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If you have any comments, letters or questions for the magazine, please write to the Post Office address given on the last page of this issue. All letters will be read by the editors and, if publishable, will be published in the next issue of the magazine.

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**AH Philosophy Part 126**

Summer-time—and game conventions. 'Tis the season for we devotees of paper wars to get together and indulge ourselves. And, this year's ORIGINS appeared to be the best way to splurge for this year ORIGINS was held in Milwaukee (from August 18th through the 21st) and represented, according to the organizers, the first time the "Number One Strategy Game Fair joined with the Number One Adventure Game Fair". I guess that means it was to satisfy just about everyone who likes playing games. At the very least, it was the greatest collection of dealers and distributors of games collected under one roof in this country.

The booth of The Avalon Hill Game Company was certainly a center of attention in that vast hall. There were a number of new products, and something bound to intrigue any gamer no matter his tastes. There was ENEMY IN SIGHT (which we sold out of)—a card game of the NAVAL WAR ilk, but with greater detail and challenge. There was GETTYSBURG (Craig Taylor's design), an introductory-level wargame based on the most famous battle of our continent and intended to celebrate the 125th anniversary of this turning point of the Civil War. Richard Hamblen's MERCHANT OF VENUS is a multi-player, financial game of space-age wheeling and dealing, with a touch of combat for spice. (I saw quite a few folk in the open-gaming areas buckling down to learn this one.) Of course, for the "advanced Squad Leaders", WEST OF ALAMEN brought the British OB and desert warfare into their hands. Too, for many gamers, ORIGINS was their first opportunity to see KREMLIN and TAC AIR. The first was released at Atlanticon to great interest and enjoyment; it makes a cutthroat, tongue-in-cheek game out of the behind-the-scenes power struggles of the ruling body of Soviet Russia. TAC AIR is a serious wargame about the air-land.
The very name conjures up images of power and intrigue beneath the onion-shaped spires of the world's most austere, yet powerful, capital. He who controls the governing body therein has his finger on the pulse of the world. Who is this man who holds the destiny of mankind in his hands? What is his power base? How did he become head of one of the strongest nations on earth?

Journey to Moscow to experience first-hand a humorous behind-the-scenes look at the intrigue, double-dealing, back-stabbing and outright paranoia that has characterized the Soviet Politburo throughout history in a delightful, satirical study of power politics in its rawest form. Now you can plot your rise from the ranks of the people to Candidate, and then on to the Politburo itself. Will your Five Year Plan succeed and raise you to a first-level Ministry, or fail and raise only the ire of the KGB? The price of failure is surely a one-way cattle car to Siberia... unless rumors of the KGB Head's son defecting to the west are true. Hmmm..."Comrade KGB Chief, before we discuss affairs of state, how are the wife and kids?" And so it goes...one hilarious purge after another in a system of sinister governmental checks and balances that only the Soviets could devise.

No one is safe in this diabolical game of power grabbing. Your staunchest political ally may have one foot in a rival camp and sell you out for his own advancement. Even the walls have ears in the Kremlin. Is it any wonder that the stress of Party office weighs so heavily...literally aging characters before your eyes? But that's life...and death in the KREMLIN.

KREMLIN is now available for $20.00 from The Avalon Hill Game Company (4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21214). Please add 10% for shipping and handling (20% for Canadian orders; 30% for overseas orders). Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.
Raise the battle sails! Run out the guns! There's an ENEMY IN SIGHT!
broadsides to be fired, prizes to be taken and fun to be had in this exciting card game of skill and luck depicting the age of fighting sail. John Paul Jones and Lord Nelson will sail the seas again on your kitchen table in this simple recreation of 18th Century naval combat suitable for the entire family.

HMS VICTORY, USS CONSTITUTION ... Old Ironsides itself ... they're all here ... from the mighty Ships of the Line to the fast and mobile American frigates capable of making 14 knots in an open sea. Break the Line, rake the enemy's bow, set her afire and send across a Boarding Party to take her home as a Prize. Blockades, Fire Ships, Running Aground and the Weathergauge all play a role in a constantly-evolving naval battle reminiscent of Hornblower at his audacious best. So board your "Ragwagon" and join the fleet.

Each player commands a fleet of six randomly-dealt ships at start and seeks to gain points by sinking or capturing the vessels of other players. Each is free to attack any of the others, but only the player who actually sinks or captures an enemy ship gets points. So loosing a broadside at a tempting target may just make it easier for someone else to finish off your victim before you have the opportunity to do it yourself. It is also wise to keep in mind that folks tend to get upset when you ventilate their sails; before long you can expect lead flying in your direction. A bit under-stated perhaps, but this frenzied naval free-for-all is the basis of the game.

Ships are rated from 1st to 6th Rate depending on their size. The more guns a ship can carry, the more Broadsides cards it can fire and the more damage it can take before it sinks. Broadsides can be used to sink an enemy, dismast it, or used as Grape to help board it. A captured ship can be pressed into service in the captor's line or returned to port for double points. But scoring points is dangerous because it tends to unite the other players against a common enemy—you. Then too, taking a prize invites blockades of your port or the breaking of your line to prevent that prize from getting home. While you can seek refuge in Refuse Battle cards and the deep reserves of a large fleet for awhile, ultimately the combined guns of a united enemy will make any attempt to win the game a hazardous affair, because regardless of the power of your fleet, you will have only one opportunity to fire per turn while your opponents can mass several times your attack opportunities. Therein lies the trick—to convince them that their beset fleets with all manners of calamity.

ENEMY IN SIGHT is now available for $12.00 from The Avalon Hill Game Company (4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214). Please add 10% for shipping and handling (20% for Canada or Mexico; 30% for overseas). Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.
Since the invasion of Italy in September 1943, the Allied Fifth and Eighth armies had been slowly fighting their way toward Rome. It soon became all too obvious that the Germans would not relinquish this Axis capital without a stiff brawl. Even with understrength and weakened divisions, the German command was determined to stand at every defensive position. Their whole Italian strategy became one of selection of suitable natural defensive lines. One such line stretched from the Aurunci Mountains to the south, through Monte Cairo, and finally to the Simbruini Mountains to the north. Through this line ran the obvious route to Rome: the old Via Cassina, or more appropriately “Route 6”. Dominating this highway was Monte Cassino, at whose base nestled the town of Cassino. And atop the 593-meter hill sat the enormous, historic Benedictine Monastery. (Saint Benedict selected Monte Cassino in 529 AD on which to build a house of God, a retreat for worship that could be readily defended against men bent on death and destruction.)

The Germans spent three months reinforcing these natural defenses, turning the line into one of Europe’s most formidable obstacles. North of Cassino, the Rapido was dammed and the valley flooded. Across the Liri Valley, emplacements and tank turrets were protected by steel and concrete. Minefields and barbed wire were liberally spread. The whole Italian strategy became one of selection of suitable natural defensive lines. One such line stretched from the Aurunci Mountains to the south, through Monte Cairo, and finally to the Simbruini Mountains to the north. Through this line ran the obvious route to Rome: the old Via Cassina, or more appropriately “Route 6”. Dominating this highway was Monte Cassino, at whose base nestled the town of Cassino. And atop the 593-meter hill sat the enormous, historic Benedictine Monastery. (Saint Benedict selected Monte Cassino in 529 AD on which to build a house of God, a retreat for worship that could be readily defended against men bent on death and destruction.)

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In January 1944, the Allied advance pulled up short in front of this barrier. For the next six months the G.I.s, Tommies, Kiwis, Gurkhas and others would slam themselves against it in a series of agonizing battles. In the end, the Allies characterized the fighting for the town of Cassino and the Monastery as some of the worst of their war, much of it reminiscent of the bitter trench warfare of World War I. In the end, the Allies would describe the fighting in terms of four separate and distinct “Battles of Cassino”—or more accurately, of the Gustav Line (in January, February, March and May of 1944).

The first, in January, and the fourth in May planned to outflank the Monte Cassino bastion. The second battle in February and the third in March were direct, frontal assaults on the town and both were preceded by concentrated bombing on one selected target, the Monastery itself and Cassino respectively. My game, THUNDER AT CASSINO, details the third battle. But first, a few words on the preceding battles to set the scene.

THE FIRST BATTLE

The first battle of Cassino took place over the period between January 12 and February 12. The general plan of attack called for a three-pronged drive: through the mountains north of Cassino, a left hook across the river Garigliano near the coast, and a thrust up the center of the Liri Valley. Defending the Garigliano front was the German 94th Infantry Division, and stationed in the Liri Valley was the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division. General Alexander’s directive to the Allied commanders stated the objective as “to make as strong a thrust as possible towards Cassino and Frosinone (on the route to Rome) shortly before the Anzio assault landing to take the mountains north of and behind Monte Cassino.”

Although the Rapido region was a quagmire, the U.S. 135th and 168th Infantry regiments succeeded in capturing the village of Cairo and two nearby high points. The French continued to make unspectacular but consistent gains, clearing Monte Belvedere and Monte Abate. But they were unable to fight their way into the town of Terelle. To crack the developing deadlock, the U.S. 34th Infantry Division—reinforced by elements of the 36th—would force itself up the rugged and rocky slopes, wheel left and attack southwards toward the monastery. But the terrain they faced was formidable, and the enemy (which now included units of the 1st Parachute Division) dug in.

Two American divisions did manage to capture the first obstacle, Monte Castellone. And, fighting with the greatest determination, the G.I.s advanced yard by yard to take Monte Mataia beyond. From there, they assaulted and captured Point 706 and Point 175—just opposite Castle Hill (Area 9)—by February 3rd. But furious and gallant attempts to take Points 193 and 444 were beaten back by the German paratroopers. With the average strength of some rifle companies in these two divisions down to 30 men, the Americans had come to a standstill. Their efforts had brought them to within a few hundred yards of the crests of Monte Cassino and within one-and-a-half miles of Route 6 below.
The first Battle of Cassino drew to a close with a grim accounting. The cost was tragic: battle casualties among the British numbered 415, and in American divisions totaled a staggering 10230.

The Cassino sector now became the responsibility of the New Zealand Corps, consisting of the 2nd New Zealand Division and the 4th Indian Division. Because the U.S. troops had come so near to victory at Cassino, it seemed that a further attempt might well readily succeed. The groundwork was laid for the second battle.

THE SECOND BATTLE

The new effort called for the deployment of the 4th Indian Division, which was experienced in mountain warfare, to capture Monte Cassino coordinated with an attack on the town by the 2nd New Zealand Division from the southeast. Dominating the positions atop Monte Cassino lay the Benedictine Monastery. Various Allied officers believed that the Germans were using the monastery for military purposes; in the end, it was decided to precede the attack by bombing the monastery from the air. On the morning of February 15th, a total of 443 tons of bombs were dropped. Some 222 heavy and medium bombers, in a remarkable bit of precision bombing, leveled the complex— an act destined to be of no military advantage to the Allies except for the temporary lift in the morale of the troops who witnessed it.

Following the bombing, the Royal Sussex Battalion was committed to clear Point 593. For two days and nights the English struggled, but in the wild and savage fighting, the German paratroopers of the 3rd Parachute Regiment could not be dislodged. With the withdrawal of the Royal Sussex, the New Zealand Corps assigned new tasks and objectives. At midnight on February 17th, the Indians moved out. The 4/6 Rajputana Rifles made for Point 193, Castle Hill (Area 9). Covering their left, the 1/9 Gurkhas would attack towards Point 444, while the 1/2 Gurkhas had the monastery ruins as their objective. In the valley below, two companies of the 25th Maori Battalion were to cross the Rapido and capture the railway station for Cassino town (Area 23) as a preliminary to forcing entrance into the Liri Valley.

Although each Indian battalion fought hard for its objectives over the next day, none were attained. Advances like that of the 4/6th came within a hundred yards of the summit, pinned there by intense machinegun and mortar fire. Although Point 193 was neither captured nor neutralized as planned, the 1/9th began its attack towards Point 444 at 0215 hours. After an advance of some 300 yards, they too were stopped cold by the intense German fire. Finally, at 0330 the 2/12 Gurkhas opened their attack against their objectives, no more than 500 yards away. They dashed forward into dense thickets, but it proved to be sown with anti-personnel mines and trip wires. Only a handful of men forced their way through the hazards, only to be halted by fierce German crossfire on the other side. With the dawn, the battalions had no option but to withdraw and take up defensive positions among the rocks on the bare slopes.

While the Indians had been fighting hard on the hills and mountains, the Maoris in the valley below had attacked along the railway line. After a slow but resolute advance, one company managed to capture the station. Later that day, the Germans counterattacked with infantry and a handful of tanks, supported by heavy fire from artillery and mortars. The two Maori companies, weakened by casualties and unable to receive reinforcements, were forced to retreat back across the river.

Thus the second battle, like the first, so nearly succeeded that the Allied commanders were impressed. Although there was less gained in this instance, they began planning for a third attempt. It was clearly necessary to adopt new tactics if the Gustav Line was to be breached.

THE THIRD BATTLE

The third battle for Cassino (and the one depicted in the game) was known as Operation Dickens. Its avowed aim was to capture Cassino and Monte Cassino, and to develop a bridgehead in the Liri Valley for the spring offensive that was to break the Gustav Line. Preparations were completed, and the operation was scheduled to begin on February 24— but unscheduled weather postponed the opening for three weeks. New Zealanders and Indians clung to their dank and insanitary holes, even as the Germans carried out relief of the troops in place until the whole area was firmly in the hands of Oberst Heidrich’s 1st Parachute Division. The vile weather finally lifted, and the attack was fixed for March 15th.

As with the previous assault, the battle would start with a massive air attack. This time the town of Cassino, from which the Germans had evacuated the civilian streets, was reduced to rubble in a three-and-a-half-hour onslaught. Some 445 bombers laid 992 tons of explosives in the area, almost half of which fell within one mile of the town center. It was inconceivable to the Allied soldiers watching that anybody could survive, but although half of the 2nd Battalion of the 3rd Parachute Regiment perished, the remaining Germans struggled out of the ruins and readied themselves for battle.

Next the Allied big guns opened up (some 195000 rounds would be dropped on Cassino between noon and 1900 hours). Companies A and B of the 25th New Zealand Battalion entered the town along the Caruso Road (Zone C), followed by a squadron of Shermans from the 19th Armored Regiment. Their immediate objective was along Route 6, a line designated on planning maps as the “Quisling Line.” But, as the leading soldiers passed the prison (Area 6), the Kiwis were met with concentrated rifle and machinegun fire. The advance slowed, as they were forced to fight their way forward at a rate of about 100 yards an hour. By dusk, only one company had managed to crawl forward as far as the Convent (Area 22). The Sherman tanks had proved of little worth, as these made no headway in the piles of masonry and craters.

In the meantime, a brilliant attack by Company D of the 25th was successful in capturing their objective— Castle Hill (Area 9). Approaching the hill from a ravine, half the company scaled the rocky walls and flanked the enemy positions at Point 165 (Area 54). Rushing the “yellow house” there, the New Zealanders secured that position but now came under fire from Point 236 (Area 44) above them. Even as all this was taking place, the remainder of the company had worked its way around the foot of Castle Hill, scaled the rocks and, after a prolonged grenade battle, captured the strongpoint. The units of 165 were then rolled into the castle because of their exposed position.

As night fell, it brought with it rain, slowing all operations to a crawl. After darkness came, reserves were brought up by the New Zealand commander. The 26th New Zealand Battalion moved around the east side of the town and joined up with the 25th. The 1/4 Essex arrived, relieved the battered D Company on Castle Hill; and in fact captured Point

March 15: The red arrows show the advance of Company D of the 25th Battalion; blue, the advance of Company A, supported by B Squadron of the 19th Armored.
165 in the ruin as well. Two companies from the 1/6 Rajputana Rifles arrived, were committed, and captured their objective (Point 236) but were driven off; the remainder of the battalion was scattered in the dark by a German artillery concentration and were lost for the rest of the night. In the meantime, Company C of the 1/9 Gurkhas infiltrated the enemy positions and reached “Hangman’s Hill”—Point 435 (Area 65).

During the 16th, the Allied commanders worked frantically to reinforce the Indian troops for their final drive to the monastery ruins. To secure the flanks, A and B companies of the 1/6th Rajputana again stormed Point 236 but again had to withdraw back to the castle after holding it for a short time. And during the night Gurkhas, after some eight hours, were able to reach their comrades on Hangman’s Hill just in time to beat off a determined attack at about 0000.

Even as the battle was raging on the hill, the fighting in the town continued unabated. The 26th New Zealand was ordered to pass through the 25th and capture the railway station (Area 23) and the “Hummocks” just beyond (Area 25). But the tired soldiers were unable to make much progress beyond capturing a few houses and clearing the Convent (Area 22) in the tangled ruin of Cassino. Both battalions stood just south of Route 6 now. As dawn broke on the 17th, the 25th New Zealanders and B Company of the 24th, led by Shermans, pushed towards the Botanical Gardens (Area 16) and the Continental Hotel (Area 18). Block by bitter block, they fought their way to within two hundred yards of the hotel. This allowed the 26th to attack toward the south towards the railway station. With tank support from A Squadron of the 19th New Zealand Armored, the 26th was able to seize both the station and the “Hummocks”. With this success, the uncommitted elements of the 24th were ordered to sweep the area from the Continental Hotel to the Colosseum ruins (Area 29). By nightfall, it had become thoroughly entangled with the 25th in clearing pockets of resistance throughout the town.

The fourth day of battle began with only a small portion of the town remaining under German control; that around the Continental Hotel and the Hotel des Roses (Area 19). Capture of these areas was necessary because they not only dominated the exit of Route 6 from the town, but enemy troops there could fire into the flank of any moving across the slopes of Monastery Hill towards Hangman’s Hill. Therefore, in the early hours of the 18th, Company C of the 24th New Zealand Battalion left the region around Point 165 to assault Point 202 (Area 45), and then turn to attack from the rear the Continental. The New Zealanders reached 202 without difficulty, but the assault on the hotel failed. Further attacks by the 25th Battalion also collapsed, although a few strongpoints and machinegun nests near the building fell. At the railway station, sharp counterattacks by the Parachute MG Battalion kept the 26th busy, preventing them from making any progress of their own.

In the early hours of the 19th, companies C and D of the Maori Battalion were thrown into the battle in hopes that, along with the weary 25th New Zealand, could take the Continental Hotel and Hotel des Roses. The Maoris made some progress, notably between the twin arms of Route 6, and some troops even reached the bottom of Monte Cassino. But, as dark fell after the bloody afternoon and with the pace of other developments, they were forced to withdraw.

With German reinforcements arriving daily, the German command felt strong enough on the 19th to launch their own attacks. The first hit Castle Hill even as the 1/4 Essex were moving out to reinforce the Gurkhals at Hangman’s Hill for an attack on the monastery ruins. Companies B and D had already left the shelter of the castle when the massed 1st Battalion, 4th Parachute Regiment, swarmed down from Point 236, overrunning the defenders at Point 165 and the two British companies, and up to the very walls of the castle. What followed was an extraordinary fight for the castle itself, which resembled a medieval siege waged with modern weapons. After several assaults, the German attack tailed off—although A and C companies of the 1/4 Essex and a company of the 4/6 Rajputana which defended the walls had suffered heavy casualties. The remnants of 1/4 Essex B and D pushed on to Hangman’s Hill, but only forty men remained in condition to fight and the attack on the peak was again postponed.

March 16: The red arrows show the advance of the 24th Battalion: the blue, that of the 26th with support of a Squadron of the 19th.

Although the Gurkha and Essex attack on the “front door” was not to occur, an armored thrust up the Cavendish road was not called off. On the morning of the German counterattack, Shermans and Stuarts of the 20th New Zealand Armored Regiment, the 7th Indian Brigade and the 76th U.S. Tank Battalion struggled up the track from Caira and attacked Albaneta Farm (behind Snakeshead Ridge). It was intended that they then push on and arrive at the “back door” of the monastery. With such a two-pronged attack, it was confidently expected that the ruins would be cleared. Having suppressed the Germans at Point 593 and Point 575, the armored force continued on to a line less than a thousand yards from the summit. But, as the Germans recovered from the initial surprise, tanks began to be knocked out. With no infantry support, it was a lost cause. At 1730, this attack was cancelled and the force withdrew with six tanks destroyed and 16 damaged.

By mid-day on the 19th, the Allied command realized the battle was a lost cause. Casualties and exhaustion had brought most of the involved units to the point of collapse. Instead, however, of ending the struggle, it was decided to commit the last fresh units (which had been retained till now for the exploitation of the breakthrough). The 23rd New Zealand Battalion of the 5th Brigade relieved the 25th in the north and central parts of the town. The 6th Royal West Kents of the 36th Infantry Brigade took over Castle Hill. Finally, the 26th New Zealand was relieved at the railway station by the 5th Buffs.

On the night of March 20th, the 6th Royal West Kents attacked Point 165 (Area 34) even as a single company of the 2/7 Gurkhas attacked Point 445 (Area 57). Weak in numbers, both attacks failed miserably. By this time, the 21st New Zealand had been committed alongside the 24th New Zealand for one last attack to seize a line between Point 202 and the Continental Hotel. Although it made an impression on the German defenders, it too petered out during the daylight hours of the 21st. Despite these setbacks, the Allied commanders continued their efforts throughout the 22nd in fighting that at
times passed the merely "savage". But the German strongpoints around the hotels could not be destroyed, and by evening the new Allied units had been exhausted as well. Sporadic fighting continued into March 23rd, but the third battle was over. In one final courageous action, the Gurkha, Essex and Rajput survivors on Hangman's Hill withdrew from the isolated knoll they had held since March 18th.

In the end, there was no clear victor of the third Battle of Cassino. The small bridgehead carved out by the troops was not used for the spring offensive, Operation Diadem. But the damage inflicted on the 1st Parachute Division was in line with the avowed purpose of the entire Italian campaign—the destruction of German divisions and diverting of replacements from other fronts. Only in this light could the Allies claim the battle a victory, a "hollow victory" indeed.

THE FOURTH BATTLE

Clearly the stalemate at Cassino and at Anzio (which continued to drag on) could only be broken with a supreme effort. The fourth Battle of Cassino was to be on quite a different scale than the previous three attempts to break the Gustav Line. This final battle in turn would be only a small, and indecisive part, in the massive Operation Diadem. Where a single brigade had served in the first battle, two entire divisions would be used in the fourth. The basic plan was fairly straightforward, depending more on sheer numerical and material superiority than on finesse. The 2nd Polish Corps, comprised of the 3rd Carpathian and 5th Kresowa divisions, was to take the ridges north of Monte Cassino and the monastery itself. The 13th British Corps was to force an entrance into the Liri Valley. On their left, the U.S. 85th and 88th Infantry divisions and the French 1st Motorized, 2nd Moroccan, 3rd Algerian and 4th Moroccan divisions were to sweep through the Aurunci Mountains between the Liri and the sea.

On May 11, all four Allied corps went into the attack. The men of the U.S. II Corps (the 85th and 88th divisions) made no significant headway; but the French began to make some spectacular gains in the mountains. In the Liri Valley, the 3rd Indian Division successfully crossed the Gari River, south of Sant' Angelo, by the 12th but was unable to enlarge its bridgehead and was forced back to the east bank. The first attack by the Polish forces jumped off at dusk on the 11th. Although they succeeded in completely capturing Snakeshead Ridge (Zone A), General Anders feared his forward troops too exposed, and they were withdrawn in the face of strong German fire. Rather than order a renewed attack, Anders settled in to wait for the 13th British Corps to make some progress in the valley.

By this time, it was evident that the German defenders of the Gustav Line were fighting desperately but could not withstand the onslaught. The French, fighting with great elan, captured Monte Maio and Ausenta; the German right flank collapsed and the 71st Infantry Division was in flight towards Esperia. The American divisions drove the German 94th westwards along the coast. In the Liri, the German defenses were penetrated on the 16th; the next day the British 4th cut Route 6 and isolated the town of Cassino. At mid-morning the next day, the Poles attacked once more—only to find that the majority of the defenders had withdrawn down the hill during the previous night. At 1015 on the 17th May, a patrol of the 12 Podolski Lancers hoisted the Polish flag over the ruins of the monastery, now deserted but for a few wounded German paratroopers. The fourth and last Battle of Cassino was over.

AH Philosophy... Cont'd from Page 2

combat of a hypothetical Third War in the Hof Gap region of Germany.

As for the competitions among the attendees, we had a full slate of tournaments hosted by Avalon Hill. Craig Taylor oversaw the FLIGHT LEADER three-round tournament and the four-round competition in the new TAC AIR. And, of course, he tested the mettle of a hardy few with a two-round tournament for FIREPOWER. Charlie Kibler headed the single elimination ASL tournament making use of the components of PARTISAN and BEYOND VALOR. Don Greenwood was kept busy hosting competition in some of our latest releases—MERCHANT OF VENUS, DINOSAURS OF THE LOST WORLD, and KREMLIN; quite a range with something for everyone's tastes I should think. The designer of ENEMY IN SIGHT, Neil Schaffler, first led quite a few folk in a demonstration of his new game, followed on Saturday by the tournament. I "volunteered" to watch over the competitions in PLATOON and BRITANNIA.

If the pressure of competition put attendees off, we also hosted a number of "hands-on" demonstrations for several of our new games. This gave them a chance to play, or watch being played, of the new titles—to ask questions, to pick up pointers for play, and generally to learn about some of our favorites. It was undeniably the best way for convention-goers to decide if they liked the games of Avalon Hill—MERCHANT OF VENUS, ENEMY IN SIGHT, KREMLIN. As well, Charlie Kibler introduced participants to the joys of playing ASL with miniatures, even as Craig Taylor did for FLIGHT LEADER enthusiasts. We wrapped up our convention events, as usual, with an open seminar, giving attendees the chance to meet and grill the designers, artist and editors of Avalon Hill. Hopefully, we were able to answer some of the tough questions posed there to everyone's satisfaction, and give them a peek at upcoming projects. For my part, a free "Special Issue" of The GENERAL (containing a number of reprinted articles on a wide variety of games) displayed some of the format changes to be instituted when we expand to 64 pages next issue.

Readers can see that we hoped to make our presence at ORIGINS felt, and to make it one of the best conventions for all gamers who attended. It might have been cool outside the Mecca Convention Center this August, but things were a lot hotter inside—new games, straight talk, tough competition. If you missed the convention, you missed one of life's more enjoyable weekends. Perhaps next year, you'll make plans to attend ORIGINS in Los Angeles. We'll promise to try to make it as exciting as this year's show in Milwaukee.
Preparing to start a game wherein the first act is the observation of 460 enemy bombers thinning your ranks is hardly a confidence builder. But that’s the hand the Germans are dealt in THUNDER AT CASSINO and like it or not those bombs are going to fall, so they had best be prepared for it. My first few trials with saturation bombing were pretty sobering experiences as half a battalion was regularly pulverized before the first Allied unit entered the board. Experience has brought wisdom, however, and with it survival for more of my para-

It should be obvious from the outset that the results of the Allied bombing will vary the start of the game. How could it be otherwise with 32 dice rolls being made to determine initial casualties and rubble before play commences? Discussion of strategy beyond the initial setup is therefore dependent on variables too myriad to consider here. Consequently, this discussion will be limited solely to an analysis of the German initial setup—or “Digging In” if you prefer. The overwhelming goal of this setup is to minimize casualties from the bombardment. While that may appear ridiculously obvious to many, it is easy to lose sight of the importance of preserving troops in one’s blind zeal to defend territory. And while the matter of deciding what price to pay for real estate—be it on offense or defense—is integral to all wargames, in THUNDER AT CASSINO it is important for the German to realize that he can’t realistically expect to hold the town. Its loss is only a matter of time and the price exacted. Troops lost in the first turn are never available to retard the Allied advance in subsequent turns, so each unit lost increases the momentum of the Allied steamroller. It is better to bend in the opening turns than to break in the middle of the game and surrender everything. This setup follows that advice strenuously. The only way to further lessen expected casualties to the bombardment would be to abandon Castle Hill and withdraw three units from the +2 Terrain Effect Modifier (hereafter TEM) areas into the hinterlands of Areas 17 and 18. Such a defense would be passive to the extreme, and I dismiss it as unworthy of consideration.

You’ll notice that I’ve resisted the urge to place more than two units in any of the bombardment areas. Not only does concentration of forces in an area increase casualties, it can actually lessen the chance of holding an area. Casualties are determined by rolling one die for every two units in an area and subtracting the TEM for that area. As the TEM is applied only once in each area regardless of the number of dice rolled, it doesn’t take an Einstein to quickly realize that two units is the most efficient initial garrison for any area. The maximum Casualty Points (hereafter CP) in a +3 TEM area is three (6-3=3) if occupied by two units, and nine (12-3=9) if occupied by more. On average, you can expect to lose four CP in a +3 TEM area if four units are occupying, but a mere .5 CP with only two units occupying it. The way of being pedantic, I’ll now state what should be obvious to those well-versed in this game. If economy of force is the primary goal, defense of Castle Hill is not far behind. I’ve found Area 9 to be the key to most battles. Not every game will feature a struggle for Castle Hill because the Allied player should take what he is given. Forcing an assault into the teeth of a defense is rarely beneficial. But if the setup, the bombardment, or both leave an opening for Allied troops to take Castle Hill, it invariably becomes the focal point of the battle. Not only does its occupation allow the Allies to bypass Areas 6, 7, 8, and 10, and give easy access to the Quising Line Victory Point bonus of Area 11, it provided an elevation TEM advantage against all fire from the town. More important, however, is the perch it provides Allied observers from which to direct artillery fire into the Continental Hotel and halfway up the mountain. I don’t believe any assault on the Monastery can be successful without control of this high ground. From the face of German artillery fire with only +1 TEM terrain to soften the blow is just too costly a proposition if Allied Observers have to spend half their time scurrying from one observation area to another just to obliterate German rear guards. Castle Hill is real threat, especially by presenting my opponent with a balanced defense—even if it would put the Allies on the horns of a where-to-strike dilemma.

Having expounded upon my overall strategy, let’s take a closer look at the components thereof by discussing the garrison of each Area in the order that the bombing will be resolved. The choice of how to administer Casualties is largely dependent on previous losses sustained and the fall of rubble, but some generalities are applicable to almost all situations nevertheless.

AREA 6: [2x3-4-5]. Infantry is called for in the Jail Area simply because it is the area most likely to be assaulted. The overall defense funnels the action in this direction because the defensive firepower is concentrated around Castle Hill. A prudent Allied player is forced south. Infantry is best suited to survive the Close Combat that will inevitably ensue. There are no tough decisions as to how to distribute bombardment CP; the only possibility which offers any choice is whether to commit two or one to satisfy a two-CP loss. This is no choice to me, I always opt—here and in every other area—to take CP in the most efficient manner (barring a pressing reason to do otherwise) and consequently would never kill a unit if I could commit two instead.

AREA 7: [3-4-5, 4-2-8]. Most players have a tendency to think of armor as their most valuable units. In this game, armor is the German’s most expendable force. Rubble severely limits the mobility and retreat options of German vehicles. This makes it very susceptible to loss and its low defense value invites artillery parties that neighboring infantry inevitably foot the bill for. That, and their high CP absorption rate of four, make them prime candidates for early loss. The M42 is placed here rather than the stronger StuG III so that the more powerful armor is available to cover Castle Hill. Bombardment losses are extracted as follows: 1—commit infantry; 2—commit both; 3—kill infantry; 4—kill armor. The worst-case scenario of four CP might be better addressed by killing the infantry and committing the armor if rubble in Areas 2 and 3 is light. You’ll soon see why.

AREA 8: [3-4-5, 4-3-8]. This is almost the mirror image of Area 7. If the M42 in Area 7 is still among the living, the StuG III takes on added importance in inverse proportion to the rubble in Areas 2 and 3. A daring German player who can successfully negotiate the rubble in those areas can move his armor into Areas 2 and 3 on the second turn and thus hinder the arrival of the massive Allied forces that arrive then.

AREA 9: [2x3-4-5]. Only infantry is posted here because of the likelihood of an assault. It is a precept of the game to avoid putting MG units anywhere they can’t be adequately screened from Close Combat possibilities, and by keeping a MG out of the bombardment area, an additional 4-Attack Factor unit is guaranteed to be available to fire on Castle Hill. As the MF-influence of German MG units is ignored on the first turn, it makes no sense to leave them in the front lines where they can be picked off. However, unless writing off Castle Hill to a successful first turn assault, the German player must be sure to move a MG onto the hill before Turn 2.

AREA 10: [3-4-5, 6-5-1]. The Anti-Tank Gun units are the German’s most powerful pieces and one is positioned here safe from the Turn 1 mayhem but in position to fire on any of four areas—one of which is almost sure to contain a target. The interesting question here is how to handle a two-CP loss. As already stated, I am loathe to kill a unit unnecessarily, but if Castle Hill and Area 8 have been hard hit it is probably wise to sacrifice the infantry unit to save the AT Gun’s 6-Attack Factor for Turn 1 covering fire on Castle Hill.

AREA 11: [3-4-5, 6-5-1]. At first glance this appears to be a carbon copy of Area 10, but this placement is more subject to question. Obviously, the AT Gun is sited to afford optimum covering fire for Castle Hill; the accompanying infantry guarantees that it will remain there unsathed throughout the bombardment (although committing units to satisfy a two-CP loss is acceptable if Areas 8, 9 and 10 have not been hard hit). The controversy arises over whether this is too much protection for Castle Hill at the expense of an Allied southern penetration made too easy. Placement of the AT Gun in Area 21 would go a long way towards discouraging a southern thrust. If one was sufficiently chauvinist to foresee relatively light rubble dispersal in Areas 15, 22 and 21, I’d agree. While I admitted that Allied armor penetration as far as Areas 17 and 21 is possible against my defense, it is highly unlikely—especially in light of the heavy presence of a few “Rumble 1” dice roll (±7) in Zone E and probably more of the same or more severe tests in each subsequent Area entered for each unit attempting it. Consequently, any armor incursions here are undertaken at great peril and likely to be rendered piecemeal by rubble dispersal. Therefore, I am willing to risk the rare possibility of a strong Allied armor thrust here in hopes that the effort will be made only to be strung out by rubble passage failures and thereby afford easy Close Combat opportunities against isolated armor.
by masses of German infantry from Areas 23, 26 and 27. If no attack develops on Castle Hill, the AT Gun should probably be moved into Area 16 or 17 if possible before Allied advances make it impossible.

One of the more interesting placements I've seen for Area 11 is the placement of one or both of the Observers here so that they can reach the Monastery on Turn 1 and be in position to direct fire from the Abbey. I dislike this option because it affords no first-turn protection for Castle Hill, and I am not all that fond of putting all my eggs in one basket—even if it is a +4 TEM basket. I've never had problems finding targets for German Artillery and have experienced few hardships by keeping my observers in the town for the start of Turn 2.

AREAS 12/13: [4-4-5, 3-4-5 each]. Finally, the MG units make their appearance—in areas where they cannot be attacked by Close Combat but can take their +4 Attack Factor shots at Allied encroachments in Areas 6 and 14 respectively. When taking casualties, committing units is preferred to outright eliminations, although it is tempting to try to prevent any Allied MG from starting Turn 2 in Area 14.

AREA 16: [3-4-5, X-7-5]. The Divisional Observer is placed here because it is the least likely forward Area to be afforded a firing opportunity on Turn 2. Being unable to fire at the outset, its main goal is the opportunity for survival afforded by the presence of the infantry and the +3 TEM. The infantry unit takes the first CP, but in the event of a two-CP loss, I'd advocate eliminating the Observer and committing the infantry, rather than killing the infantry for the same reasons espoused below.

AREA 18: [X-7-5]. Players often express surprise that I would leave an Observer alone to face the bombardment. Unfortunately, with 17 red units to post, someone has to be the odd man out and I'd rather lose an Observer who will reappear on Turn 2 than a combat unit that is gone forever. The loss is further mitigated by the fact that German artillery can't fire anyway on Turn 1, and the replacement Observer will be able to move into the Monastery on Turn 2. Thus, the loss is limited to one Turn 2 fire mission.

BLUE AREAS (23, 26, 27, 31): My placement of the 13 blue units is with an eye towards rapid deployment into the town on Turn 1. The infantry is concentrated to the south for possible Close Combat use against any tanks that stumble into 15, 21 or 22. The AT Gun unit should be placed in Area 26, not only to facilitate its move into Area 21 but also to provide it with the better +2 TEM. The move fail. Lone committed AT Guns are the favorite prey of the MATAF air strike.

YELLOW AREAS (33, 34, 43, 44, 55): The purpose of my placements on the hill is twofold: to provide quick reinforcement of the town and bar a rapid Allied advance towards the Monastery. Area 34 is obviously the most important—being the only yellow area that can fire into Castle Hill or reinforce it once an Allied MG unit arrives. For this reason, all four yellow MG units are concentrated here to maximize covering fire for Castle Hill. Such an imbalance of MG units in one area is usually ill-advised for all the same reasons that tacticians expound on a Combined Arms approach. However, their presence here should dissuade any serious attempt against Castle Hill, and if so, they can be deployed into a more balanced defense for the start of Turn 2. One should be moved to Area 55 to present a picket line defense of a MG in every other Area to slow Allied advances up the mountain. If this is not possible due to a battle royale on Castle Hill, the MG unit in Area 31 can be substituted. Any opening move by the Allied player which does not include movement onto Castle Hill should be parried by German reinforcement of Castle Hill with three units from Area 55—leaving the forces in Areas 27 and 33 to reinforce the southern areas—possibly to the inclusion of Close Combat against enemy armor.

In conclusion, always remember that THUNDER AT CASSINO is a game of reaction. Every Allied move has a possible German countermove—but it does not necessarily have to be carried out immediately. The advantage usually lies with he who moves last, provided he hasn't passed up any critical opportunities in the interim. The burden of the offensive lies with the Allied player. Don't be too quick to remove this mantle from his shoulders. Make him pay the price for forcing the action. Your job is to react, but only when it is in your best interests to do so now as opposed to later. The Pass option should be your most frequently used impulse—but before uttering that fateful word always stop to ask yourself whether you are willing to end the turn at that point. Never assume that the Allied player will continue the turn. Make sure it ends at a point to your liking.

CONTEST 142

It is the ninth (daylight) turn of a THUNDER AT CASSINO game, with the Allies needing one more victory point for a draw and two more for a win. All the German units are Committed and only remaining Allied uncommitted units are the five illustrated here. The three remaining VP areas (19, 29 and 31) are all in tenuous German control is considered a German Advantage. Your task as the Allied player is to devise a combination of impulses that will give the best chance of wresting sufficient control from the German to gain a victory—using only the mapboard space illustrated here. After specifying the action(s) to be taken by your five units, in the order these are to be carried out, check the box indicating whether the most likely result of your move is a German win, a draw, or an Allied win. As a tie breaker, estimate your chances of victory to two decimal places.

The answer to this contest must be entered on the official entry form (or a reasonable facsimile) found on the insert of this issue. Ten winning entries will receive merchandise credits from The Avalon Hill Game Company. To be valid, an entry must include a numerical rating for this issue as a whole and a listing of the three best articles in the judgment of the contestant. The solution to Contest 142 will appear in Vol. 25, No. 1 and the list of winners in Vol. 25, No. 2 of The GENERAL.
For those among the readership not yet aware, THUNDER AT CASSINO is heir to the STORM OVER ARNHEM system. As can be expected, THUNDER AT CASSINO is a much more involved game, with many facets of WW2 warfare not found in the street fighting around the Arnhem bridge simulated well in this fluid battle. However, our attempt at a replay of the full game became unwieldy (the accounting of the moves alone took a mere 33 typed pages), so we chose to use one of the two short scenarios as an introduction for the readership to this new classic. “Counterattack at the Roundhouse” has much of the tension and demands all the skill that the full game does, but these two truncated turns take only a few minutes to play. As both replay players have pitted themselves against each other innumerable times in playtesting and both are comfortable with either side, we let the die decide sides. Don Greenwood took on the role of the defender, and I have the role of the attacker.

While casting about for a neutral commentator on THUNDER AT CASSINO, we wondered who better to ask than the master gamesman, Tom Oleson. He has the ANZIO credits as an Army MG (area), and he holds a top AEA rating (built largely on dozens of victories in the Italian theater). We were right... perhaps a little too right. We got no wishy-washy “nice move” commentary from Tom, who instead handed us an incisive, incisive analysis of our stupidities. Of course, Don is now calling for a neutral commentary on the neutral commentary. In the meantime, he has challenged the commentator to a grudge match to show him the wisdom of the passive defense. I’ll let the readership know how it turns out.

When not identified at the outset, German comments are always the odd-numbered Impulses; Allied comments are even-numbered Impulses. Neutral commentary is in italics. Each player’s move is listed on the line below his comments for that impulse. An attack is listed in the form: Attacker [area attacking from] vs Area attacked. This is the usual method of reporting moves, and it’s used for reporting all non-tactical moves as well. Movement impulses are listed in the form: unit [number of Area moved from] number of Area moved to.

**Initial Set-up:**

**German:** Region G -2x15PzGr, 3x5/II/115, 3x7/II/115, 3x9/II/115, 6xMG, 1/II/115 MG, 10/II/115 MG

Area 20 - 2x7/II/1, 2x7/II/1, 8/II/1 MG, 1st Regt Observer

Area 27 - 3/II/ MG, 2/II/ MG

Area 28 - 2x6/II/1, 1/1 MG

Area 66 - 1st Div Observer

**British:**

Area 25 - 2x2/26 NZ, B/26 NZ

Area 26 - 1x2/26 NZ, 2x2/26 NZ, 2x2/26 NZ, C/27 NZ MG, 6th NZ Observer

Area 21 - 3x2/19 NZ, 2x2/24 NZ, 2B/24 NZ, D/24 NZ, B/27 MG

**Area 22** - D/24 NZ

(General holds Tactical Chit)

With only one MG unit to defend two areas, one has to be susceptible to daylight, multi-area moves. The only logical choice for his attack is Area 22—the one which can be entered from only one area—as opposed to Area 26 which can be entered from three. But my stronger force in Area 26 is necessary because it is subject to fire from three areas as opposed to only one. More importantly, it is probably the area which will be hammered by his artillery and will need lots of cannon fodder to protect the MG. A better setup might be to strip one of the infantry units from 26 to 25 for better balance; but overall, I think it best to protect the MG at the Observer's position and rely on the tanks to come running to Area 25! That lone infantry unit in Area 22 is necessary to prevent a German forward "retreat" out of 21 from seizing the area and the game.

Area 25 is the most vulnerable because it is somewhat isolated on the Allied left flank, and because it has two VP points to adjacent Area 26's one. Of course, the Germans only need one point to win, but since they have two 2-VP areas of their own to defend, capturing a 2-VP area would give them a cushion. There are ten Allied units divided between these two areas, and it is obviously better to put the machine gun and the observer in the central area (26) where they are more effective than they would be in a corner (25). That leaves eight infantry units to assist the MG, bordered by German areas on three of its six sides, while 25 is surrounded by one German and three Allied areas, it makes sense to divide the infantry into three for 25 and five for 26. I rate this set-up "9", on a scale of ten.

As between areas 21 and 22, here too not a lot of thought is needed. Area 21 is on the front line, so it should take nearly everything, leaving just one unit to occupy 22 for the reason Don explains. But which unit? Since the tanks have mobility, why not take one of them? I rate this set-up "8" on a scale of ten (i.e., OK but open to criticism). No grading on the curve here.

The impossible thing to convey in any replay of THUNDER AT CASSINO is the sheer scope and range of one’s thoughts while playing. This game presents one with literally hundreds of tactical options each turn—ranging from the movement of large bodies of troops across vast areas of the mapboard to the shift of a single counter to one vital area, from the massed fire attack of combined companies to a solitary surgical burst from a MG. And those tactical options are constantly changing with the evolving action. This system applied to this battle presents the player with the most fluid of games; it rewards those who can quickly evaluate these relationships, readily recognize threats and opportunities, and seize the ever-shifting initiative. It is, for any wargamer, one of the best challenges I can think of.

The key to "Counterattack at the Roundhouse" for the German player is finding in pressurizing all three adjacent Allied VP areas (21, 26, 25)—and having a modicum of luck. The trick lies in coordinating it all so it comes together on the last turn. Even diversionary attacks on two of the three areas serves, if you can isolate and concentrate overwhelming force on one; the German only needs to gain one VP area to win. I note that while this is mandatory for strategy and yet remain flexible enough to take advantage of any difficulties that the New Zealanders may get themselves into.

Turning to the specifics of my set-up, note the weighted flank in Area 20. As it is furthest from my offboard reinforcements, I like to concentrate here to develop a two-pronged attack. Its task is to attack 21 (or 26 if sufficiently softened up). The 1st Regt. observer is placed in 20 to give me the potential for back-to-back artillery strikes in 21 or 26 (the artillery from 66 can hit anywhere); I have no intention of shifting 25 as I fully expect to be talking about. My infantry reinforcements will strike at 25 as Don has no MG there to slow them down, giving me a foothold I hope to exploit on the next turn. And my armor moves into Area 28 to fire on 25 and/or 26 in support. If all goes well, this scenario can be most exciting when on the offensive.

Rex has 11 units to spread among three areas. His set-up is less obvious than Don’s, but there are some aspects which are rather mandatory; for example, the observer in 20, and one of the two machine-guns anchoring each flank. This leaves eight units for the three areas, six stronger (3-4-5) and two weaker (2-4-5). Also bear in mind that, since Rex moves first, he can do whatever he wants with 14 units in Zone G before Don can do anything at all.

The burden of attack is on the German, and the time to do it is brief. The set-up and first move have to be right, or he will lose. Contemplating the German set-up from the perspective of the game as it developed, we can see that Rex tried to win by taking Area 21 quickly, while mounting a feintable challenge to the other flank, Area 21. His set-up is not bad, but not particularly imaginative, nor the only conceivable alternative. He put the two weak units in the central Area 27, two of the strong units to anchor his right flank (28). Suppose instead, he had put everything in Area 20! That would surely give Don more concern about that flank, while as the game developed, Rex gave him little to worry about over there. On his first move, Rex could then have moved four units (or whatever necessary) into areas 27 and 28, still leaving ten units in G to allocate. I am all the more convinced that this would have been a better start for him, looking back from the perspective of the end of the first turn which left most of his units unused.

Here is another, less sweeping alternative: weaken 28 in favor of 27. Rex mentions that he likes to have a defensive line, and against a more aggressive player, it would have been needed. It is at Area 27 that the Allies could attack to threaten the German VP's behind it. Here again, there is no particular need for 28 to be strong at the start, since Zone G is right behind it.

**TURN 8**

[1] The first German artillery strike is crucial. I am
firmly convinced of that; it must cause the enemy some discomfort. As the defenses of all the target areas is identical, I like to use it against Don's central concentration in Area 26 as from here he can reinforce either flank. Besides this, if the chit differential is high enough, Area 26 may open up for me as a viable alternative to attacking 25 (although 25 is easier to lock down). [5]

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1—Linda Carter liked to play the librarian-type, wearing a conservative suit with the collar buttoned up to her chin, heavy glasses, hair up in a bun. When she unbuttons half the buttons, discards the spectacles and tosses her hair free, wow... Wonder Woman! The Arnhem/Cassino game system is like that; well, a little bit like that. Like many gamers I suppose, when you look at SOA, when unfamiliar concepts I was too lazy to learn, so I put it aside to catch dust. But with this second version, Wonder Woman has emerged for me. It forces you to think ALL THE TIME (which most games don’t!), but it is worth it. One of the things to think about is when to use your artillery; early, when you may knock out a force before it can reach you. As I'm not thinking like that, my heart was never going to hurt you, or later when a situation may have developed which could permit you to clear an entire area (and of course these are just a few possibilities).

I think Rex is right to strike on the first impulse, but I disagree when he says that “Area 26 may open up for me as an artillery back.” Area 26 is too strongly garrisoned and could easily be reinforced from Area 21. Particularly since he is already thinking about the vulnerability of Area 25, I think he should've attacked there. It has only three units to Area 26’s seven. Moreover, it is harder to reinforce. In theory, Don could move everything he could spare from 21 to 25 on his next turn, but Rex should know that Don is too conservative to do that. Rating: 2" (sound idea done in the wrong place).

[2] The failure of his opening Artillery Barrage is a big plus, and allows me the luxury to pass and wait for the situation to develop.

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2—When they finished “Casablanca”, they left a scene on the ceiling room. It is the roof of Rick’s Place. The lazy-turning overhead fans cut through the smoke ascending in long spirals from the card table where Bogey is playing poker with Claude Raines, Peter Lorre and Sidney Greenstreet (too bad he got cut right out of the film). At stake are the lives of Ingrid Bergman needs to leave for America. Lorre wears a grey eyes, and Bogey a must with black bow-tie undone. A cigarette dangling from his lips. At the crucial moment, he mutters “Pass”. Don, is this how you see yourself when YOU pass, and why do you like to do it so often? I agree it is a beautiful feature of this system, but there is only one reason to use it: when there is genuinely nothing better to do, not just “wait and see”. In impulses 6 and 8 of this turn, Don makes defensive moves which threaten Rex in no way but are necessary reinforcements of the Allied rear. He should have made one of those moves instead of passing here. If you are going to “see how the situation develops”, pass only when it is a crucial stage and you do not need to do anything else. Not true here.

Another criticism. The victory conditions for this scenario imply that the Allies might capture one or more VPs while Don never captured any. I suppose that was intended at doing this. On this impulse he could have blasted Area 27 with artillery or moved a blocking unit into it. Either move would at least have forced Rex to take a point or two away from him. Rating: 6" (wrong move).

[3] I'll shove the tanks forward more to see how he reacts than for any other reason. If I draw his artillery, so much the better. Armor doesn't win this scenario for the German, infantry does; once his artillery is committed, my future options are much less hazardous.

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3—Since this scenario has but two turns, there is no movement to waste. Tanks are the strongest and fastest units, and it is risky to soften up 25 this turn. All areas containing the enemy. Moreover, this scenario is finely balanced. Therefore, Rex, how can you say that "armor doesn’t win this scenario for the Germans"? Anything, however tiny, may win or lose this scenario, and armor is not insignificant for the reasons explained. And if the idea is just to “see how happens”, why not just one tank? A final point: the tanks would also be the ideal reinforcement had Don tried to break into the German rear. Rating: 0" (and Don’s impulse 10 shows it).

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4—There is no need to react yet.

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B—PASS

4—There was no reason not to do now what he did in impulses 6, 8 and 10, and save the “Pass” for later. He could also have atfeinted an attack. ‘0”

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5—Since Don hasn’t committed a unit into 28 to block me (I haven’t enough strength there to insure shooting it out), it’s time to open the offensive into 25.

G-3×3-3-5 [G] 25

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5—Rex makes the excellent point that Don could have blocked Area 28 but instead chose to pass twice. Maybe Don will wake up and block 28, so perhaps Rex should have moved more of the 14 units in G into the crucial Area 25, but this is OK: rating “B” (at last somebody does the obviously right thing).

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6—I can no longer afford to pass. If he were to pass also and end the turn, in his first impulse of the second turn he could move to 23 and block the route of my tanks to 25. Now that he has made a partial commitment of forces to 25 it is tempting to try moving a blocking unit into 28 to trap them there, but I haven’t found this particular effective in the past. The NZ Infantry has a Committed strength of 0 which covered with the +1 TEM of Area 28 makes it an easy target. The Allies can’t afford to waste units like this. Besides, it really doesn’t gain me anything. The forces in G could just move into 28 for an automatic victory in CC over my blocking force, and be in position to move into 25 or 26 on the final turn. If this type of option is still open next turn, I’ll consider it, but not now.

B-3-3-5 [G] 21 23

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6—By now Don and Rex should know each other. Don excuses himself for not blocking 26 by saying that a unit there would be “an easy target”, but he should know (as Rex says later) that he likes to go for the sure thing; a higher odds attack. Sure, Rex could knock out the blocking unit, but he would probably use two of his units to do it, and in this scenario that would be a good trade-off for Don. Also, Don speaks of Rex moving this turn from G into 28 to unblock, and then next turn into 25. Possibly right in this turn. All told, I find unconvinving Don’s argument for not trying to block the area.

As for Don’s move itself, apart from the fact it shouldn’t have been done on impulse 2, OK: “6”.

[7] Don couldn’t risk passing this time—a wise decision. If he had, I’d have been tempted to “Pass” and then plug his interior lines with a first move into 23. He would have wasted vital units in Turn 9 trying to dislodge it. But we’ve played against each other so often that he spots such tricks much too readily. I will spend the turn looking ahead and move a MG into 27. Merely positioning myself for the next turn. I don’t think Don will expose his troops by firing on this lone unit.

G-4×3-5 MG [G] 27

7—And so probably ends any chance Don might have had to attack 27 to threaten the VPs beyond: rate this a “5”, as it could’ve been done earlier at no cost. This is because units moving out from an area or zone can fan out into different destinations.

[8] It is necessary to prevent his units in 25 from retreating into 24 when fired on, lest they be able to move into 23 in the next turn and block the armor’s path into 25.

B-3-3-5 [G] 24

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8—See comment on impulse 6 above.

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[9] He continues to “rob Peter to pay Paul”, a common dilemma in this game — so much to do and never enough time and units to do it all. If he continues to weaken 21, I will certainly think about dropping my remaining artillery onto it and open the fighting for the VPs. Meanwhile, I’ll simply build up the pressure on 25.

G-3×3-3-5-5 [G] 25

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9—Rex should know that Don prefers low-odds attacks, so why not add to this movement the dispatch of a blocking unit into 26? It would have a committed strength of “1” (vs. NZ’s “0”). Not only would such a unit block reinforcement into what is fast becoming the make-or-break area (25), but every unit Don used in 26 to dislodge it would be available in 23 to fire on or reinforce 25. Rating: “3” (and a half a good move).

[10] I believe his moving his armor into 28 alone is a minor mistake; if I win the chit draw by even one, it will effectively remove both of his tank units from the game — thus depriving him of his best defensive support for the second turn. Although Committed infantry in the area would lessen the area defense, it would allow him to accept casualties in a more efficient manner. Retreated infantry units can still be a factor during the second turn. Retreated German armor isn’t worth it because it cannot cross the river. Therefore, I’ll fire my artillery now before he retreats or moves infantry into the area.

—6h NZ Art [G] 26 vs 8 at +4 [12x5 = 6] [K] 2x5-3-81

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10—Don makes two good observations: Rex erred in moving his tanks where he did and in not later reinforcing them with infantry in a free “tag-along” movement out of G. Since this attack was so good, however, Don, why not do it earlier? As you point out, you might have lost your chance. Those tanks firing next turn into 25 or 26 might have won the game for Rex. Rating: “10” minus “2” because Don should have done it earlier and minus another “2” because Rex could (without loss of other movement have corrected his error) for a net of “6”.

[11] The loss of the armor is certainly a blow, but not a decisive one. Given his draw, if he had dropped it on uncommitted infantry I might have been thrown offside. He has been exceedingly lucky so far however, and that bodes ill for me. As is, I forge ahead into 25 and move a MG unit in to guarantee that only his armor can reach the area from 26. Too, if he uses 31 as a blocking unit at this point, I may well be able to sweep 25 in Close Combat — effectively giving me the game as I both move first and hold the “Tactical Advantage”. Hence, Don won’t pass but will reinforce the area — but from 26! Or from 27?

G-4×3-5 MG [G] 25

[12] I always like to downplay my woes too. Since Don is too timid to block 28, Rex continues to reinforce 25, while himself overlooking the possibility
of blocking 26. An important point to remember in this scenario is that, although it is important to have somebody left to fight in the second and final turn, all you need in the end is one surviving unit to deny control of an area to your opponent; therefore casualties are less important than they would be in a longer scenario. That is why I think it is worthwhile to block. An OK move—"6".

[12] It is too dangerous to fire and present a committed target to his waiting MG, but also too dangerous to pass when I'm outnumbered in Area 25 seven to three. So I'll move a tank into 25, whose committed status does not lessen the defense of the area.

B-5-3-8 [21] 25
12—You could call this the turning-point of the game. Rex has committed so heavily to Area 25 that he now has no other choice, though eventually he will also make a feeble stab at Area 21. Don, on the other hand, still has a choice: to reinforce 25 and slug it out there, or to abandon it and try to take 20 in order to threaten the three VP's behind it. Don's choice to slug it out is probably sounder, but certainly less imaginative and exciting. Having made his choice, Don could also have considered reinforcing 25 with an infantry unit from 21, as the tanks could still go later. True, this might weaken 21 too much, but it still could be reinforced from 26 unless blocked. Give the man an "8" for a sound move but take away "2" for dullness, leaving a rating of "6".

[13] This lacklustre Allied reinforcement opens possibilities. At the instant, I have a CC advantage in 25 and am assured that my MG will be there next turn. If, in CC, I could eliminate two of his infantry and block reinforcements from 26 at the beginning of the next turn, then I think the game is mine. On the one hand, if the turn ends now I give up the movement and fire of a number of my units, not to mention my second—but weaker—artillery barrage. On the other, Don gives up the action of the bulk of his command and I would hold the CC advantage in 25. Bottom line, we'd both sacrifice in favor of a serious early-game gamble—although I've more to gain from it than he. I don't think he'll pass; and if he does, I am satisfied to live with the results. If I lose this gamble, the Germans will have to be very opportunistic next turn (my favorite style) and moderately lucky to pull out a victory. Let's see if my "Pass" throws him into a quandry (always a useful thing to do to your opponent in any competitive game). I expect, however, that he'll play cautiously and move more armor into 25—both to weather this turn and beef it up for the next.

G-PASS
13—Rex's reinforcement is not lacklustre but cautious. You can't stop him from sending over the other two tanks later if he wants to. In impulse 7, Rex says they know all of each other's tricks. I wonder. If that were true, Rex would realize now that it doesn't pay for him to pass fatally. Don loves to pass, and the chance that he will pass again is very high especially since he doesn't expect it from Rex. Rex should've waited for Don, and then have the option himself to decide to pass and end the turn. Instead, Rex could have sent a blocking unit into 21, 26 or perhaps the latter combined with another unit from G into 25. Later he will wish that he had. Below "0".

[14] "Pass?" This bears some thinking. Were I to pass now, he'd lose his second artillery fire mission and will leave four units (including a MG) offboard where they reach only Area 25—unless he declares a Night Turn, which will cost him the Tactical Advantage and give me the option of the all-important reroll. While I am giving up the movement/fire of 16 units to Rex's 15, I believe I am coming out ahead because I really can't afford to fire while he holds such strong return fire opportunities. The danger is, of course, that he will do well in Close Combat. In our last game, he rolled three "5's" in the climactic CC round to eliminate my three defenders in Area 25 and win the game (1-in-27 chance). If he does that well now, I'll be dead; but if he rolls that well, I can't win anyway. The chance to escape Turn 8 without a single casualty is too overwhelming to ignore. Screw his artillery—I'll pass too.

B-PASS
14—And so Bogey lays down the full house and the papers are his. Claude Raines leaves to "round up the usual suspects". If you pass often enough (three impulses out of seven), you get it right some time. A perfect "10".

CLOSE COMBAT
Area Attacker(s) Defender Needed dr
(German:)
25 2x3-3-5 3-3-5 5 4
25 2x3-3-5 3-3-5 5 3
25 3-3-5 4-3-5 3-3-5 3
25 3-3-5 5-3-8 6 4
(British:)
25 3-3-5 3-3-5 6 1
25 3-3-5 3-3-5 6 2
25 3-3-5 3-3-5 6 1
25 5-3-8 3-3-5 5 5

Damn, this ploy hurt me more than him. As but one instance of the ramifications of every action in this game, note the loss of a single 3-3-5 here in 25 in CC robs me of the possibility of getting one of two "Combined Company" (4.24) bonuses if I'd wanted them. I think my only chance now lies in isolating Area 25 and conducting a single thrust while pushing on 21 just enough to hold his attention. I can, for example, drop the 1st Division artillery on his single unit in 23 looking to beat his chit draw by only "1"; he would then have to commit a unit to the area to hold me from moving in on my next impulse. But ... we'll see what develops.

Actually, winning the Close Combat when I was at a disadvantage leaves me in a very strong position. Rex's luck has deserted him. Serves him right for rolling those "5's" in the "warm-up" game. Now he'll need to score big with his artillery fire this turn if he is to have any chance. It just points out the importance of that first artillery shot in this scenario. Having failed to score with it, he obviously felt forced to press his luck and it backfired when I passed rather than give him any easy targets.

I can only underscore Don's comment that Rex's artillery was wasted, and you can't afford to do that in this game. If he had managed (for example by using his forfeited artillery strike) to kill a unit or two in Area 25, it could've made the difference in the end.

TURN 9
[1] I will "throw away" one of my lesser infantry units to tie up his forces in Area 26. This should keep them out of my hair for awhile.

G-2-4-5 [27] 26
1—Excellent opening move—"8".

[2] His move pins my forces in 26, cutting off most of my reinforcements to 25—presumably preceding a German move into 25. I still have four units
capable of reinforcing Area 25 though, so I'm not worried.

**B-PASS**

2—Don knows that he has to reinforce 25, and it makes no sense to permanently let one unit tie up his strongest area. 26. Therefore, on this impulse he should either reinforce 25 or clear 26. A proper "Pass" option can be the most elegant move in this or any other game. Don showed it in the last impulse of Turn 8; but when you know you have to do something, passing afterwards is better: a rating of "0". Also, Don, isn't it time to move a blocking unit into 20? Make that an absolute "0".

[3] There is no longer any reason to be subtle, since I am sure that Don realizes as well as I do where my best chance of victory lies. In goes the last company in reserve. This also serves to keep him from passing—which can be as important a ploy as any other in this game. Often a "Pass" forces your opponent to take an action—any action—to keep the turn proceeding; occasionally, you can take advantage of such impromptu moves. Alternately, an action such as this can force your opponent to take an action in response for he fears you passing next while holding an advantage in some critical area.

Knowing when to "Pass" and when not to is a game unto itself, and likely one novices must fail at a few times to master.

G—3 x 3-3-5 [G] 25
3—An obvious move which Don could have prevented but chose instead to (what else?) pass: "8".

[4] I no longer need to keep Germans out of Area 24, so the blocking infantry there reinforces 25 rather than give him a 9:4 CC ratio.

B—3-3-5 [24] 25
4—Could have been done as the second impulse. Also, he could use his artillery now and do this later. The equivalent of one of those pawn moves when you can't think of anything better: "5".

[5] Much as I'd like to, I can't drop artillery shells on my own troops. Let's see if I am lucky and can KO some armor. It may also distract him into looking to his defenses in Area 21.

G—1st Regt Art [20] vs 21 at +2 [4:9 = 5] [K 5-3-8; R 3-3-5 to 22]
5—Perhaps if Rex had first reinforced 25 a bit more, Don would have had to match this and weaken 21 a bit more. Then he could've bombarded it, but not too bad: "5".

[6] The decision to eliminate armor wasn't taken lightly. It is one of my few units capable of reinforcing 25, but it allows me to retreat a unit to Area 22 which can serve as my blocking unit for any attacks I make into 21 when he eventually moves into that area. If his final artillery fire mission does as well, I could have a problem in 21 where he can commit five units. I should be able to survive a 9:5 CC in Area 25, so I pass. I doubt whether he'll give up his second artillery shot again. A cataclysmic chit draw is his best remaining hope of pulling this game out of the fire.

**B-PASS**

6—Don's doubts about killing the armor.

Here again I see nothing to be gained by not doing one of a variety of other things. "0".

[7] I want to free the MG in 27 for other potential opportunities. One of my precepts in this scenario is to maintain some form of line protecting my own starting VP areas (18, 19, 29, 31) and this unit serves well for insuring that 27 will never be inadvertently vacated by my troops. As before, I don't think he'll waste a shot on a lone unit.

**G—4-3-5 MG [G] 27**

7—One of the worst moves Rex has made. It is probably too late for Don to daringly counter-attack, and it isn't his temperament. It is all or nothing in 25, and hope for a miracle in 21. I started out with the wrong scale to rate this game. I need a minus category.

[8] ?? That MG unit appears to be wasted. All it does in 27 is block the area so he can move two units out to 25. Of course, I'd have to eliminate the lone German unit in Area 26 first anyway.

**B—PASS**

8—There is no point in repeating my criticisms of Don's infatuation with the pass option.

[9] My first artillery barrage worked so well this turn at eliminating a potential threat to my plans for 25 that we'll do it again.

G—1st Div Art [66] vs 21 at +3 [8:15 = 7] [K 5-3-8, 3-3-5]
9—A good move which gets its deserved result: "9".

[10] Ouch! His 7-CP barrage hurt, but not enough. As long as my MG remains in 21, his maximum invasion of the area is five units—and I can defend with at least four. One more CP would have cut a lot more. The ability of armor to soak up an extra CP has saved me two units this turn.

**B—PASS**

10—Don, why pass when sooner or later you have to kill off the blocking unit in 26? Doesn't it make sense to have those units free now that they have nothing to fear from artillery? "0".

[11] With my last artillery result, our losses thus far are equal. Unfortunately that Don drew so well that he could've killed off the blocking unit in 26? Doesn't it make sense to have those units free now that they have nothing to fear from artillery? "0".

**G—4-3-5 [K 5-3-8, 3-3-5]**

11—If Rex had those 'superfluous' tanks backing him up in 18 and 19, he could probably move everything but the observer into 21. As it is, he weakens 20 and invites the artillery barrage which even- tually comes: "3".

[12] Moving the now-free garrison of Area 22 into 21 reduces his present Close Combat possibilities in this area to zero.

B—3-3-5 [22] 21
12—Right. An "8".


G—3-4-5 [20] 21
13—There isn't much else for Rex to do, since Don cannot retreat into his VP areas, but would instead have to unblock 26 in order to move there. Perhaps Rex should have been really daring and moved two units. It is time to be daring. A "6".

[14] If I can knock out the units in Area 20, it frees my units in 21 to fire on the Germans in their area. Otherwise, they dare not fire lest a big chit draw by the MG wipe out my advantage in Area 21.

B—6th NZ Art [26] vs 20 at +3 [10:8 = 2] [K 1st Regt Observer; R 3-4-5 to 19]
14—An obvious move. "6".

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**Figure #2** The situation prior to resolution of Close Combat in Turn 8.
[15] I think his artillery was tardy, but what do I know? Don only has one unit free to move now, so I'll up the ante in 25.

G-3-4-5 [28] 25

15—It has long been obvious that the struggle for Area 25 will decide the game. It seems to me ridiculous that Don has nothing to lose by moving one of his committed units to 26 to reinforce his allies in Area 25. I'll block 26. Surely his argument that he can't afford to suffer any units is not valid. An inevitable move ("L") by Rex.

[16] Losing the MG in Area 26 would now free only one unit—the German MG in 20 to reach Area 25. Big deal. Such a move removes its fire threat to Area 21 which worries me more. So it should be safe to fire it now.

B-4-3-5 MG [26] vs 25 at 0 [6:4 = 2] [K 3-3-5] 16—Good—a "L".

[17] Area 21 is still a sideshow. Another unit slips into 25.

G-3-4-5 [28] 25

17—Same comment and rating as for impulse 15.

[18] Rex has freedom of movement with only one remaining infantry unit. If I get rid of the blocking unit in 26, he may be hard-pressed to keep replacing it—even if he continues to move his units in 25 to reinforce either 21 or 25. This strikes me as a better tactic than taking -1 shots vs 25.

B-3-3-5 [26] vs 26 at 0 [6:8 = -1] 18—As they say, "a day late and a buck short"—"L".

[19] Don finally attempts to untangle himself in Area 26—with a series of low-odds shots I suspect. For my part, I prefer larger firegroups—more at risk but often bigger results. I'm going to try to knock out his uncommitted units in Area 25 with my combined company. Any hit will eliminate at least one unit from further consideration, and thus put even more pressure on him.

G-3 × 3-3-5 [25] vs 25 at +1 [7:5 = -1] 19—I agree with Rex. Also, Don should know that he "prefers larger firegroups" and that therefore Don could have profited by blocking Rex's area to tie up those groups. Rex's move ("L") is obvious and deserves better luck.

[20] Firing the tank doesn't weaken my defense at all and only deprives me of one reinforcement in Area 21, which I really don't need.

B-5-3-8 [25] vs 25 at +2 [8:3 = 5] [K 2 × 3-3-5] 20—Nice move Don: "6" for skill and "3" more for luck makes "9".

[21] Don is unbelievably lucky this game. But my mental count of the shots drawn thus far (something automatic with experienced players, and a reason I prefer die rolls to chit resolution) leads me to expect that I have an edge in that department now—I've made more "high" chits in my cup and Don has a number of low ones in his. Might as well exploit that assumption.

I'll fire on his uncommitted units again (rather than making three +1 attacks on his committed units) in 25 in hopes of eliminating a couple from his plans. After all, his uncommitted units are more of a threat to me than are the others. His committed units are just spectactors now. Another gamble—again for high stakes.

G-4-3-5, 2 × 3-3-5 [25] vs 25 at +1 [4:10 = 6] [K 2 × 3-3-5] 21—The time for subtle maneuver is over and the lead starts flying: "8" for a good result which restores some hope for the Germans.

[22] The CC ratio in Area 25 is suddenly 8:1! Despite the 6CP attack, I believe Rex erred in attacking with his last remaining unit in 25 as one attack rather than opting for three separate attacks against my committed units. By opting for one attack, he allowed me to concentrate all my losses in eliminated units rather than forcing me to lose units one at a time to retreat results. I still think my best chance of taking heat off Area 25 is to force him to replace his blocking unit in Area 25.

B-3-3-5 [26] vs 26 at 0 [6:4 = 2] [K 2-4-5] 22—Don's argument has some merit, but in the end it comes down to what the player feels more comfortable with. Don likes to nibble, Rex to bash. No point in rating any more, as the combatants just fizzle away at each other.

[23] Again he was lucky! If the differential had been but one more, his last uncommitted unit in 25 would also be "history". And he follows that up by shooting down my ineffective sacrificial lamb in Area 26. That can't go unanswered, so I send in his brother.

G-2-4-5 [27] 25—The most obvious move in the game. He can't let 26 go unblocked.

[24] His last "cheap" blocking unit has been used. If I can disable it, he'll have to replace it with a MG or allow me to reinforce Area 25.

B-3-3-5 [26] vs 26 at 0 [8:8 = -1] 24—I find something unfair about low-odds attacks succeeding, so I applaud this result. If it is necessary to free up 26 now, why not earlier?

[25] While Don's busy popping away in 26, I might as well speculate a little elsewhere. So, a weak shot at the committed New Zealanders in 21 hoping to ing even one German unit will guarantee Area 21. If I succeed, a touch more pressure for him to consider.


[26] Having expended his last shot on Area 21, I am now able to safely fire my units there. Dislodging even one German unit will guarantee Area 21 for the Allies.

B-4-3-5 [21] vs 21 at +1 [4:11 = -1] 26—in This and his next impulse, Don tries two low-odds attacks which both fail. I agree with Rex that it is better to attack at superior odds.

[27] And now for the obvious shot at 25 looking to really put the screws on.

G-4-4-5 [28] vs 25 at +1 [4:7 = 3] [K 3-3-5] 27—Good luck.

[28] The CC ratio in Area 25 is up to an alarming 8:2! My last uncommitted unit in 21 is out of it anyway, so he might as well try to guarantee the area for me by attacking 21.

B-3-3-5 [21] vs 21 at 0 [7:8 = -1] 28—See my comment on impulse 26 (although, in fact, combining would not have helped).

[29] No reason for me to press any further; I want the turn to end now! But I doubt that Don wants all. I need do is weather his fire for several impulses and, even if he moves a last unit into 25, I have a slightly better than 50% chance of capturing it.

G-PASS 29—Passing at the right time.

[30] Rex's "Pass" was the correct choice. I can no longer hope to reinforce 25 from 26, so I'll just take my shots and hope for the best.

B-3-3-5 (25) vs 25 at 0 [10:5 = -] [K 3-3-5, 4-3-5 MG] 30—Who's hot!!

[31] Damn, damn, damn! But still no reason to commit my last unit. I'll hold it back to jump into 26 just in case he clears my 2-4-5 there. I certainly don't need all these folk in the Roundhouse too.

G-PASS 31—OK.

[32] Even a catalyzing hit could win Area 26 for Don now. The only question is whether I should take one 4:4 attack against 25 or two 3:4 ones. I favor the latter because a retreat is as good as a kill now.

B-3-3-5 [26] vs 25 at -1 [6:7 = -] 32—Too late to change character now: more caution.

[33] Don can't possibly be lucky enough to do it again; it's not in his personality profile.

G-PASS 33—Still OK.

[34] I need to win one of these low-odds shots! B-3-3-5 [26] vs 25 at -1 [6:6 = -]

34—You already did, Don!

[35] And so, at long last, the MG must rush into Area 25. Might as well as Don will commit his remaining unit there regardless.

G-4-3-5 [27] 25

[36] No choice left; I can't let him have a 7-to-2 CC advantage. I must reinforce 25 with my last unit. That will leave him with a 1-in-18 chance to win in Area 25 and a less than a 1-in-72 chance to win in Area 21 before trading in his Tactical Advantage for a re-roll.

B-3-3-5 [23] 25

35-36—The unavoidable final moves.

NO UNITS LEFT TO MOVE/FIRE

Rex: And so it comes down to Close Combat again, as it always seems to in this scenario. I'll attack in Area 21 first just on the off chance I luck out and hit that 1-in-72 jackpot. I must save my best chance for last because I'll only be able to use the Tactical Advantage once to force a reroll. Ideally, I want to use it on his last remaining unit so that he can't turn around and use it against me. As luck would have it, I'm forced to use the Tactical Advantage on my second attack in the battle for the Roundhouse in 25. But it works, and the reroll keeps me in the chase. The third battle—a 33% chance—is also successful. I win—for a brief moment. Don wastes no time passing the Tactical Advantage chit back to me to force a reroll. I lose. How close can you get?

CLOSE COMBAT

Area Attacker(s) Defender Needed dr

(German):

| 21 | 3-3-5 | 3-3-5 | 6 | 1 |
| 21 | 3-3-5 | 3-3-5 | 6 | 2 |
| 21 | 3-3-5 | 4-3-5 MG | 4 | 4 |
| 25 | 2 × 3-4-5 | 5-3-8 | 4 | 4 |
| 25 | 2 × 3-4-5 | 3-3-5 MG | 4 | 4 |
| reroll | 5 | 5 |
| 25 | 2 × 3-4-5 | 3-3-5 | 5 | 6 |
| reroll | 5 | 3 |
British attacks are not listed as they are inconsequential to the Victory Conditions at this point.

What can I say but, "Give me another turn and I'll clear everything up to the "Convent". Don's luck on the chit draws seemed impressive at the time, but the final tally shows that he actually has more high chits remaining in his cup than I do in mine. That means my average chit draw was higher than his. I think though, that as this replay stresses, it is the when and where that luck occurs in this game that is crucial. There is nothing more frustrating than to see a good attack be just one CP short of devastating, or to see your anyone else, it isn't.

Don and Rex gave the slightest indication of British attacks. In fact, for most of the game, the Germans did not even attempt to concentrate I've engaged in for awhile. And that, to me, is what wargaming is all about.

When two players as experienced and skilled as Don and Rex clash in a game they know better than anyone else, it isn't surprising that the match is one that Karpo and Kasparov might envy. Has a nice ring to it, doesn't it? Too bad it isn't true! Too, this replay shows nicely how carefully balanced that luck occurs in this game that is crucial. There is nothing more frustrating than to see a good attack be just one CP short of devastating, or to see your anyone else, it isn't.

Don's tactics were a bit less bad than Rex's skill. Were it to play the Germans in this scenario, I would like to start out with a one-two punch artillery and Night Turn designed to really isolate Area 25.

Figure 93: The situation at the end of the 18th Impulse, Turn 9.
I suspect that you based your decision on sales games in the "So That's What You've Been Playing..." step of devoting this issue to a solitaire game that you give the challenges and excitement of FTF play is an answer to prayer for those of us interested in exploring the social and political implications of the Avalon Hill suite of games. Any improvements are welcome and should more than compensate for the price increase. The subscription rates are still a bargain!

Edward Campusano
Norwood, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Martin:

Since I have received your letter, I suspect you would like to know that you receive plenty of letters of this ilk, and have quite a few of these to go today, I'll try to be brief.

In response to your survey, I have noticed acknowledgement to the SOLO players amongst us, along with a recent increase in the games marketed to them. This is an excellent trend which I will work toward encouraging. The sprinkling of solo games in recent years has been an important step of devoting this issue to a solitaire game, and I believe we are able to see a specialty solitaire game that you give the challenges and excitement of FTF play is an answer to prayer for those of us interested in exploring the social and political implications of the Avalon Hill suite of games. Any improvements are welcome and should more than compensate for the price increase. The subscription rates are still a bargain!

Edward Campusano
Norwood, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Martin:

I have just received The GENERAL Vol. 24, #4. Let me congratulate you on taking the bold step of devoting this issue to a solitaire game. I suspect that you based your decision on sales statistics and the continued popularity of solitaire games in the "So That's What You've Been Playing..." feature of The GENERAL. Regardless, to devote an issue of the magazine to a solitaire game is a wonderful effort of the readership.

Beritami, Boy, you are asking for trouble. "Please take a few moments and jot down your thoughts."

"Finally, so you can sound off."

"Remember, you asked for it."

"The GENERAL has lost a measure of its humility."

I applaud these efforts. Despite the fact that some changes may be strongly desired, a "new and improved" presentation is fine. I am also encouraged to learn that the changes you have made are a "good thing," not a "system" as described in the "Readers' Survey" included in the ASL Annual some time ago. I have been a subscriber to The GENERAL for nine years, but have declined as the topic did not seem important enough to warrant a letter. I hope you find my comments constructive and not too negative.

James M.
Jacksonville, Florida

Dear Sirs,

As you might be able to tell from the way I completed the survey, I am an avid QUAD player, but have never played (that was nine years ago) and it has become the only game I play. I feel, however, that this survey may be of use to you and I would like to see some of your results.

I was pleased to see new scenario inserts in the ASL Annual, but I feel that the ASL system is a superior system for scenario play, and I feel that it would be nice to see new scenario inserts in the GENERAL. I have noticed an increasing interest in the restructuring of the boards, etc."

Should you decide to publish a 25th Anniversary edition of the "Readers' Survey," I would be happy to submit "a few words" for inclusion. Whether the submission would be useful or not, only you and your colleagues would decide, and I certainly would not expect any form of remuneration. After all these years, and as I see this as such a good opportunity to encourage ASL players to upgrade to ASL, I feel that ASL is such a superior system, and that the ASL system is a superior system for scenario play, and I feel that it would be nice to see new scenario inserts in the ASL Annual, but I feel that the ASL system is a superior system for scenario play, and I feel that it would be nice to see new scenario inserts in the GENERAL. I have noticed an increasing interest in the restructuring of the boards, etc.

Concerning the question of a scenario pad vs. insert, I think it is time to allow both to coexist. I have developed a strong faith in the quality of ASL products and I would buy your time is very important, and I feel that it would be nice to see new scenario inserts in the GENERAL. I have noticed an increasing interest in the restructuring of the boards, etc.
THEATER MODIFICATIONS
More Expansions for B-17
By John E. Ockelmann

B-17, QUEEN OF THE SKIES is the game of high-altitude tension and soaring excitement. It nicely simulates the bombing operations carried on by the 8th Air Force based in England, or by the 15th Air Force based in Italy (Vol. 23, No. 1), during World War II. You, as player, are the aircraft commander; you must make the decisions regarding the fate of your B-17 and crew. It is, quite simply, the most fun you can have in solitary gaming. It highlights the adventure in "Adventure Gaming".

But there are some shortcomings in simulating the real tension of certain facets of a mission. How good a formation flyer is the pilot? Is the target recognizable to the navigator and bombadier? Will your B-17 even make it to Zone 2 before a mechanical fault forces an abort? Questions like these plagued every B-17 commander, and have yet to be integrated into the game. I enjoy B-17 immensely. But I also believe in tinkering with a game to make it even better. [What wargamer doesn't?] After some weeks of research and several pads of paper, I offer the following modifications for devotees to this great adventure.

GROUP FORMATIONS
When the B-17 first flew in combat against targets in Europe in August 1942, a six-plane squadron formation was used for combat. When a "bombardment group" (two or more squadrons) were sent aloft, the group formation had a lead six-plane squadron followed by the second squadron at a three mile distance. The other squadrons involved were spaced four miles apart at the midpoint between lead and tail squadrons. While risk of collision was low, the squadrons were usually unable to get a concentrated bomb pattern on the target or to support each other with defensive fire.

In September 1942, a new group combat formation was instituted, based on a nine-plane line abreast squadron organization. The group formation consisted of a high squadron, with a lead squadron offset to the left and some 500 feet lower. While more compact than the previous formation, flexibility suffered. Collision risks were higher with pilots un-used to the rigors of formation flying (a specialized skill), and the fire from the waist gunners was greatly restricted to reduce the risk of hitting neighboring friendly aircraft. Also, in the early missions, aircraft aborts due to mechanical failure were so common that these formations were often terribly disrupted before even reaching the French coast.

Colonel Curtis LeMay, commander of the 305th Bombardment Group (Heavy), had noted the flaws in the group formations his men were using. Being new to the theater, he didn't immediately speak up against them. But after flying several practice flights and some combat missions, he introduced what would become known as the "high-lead-low" group combat formation. While harder to fly, demanding better pilots, the new formation was much improved in two respects. The gunners were able to fire in all directions unimpeded, or to concentrate defensive fire in a single direction if the need arose. And the bombing pattern was relatively compact, leading to more substantial damage to the target.

After reviewing this information on the early group formations, here are some proposed modifications to the rules of B-17 for those who might wish to use these earlier formations to simulate the historical first missions:

1. Since group defensive fire, for the most part, will be ineffective against enemy fighters—when rolling for any fighters on Table B-3, ignore results of "16", "36" and "56" and roll again if not using the April 1943 formation.

2. With the August 1942 formation, bombing accuracy will not be as effective. Apply a "-1" modifier to the Table O-6 die roll.

EVASIVE ACTION
Upon initial entry into the skies above Europe by the B-17, the theory was that flying straight and level on the bomb run was simple for the flak guns to send you and your aircrew a personal invitation to join the Luftwaffas—or worse. So evasive action by the formation was a standard tactic on the bomb run. While certainly good for morale, there was one major drawback. Dropping bombs while jinking to evade flak sent the bomb-on-target accuracy rate way down.

Again, it was Colonel LeMay of the 305th who set the new standard for performance. He established the rule, and enforced it, that from now on evading flak on the bomb run was forbidden. On the very next mission, personally commanding his group, he flew a straight-in bomb approach.

No muss and no fuss, evading no flak bursts. It was a practical and effective solution. While flak damage to the airplanes rose, so did the accuracy rate. For those who, playing early scenarios, wish to recreate the dictum of evading flak in 1942 common to all pilots, here are the modifications:

1. While using evasive action, you may apply a "-2" modifier to the O-2 Flak Table die roll.

2. While using evasive action, you must apply a "-3" modifier to the O-6 Bomb Accuracy Table die roll.

FORMATION DEFENSIVE GUNNERY
Occasionally, the tight formations produced accidental hits on a B-17 by the guns of another. When rolling for enemy fighters on Table B-3, should a "16", "26", "36", "46" or "56" be rolled, roll one die and check for possible hits from friendly fire: "1-5" = no hits; "6" = hits. Should a "6" result, roll for number of hits and location using two dice and the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hits by Friendly Fire:</th>
<th>Location of Hits:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;2&quot; = two hits</td>
<td>&quot;2&quot; = Nose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;3-11&quot; = one hit</td>
<td>&quot;3&quot; = Pilot Compartment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;12&quot; = two hits</td>
<td>&quot;4&quot; = Bomb Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;5&quot; = Radio Room</td>
<td>&quot;6&quot; = Wing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;7&quot; = Waist</td>
<td>&quot;8&quot; = Wing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;9&quot; = Tail</td>
<td>&quot;10&quot; = Bomb Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;11&quot; = Pilot Compartment</td>
<td>&quot;12&quot; = Nose</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CREW EXPERIENCE
Another problem for the 8th and 15th Air Forces in those early days, one totally unforeseen, was that of target identification. There was a significant difference in finding a town in America, with easy checkpoints on training runs, and finding one in war-time Europe where the close proximity of towns to each other and enemy action meant sometimes the wrong target got bombed.

Once again LeMay devised a solution. He started a "Lead Crew" school that taught teams of bombadiers and navigators to recognize certain sets of targets from the air. If a target that a particular "lead crew" was familiar with was selected for a mission, they were placed in the lead bombers on the belief that they would most readily recognize it—and thus that the entire group would bomb it with a reasonable chance of success. And it worked, as these specialists became an elite and important facet of the American effort. Modifications for recreating the impact of these lead crews are:

1. Anyone who has flown in the lead bomber position in the lead squadron at least twice against the same target is entitled to apply a "+1" modifier to the O-6 Table die roll.

2. Anyone using the lead crew concept can designate the target system they wish to use the bonus against (i.e., marshalling yards, industries, dockyards).

Pilot experience was a major factor in formation flying. Flight schools in the States had concentrated on the basics, and did not teach the finer points of flying, leaving indoctrination to formation combat flying to the group theater schools. Subsequently, the first few missions of a new pilot were somewhat riskier in terms of possible collision. Implement the following:

1. Any novice pilot (five or fewer missions flown) must apply a "+1" modifier to the die roll of Event 12 of the Random Events Table.

2. Any veteran pilot (ten or more missions flown) can apply a "+1" modifier to the die roll of Event 12 of the Random Events Table.

Gunner experience was also a prime factor in air-to-air combat, when the bomber was beset by the enemy. Lack of adequate training Stateside led to some gunners who simply didn't understand the fine points of their guns, or how to use them effectively against oncoming fighters. After a
few missions (and intensive theater training), aerial gunnery always improved remarkably for those crewmen who survived. The modifications:
1. Any novice gunner (five or fewer missions) must apply a "-1" modifier to the M-1 Defensive Fire Table die roll.
2. With a novice gunner, an unmodifier die roll of "1" jams his gun. A repair die roll of "1" clears the jammed gun and a "6" permanently breaks it; any other result has no effect. Only one repair attempt is allowed per zone entered, immediately after entry of that zone.

AIRCRAFT MODIFICATIONS
In the B-17E version, the nose gun was originally a .30-caliber light machinegun. Its drawbacks were obvious—a lack of range and insufficient hitting power. If flying the 17E, institute the following changes:
1. Due to lack of range, a "6" is required to hit an incoming enemy fighter on the M-1 Defensive Fire Table from the nose position.
2. Due to insufficient hitting power, a "-1" is to be applied to the M-2 Table die roll.

The B-17G had some, primarily defensive, changes made to it in design. While the chin turret was a major improvement, other changes were also implemented. Ammunition was increased by 50% for the cheek guns and 100% for the waist guns. The tail guns were fitted with an improved sight and given a better field of fire. Modifications for use of the B-17G in combat are as follows:
1. With ammunition increased by 50%, the number of shots by the cheek guns is changed from 10 to 15.
2. With ammunition increased by 100%, the number of shots by the waist guns is changed from 20 to 40.
3. With improved sights, a "+1" modifier is applied to the tail gunner to the M-1 Defensive Fire Table die roll.
4. Due to the improved field of fire, a "+1" modifier is applied to passing shots.

THE DAMAGE TABLES
The B-17F had extra fuel tanks installed in the wings, just outboard of the outer engines. These "Tokyo" tanks were susceptible to damage and fire. So, should #10 be rolled on the Bl-1 Wings Damage Table, roll one die to determine which fuel tank is hit: "1-2" = Tokyo tank; "3-4" = outboard tank; "5-6" = inboard tank. Damage is then determined normally.

Landing gear proved to be very vulnerable to damage. So when a "12" is rolled on the Bl-1 Wings Damage Table, roll one die and apply the following:
- "1-2" = Brakes out (h)
- "3-4" = Landing Gear Inoperable (i) (j)
- "5-6" = Landing Gear Drops Down (j) (k)

For extra-long range missions (Zone 10 or beyond), a fuel tank was occasionally carried in the bomb bay. Helpful as this tank was, it was not self-sealing. And the close proximity of aviation fuel and high explosives had many crews wondering about the benefits of the bomb bay tank. Should a "3", "9" or "11" be rolled on the P-3 Bomb Bay Damage Table while on a mission of extreme range, roll one die: "1-3" = check bombs normally; "4-6" = bomb bay hit and roll one die. A roll on this second check of "1-4" means "leakage", or of "5-6" means "fire" (immediate bailout of crew and loss of plane). If a leak occurs, should this section of the plane be hit again before the bomb run, roll one die: "2-5" = fire and bailout of crew; "6" = bombs explode with loss of plane and crew.

Bomb bay doors proved to be vulnerable to flak damage on the run in, as well as damage from fighters. Should a "5" or "10" be rolled on the P-3 Bomb Bay Damage Table, roll one die and apply the following:
- "1-2" = Bay Doors Inoperable, jammed shut (c)
- "3-4" = Bay Doors Inoperable, jammed open (c) (d)
- "5-6" = Superficial Damage, no effect

Weather
Occasionally, the target designated was not able to be attacked, due to weather or other reasons. Hence, an alternative target was always selected for this contingency. Once you have determined your primary target, select an alternative target along the route to it as your secondary target.

In "poor" or "bad" weather, it didn't always mean that the weather was such that bombers couldn't hit the target. It often meant that the target was obscured by cloud cover, forcing "a timed bomb run" with a far greater chance for error and misses. So, when rolling for Weather along the route to and over the target, use the following modified table by rolling one die:
- "11" = Clear conditions; apply "+1" modifier to rolls on Tables B-1, B-2, M-4, O-2 and O-6.
"2-3" = Haze conditions; no modifications apply.

"4" = 50% cloud cover; apply "-1" modifier to rolls on Tables B-1, B-2, M-4, O-2 and O-6.

"5" = 100% cloud cover; apply "-2" modifier to rolls on Tables B-1, B-2, M-4, O-2 and O-6.

"6" = Storm conditions; bomber may abort. Alternate target may be attacked if desired but no fighter protection possible; apply a "-3" to rolls on Tables B-1 and B-2.

Weather over England also needs to be handled more realistically. While it could be clear for takeoff, the weather there often deteriorated in a few short hours to an alarming degree. Upon your return to England, make another roll for weather over the base and apply the following: "1-4" = poor weather; "5-6" = bad weather.

At certain altitudes under certain conditions, the engine exhaust of a B-17's four engines become visible to the naked eye. "Contrails" (as these came to be called) tended to attract enemy fighters and helped flak crews determine the bombers' altitude quickly. Upon reach Zone 2, roll one die:

"1-4" = no contrails; "5-6" = contrails form. If contrails form, apply a "+1" modifier to the die rolls of Tables B-1 and B-2.

**MECHANICAL FAILURE**

While the B-17 was a reliable aircraft, the English (or Mediterranean) weather often had a frustrating effect on the engines, turbo-chargers, and other systems of the aircraft. Upon reaching Zone 2, and every turn thereafter, roll two dice; a roll of "12" means a mechanical failure has occurred in your plane. Should such a failure occur, roll two dice and consult the table below, implementing the effects given:

2 = Engine Failure. Roll two dice to determine which engine:

"2", "3" or "7" = engine #1

"4", "10" or "11" = engine #2

"5", "6" or "12" = engine #3

"8" or "9" = engine #4

Then roll one die:

"1-3" = engine restarts; "4-5" = engine restarts but not at full power (may stay in formation only by jettisoning bomb load); "6" = no restart, must jettison bomb load and abort mission. If the engine restarts, but not at full power, the pilot may choose to abort the mission.

3 = Turbo-Supercharger Failure. Roll two dice to determine engine as above. Aircraft cannot fly as far as or as high, and must drop out of formation. Pilot may choose to abort the mission.

4 = Heating System Failure. Heat fails throughout aircraft. May drop out of formation, or must risk frostbite. Pilot may choose to abort the mission.

5 = Fuel Transfer System Failure. The crew is unable to transfer fuel from one tank to another, or to engines. Roll one die to determine remaining fuel available: "1-2" = four turns; "3-4" = three turns; "5-6" = two turns. Pilot may abort mission. Upon exhaustion of remaining fuel, the plane must either be landed (Table G-9 or G-10), or crew bailed out.

6 = Oil Tank Failure. Roll two dice to determine engine as above. Aircraft must drop out of formation, and pilot may choose to abort the mission. Roll one die:

"1-3" = fire, roll to extinguish; "4-6" = leak, engine feathered and plane's speed reduced to two turns per zone.

7 = Intercom Failure. Bomb run automatically off-target; gunners may hit on Table M-1 only with a "6" (tail gunner with "5-6"). Pilot may choose to abort mission.

8 = Electrical System Failure. Plane must drop out of formation and pilot must abort the mission.

9 = Electrical System Failure. Crew must bail out and abandon aircraft.

10 = Top Turret Power Failure. Top turret gunner cannot traverse or elevate guns. Gunner may manually traverse and elevate guns (successful on a die roll of "1-2"). If manual attempt successful, the gunner hits on Table M-1 with a die roll of "6".

10 = Ball Turret Power Failure. Ball turret gunner cannot traverse or raise/lower turret. Gunner may manually traverse and raise/lower turret (successful on a die roll of "1"). If manual attempt successful, the gunner hits on Table M-1 with a die roll of "6". If unable to raise turret, a "1" modifier is applied to landing roll on Table G-9 or G-10; gunner is trapped inside. Pilot may choose to abort mission.

12 = Bomb Release Mechanism Failure. Bombs fail to drop during bomb run. Bombed air may manually release bombs (successful on a die roll of "1-2"). If manual attempt successful, bomb run off-target. If unsuccessful in manual attempt, plane must leave formation and attempt to jettison (successful on die roll of "1-2"); may attempt one per zone. If bombs on board upon reaching England, apply a "-4" to the landing roll on G-9 and pilot must remain aboard for landing attempt (remainder of crew may abandon craft). If bombs still aboard in ditching attempt, apply a "-4" to landing roll on G-10 but entire crew may bail out.

**Figure 3:** Three views of the April 1943 formation.
Corporal Uhl moved the Hitdorf Garrison platoon into the factory on the northwestern side of Hitdorf. He chose this Map 3 position because the building's stone construction would protect his men, and because his objective was to keep Americans from occupying stone buildings. He also chose the factory because he knew it would give him a commanding view of the approaching Americans. Curiously, when he hid his one squad and one crew inside the factory, he did not occupy the 2nd level.

"They're coming," the veteran light machine-gunner said wearily. The corporal crossed the spacious, machine-filled room to the northwestern corner. Here he could see out through windows in two walls. But he had no time to even look. The trees outside the west wall erupted in eyeshot and flame. Shouts and cries followed. Now Uhl could see, through the smoke, that an American squad had walked into the minefield he had placed. The squad lay broken.

The American squad was one of three probing alone for minefields. Another one walked into Uhl's Second on the road to Hitdorf. That squad was KIA'd.

But the third squad found an open route to the village through the trees. The G.I.'s ended their move nearby.

"They've got the satchel charge," the veteran called out. "And here come two other squads out of the woods behind them. One of the leaders is with them and they're carrying a bazooka. They've stopped on the other side of the probing squad."

"Isn't that a road? Corporal Uhl called from across the room.

"Ja, Corporal," the veteran replied.

"Why don't you defensive fire them? Those would be good odds, you know. With penetration you probably could break both squads."

"I would like to do that, Corporal. And if you had positioned us on the second level of this factory we could defensive fire at those squads in the street. But since we're down here on the ground floor we can't do anything. The stone wall out there in the courtyard blocks our line of sight."

Corporal Uhl bit back his tart reply.

"Also Corporal, you had better hope the American doesn't have those four other squads on that side of the map. If he does, they are going to waltz into Hitdorf like their comrades in the street and we won't be able to do anything to stop them."

Corporal Uhl's mouth dropped open in amazement. He hadn't thought of that.

The veteran shook his head. "No wonder we lost this war," he said.

The other four American squads had not known where the Hitdorf Garrison was, but they did set up on Corporal Uhl's side of the map. Organized in two groups of two squads each, each led by a good leader and armed with an MMG, they began their move on the factory.

The group with the lower leader moved out of its position on Map 4, sprinted around the wooden building and moved into the factory at the back. The group led by the better leader moved on a straight line through the woods and tried to get into the

factory from the west. They couldn't because the Hitdorf Garrison was there so they returned to the shelter of the trees.

Corporal Uhl decided instantly. The Americans in the factory were the greater threat. Quickly he moved the platoon to the interior walls and doorways. He directed their doubled attack factors into the Americans filling the rooms.

The Americans caught the fire head-on. The leader broke first. The two squads broke in quick succession. The G.I.'s scrambled to get out of the building or to find cover behind machinery.

Then the Americans on the west side of the factory were shooting at Uhl, advancing fire. The fire had no effect.

Uhl turned back to the broken Americans in the factory. They were routing now, but not into the wooden building. They routed into the woods instead—right into Corporal Uhl's third minefield.

Uhl watched the broken American leader go down as cries that Uhl could not understand arose from the Amis. The leader was the only KIA to result, however. The other two broken squads held their morale and remained on the map.

Then the American advance began. Corporal Uhl saw a man with another satchel running toward the broken squads in the minefield. He made a mental note to check the rules of engagement. He was sure the Americans were supposed to have only one charge.

The American group with the ranking leader was closing for close combat. Because Corporal Uhl had already moved his men behind machinery at the west end of the room, his interior position seemed favorable. The odds weren't favorable though.

American grenades sailed through the windows and bounced wildly on the floor. Uhl's men hurled some of them back frantically and tossed some German ones as well. The Americans poured inside after their grenades, spraying the rooms with automatic fire from Thompson sub-machine guns and M-2 machine pistols.

Uhl watched them come in: two big squads led by a big leader. Uhl stood his ground; he controlled his smaller force and met the American 2-1 attack with his own fierce 1-2 attack.

Each side fought desperately. At this range there was no time to think. In the end, it was mad luck that determined life and death among the machines. In the end, this time, it was the Germans who won and the Americans who lost.

Corporal Uhl and the veteran stared dumbly at each other. They had survived. Other platoon members crawled out from under machinery and other cover. As they became cognizant of their survival and that of their comrades, as they became cognizant that, as a unit, there were intact, they couldn't help it: they began to laugh.

The booty from the skirmish was impressive. The Americans who had routed out of the factory had left behind an MMG. The Americans who had been KIA'd in close combat had left another MMG. The veteran claimed this one for himself and turned over his German LGM to a crew member.

Corporal Uhl walked over to the fallen American leader. The man was still breathing. "It was a good attack," he rasped, "I'd try it again." Again Uhl didn't understand the words, but when the American became still, Uhl became curious. He looked at the leader's dogtags. The man's name was Shaw.

Corporal Uhl figured the American had only one leader left, the one sighted slipping into Hitdorf.

Shaw was another and the third had fallen dead in the minefield when the Americans had routed out of the factory.

Now to rally. Uhl noticed the cries of the Americans in the minefield had stopped. He paid them no more attention. They had no leader to bring them back into the fray.

Uhl began to consider prep fire. The thought of moving into the second level did not occur to him. So he couldn't fire into Hitdorf because his line of fire was blocked. The two targets he could fire at were both in minefields. Uhl decided not to fire into the further one, not because there were American wounded there, but because with two broken squads in the other minefield his chances of scoring a KIA there were doubled. Although there were no leaders in the hex, Uhl knew that Americans would bring more on later. He didn't want broken American squads lying around waiting to be rallied.

At the corporal's direction, the platoon fired into the minefield.

"Where are you going, Corporal?" the veteran with the American MMG asked.

"Into the other room," Uhl answered. "I'm going to get that other American MMG."

The veteran shook his head and hunched back over his own MMG. He wondered how Uhl figured he was going to move that thing, but he didn't say anything.

With three American squads in Hitdorf, Captain Tienham split up his arriving force of Volksgrader and an American squad to cover the south side of Hitdorf. The remaining squads would move on foot into the buildings nearest to form a fire group. Tienham himself rode in the truck down the road on the north side of town. He took a crew controller and the HMG with him. He had already established radio contact with German 81mm mortars, so fire support would be forthcoming. He wanted to get the HMG operational in the stone factory with Corporal Uhl. And he wanted to establish an artillery OP there.

Corporal Uhl found the American MMG in the northwestern corner of the room, where the Americans who had routed into the minefield had tried to get it out of the building. They hadn't been able to do that, and it was suddenly clear to Uhl that he wasn't going to move the weapon either. Not alone. The sound of an approaching vehicle drew him to the eastern wall. He looked through a broken window. A German truck was moving up the road. It turned into the courtyard and stopped next to Uhl.

The corporal watched as a crew jumped out of the truck with an HMG and a radio. Then a German captain got out of the cab and stood motionless on the ground. He was staring toward the woods where the American squads had routed into the minefield.

"Don't worry about them, Captain," Uhl called. "We didn't finish them with our prep fire, but they're still broken." Uhl was about to ask the officer to help him move a squad MG when Americans of the "broken" squads rose up in the woods and laid down a barrage of small arms fire.

Uhl watched in horror as the German captain broke, and then the crew too. The HMG and radio tumbled useless to the ground.

Corporal Uhl left the scene and ran to his platoon.

"What the hell happened?" he demanded of the veteran. The veteran shook his head.

"But those American squads in the woods... in the minefield... were broken!" Uhl cried.
“They couldn’t fire. There weren’t any leaders there to rally them.”

“Maybe they found another way to rally, Corporal,” the veteran said, “by the way, I notice you didn’t bring back that American MMG.”

Corporal Uhl glared at the veteran.

“There’s your answer, Corporal,” the veteran pointed out when the American movement began again. A lone figure was running through the German minefield toward the wooden building. Uhl tensed in anticipation of a mine going off, but the man made it safely through the field and continued across the grass.

“He’s the same one I saw with the satchel charge earlier!” Uhl exclaimed.

“Look again, Corporal,” the veteran said sarcastically.

The man came out on the east side of the building. As he sprinted into the sunlight on that part of the lawn, Uhl finally saw the white circles and red crosses on the man’s helmet.

At the same time Uhl realized what it was the broken Americans in the minefield were yelling. And it was obvious now that was where this crazy American was heading.

“Medic! Medic!”

“Are you going to defensive fire at him?” Uhl demanded again of the veteran.

“Not on your life, Corporal.” The veteran looked down the barrel of the MMG and fired at the rallied American squads in the other minefield.

Can medical corpsmen rally troops to fight?

According to Eloise Katherine Engle, author of *Medic*, the answer is a resounding “yes.” Pages 139-139 describe the stories of the heroes of three Congressional Medal of Honor winners, all Marine corpsmen serving in the Pacific theater during World War II.

“Pierce inspired the entire battalion,” Engle writes of Francis J. Pierce, a corpsman in the Fourth Marine Division. Of George Edward Whalen, a corpsman with the Fifth Marine Division, Engle writes, “By his dauntless fortitude and valor, Whalen served as a constant inspiration and contributed vitally to the high morale of his company.”

And of John Harlan Willis, a corpsman also with the Fifth Marine Division, Engle notes, “By his great personal valor in saving others at the sacrifice of his own life, he inspired his companions although terrifiedly outnumbered, to launch a fiercely determined attack and repulse the enemy force.”

Of the European theater, Engle writes on pages 86-87: “There was often close contact between German and Allied medical units, particularly toward the end of the war. Both sides took care of friendly and foe alike. Each of them hung onto captured medicals to care for their wounded, and records indicate a great mutual respect between the two forces. The Germans who wore Red Cross armbands and bibs went to the same heroic ends as did the Allies so that casualties might be saved.”

More recently, General Lewis C. Walt, Commanding General of the Third Marine Amphibious Force and the Navy Component Command of the Military Assistance Command in Vietnam, said of medical corpsmen, “They out-Medicate a Marine by volunteering for all kinds of jobs including more than their share of patrols. The spirit they have is absolutely amazing. They are proud and dedicated and the Marines think the world of them. Why, a Marine platoon would not go more into battle without corpsmen than without weapons. The fact that they know corpsmen are out there to take care of them is a tremendous morale factor.”

Unlike platoons in Vietnam, ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER units deploy without medicals. In actual fields of fire, medicals made a difference. SMC counters should be implemented so their role isn’t ignored on the boards of play. Something for you ASL fanatics to think about when you finish with such trivial matters as ROFs and TPBFs.

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**FAME & FORTUNE**

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We look forward to your article submission; send us your copy to the “Guidelines” section of the page. We want you to write for _The GENERAL_.

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**CONVENTION CALENDAR**

_The GENERAL_ will list any gaming convention in this space. Conventions held in the same year are listed here. Additional information of interest to our readership such as tournaments or events utilizing Avalon Hill Games’ products is solicited and will be printed if made available.

**OCTOBER 8-10**

NOVAG IV, Sterling, Virginia

Contact: Northern Virginia Adventure Gamers, 101 East Holly Avenue, Suite 11, Sterling, VA 22170.

Note: AIR FORCE among other tournaments.

**OCTOBER 14-16**

RUDICON 4, Rochester, New York

Contact: Michael Closser, Rucicon 4, c/o Student Directorate, One Loub Memorial Drive, Rochester, NY 14632.

**OCTOBER 29-30**

UMF-CON, Farmington, Maine

Contact: Thomas Kane, Table Gaming Club, Student Life Office, 5 South Street, Farmington, ME 04938.

**NOVEMBER 4-6**

QUAD-CON 88, Rock Island, Illinois

Contact: Alex F. Key, RiverBend Gamers Association, P.O. Box 8421, Moline, IL 61265.

Note: Competitions in ASL, CIV, DIP, B-17 and CM among others.
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NO HOLLOW THREAT
By Jon Mishcon

Hollow-charge explosive devices were developed before World War II. Also called “shaped-charge weapons”, they developed their potency by generating a “super-hot” flame that explosively burned through resistive material. As the flame is hottest, and therefore strongest, at its tip, hollow-charge devices required three preconditions in order to be most effective.

First, the fire had to ignite at a specific distance from the material to be penetrated. Should the fire start smack adjacent to the target, or worse if the hollow cone is cracked, the flame will be diffused and without strength. Second, the fire is disrupted if spun; therefore the device’s flight should be without any rotation. Thus the “rifling” that lines most barrelled weapons dramatically degrades hollow-charge ammunition effectiveness. Thirdly, if possible, nothing should be in front of the flame. Anything that stands in front of the flame requires energy to burn through, thus naturally diminishing the penetration.

For use as demolition charges, a hollow-charge weapon could approach the ideal. The Germans early had a series of cup-shaped charges with base fuses and fold-down legs for use as DCs. The prospect of delicately folding down three legs and standing 30 pounds of explosives atop the target must have been somewhat daunting however, since many countries developed hollow-charge projectiles. Standing off and shooting at the target may be safer, but it did compromise the weapon.

The use of hollow-charge projectiles requires a balancing of tactical needs against the best possible penetration. A fuse in front of the explosive is needed to achieve the stand-off distance. As the “shape” of a shaped-charge is an inverted cone, some form of ballistic cap is necessary to allow smooth flight. Finally, due care must be exercised to avoid having the energy that propels the weapon disrupt the hollow-charge shape.

Luckily, the burn-through effect of a hollow charge doesn’t require a high velocity. Indeed, low velocity is actually preferable as it allows the fuse to work best for insuring proper stand-off and minimizes the risk to the hollow charge’s shape. Three basic approaches were followed to direct the flight of these low-velocity projectiles.

First, fin-stabilized shells were developed experimentally for conventional rifle-barreled weapons. These shells had tail fins and a roller-mounted band attached that reduced the spin to approximately 30%. Nice, but even 30% of the normal spin was still disruptive.

Second, spigot dischargers allowed conventional explosive propulsive charges to “squirt” out hollow-charge projectiles. The British made a special study of spigot dischargers starting in the early 1930s. A spigot device had the hollow base tube of the shaped-charge projectile placed over the firing pin. Trigger the pin and the resulting explosion sent the shell on its way, with the distance traversed by the base tube over the pin giving direction to the weapon’s flight. Also nice, but the practical limitations of carrying around a large number of long-tubed projectiles shortened the base-tube length, and therefore the accurate range of the spigots. Although the Panzerfaust was not a spigot device, as the discharge tube surrounded the propellant, the same limitation in accuracy applied since the head of the device stuck out beyond the guiding tube.

Thirdly, rockets were seized upon as an effective mechanism for delivering hollow charges to their targets. In 1918, Goddard actually developed the precursor of the bazooka with a light-weight rocket launcher. As there were no shaped charges at the time, the idea was held in limbo until World War II. The American shaped-charge projectile had a far smaller explosive head than the Panzerfaust but, since the rocket travelled the relatively long length of the launcher, the bazooka was more accurate.

Lastly, some comment is required about the anti-personnel effect of all shaped-charge weapons. Assuming, as noted in Hogg’s German Artillery of World War Two, that the most effective size of anti-personnel fragments is 0.04 oz (1.1 gram), hollow-charge weapons do a generally lousy job. Given the need for a light ballistic cap that provides few effective fragments, and a “super-hot” directed flame that tends to burn through, rather than break up, hollow-charge weapons were not valuable for disrupting infantry in the open. Moreover, the projectile’s impact fuse would not detonate unless it struck a hard surface, and had to hit it at an angle more perpendicular than not. (Unlike the graze fuse of an artillery shell, the SCW projectile’s fuse would not be detonated by a glancing hit.)

All of the above is reflected rather well in ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER. Rule C8.31 requires that SCWs be directed at hard targets (although the 16 FP of the PF is probably a better reflection of later models with the anti-personnel
fragmentation collar). Rule C13, which contains essentially all the other rules on SCWs, demonstrates the power of the ubiquitous 'faust and range-accuracy advantages of the bazooka. Gone are the days of huge stacks of PF counters, as this is now an inherent weapon for the German when available. Of special note is the fact that only German squads can get two bazookas and Panzerschreck hits in a single fire phase. Additionally, there is a +1 d6 for PF availability for half-squads. This is of paramount importance in considering the tactical usage of SCWs. Remember, however, the +1 availability d6 for firing one at a non-AFV target.

We have a few tactical hints for the use of SCWs in ASL play. First and foremost, if you got 'em, use 'em. We've witnessed many the tournament game in which the German player, unless faced with tanks, never fires a 'faust. Even recognizing the 16% chance of being pinned, the potency of these weapons against adjacent enemy infantry in a building or behind a wall shouldn't be ignored.

Second, don't forget Deliberate Imobilization (C5.7). The '44 BAZ is still good for a "4-4" at two-hex range (DFP against a large, non-moving target). If you can't blast his front armor, you've still got a 5% chance of detracking him, with the bonus that he may abandon ship in that case. Third, we always sing the praises of WP. A wonderful combined offensive and defensive tool that costs you nothing (barring possible weapon malfunction) if you blow the availability roll (C8.9).

Fourth, for the Germans, stick with squads for best PF availability. Players are advised to use crews, when available, for bazookas and Panzerschrecks. Once again, this is strictly in keeping with the tactical doctrine of the 1940s. Bazookas and PSKs were seen as "special weapons", while the Germans considered PFs as part of the basic squad armament.

Fifth, although rocket-propelled SCWs may be fired from buildings without the risk of backblast by using Case C (C13.8), it is preferable to take wall advantage (B9.32) when possible. Even when you are in the hex with a building, if you claim wall advantage you are considered in the open behind the wall (example B9.321). Less modifiers, more hits.

Sixth, don't forget that Guns are acceptable SCW targets. Even if you don't knock out the gun, the SCW may affect the crew (C11.4).

Seventh, remember the difference between PIATs and the other SCW. The PIAT used a spring-loaded spigot to hurl its HEAT projectile. Although it can't be used at targets one or more levels lower in the same or an adjacent hex (C13.61), the fact that it can be manned by one man (Heroes!) and can be used inside a building (it has no backblast; C13.8) will make it a potent weapon indeed.

Lastly, some mention of Desperation (C13.81) is worthwhile. If you're in a single-story building and about to be overrun, think twice before firing at that oncoming AFV. If you fire from within restrictive terrain with a rocket-propelled SCW, then you'd best plan on having everyone therein break. Ours always do. If you wait and "take" the overrun (and survive), not only do you get a better target (0 Range, rear shot) but you also have a decent chance of having the AFV turn your nice little hovel into rubble—thus avoiding the backlash dr. Nice. We have included a new scenario, "Rocket's Red Glare" on the insert to allow readers to experiment with some of the ideas described above.

These notes continue the series of commentaries in the Clinic pertaining to the scenarios published with the previous installment of the column (Vol. 24, No. 4 in this case). The intent is to provide the ASL player with one of numerous possibilities for defensive setup, attacker initial placement, and basic tactical approaches for both. Having had several months to examine your own approaches to our Clinic scenarios, the reader can now compare his findings with our summation.

After Action Report—Buchholz Station

Setup for BOTH sides is fixed.

ATTACKER'S TACTICS: It is not worthwhile for the Germans to loop either west of Hill 498 nor east of Hill 522. Drive as fast as you can between them trying to cause as many U.S. casualties as you can on Turn 1. Use the Advance Phase with several groups to "winkle" the U.S. player out of his defensive positions. At some point you must rush through 3AA2, so plan to use smoke there. Try to win by knocking out 15 American victory points, but to do so you'll have to threaten to exit.

DEFENDER'S TACTICS: Don't try to hold on Turn 1. Pull the GI's back and use the fall-back defender tactics as per our prior Clinic installment (Vol. 21, No. 6). Use a 9-1 leader with the .50-cal. in the building and put the 9-2 with your best up-front. Remember that he has to come to you, and that time is on your side. Also note that 3W4 covers 3Y1.

The Bitche Salient

AMERICAN: The water-cooled .30-cal. goes into the stone building, one bazooka into Z1, the .50-cal. goes into J4 with a bazooka in H5. I try to set up an assault force with two MMGs and a bazooka in G1, G3 and F4 to put pressure on the Germans. Good locations are S2, T3, U2, V3, X1, Z1, BB1 and Z3 for your holding force. You're going to take some lumps, so try and be sure that units can rout to a leader.

GERMAN: Place an 8-0 and radio in foxhole in 2R2, pre-registered on 4X1. Three squads with LMG and MMG and 9-1 in foxhole under the wire in W10. Wire across the edge of board Q to X in hexes 9 or 10. Place a squad with MMG in foxhole in 2Q6. And squads with LMGs in foxholes 2W5 and 2K5.

ATTACKER'S TACTICS: The Americans must defend around 4G1 while attacking uphill around 4G1. Capture the hilltop defenders. Once you have the heights, you can use your HMGs and OBA to try to rack up more victory points and win.

DEFENDER'S TACTICS: The Germans should cover the hilltop with as few pieces as possible. Attack onto Board 4 and capture building X1. Use the troops that come on the south end of Board 4 and dig in around the road.

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If the readers should need a copy of an article from an out-of-print back issue of The GENERAL or one of the Wargamer's Guides, The Avalon Hill Game Company does provide a photocopying service. The charge for this service is $1.00 per page, with a minimum order of five pages required. Please specify the article title, volume and number it appeared in, and the pages on which it can be found. This service is also extended to our other publications, past and present—ALL-STAR REPLAY and HEROES. Standard Avalon Hill Game Company postage rates of 10% of the amount of the order must be included for domestic orders (20% for Canadian orders and 30% for overseas orders).

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YOU CAN HELP

It's not too late to salvage the situation. If every person reading this would send one copy of DIPLOMACY to the White House, someone surely would get the message. Better still—why not send one copy to your best friend? Who knows, the person you introduce to DIPLOMACY might end up as Secretary of State himself.
The Beaches of ITALY

By David R. Smith

Sunny Italy. That’s the way it’s advertised. But that’s certainly not the way the men who waded ashore at Salerno or Anzio remember it. I’ve met some of the men who visited those beaches. They remember the rain, the cold, the mud and the nights without sleep. Hardly a pleasure trip.

Italy was the first Axis country to fall to the Allies. And Salerno was the first invasion of the Axis-held mainland. But suppose it hadn’t been Salerno; what if it had been further north? Or on the east side of the peninsula where the Allies waded ashore? What would the chances of success have been? ANZIO is the Avalon Hill game that lets you find out. Let’s look at the beaches in this great game to see what your chances of getting ashore, and staying ashore, are if you’re the Allies during that second week of September 1943.

First, some ground rules. For this article, I’ll assume that the game is being played with all Advanced Game Supplementary Rules except “German Free Deployment” and “Fog of War”. This gives us a known basic German set-up to consider. I’ll also discount the 16th Panzer Division and first turn German air support. To be able to make any projections, we must assume that you won’t fight the 16th Panzer on the beach chosen; and since air support is part of the German initial placement, I’ll assume that each beach chosen was without any. And lastly, we’ll plan on the maximum amount of forces being sent onto the board at the turn of invasion. This also happens to be the historical Allied invasion, with Allied forces pressing up from the southern area of troops, then even if the Napoli invasion fails you will have units to supply lines on the board. The help in staving off the German response to an invasion at Napoli depends on your luck with defections and what the German feels is the greatest threat.

MONDRAGONE
An invasion at Mondragone, like any at the Golfo di Napoli, has the city of Naples as its prime objective. Mondragone also offers identical chances for defection and disembarkation of the Italian units. But not the same chance of being overrun by the Germans. This beachhead encompasses more area, giving you better maneuverability. Should the Germans split the forces available to garrison Naples, the chance for you to take the city on the first turn is much better than with the same defensive situation in an assault at the Golfo. Overall, I’d say this beach offers good prospects as an invasion site.

TERRACINA
Terracina is a hit too far north for my tastes. However, it does offer a good port, easily gained, and plenty of cover from which to defend the beachhead. With this you also get good initial lift and a strong chance of help from defecting Italian forces. While the drawbacks of landing here may not be fatal, they are enough to make most experienced players shy away from it. The Allies may get ashore, and stay ashore. But no matter what the objective, it can be handled better from other beaches. Beach areas to the south of Formia (and the 15th Panzer-Grenadier) give better opportunities to take Naples and link with the southern drive; beach areas to the north offer quicker access to Rome. You won’t get air support at Terracina, while any airborne cover is dangerous at best.

ROMA
Roma’s best asset for the Allies is the airbase nearby, followed closely by all the Italian defectors. It has adequate port facilities; and there are roads to quickly move your forces across the country and cut off German supplies to the south. A successful invasion here, with Allied forces pressing up from the toe and heel of the country, could trap a lot of Germans.

However, the German player won’t take any threat to Rome lightly. He will probably use his strongest order of battle to crush a landing rapidly.
And if he has any sense at all, he will block the roads between Rome and the east coast. These facts will make for a hard fight for Rome, and might well make it impossible to cut off the enemy in the south. All in all, an invasion at Rome is not the worst available, but it is doubtful that the risk is worth giving up the opportunity to invade near Napoli instead.

CIVITAVECCHIA

This beach has two advantages going for it as an invasion site. A good port, and a fair distance from any German force that could trouble the landings. The objective of any invasion at Civitavecchia would seem to be the capture of Rome. If, indeed, this is the case, the Allied player wastes about three turns while moving south (which an invasion at Roma wouldn’t entail). While it can be argued that this gives you the chance to build up forces, thus attacking Rome with a stronger army, you also give your opponent time to overcome the Italian garrison there and organize his defense with reinforcements. In short, the Allies will be forced to react defensively, losing units and time all the while.

As with Terracina, there is nothing you can do from Civitavecchia that can’t be accomplished more efficiently from another beachhead.

GROSSETO-CECINA-LIVORNO-GENOVA

These beach areas can be considered as a group since they basically present the same problems. They are so far north that they’ll cause the German to call on his strongest OB. And, as if that weren’t enough, almost any move you make will release German garrison units into the game. There is no air support or airborne force; nor can the airstrike be used later unless you move south to Rome or your southern units capture an airbase. Either of these are unlikely. Linking up with the Allied southern armies will be almost impossible.

While the northern beaches have excellent ports, just coming ashore insures a strong German response. Neither of the other two beaches have even a port that can be reached on the turn of invasion, and only at Grotseco can you come ashore without activating garrisons. To any who would choose one of these four beaches for his initial invasion, and only at Grosseto can you come ashore with the southern forces within two months. If the case, the Allied player wastes about three turns, the German player can keep any of these things from happening, the Allies will be forced to react defensively, losing units and time all the while.

CONCLUSION

These then are my views for Allied invasion of the Italian beaches in ANZIO. Others will certainly have different views, but I believe that for the Allies to win the game they must get ashore and seize a good port quickly, then grab an airbase and link up with the southern forces within two months. If the German player can keep any of these things from happening, the Allies will be forced to react defensively, losing units and time all the while.

Being thrown off the pace this early in ANZIO could mean the Allies will not be ready when their second invasion and airstrike turns arrive. Even with a large number of turns, the Allied player can’t afford to spend the whole game slugging it out in the trenches of his beachheads. There is simply too much to do and too much ground to gain to reach the north in time to win the game. And that is the crux of this most fascinating game.
BY THE BOOK
A Manual of Advanced Tactics for PGG
By David S. Bielska

PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN occupies a singular niche in the Avalon Hill line. Several titles portray the Eastern Front at a strategic level and several at a tactical level, but only PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN is oriented toward an operational level, (i.e., regiments and divisions). Because of its unique point of view and its widespread popularity, many articles have been published about the game. But the contents of these articles have addressed almost exclusively the broader aspects of offensive and defensive strategies for the Battle of Smolensk. This article examines some of the tactical aspects of PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN.

LESSON 1: OVERRUN
To the German player the overrun rule qualifies as the most crucial aspect of the PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN system. If losses to the Red Army overran division due to adverse conditions, Smolensk would degenerate into a hopeless slog through successive defensive positions. But overruns provide the opportunity to increase the rate of attrition, neutralizing the Soviet manpower advantage. Overruns help the German keep the situation fluid and thus capitalize on their mobility. (Lesson 5 discusses such tactical implications of Nazi strategy in greater detail.) In short, the overrun is a prime example of a “force multiplier.”

Therefore German players cannot expect success unless they employ overruns in an efficient manner. Many seem inhibited by Case 9-72 (i.e., loss of divisional integration due to regiments controlled by the Soviet player). But overruns need not be limited to panzer and motorized divisions with divisional integration. Three situations exist whereby units lacking divisional integration can conduct overruns profitably.

The first case concerns a common occurrence: mechanized units jumbled together after retreating. Such a stack may still contain enough strength to overrun certain targets. German players should recognize that even 1-1 odds may yield advantageous results. Furthermore, the overrunning units in this case need not worry about losing divisional integration in a retreat!

An as example, in an actual game the Germans had been striving to break the enemy line in the clear terrain between Smolensk and Roslavl. At the end of their Combat Phase they had dented the line, but not broken it. A lowly (2)-10 headquarters held the weakest portion of the line. Panzer divisions in reserve could have stepped on it at 1-1 odds in the Mecharnized Movement Phase, but they were needed to overrun stronger units on either side of the headquarters. However, earlier in the player turn, two panzer divisions had overrun 2-1 odds. That corresponded to an 83% chance of inflicting an adverse result on the headquarters. Elimination (via an “engaged” result) was unnecessary—a retreat result disrupted the defender, removing its zone of control. And without its ZOC, the headquarters opened a gap in the line through which the German reserves poured.

The second case concerns an action German players rarely consider: voluntarily unstacking a panzer division. By splitting off a regiment to cut supply and/or retreat routes, the division may accomplish more than it could if it retained divisional integration. As an example, again in an actual game the advance on Smolensk had stalled; so the Germans, desperate to regain some momentum, had hurled the bulk of their forces against the most vulnerable portion of the Russian line, which was located astride the forest west of the city of Smolensk. The Soviets had laid down two strong regiments in the Mechanized Movement Phase opened a hole. The Nazis now had a clear shot at the sole enemy headquarters in this area, a (5)-10. Unfortunately, by this point in the phase just a single, full-strength panzer division remained uncompressed. The division could have overrun the headquarters at 1-1 odds, with a 17% chance of eliminating it. The additional 50% chance of disruption gave no benefit to the Germans—the loss of the headquarters’ movement and ZOC in the Soviet rear was unimportant and the interruption of supply routes to their panzer division was meaningless. Instead, the division detached a panzergrenadier regiment to swing behind the headquarters and surround it. The remaining two regiments, even without divisional integration, could still overrun at 1-1 odds. That raised the chance of elimination to 67%.

Many may object that this tactic risks the elimination of the detached regiment, permanently canceling the divisional integration bonus for a percious panzer division. In the above example, the Germans faced a 33% chance of marooning the detached regiment far behind enemy lines with no damage done to the headquarters. But, as the German player was willing to trade the possibility of copping one panzer division for the possibility of resuming the advance on Smolensk. To digress, the overrun did eliminate the headquarters and the detached regiment survived after all. Only one untreated rifle division could reach the regiment, so for added punch a headquarters rushed down from the northern forests and stacked with the division. Incredibly, the Soviet division proved to be a 0-1-6, forcing the stack to retreat automatically (Case 10.23)! Anyway, this tactic does not necessarily condemn the panzer division to separation. In the absence of a ‘hit’ result, the overrunning regiments could have continued to move, allowing them to rejoin the detached regiment. Similarly, in the Combat Phase conventional advance after combat can re-unite a scattered division.

The third case where a unit lacking divisional integration can perform useful overruns concerns non-mechanized units. Unlike certain other games, PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN does not restrict the capability for overruns to arm/motorized units. A German 9-7 foot infantry division, for instance, can overrun and remain intact to the verge of elimination. A single such division may not appear very fearsome, but a stack of two divisions packs more wallop in an overrun than a full-strength panzer division. In addition retreat results mean less because the foot infantry have no divisional integration to lose. On the other hand, if three foot divisions find themselves overrun at 1-2 odds, a die roll of 6-7 will cause much gloom in Berlin.

Theoretically the same applies to Soviet rifle divisions. In practice, however, fewer opportunities arise. Only the most frantic Soviet player would attempt an overrun with untreated units, and a tough stack of foot units faces an equally tough opponent to keep it pinned in place. Even if circumstances permitted, the overrun must have some purpose. An overrun that opens a gap in the German line will neither permit the victorious units to march halfway across the map and liberate Vitebsk nor lead them to initiate a vast encirclement of the German Army. At best, an overrun accomplishes one of three things. First, it can remove a pin, allowing the Russians to withdraw, enter more favorable defensive terrain and such. Second, it can hasten the elimination of the trapped enemy unit (see Lesson 4). And third, it may deliver such a psychological blow to the German player that he’ll become demoralized for the remainder of the game.

LESSON 2: STACKING
In a fluid situation, the motorized infantry divisions act as the perfect companions to the panzer divisions. They possess the speed to keep pace, and almost as much punch. Frequently an overrun by a motorized division frees a panzer division from a pin, thus increasing the mobility of the Wehrmacht’s elite. And German players seem less inhibited in splitting up motorized regiments to pin enemy units on the shoulders of a breakthrough.

On the other hand, in a static situation the motorized troops display an unfortunate weakness: a low concentration of strength. To bulldoze a hole through a heavily-defended enemy line, the Germans must concentrate a large quantity of strength in a small number of hexes, and for this the motorized divisions are ill-suited. Panzer divisions and two or three-high stacks of infantry divisions pack more power per hex than all motorized divisions except the SS units. But if the German player is willing to ignore that sacred cow, divisional integration, the motorized infantry need not cause weak spots in the offensive line. In particular, if an infantry division stacks with a motorized division, the former negates divisional integration for the latter, yet the stack is stronger than if the motorized division retained divisional integration. Of course, if the foot and motorized divisions occupy separate hexes the total strength is higher still. But in a static situation the foot division may march up from the rear only to find all the critical hexes occupied by pinned mechanized units.

In a mixed stack, the foot infantry supplies the strength and the motorized infantry supplies the steps. An infantry division that absorbs two steps in losses drops in combat strength by seven points; but stacked with a motorized division, the infantry can let the motorized regiments absorb the same number of steps for a decrease of only two strength points. Alternatively, the creation of a mixed stack raises the total number of steps present from four to eight. Thus a mixed stack can absorb more losses before either division reaches the verge of elimination.

To illustrate this last point, in an actual game the Germans had encountered stiff resistance in the vicinity of Smolensk, so they could spare only a handful of units to press on to Roslavl. Two panzer divisions and a motorized division conducted the main attack in the woods northwest of the city. Unfortunately, the three Russian defending rifle divisions turned out to be lions. Perhaps unusually, the Germans attacked repeatedly at 1-1 odds. The gray units absorbed adverse results as step losses, because if they retreated they would be scattered and pinned with no reserves available to restore the situation. Then an infantry division arrived in the area. Under conventional thinking, the lack of an empty hex adjacent to the defenders would prohibit
reach a threatened area. For example, interdiction

can curb an unexpected enemy breakthrough
deep in the forests north of Smolensk or retard an
early threat to Roslavl and Yel’nya. But such use of
interdiction also carries consequences on a more
strategic scale. The more time the Germans con-
sume to conquer Smolensk and/or Roslavl, the less
they have to threaten Vyazma and points east—
supplies and no supplies. (Lesson 6 discusses this
in greater detail.)

Whereas the choice of ‘‘when’’ may be uncertain,
the choice of ‘‘where’’ lends itself to some hard
anaylsis. The table shows how placement of the
interdiction marker in different hexes affects the
depth to which the German unit can supply itself.

The second column shows the farthest hexrow that can be supplied,
according to Case 11.11. I label this as the ‘‘beam-
down method’’ because Case 11.11 permits Ger-
man units to rendezvous from any road hex connected to the west
map edge through 20 hexes of the thickest forests. The third
column shows the farthest hex along the road to
Roslavl that can be supplied according to Case
11.12. I label this as the ‘‘truck’’ method because
units can rendezvous from any road hex through 20
hexes of the thickest forests.

The Soviet strategic objective is defense of territ-
ory. Widespread pinning of Nazi units contributes to
the defense by restricting maneuver, pinning down
mass decisive strength against vulnerable locations
in the defensive line. In a static situation, the Soviet
manpower advantage triumphs. However, the pin
acts most effectively when conducted by troops in
the main defensive line—there’s no time for the
pinned enemy units to move. Haphazard pinning by
scattered units in a fluid situation usually
results in serious Soviet losses after a cascade of
overruns. ‘‘Harrassment’’ pins are best reserved as
a temporary expedient: buy time for the arrival of
reinforcements, to cover a withdrawal, and so for...

Pins also aid the Germans on the strategic level.
A strong Soviet defensive line commonly implies
scanty reserves. So, if German units pin the forces
up front the Russians cannot respond to a rupture
in the defense. But the pin acts more as a tactical
level device for the Nazis, either to fix a Red unit
as a target for an impending attack (usually while
surrounded) or to hold the unit for mopping up by
reinforcements.

In the latter regard, German players often go too
far in tiding up their rear areas. If the Lehr Regi-
ment has pinned three rifle divisions destined for
Guderian, then an overzealous action behind
the front, why not leave them there for the rest of
the game? Forces spared from mopping them up
reach the front lines faster. More importantly,
the elimination of the pinned units may permit
their return to the game as reinforcements
randomly drawn from the dead pile. Even pinned
in place, the units cease to contribute to the Soviet
war effort; lacking a headquarters they can neither
attack (Case 10.35) nor overrun (Case 6.55) to
gain their freedom. A paranoid German player
should rest assured that the probability a Russian
headquarters would ever penetrate his lines, travel
deep into his rear areas, and then make a stand
against him is virtually nil . . . unless, of course, he’s
blundered so badly throughout the game that his
opponent wishes to rub salt into the wound.

German players may rightly worry that widespread
pins rob their own units of the ability to
redeploy, usually to reinforce a breakthrough. But
a form of disengagement exists, at least for
motorized divisions. Disengagement is yet another
advantage: the foot division effectively relieves the
motorized division of its pinning duty. The pro-
cedure begins with the foot division joining the motor-
ized division. The later then conducts a normal
attack in which the foot division does not partici-
bate. The best odds are 1-1, which offer a 67% chance of some sort of ‘‘A’’ result. The motorized
division chooses to accept the adverse result as a
are 1-1 because of the requirement for an "A" result. Disengagement may still fail on a die roll of 1-1, since the defender can choose to satisfy the attackers remain pinned. Higher odds do not necessarily favor the defenders if the German player remains mentally flexible and his forces retain sufficient plasticity to exploit any advantage that presents itself. And plasticity implies two qualities: mobility and reserves.

Lesson 1 touched on the value of mobility as a force multiplier. Overruns increase the prospect of attrition. Out of the enemy's disengaging stack, the Red Army's maneuver advantage. Furthermore, mobility permits the German player to mass irresistible strength against a vulnerable sector of the front and cause an irreparable breach. Mobility captures territory and concealed territory victory Points. Lesson 4 touched on the value of reserves (i.e., unpinning units). Reserves remove enemy units conducting harassment pins. Reserves shift the center of gravity in response to an unexpected opportunity. Reserves exploit a breach in the defense to cause decisive deterioration in the enemy capacity to resist. Indeed, in few other games does the value of mobility and reserves appear so naturally, without the need for special rules.

In closing, a strategic concern of minor importance relates to German fears about Soviet recapture of Orsha and Mogilev while the bulk of the Wehrmacht is tied up around Smolensk. Principally the threat arises from provisional reinforcements popping out of Entrance Area 6. To a great extent, these fears are remnants from the previous edition of the game, which treated rail lines as indestructible. Soviet units could ride the rails through kilometers of hostile territory and detrain in an enemy-controlled city. (Indeed, in the first edition the German 1st Cavalry Division invariably did nothing throughout the game except bivouac in hex 1125 and flag down the daily express train to make sure several thousand heavily-armed commuters weren't on board!) In the current edition rail cut markers prevent such foolishness. On the other hand, Soviet infiltrators in the southwest corner of the map become easier targets for mopping up by the steady stream of infantry reinforcements plodding eastward.

LEsson 5: GERMAN STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

To be blunt, German strategy is minimal—the capture of Smolensk overrides everything else. Without Smolensk the German player faces the distinct possibility of losing the game. Besides the Victory Points (the largest of any objective on the map), occupation of the city bestows a crucial strategic implication. First, use of the interdiction marker may have greater impact during the critical period than afterward, when it may simply limit how the Germans must battle for the city the less time remains for them to run wild on the eastern half of the map.

The second strategic point concerns general game flow. In a typical game, turns 4 through 6 very often determine the outcome of the contest. During this critical period either the Soviet player successfully establishes his defensive positions, or the German player sets the stage for massive territorial gains. The notion of a critical period in the game has three strategic implications. First, use of the interdiction marker may have greater impact during the critical period than afterward, when it may simply limit how the Germans must battle for the city the less time remains for them to run wild on the eastern half of the map.

With regard to the last point, Soviet players naturally prefer to squeeze all 30 hexes of movement out of transporting a unit by rail. This means they rail reinforcements toVyazma like clockwork and then let the units struggle to Smolensk as best they can. Unfortunately, such a transportation scheme frequently results in a horde of divisions reaching the Vop River just in time to see Smolensk surrender. Alternatively, short-haul rail movement may prove more valuable in preparing for the critical period. Possibilities include rail units from Smolensk to Vitebsk or Game Turn 1, from Mogilev to Roslavl or Game Turn 2, and from Vyazma to Smolensk on following game turns.

The third and last strategic point to consider concerns a minor qualification in the victory conditions. The German player receives Victory Points for a captured city only if a line of communications can be traced from the city to the west map edge. This suggests that the Russians can negate German capture of a city late in the game by encircling it on the final game turn. Unfortunately, the likelihood of saving Roslavl or Vyazma (much less Smolensk) by this means diminishes greatly in light of the facts that German reinforcements move last and are almost certain to be in supply. Nonetheless, Kaluga and Rzhev, by virtue of their location at the edges of the map, may provide just such an opportunity.

levels of Victory equal multiples of five and Victory Points for geographical objectives equal multiples of five, so the four VPs conceded for four divisions of extra reinforcements have no effect on the outcome of the game.

However, the Russians should seriously consider entering all ten divisions. Players may object that yielding 11 VPs from the additional six divisions to save a 10-VP objective, Roslavl, is not cost effective. But viewed from a strategic perspective, the decision provides three advantages. First, it strengthens the Soviet defense early in the game when the distribution of force is at its greatest impact. Second, the reinforcements reach the front without necessarily consuming the limited rail movement capacity. And third, though the reinforcements may not save Roslavl they almost certainly delay its capture, and as pointed out in Lesson 3, the longer the Germans must battle for the city the less time remains for them to run wild on the eastern half of the map.

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In his piece "Man the Beaches" (Vol. 24, No. 4), Mr. Nixon took a long look at defending Italy and Allied options for the Mediterranean Theater. In this companion piece to that fine article, he turns his attention to what the Axis can do in the south.

Redress the Past

In his article, "Germany: The Mediterranean Strategy" (Vol. 22, No. 1 of The GENERAL), Nicky Palmer touched upon a concept vital to the Axis Southern yearnings. The Axis are allowed only a cursory look at the Mediterranean, with no intention to give detailed information regarding Axis unit positions at the end of Fall 1939, his entire thesis breaks down and it becomes obvious he never actually played this game. If we back off and adjust these panzer estimates to make this force legal, there can be only one 4-6 stationed in the Minor Allies. Turkey is safe.

In Nicky's defense is the fact that his was only a cursory look at the Mediterranean, with no intention to give detailed information or any step-by-step instruction of exactly how to do it. Unfortunately, in the one instance where he does give detailed information regarding Axis unit positions at the end of Fall 1939, his entire thesis breaks down and it becomes obvious he never actually played this strategy against anyone experienced enough to correct his illegal move. Therefore, before detailing my own plan of southern aggression, I must first address a number of items Mr. Palmer has seemingly overlooked in his presentation. So, with all due respect:

Too Many Troops

Nicky ends Fall 1939 with too many factors in the Axis Minor Allies. The Axis are allowed only two BRPs for builds. Declaring war on Yugoslavia and Turkey in Winter, only 17 factors can be built that turn—provided that Italy does not join his ally in a Mediterranean Offensive. That offensive is unlikely with all his air on loan, only one armor built, and a maximum 16 ground factors in action (five or six of which are in Libya).

The second Italian 2-5 armor can't be built until Winter, and the fifth fleet will not sail until 1940. But the greatest harm done is to the war of economies. That is, Italian purchase of a DoW against the Allies in Fall 1939 threatens Italian survival chances by freeing the enemy of that financial burden. The kicker here is that a double-turn invasion of Italy in which the Allies declare war must begin with Britain, not France, paying for the DoW. This is because Rule 21.4 has been expanded to include DoW on major powers (21.4 on Page 45 in The Gamer's Guide to THIRD REICH). It is, therefore, a 50-50 expenditure for Britain, including the Offensive option. This leaves Britain only 12 BRPs for Fall builds, reason enough to squelch the resolve of most British players.

An Italian DoW removes this major hurdle and opens the floodgates of Anglo-French assaults. Although the shortcoming can be overcome, Nicky totally ignores this dilemma in his article. Italy is left extremely weak in all respects.

Defending Italy

As a consequence of the second above, Nicky's Italian situation in Fall '39 finds one 2-5 armor in Taranto, a 1-3 stuck in Albania (Italian fleets are at Taranto and Venice, so could not have SRed it out), loaned air units in Polesi and Bucharest, and "five or six" units in North Africa. I suppose these "five" in North Africa are the five other 1-3s. If "six", one 3-3 unit must also be there, or a replacement unit might have been SRed there. I'll assume only five units in North Africa, although it matters little at this point.

Italian expenditures

Nicky's Italian BRP expenditures in 1939 are potentially disastrous. He uses the Italian economy to subsidize the German, a valid enough arrangement in later turns. But in Fall 1939 this leaves only two BRPs for builds. Declaring war on Yugoslavia and Turkey in Winter, only 17 factors can be built that turn—provided that Italy does not join his ally in a Mediterranean Offensive. That offensive is unlikely with all his air on loan, only one armor built, and a maximum 16 ground factors in action (five or six of which are in Libya).

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The defense of Italy is handled by the remainder; two 3-3s and whatever was built with the two BRPs (presumably two replacement units). The result, on the other hand, is wide open to an Allied double-turn (DT) conquest. (Rather than the comical term “flip-flop”, could we please adopt the more descriptive usage “double turn?”)

German armor in Venice cannot retake Rome as British and French forces pour into Italy during Winter movement and SR to block them. The few Italian defenders are vapor after two turns of combined Anglo-French attacks. Italy is conquered. How Mr. Palmer could have referred to Marcus Water's 'Guide' defense of Italy while espousing his own open invitation to Allied invasion (the “Italian Open”) in the same paragraph is beyond me. I am at a loss to illustrate a defense of Italy featuring the meager forces Nicky has allocated.

Perhaps his “five or six units” in Libya are actually the two Italian 1-3s which began there, supported by three or four German units SRd there. However, availability of three or four more 1-3s will not keep the Allies out of Rome, and using the Italian navy to get their partially mobilized German forces to Libya makes Allied invasion of Italy easier still.

Finally, with Germans trying to SR out of Poland and into Venice, Rumania, Bulgaria and North Africa, they may come up short of SRs. Add to this her troop commitments on the East and West fronts and suddenly Germany comes up short of manpower as well. Consequently, I doubt that Nicky intended to send German troops to Libya.

Certainly, the British may not have set up to capitalize on such an opportunity, but it is pointless to consider such inferior play. On the other hand, the Italian navy might successfully skate through both French and British fleets to repulse an invasion force... but I wouldn’t count on it. What's really needed to salvage this situation are a few of those panthers sitting in X23 guarding Rome. Some of them may be scattered somewhere else on the map.

A proper defense of Italy requires either abandoning the Fall DoW against the Allies, or enlisting some heavy duty German aid and enticing it much further south than Venice. Don't even think about flying the air out of Italy. (For further considerations, see my "Man the Beaches!" in Vol. 24, No. 4 of the GENERAL.)

BRPs in 1940

Mr. Palmer's BRP situation in 1940 is interesting. I calculate 1940 starting BRPs as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Start</th>
<th>BRPs Germany</th>
<th>Italy</th>
<th>Britain</th>
<th>France</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CarryOver</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conquest</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Start</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Start</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Axis start Spring with 247 BRPs; the Allies with 325 BRPs. Conquests are Poland and Yugoslavia for Germany, Luxembourg for France. The British have intervened in Turkey.

This clearly illustrates that as soon as the Axis take an Offensive option, the Allies can start maneuvering for a double turn. This will remain a possibility through 1940 until it occurs, or until Germany takes either Ankara or Paris. If Ankara, the British may choose to let it go without a last ditch fight as a means of avoiding the DT and eventual Axis retaliatory DT. The same holds true to a lesser degree for Paris.

There is also a strong possibility France could begin 1940 with 25 more BRPs for Belgium and the Netherlands, wiping out her five-BRP carriover, for a net gain of twenty. This would give the Allies a DT over Winter 1939/1940, potentially a catastrophe for Germany.

To prevent this DT, Germany could elect to forego an amount of Strategic Warfare (SW) expenditure; but where does one draw the line? That is, how much SW can you think Britain will leave unstated in order to sustain this DT? If Britain builds only one SW factor, they retain the DT no matter what Germany does. This is exactly what will occur if Germany didn't protect against a DT in Winter 1939, and the Allies have a decent shot at Berlin in Spring 1940.

Germany's weak BRP situation can even allow Britain and France to finagle a DT without conquering Belgium and the Netherlands. The point of it all is that Germany's fate deteriorates to a guessing game, inflicting on his style of play. Through it all, Britain is in the driver's seat. Once Germany concludes Winter 1939 by conquering only Poland and Yugoslavia, there is nothing to prevent Britain and France from immediately taking a DT if they so choose. Barring a catastrophe, they can retain the initiative throughout 1940!

At this point, the Allies are at their military peak with Germany's forces in Italy evidently partially mobilized. Total mobilization and new troop commitments on the West Front may preclude any German success in Turkey or recapture of the initiative. What it all boils down to is a free hand for the Allies, and with France enjoying offensives in the West, Germany could be in big trouble fast. DT-mania will haunt Germany in 1940 even after the fall of Ankara in some cases, yet Mr. Palmer ignores it totally.

Due to overlooking this BRP situation, Mr. Palmer has made some curious statements: "The West is bankrupt"; "To keep the three fronts going all this time the British have spent the bottom of the barrel"; "...the fall of Suez should see them plunging into the red"; and my favorite, "The year 1940 sees the Axis swing into top gear against the Allies on three fronts". None of these are substantiated by facts and figures. The final one is simply not true; Germany cannot buy Offensive options on even two fronts for a full year (120 of his total 172 available BRPs) concurrent with mobilizing his army and replacing losses. For his part, the Italian is going nowhere on his own.

With no Axis West Front Offensives consuming those bothersome French BRPs, France will go on the offensive here to avoid losing (if not something else) until such time as you guessed it—she actually opts for that DT. Imagine French fleets used on offense with British fleets available to intercept the Italians! Britain doesn't even spend any BRPs on an Offensive option to intercept. Availability of these French BRPs and forces in 1941 far outweighs the threat to Suez and a once-only British loss of 25 BRPs.

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**HIT THE WEAK MAN**

The rationale for a “Mediterranean Power Play” is varied and depends, possibly, more than anything else upon one's own preconceived notions of Axis chances for success and on the ability of one's opponents. My opinion is that a “Campaign Game” between two equal opponents begins with an even chance of victory for each side. In multi-player games, the probabilities may shift to one side or the other according to attendant experience and ability of the players. Axis strategy should, therefore, gear itself towards picking on the weakest opponent. As a general rule, if you have it best to play a “Standard Game” (Poland in 1939, France in 1940 and Russia thereafter) when facing a poor Russian player; use the “Mediterranean Power Play” when facing a weak British player.

More specific, the major advantages to a “Mediterranean Power Play” are:

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**Massive BRP Rewards**

Depending on how the French colonies go, the Mediterranean yields 110 to 130 BRPs to the Axis. This is economically more rewarding than attack-}

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**Gibraltar & Suez/Alexandria**

There is a one-time British loss of 25 BRPs each for Gibraltar and Suez/Alexandria. As Mr. Palmer has written, such loss can be catastrophic for an unprepared Brit.

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**Ignoring Russia**

Russia does not have to be attacked until the Spring of 1942—if at all. If still occupied with consuming the Med, Germany need not even spend the BRPs to declare war on Russia, leaving that financial burden in Russian hands admittedly flush with power.

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**Russia's Dilemma**

Whether Germany attacks Russia or vice versa, the Russo-Turkish border will prove more trouble for Russia than for Germany, even after the 1942 influx of Russian armed forces.

Germany's great advantage here is provided by that friend of all defensive two-timers, the “Two Front Defense”. That is, if Russia wants to advance on both fronts (East and Med), she must pay 30 BRPs per turn to buy the options. Germany, however, can advance in both areas with a paltry 15 BRPs spent for an East Front Offensive option. That is, until Russia penetrates eastern Turkey. Even if the situation deteriorates to that point, Russia is still spending 30 BRPs for Offensive options while the German probably chooses Attritions and pays nothing. Russia is not going anywhere at this rate. At least not until 1941.

Eastern Turkey should prove a German liability only to a German still engaging Western Allied forces in the Med in 1942. Otherwise, Russia's backdoor is open.

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**Italy Unbound**

Once the Mediterranean is cleared, Italy is freed of her defensive burden. Her armed forces are permitted to move all over the map, not suffering the deployment restrictions of the German Minor Allies. What's more, instead of consuming Italian SRs in the Med, they can now be used to augment the German's. Those Italian SRs are ideal for reinforcing the Eastern Front, especially at the Russo-Turkish border.
In fact, even in a "Standard Game" not focused on the Med, it is common strategy to defend Italy with German forces at least in part, so that some Italians can be sent as cannon fodder to the Eastern Front. Much more important than any added raw strength, the real benefit is consequent usage of Italian SRs to ferry these troops back to the front once taken as losses. This SR increase is welcome relief to an SR-poor German at the height of Barbarossa.

Italian air need not even be "loaned" in the conventional manner. It can sit on defense in the East, able to provide DAS to any unit within range, thereby giving Germany a total of 20 usable Italian factors in Russia, plus potential other "static" Italian defenders.

In the West, Italy's forces have freedom to deploy as needed, filling a void created in the 3rd Edition by Axis Minor Allied limitations. These 1-3 Italians often can free a German 3-3 for duty elsewhere, in cases which require a unit—any unit—no matter what strength.

The Italian fleets get into the Atlantic. Beyond the invasion of England this threatens (see "The Spanish Gambit", David Hablanian's excellent treatment of invasion in The GENERAL Vol. 18, No. 5), these fleets can be used as cannon fodder—this time against the inevitable Allied invasion of Europe. They may not win any sea battles, but can certainly slow Allied build-up in Europe by taking out some enemy fleets. They can also skirt the whole naval mover issue if used to defend the port/ beach areas of Bremen, Calais, Cherbourg and Lorient. Italian fleet losses to air raids are not so unpalatable as German.

Notice, however, that these fleets alone are no defense within range of Allied paratroops and air power. It is still necessary to defend with ground forces. The point is that the combination of fleets and ground forces will force the enemy to invade the non-port hex, or spend many expensive turns reducing the fleets by air.

Italy to the End

Quite simply, Rule 26.7, "Early Italian Surrender", can be forgotten once the Mediterranean has been conquered. Likelihood of early surrender at that point does not bear extrapolation here.

Turkey

As above, the bizarre series of events required to bring Turkey into the war as a British Minor Ally will never materialize. Turkey is in and out of the war early.

Festung Europa

Most obvious, the Western Allies will have a terrible time getting anywhere. Not that they can't land almost anywhere within reach of their airforces; but they will not move inland well against a BRP-wealthy German player whose Mediterranean-conquest BRPs will immediately rebuld all losses and buy him plenty of West Front counteroffensive punch.

Leningrad Busters

Always remember that Shore Bombardment allows the least expensive attack you will ever make. Consider one case: 30 shore bombardment factors and two infantry factors attacking Leningrad defended by four infantry factors. This is a 2-1 attack, and on an Exchange the Russian loses at least half his defenders (depending on what units were in the city). This leaves Leningrad open to an Exploitation attack, defending with only a maximum of eight now. Of course, the German might have won the initial 2-1 outright. The point is, if he is taking an Offensive option anyway, he risks only the two infantry factors for this chance to knock out a major Objective. I freely admit there is a remote chance the fleets will ever be available on the turn you might wish to employ them thusty, but watch for other possibilities—like Gibraltar!

Vichy

This is quite straightforward. Once past the initial danger period when Britain might deactivate Vichy France due to your trespassing, the German stands a reasonable chance to bring them in on his side. For that matter, it is unlikely Britain will feel like spending many BRPs to deactivate Vichy once her rulers realize that they are your prime target. Should you sway Vichy France to your cause, base any 9-factor Vichy fleet at Gibraltar. This is because you don't want it bombed since you can't rebuild it. If, however, you receive other Vichy partial fleets in addition, you need not be quite so parsimonious with them.

Objectives

In case anybody is interested, the final reason for plunging into the Mediterranean is the wealth of objectives available there. I count seven which don't fall in a "Standard Game": Istanbul, Alexandria, Mosul, Suez, Malta, Gibraltar and Madrid. Four more fall easier than normal: Makop, Grozny, Astrakhan and Stalingrad. Two become more difficult to take from a "Med Power Play" situation: Leningrad and Moscow. The bulk of these fall to you immediately; there should never be any doubt you will attain a Marginal Victory in the Campaign Game. You have guaranteed that the Allies must attain a Tactical Victory to beat you.

Variants

Yes, there is even more after the "final word" above. But this might not come into play because it depends on which variant is drawn. The advantage here is that some of these variants which might normally be of only marginal use (like #1, #2 and #9) are extremely valuable tools to throw against the British when pursuing Mediterranean victory. None of the variants suffer, except possibly #7, but you could opt not to use it should you desire. More likely, draw of that variant will decide your course upon a "Standard Game".

1939 Anyone?

If you are playing the 1939 scenario and feel like irritating your British opponent, you might use a "Mediterranean Power Play". He will hate you forever as you consume his objectives. Good for vendettas.

NO PERFECT PLAN

There are also, however, good reasons to avoid a "Mediterranean Power Play":

French Hangover

Late conquest of France can prevent you from completely conquering the Mediterranean prior to Russian and US entry in force. If you can't knock out France before Winter '40, you may find the Med too much to handle. Even a Fall victory at Paris can leave your short of BRPs and active forces if things have not gone well.

On the other hand, a Winter '40 victory in France may be so cheap that your Mediterranean Offensive need not suffer. Unfortunately, chances that you can anticipate this in the Fall so as to set up a Winter move on Turkey are slim.

Spain and the Rock

The problem here is not whether or how to conquer Spain, but when? By far, it is best to invade the country in Fall '41 in order to avoid the damaging effects of Rule 46.3. Just make sure you successfully bring in the Minor Allies in Summer '41 and play any of the affected variants beforehand.

At this point, the challenge is to knock out Gibraltar by Spring '42 at the latest. If unsuccessful by then, you're hurting. An Allied DT over the Summer-Spring turns will allow them to flood Gibraltar with a 4-5, a 5-6 and a 3-3 paratroop unit for a total defense of 48 factors (excluding DAS). It all boils down to one thing really. The "Med Power Play" is not complete until Britain has been
100% excluded from that Front. If Gibraltar stands, it cannot be long before British and American forces are invading somewhere in the Mediterranean. Threat of this would tie an inordinate number of troops and nullify many advantages previously listed for undertaking the strategy in the first place. Gibraltar truly is a rock.

**Strict Timetable**

For all things which befall every Wehrmacht commander on the Russian steppes, at least one bright spot seems to hold true; there is not much pressure to complete any certain level of advance in the East. Maybe it’s simply because success in Russia is so blasted difficult to gauge prior to final capitulation. Maybe it’s only our naïve assessment that end games are just too difficult to study in depth that keeps us from formulating a plan that may just do the job, if we see it and pursue it. For example, if you had told prior to World War II that Russia would be invincible, my slim liquefier here might cost might have been a rock.

**Western Allied Determination**

This is where an initially successful Mediterranean campaign can backfire miserably. Imagine British and US armies building up in England with no place else to stack counters. No Gibraltar. No North Africa. Not even a Malta. Everybody piles into the island and stacks to the limit.

Sooner than would occur in a “Standard Game”, this powerful force will hurl itself at the continent. In fact, using both British and US armies in Europe with only a token holding force in North Africa, will be a major point of contention when the in-depth study of Campaign End Games is finally printed.

Between them, Britain and America field by far the most versatile fighting machine in the game. Even were Russia conquered and all German troops available on the Atlantic Wall, the Western Allies would get ashore somewhere. They may not stay long but, then again, they would be back for more the very next turn.

All of which is to say that the “Med Power Play” forces the Allies into what is possibly their most potent strategy—“Go For the Throat”! However, as has been mentioned, getting onto the continent and staying there are two different matters. Germany possesses a tremendous facility for blasting armies back into the sea.

**Turkish Delight**

Britain receives 30 BRPs as soon as she intervenes in Turkey (25.22). Should this occur late in 1940, as opposed to early in 1941, it may provide the opportunity for a DT. That’s not to say Britain can handle a DT at that time, but it is an eventuality the Axis players must consider.

**SUFFER NO FROSTBITE**

As best construed and presented here, a “Mediterranean Power Play” is no easier path to victory than a “Standard Game”. Only careless play by your British opponent will allow the Axis to conquer the Med prior to Winter 1941. Consider your campaign a success if completed by Spring of 1942, which happens to herald entrance of US forces and British reinforcements. At this point, of course, WW11 is far from over. It has only just begun. For one thing, you may try very hard pressed by a healthy Russian who sinks his teeth deep into you in order to gain as much as possible before the Western Allies collect themselves to deliver what he may envision as a telling blow.

Yet your situation is far from the critical stage. Thanks to those southern conquest BRPs, you are in an extremely robust economic situation and can utilize all of Italy’s armed forces to help combat Russia. Your armies will never be stronger than at the conclusion of a successful Mediterranean campaign, barring inordinate bad luck at Gibraltar. Once shifted to the East Front, your air, panzer and paratroops (both airborne are now available) allow the Axis Offensive options through 1942-1943 as usual.

But, none of this so far has begun to answer questions of exactly how the Axis are to wage Mediterranean warfare.

An excellent place to start is to read and reread David Hablanian’s article “The Spanish Gambit” (in The GENERAL, Vol. 18, No. 5) and Marcus Watney’s “The Long Road From Rome” (in the Gamer’s Guide). Though both articles suffer minor problems in certain areas, they are in general good reading material and are, after all, well advanced of the “casual playing” levels most of us practice in friendly gaming.

Gibraltar is the objective of the “Spanish Gambit”, all-out invasion of England the goal. But invading England is still a risky venture. Even Mr. Hablanian admitted that, and without realizing he had actually escalated Axis chances by illegally carrying three German panzer units on four fleets in two separate instances. That is, although four fleets certainly have the capacity to carry three 4-6s in an invasion, they could in fact carry only two since those panzers must have begun their turn in the port of embarkation (which accommodates a maximum of only two ground units). So, instead of David’s six 4-6 armored units, his invasion of England would include only four. Quite a difference.

Alternatively, two stacks of three fleets might carry four panzer units while the remaining two fleets carry a fifth, or even a ninth fleet could be used—totaling three stacks of three fleets carrying six panzers. Notice however, that using this ninth fleet precludes any chance of exploitation from the beach since that beachhead would be an unsupplied hex. Also, this assumes no significant naval losses to date. The tenth fleet, Italian-built in 1942, does not enter play before US entry, and so is not considered. Finally, all this dispersal has made it easier for British naval power to defeat these Axis task forces due to mixing Italian fleets with German, and a smaller size of each group.

As Mr. Hablanian discussed, the need to knock Britain out prior to US entry means Spain must be attacked immediately after France falls. Once begun, there is no turning back as this early invasion dims the chances of activating Axis Minor Allies, greatly strengthening Russia’s position. Using this gambit,
victory must come in the West for there is no chance of it in the East. The “Spanish Gambit” remains a viable alternative, a very attractive one at that. But, it is the “Med Power Play”, does not offer a guaranteed win, or even necessarily any better chance for victory than a “Standard Game”, except as opportunity and chance might allow on any given playing. It becomes, therefore, yet another option the Axis can collect in their bag of tricks.

Thus, the key to successful application of the “Spanish Gambit” or the “Mediterranean Power Play” is flexibility. That is, if the Axis can remain on track with a “Standard Game” while maintaining the option of switching to one of these alternate plans, their alternative victory is greatly enhanced. Typically, the Axis move through the game, able to pick and choose any point of departure to one of these, or remain on line to complete the “Standard Game” as opportunity provides. This flexibility is precisely what is lacking in Mr. Palmer’s Mediterranean strategy.

Mediterranean conquest can be organized into six distinct campaigns, the first four offensive and the last two defensive:
1. Poland-Yugoslavia-Italy
2. Greece-Turkey
3. Mediterranean Consolidation
4. Spain-Gibraltar
5. Russia
6. Festung Europe

Ignoring the first of these, which has received more than its share of coverage in these pages, the balance of what follows explores the remaining five major campaigns featured in the “Mediterranean Power Play”. We are joining play in progress; the Axis have just scored a win in France. Poland and the Low Countries have fallen earlier.

CAMPAIGN II—GREECE & TURKEY

Because of the weakness of Turkey’s army and the 20-factor limit placed in inactive Axis Minor Allies, any assault on Turkey must be studied from a rather awkward perspective. How does Germany amass enough firepower to quickly smash into Asia Minor so they can then immediately dismance the remainder of that country’s army?

I am going to state from the outset that a 3-3 is in Finland, so the maximum thrown against Turkey is theoretically 17 factors. Putting it bluntly, 17 factors can attack only four enemy factors at 2-1 odds. This won’t get you across the Straits on the first turn of attack, and what’s the point of an in-depth examination of the subject? I believe it bears careful study, much more than has been given here. Despite all that, for the purposes of the “Med Power Play”, fancy footwork in Finland is not required. The following seven options, ranked weakest to strongest, legally amend the size of Germany’s assault force.

Panzers in R34

Panzers in R34 are able to reach the X-hexes, making it possible to exploit a successful attack on Istanbul. Notice, however, that this force will not be able to do this if an alert Turk has defended all three European Turkish hexes. Such a defense precludes Axis movement into Z33 as a means of vacating factors from Bulgaria to make room for those R34 panzers, thereby maintaining the 20-factor limit.

It may look like that 2-3 in Z32 is easy pickin’s. It is if you really want to kill it; but are you going to waste the effort on it? Can you even afford to leave an idle panzer unit in Z31 to isolate it (or in Y33 if you’ve attacked AA31 in lieu of Istanbul)!

One slight-of-hand maneuver can bring three extra factors into your assault. To set it up, either leave one factor of air out of the Minors or stage it out on your turn. This gives you 19 factors in the Minor Allies, counting the three in Finland. Three of these factors are airborne, which drop on Turkey during the Movement Phase. Naturally there must be a logical spot to drop it; you are not going to simply throw it away. The criteria of Rule 25.6 must be met at the end of movement and SR, so you can now—during movement—bring a 4-6 panzer into Bulgaria since the paratroop and air factors are not in a Minor Ally at the end of movement. Now your attack on Turkey includes a full 20 factors. But this is still not much to celebrate.

Base Albania

Somewhat better than the R34 location, Albania offers a remote base for not only panzer units, but also infantry, air and paratroops. Unfortunately, a goodly number of drawbacks make this position virtually useless:

1. Ground forces must have been transported to Albania via air, sea or ground (Schlachtverband) which is a very expensive maneuver.
2. Air AA31 requires an airbase for any airpower to be useful, which can then reach only one Turkish hex (AA31).
3. Infantry attack only AA31, and only if it can get to AA30, past a Greek army timid enough to oblige.
4. War must be declared on Greece and/or Yugoslavia in order to reach Turkey from Albania.

This last condition makes this a very shaky move against a competitive opponent who may realize your true goal is Turkey (you will, after all, declare war on Turkey in the same turn) and set up Greek and Yugoslav troops to block your drive on that country. Unless you know your opponent, you are playing a guessing game at this point.

Of course, nothing can prevent air and airborne units from flying over activated Minors, and this may be all you need anyway. Your ground troops are free to attack Greece/Yugoslavia towards their now weakened defense of their own capitals. If, however, you are counting on ground troops from Albania to hit Turkey I only wish you luck.

Base Yugoslavia

From Z29, Axis airpower can hit three of the four Strait hexes and cannot be hindered by Yugoslav or Greek forces. However, Turkey’s defense can still freeze your ground units in place. A possible variant of this could involve a DoW against Greece, with the intent of occupying AA30 to track AA31.

But again, a wise Greek can easily block AA30 with a single 2-3, denying that hex for a turn.

Airbase Rhodes

This is probably the simplest and most straightforward of these seven options. Air power on Rhodes takes some forethought, but once in place is a certainty. Unfortunately, a four hex range allows aircraft to hit only one of four Strait hexes. The paratroop unit, however, is free to drop on any Turkish hex of consequence.

Hit the Beach

This one may bring shivers to your spine as you picture that sleek Italian navy running head-on into those British sea-dogs. Worse yet, they may tangle with the French navy!

However, the French may be badly split between Marseilles, Beirut, Tunis and the Atlantic and have trouble intercepting. For that matter, if you have gone and attacked Turkey before knocking off Greece, he may be entertaining thoughts of his own victory (only in a multi-player game) and opt to conserve his fleet, leaving Turkey to Britain. French attitude at this point is, “the more Axis forces involved in Turkey, the better.” That is, however, an unlikely eventuality. In any case, if you take my advice you won’t invade Turkey until France is conquered anyway.

This leaves the British Navy in your path. Well, it just may happen that Britain is hard pressed in Egypt, has no extra forces in the Med due to commitments elsewhere, and faces a very difficult decision. Does she send those Mediterranean fleets out to intercept, foregoing any subsequent SR into the Med on her player turn (barring interception failure)? Does she try a partial interception with only two or maybe three fleets and hope for the best, retaining Gibraltar’s fleets for SR duty? Or does she allow the mission to proceed virtually unopposed, give the Turkish fleet its shot at glory (hopefully losing all six factors to cost the Italian three), and subsequently reinforce through Gibraltar with powerful land and air forces? A tough decision all the way around.

For Britain, it is tempting to lure Britain into a Mediterranean naval engagement. After all, your intention is to eventually sail the Italian fleet into the Atlantic where naval modifiers will put you at an even worse disadvantage. But at present, the fleet is still needed to ferry reinforcements to Libya in an effort to maintain pressure on Egypt and West African colonies if those have gone Free French.

Therefore, I would risk Italy’s fleets only if naval modifiers would be at least even if all available British fleets intercepted, or if British fleets based at Gibraltar must be used to give Britain a naval modifier advantage and the situation in Egypt determines that British reinforcement include a substantially Axis victory on the following turn. Concurrent with the latter, it is helpful this turn to hit Egypt as hard as possible to kill ground units. In this manner, Italy is fighting British SR
limits into the Med more than the British army itself, a shift of substantial improvement for Italy's war effort.

Britain's other alternative hardly bears mention. They could totally ignore Axis movements in the Med—the “Walk Like an Egyptian” strategy. My impression is that would be the end of World War II. But anyone willing to submit otherwise is welcome to it.

As for the invasion itself, there is nothing very critical at all since the Turks have not defended the beaches. (If they have, you can foresee invasion and cross at the Straits easily.) Hit AA31 if you need help breaking through; DD30 if you want to take Izmir and/or isolate the Strait defenders in BB31; and land at EE32-EE33 if you want to create general panic throughout the Middle East. Notice however, that you must leave a fleet to supply the beachhead if you want to threaten Exploitation movement from that Breakthrough hex.

Notice also that invading AA31 can be helpful even with the smallest of units as a means of utilizing Italian shore bombardment. Remember that shore bombardment is not limited to three times your attack strength as is air support.

Southern Charm

It is a rare day you will enjoy hitting Turkey from the south. Wherever you either lucked out with an invasion of Lebanon-Syria, or France fell early and Lebanon-Syria turned Vichy and you moved immediately before Britain could respond. You needn’t fear trespassing on Vichy soil with your concentration on the Mediterranean. It is even unlikely that Britain will have the opportunity to attempt a deactivation roll with the BRP pressure and territorial demands (Gibraltar and Suez/Alexandria) you are forcing.

This is actually the strongest attack Germany can devise against Turkey, hitting both the Straits and the south at once. The country will not stand two turns. With a force from Lebanon-Syria, it could fall in one turn. But it is such an unlikely occurrence and can be stopped so completely by British air and naval presence in the eastern Med, I include it here more for completeness than any expected use. If this opening ever presents itself, by all means take advantage of it. If nothing else, you may at least succeed in pulling British fleets out of Gibraltar, limiting your opponent's SR capacity into the Mediterranean.

Base Greece

Finally, this is how I recommend the invasion of Turkey be arranged. With northern Greece available for basing both ground and air forces, you more than double the strength of your initial assault. In addition, that extra Greek hex—AA30—allows infantry to attack AA31, lessening any Exchange costs.

Faced with this deployment, Turkey may actually concede Zipper, Zanzibar, or any other unit. Abandoning the entire European shore, however, is not likely and is the only defense certain to allow Axis troops to end the turn “within several hexes of Ankara”, Mr. Palmer’s expected result.

Turkish (Blood)Bath

No matter how many British troops enter Turkey, the country will lose one turn for each if Germany is weak and rolled poor results. Any British which can be isolated, particularly armored units, will elicit unprintable remarks from your opponent. Suffice it to say that the more British units involved in Greece and Turkey, the better. Better yet, if you can force them out and nail them on the Anatolian Peninsula than to dig them out of Egypt where they would be tougher to manhandle.

The actual disemberrment of Turkey is nothing to get excited about; it’s not a pretty sight for the Allies. Greece either holds for awhile or folds; if you’re lucky one or two British units may be tied down there, not even able to SR out once you are adjacent to Athens.

But there is an extremely important decision to be made for the Axis, as this is the last opportunity to bail out of total commitment to go after Gibraltar. You must critically assess your situation for those threats which are imminent. If you have been slow walking Turkey or have been hurt, it might be best to go after Russia at this point. If those western colonies have rolled “Free French” and there happen to be a few French units over there holding your Italians at bay, you must consider your chances of the Axis being considerably reduced; Why not go straight for Russia now? You have him outflanked through Turkey, and Egypt will probably fall to you sooner or later anyway. Sure, there’s a lot to be said for sticking to your original plan. But for every game won due to sticking to a plan, I bet I can name ten which have been won due to flexibility. This is a great advantage, and just because I am presently dealing with Mediterranean conquest, don’t think for a minute I would pass up an opportunity to knock the Russian on his can if there were a better chance of that. Flexibility is your trump card, your “Ace in the Hole”.

CAMPAIGN III—MEDITERRANEAN CONSOLIDATION

The easiest part of “a Mediterranean Power Play” is conquest of the Middle East and Egypt. Once Turkey falls, Axis forces driving south and west in conjunction with Libyan pressure from the west ensure a British collapse in short order.

The key problem facing the Axis is deployment requirements for the Spanish and Russo-Turkish frontiers in preparation for the next round of fighting. Naturally enough, the instant something is professed as “easy”, the next step is to try and do it one turn quicker than expected. In the end, nothing is really easy.

The key to Egypt, and the entire British position in the Med, is to knock out more enemy units each turn than can be redeployed into the area. With only four fleets operable out of Gibraltar, this is not too difficult. In fact, should anyone ever have the opportunity to take (like a late-year turn when they simply aren’t 15 BRPs to spare for an Offensive option), a 61+ Attrition versus Egypt and Greece might destroy as many as seven enemy ground units, and British morale as well.

There is some slim chance British air, in addition, might slip through by SRing from Gibraltar to Oran, Algiers, Tunisia and/or Malta and thence by fleet to Egypt. But air has a big problem in Egypt as the Axis easily nail it each turn. There is no place for “used” British air units to hide. The air war is dreadfully slanted in Axis favor there.

The end in Egypt is hastened by the fact that once Axis forces are adjacent to the ports, no British SR in or out is possible. The pathetic plight in the Middle East is mercifully at an end; there will never be a Six-Day War. (See Figure 1.)

Much more exciting are Italy’s exploits in the western desert. This often dormant forward extension of Axis expansionism is, in a “Med Power Play”, of vital importance. From it, Italy must press both east and west. Although progress can be normally realized only in the west, both directions are important—for reasons I believe obvious. In the unlikely event the western colonies are unguarded, even sending a 2-5 armor there to gobbled them up is worthwhile. (Refer to Figure 2.)

More likely, French infantry will preclude any outflanking movement from the overland approach; Tunisia might destroy the entire European shore, however, is not likely and is the only defense certain to allow Axis troops to end the turn “within several hexes of Ankara”, Mr. Palmer’s expected result.

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But there is an extremely important decision to be made for the Axis, as this is the last opportunity to bail out of total commitment to go after Gibraltar. You must critically assess your situation for those threats which are imminent. If you have been slow walking Turkey or have been hurt, it might be best to go after Russia at this point. If those western colonies have rolled “Free French” and there happen to be a few French units over there holding your Italians at bay, you must consider your chances of the Axis being considerably reduced; Why not go straight for Russia now? You have him outflanked through Turkey, and Egypt will probably fall to you sooner or later anyway. Sure, there’s a lot to be said for sticking to your original plan. But for every game won due to sticking to a plan, I bet I can name ten which have been won due to flexibility. This is a great advantage, and just because I am presently dealing with Mediterranean conquest, don’t think for a minute I would pass up an opportunity to knock the Russian on his can if there were a better chance of that. Flexibility is your trump card, your “Ace in the Hole”.

CAMPAIGN IV—SPAIN & GIBRALTAR

There is nothing Spain can do to prevent the fall of Madrid on the first turn of invasion. I borrow from David Hablanian’s article; he did a fine job illustrating the attack on Spain. (The readers may wish to obtain a copy of Vol. 18, No. 5 of The GENERAL, in order to refer to the illustrations and read his entire article.) Germany bulldozes Spain and SRs for a follow-up attack on Gibraltar.

The difference in a “Med Power Play” version of this attack is that it occurs in Fall 1941 in lieu of Fall 1940. Ramifications of the differences are:

1. Britain will likely not be invaded, barring extreme Axis good fortune.
2. Gibraltar will not be backed by North African airbases.
3. Britain faces loss of 25 BRPs in Egypt in the current year as well as a strained economic position due to a year of heavy fighting in the Mediterranean.
4. German Minor Allies have a good chance to activate due to timing of the attack on Spain. 5. The Russian front is strongly held thanks to existence of the Turkish front and activation of at least some Minor Allies; Germany does not face destruction in the East.

Key features of the assault on Gibraltar are: a) capture of Oran, Tangiers and Casablanca; b) British BRP trouble; c) German and Italian shore bombardment from both the West and Med fronts; d) German paratroopers. Should Britain attempt naval interception, she must leave enough fleets available for SR reinforcement of Gibraltar or face the awful fact that any counterair and Exchange losses will not be replaced, allowing the fortress to fall in the following turn. That your attack on Gibraltar should normally guarantee capitulation of the fortress on
any Exchange result is a matter not likely to go unnoticed by the British admirals. Therefore, if it is apparent you have the power to ensure victory on such an Exchange, the British navy will choose whatever course best suits its own needs—meaning reduction of your fleets—and probably throw everything at the Kriegsmarine. So be prepared for it.

Another exciting tactic is to invade England the same turn you attack Gibraltar. This would be more of a “raid” than any full-scale invasion, but it is bound to scorch the land and crumple on the new enemy. He might seriously jeopardize his Gibraltar situation trying to intercept your fleet; you might actually elude or defeat him at sea, and you might even land on British soil. Unfortunately, there is only slim chance you would be willing or able to spend 15 BRPs for a West Front Offensive at this stage of the game. Nevertheless, if you are ready to station troops in port with the Kriegsmarine, the enemy must always guard against this threat.

You enjoy such tremendous air superiority over Gibraltar, there is usually little more than satisfaction gained from a turn of massive counterair. Unless your air force has been reduced by SW and excessive losses, or you face excess RAF power due to failure to secure those North African bases, you can throw a maximum 24 air factors into your attack (even after allowing ten to nullify the ten RAF at Gibraltar). Remember, once you nail the fortress, enemy air remaining in the hex is eliminated for failure to change base anyway, so why waste extra energy on a “killer” counterair attack? Your extra air is much more valuable on the Russian front at this time—or even in France to lend substance to a “Sea Lion” threat.

The only other reason you might opt to annihilate the RAF is on a Winter turn in which you don’t expect to take the fortress but in which Britain will not be able to rebuild the air without depleting her BRP reserves, consequently suffering a BRP Base Reduction at SW Resolution. In this case, counterair attack would yield a valuable fringe benefit.

The Awful Truth

Despite all your planning, coniving and destruction of British forces and BRPs, the actual attack on Gibraltar will still usually be at 1-1 odds. Because of this, you must provide capacity to repeat the attack should the initial attempt fail. Unlike David Hablanian’s situation, however, you can hit even a Gibraltar defended by two 4-5 armor units at 1-1, thanks to use of two 4-6 panzer and 24 air factors. This is because you invested an entire year to reduce the rest of the Mediterranean and those nasty North African airbases. Notice you don’t have to arrange contingency plans to advance a unit on any Exchange result, provided the paratroops are held in reserve for an Exploitation Phase drop on a Gibraltar cleared of ground units by such an Exchange. (See Figure 3.)

This tactic enjoys the advantage of not risking the para unit, potentially saving the nine-BRP rebuilding cost and a valuable SR. Bear in mind, as Mr. Hablanian showed, it is also an excellent way to “cheapo” Gibraltar, allowing a 1-2 attack (17-32) 50% probability you can take the fortress. This is better than half as good as a 1-1 for only half the risk in BRP replacement costs, although the 15 BRP Offensive option cost itself escalates this expense due to higher probability that a repeat attack may be required. But for a desperate German, this 1-2 attack is not bad and might, after all, be his last shot. If it works the first time (50% chance), it is cheaper than a 1-1 Exchange victory. A standard 1-1 attack is successful 83.3% of the time and back-to-back 1-1 attacks fail only 2.7% of the time. I wouldn’t even hesitate to go for it.

Should two 1-1s result in, first, an “A” result versus two 4-5 armor units followed by an Exchange, you may regret ever reading this article as you have spent 206 BRPs reducing Gibraltar (if only land and air forces were involved). Admittedly, the enemy loses 71 BRPs (counting ten air), but you will have to do something outstanding elsewhere; you certainly won’t have impressed the competition at Gibraltar.

If you’re feeling reckless, you might count on shore bombardment to augment this attack, and this would carry with it the added benefit that on an “A” result, your losses would be reduced by the amount of fleets involved as they need not be eliminated. But on an Exchange result, I doubt any of us are so anti-navy that we would relish the thought of wiping out the defenders with matching fleet losses. Trading the Scharnhorst and the Gneisenau for a junkyard of Crusaders and Matildas is no way to win a war.

Notice why it is vital Gibraltar fall prior to the Allied 1942 summer reinforcements! Gibraltar’s potential ground unit strength increases in the following progression:

Spring 1942: (2) 4-5=8×4=32
Summer 1942: 4-5, 5-6, 3-3=12×4=48
Fall 1942: (2) 5-6, 3-3=16×4=64

Since the Allied Spring and Summer turns are taken back-to-back as a DT, you may never face anything less than 48 factors following your Spring ‘42 turn. At that point, if you don’t “cheapo” Gibraltar, you must pray the Russian is not as tough as feared for you must annihilate him somehow. You have lost the war in the West.

BRP Trouble

If things have gone well (I always expect them to), you have taken both Gibraltar and Egypt in 1941. Britain should be in extremely poor financial health. Here’s where SW and Foreign Aid may drive a spike through the British war machine. Consider the following schedule of British 1941 BRP expenses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>BRPs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(125 Base + 30 for Turkey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW Builds</td>
<td>-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of Turkey</td>
<td>-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of Egypt</td>
<td>-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of Gib</td>
<td>-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Aid</td>
<td>-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This leaves only 45 BRPs for all of the 1941 Offensive options, builds, Vichy deactivation attempts and intelligence efforts. Something has to go.

Britain might forego Foreign Aid expenditure this year, and loss of Gibraltar may come off her 1942 Base if the 1941 BRP coffers are drained. In any case, 1942 Year Start SW losses must also be deducted, and it begins to look like Britain will finally be in the Red as Mr. Palmer tried to effect so long ago.

Of course, your illustrious opponent can see this coming in Spring/Summer of 1941, before the critical stage of Winter “freezes” his assets. What might he do? If he fights, he must pay the BRP bills; if he runs, you will conquer everything in sight. He cannot physically stop you, but he can de-escalate
the economic danger by avoiding combat, declining Offensive options, preserving his expensive air and fleet units, and maybe even yielding Egypt without much of a fight. All is to your advantage as it helps you reach Gibraltar in short order. Churchill pressures the Russians to take up the fight and cool his heels in London, arriving of the Yanks.

More of the Awful Truth

Believe it or not, it is important that you attack Portugal the same turn you visit Gibraltar, and you must invade that tiny country with at least three panzer units-four would be better. You might substitute loaned Italian armor, but you must make a Breakthrough attack on Lisbon and exploit to Z8, adjacent to Gibraltar, if your initial 1-1 attack on that fortress results in an "A." Why? Because failure to place units adjacent to Gibraltar would force you to drop the paratroops in that hex and hope the British fail to dislodge it.

This is not a bed of roses for Britain. There may not be enough BRPs left to finance an offensive, and it would be at best a 1-1 attack with both British armor lost on an Exchange (full) result. Britain could reinforce Gibraltar, but this might add those final BRP losses which spell economic doom for the country come the 1942 Year Start. An additional hazard for Britain is that units adjacent to Gibraltar allow the Axis to attack the fortress from a Breakthrough hex where stepping is unlimited. Fortunately for the Brit, there will likely not be enough panzers in Spain at this point to arrange such an attack; nailing the paratroop unit has obvious impact.

Lastly, one other threat the British still pose in the Mediterranean is inherent anytime they manage to base two armored units on a port with fleet capacity to invade. This is why I show four fleets still at Gibraltar. Britain threatens to land at W24 and take Rome if not guarded. After all these months of fighting and getting kicked around, the British could still wreck the war for the Axis. It’s not difficult to visualize three fleets carrying two 4-5 armor to W24 with a fourth fleet providing supply to the beachhead to allow one unit to exploit into Rome. It’s also not difficult to imagine these fleets skating through those Italian fleets. Why take the unnecessary risk? Garrison those beaches and put the Italian fleet at Taranto, Port Said, Oran and Malta (if that island has fallen early).

Finally, likelihood that Britain might forestall your assault on Gibraltar by attacking your positions before that fortress reflects the specific situation of each individual game. If you are pressing in Egypt or have already taken it, have forced some expensive British rebuilding and knocked out enemy BRPs for Turkey and Greece, there can probably be little or no spoiling attack mounted. On the other hand, if the British have wisely pulled back, yielding ground perhaps even too easily but saving BRPs, they probably can finally make a last ditch attempt to retain at least a foothold in the Mediterranean. If nothing else, they are playing to delay capitulation of Gibraltar until arrival of U.S. forces and paratroops allow a more formidable defense.

To prevent this enemy tactic, you might attempt to isolate any of his 4-5 armor and 3-4 infantry still in the desert the same turn you attack Spain. If these units are lost, due to isolation, they cannot be available to man Gibraltar. Enough of these losses, and the enemy may forfeit any chance to hold Z8 by virtue of having no-one left to man the fortress should its original defenders advance out.

CAMPAIGN V—RUSSIA

Russia begins to make a nuisance of herself as early as 1939 when she usually spends nine BRPs on Foreign Aid to Hungary. If Foreign Aid spending is coordinated with Britain—in other words, "spending to the max"—Germany will either be in the hole as 1940 dawns or will be fielding a small army due to channeling BRPs through her diplomatic corps.

My own preference is for Germany to forget about Foreign Aid until late 1940, after the conquest of France. This is based on the conviction that maximum builds are required to ensure a speedy demise of France, Germany’s number one priority in 1940. "Maximum builds" means building the most quick strike forces (air, airborne and panzer) possible without allowing opportunity for an untimely enemy DT. Naturally enough, Germany also must build large quantities of infantry and at least a few replacement units. With these BRP demands evident, Germany can ill-afford playing the Foreign Aid game while France hangs in the balance. Besides, it doesn’t matter when in 1940 those BRPs go to the minors, and Germany needs them in her reserves until France is gone.

But Foreign Aid is just the tip of a Russian iceberg of troubles headed Germany’s way when pursuing a Mediterranean victory. The big issue to be resolved is what Germany is to do on the East Front while putting around the Med.

First of all, Germany does not lack sufficient forces to block Russian overtures in Poland and Rumania in 1941. Due to her small air force and meager initial compliment of armor, Russia threatens little against a German player intelligent enough to defend with a double line. Russia’s biggest target is Warsaw, and it can easily be covered with panzers and air power.

Second, in most cases Germany will still take an aggressive stance against Russia, and attack despite continued commitments in the Mediterranean. In this instance, the exposed southern flank through Turkey can be a nail in Russia’s coffin. A couple of panzers in eastern Turkey pull as many as ten Russian units off the main line, effectively killing any Russian counterattack possibilities.

But the real test for Germany begins in mid-1942 with the entrance of Russia’s ’42 builds. At that point, Russia can fight back on both the main front and in Turkey. She will not be able to buy Offensive options each turn, especially if fighting in the south has flowed into Turkey itself on the Med Front, but at least Russian armies are now able to cover their front lines with a double line, and a triple one where needed. Adding four more armored and two paratroop units to their forces doesn’t hurt much either. It certainly gives the German a lot to think about.

On the other side of the continent, Britain and the US also begin to make a lot of noise at this time. The situation there, however, is far less complex than in Russia, because Germany’s objective is easy to understand: keep the enemy off those beaches, and tie them up once landed. As one would imagine, understanding it and doing it are not the same thing at all.

Figure 4 shows a typical East Front situation in Winter 1941, as Germany completes her Mediterranean feast. Notice the absence of half the panzers, the paratroops and all the Luftwaffe. They are still busy chewing on Egypt and Gibraltar. Lacking these units, Germany might be in trouble were it not for her extra front in eastern Turkey. Russia could ignore that region, but would still gain little on the
Polish front and soon would be in trouble herself. Not surprisingly, there is really nothing new on the steps as far as tactics; check out the previously mentioned articles by Nayyer Ali and Marcus Watney. Depending on who declares war first, there may or may not be a turn or two of Russian offensive action resulting in either a German collapse of variable magnitude or a stiff rebuff of counteroffensive action. Play is generally more open and balanced than in a “Standard Game”, owing to the expanded war in the Caucasus and absence of substantial German forces still assaulting Gibraltar if Russia declares war in 1941.

As 1943 wears on, you will increasingly replace Eastern Europe, Leningrad, Moscow and Vologda as your main concern now. Eastern Europe, Leningrad, Moscow and Vologda "Achilles Heel" is aggravated by prior elimination of Turkey in early 1941. The key in Russia is to draw as much enemy strength to an area where he has little to gain; he can do no damage to you in the Caucasus other than physically destroy what forces you placed there. You need fear no loss of a Warsaw or a Bucharest as a “Med Power Play”, swinging into Russia directly after the fall of Turkey.

Of course, once you push him out of the Caucasus he once again, as in a “Standard Game”, is fighting on one contiguous front. But so are you. Figure 5 shows a typical situation in 1943. Heavy Axis panzer and air concentrations in the Caucasus have attracted the lion’s share of Russian attention. Notice how the paratroopers are divided, to threaten breakthrough against a double line on either front. Should you ever want to threaten maximum penetration in one area, both parax can gang up, but this frees the rest of the Russian line from their danger. Naturally, you will also have to counterparatroop deployment too, both in the east and in the west.

Whenever possible, Russian air gets counterfeated and intercepted to prevent wasting Axis SRs to pull spent airways out of enemy counterair range. Always remember, a single enemy air factor can attack a spent 5-4, or even more, with a +1 modifier and possibly destroy as many as six of your air factors while risking only one of his own. Allowing such an attack might justify enemy offensive action, or some risky venture by virtue of the chance that nailing your air helps defray other incurred expense. Once you demonstrate that exposed enemy air is a serious threat, it will be the enemy’s turn to waste SRs to pull out of range and suffer inconvenience with poor air coverage due to less than optimal basing.

As for pushing the enemy out of the Caucasus, you can drive along either the Black Sea coast or the Caspian. A Black Sea offensive could eventually link up with your Polish front, driving on Rostov from the west. A Caspian offensive promises to unhinge the entire Russian defense line, if only it can push beyond Astrakhan. Coupled with current effort to the west against Leningrad and Vologda to draw off enemy strength, this might knock Russia out and immediately win the game. However, I am not suggesting there is a great chance of an outright win in Russia. Of course that is your objective, but a realistic approach is to merely wear down the Russian, force him to drain BRPs from his Western Allies, pick up some added BRPs for Eastern Europe, Leningrad and Moscow, and to put some distance between Russian forces and German eastern borders in preparation for the Front End Game. As stated previously, should you have good reason to believe your Russian opponent is weak, he is the one you should attack with either a "Standard Game" or an abbreviated "Med Power Play", swinging into Russia directly after the fall of Turkey in early 1941.

But even after all that, if you somehow manage to gain tremendous advantage in the East, there is yet another approach you should take which, coincidentally, addresses all those drawbacks encountered in a Caucasus campaign. Should chance and circumstances conspire to have you left out of the party and the war is a direct attack across the Polish front. As in a “Standard Game”, immediate objectives Eastern Europe, Leningrad, Moscow and Vologda are selected to prey on Russian BRP weakness; if only she could be isolated from those Western enemies, the country should not stand long. This "Achilles Heel" is aggravated by prior elimination of Lend Lease potential and existence of the Caucasus distraction.

But chances of knocking out Russia in 1942-43 as though it were 1941-42 are almost nil, and will not be explored here in depth. It is not anticipated. The best strategy to employ against a strong Russian, a player to be avoided. It is not the best strategy to use against a weak Russian player, and that is the only Russian who could be conquered by it (although he would be
conquered much more easily by a "Standard Game" course.

The entire situation in Russia will require much more attention than it has received here. I have merely touched on some critical areas. Proper coverage must wait, as it will be a very lengthy effort which details all the points to be considered. Ramifications of a German plan to force an enemy DT over Fall/Winter 1941 alone are so profound that I have not yet even cluttered the strategic scene with such thoughts.

CAMPAIGN VI—DEFENDING THE WEST

There are twelve hexes to defend against invasion, plus six ports which could fall to Allied paratroopers. Gibraltar is the invasion hex a casual glance might not make apparent. Hex F33 cannot be invaded (GR Guide, page 44, 5.6). However, don't think you need cover all 18 of these hexes with maximum force. Gibraltar needs only a 9-factor fleet; Casablanca actually requires nothing at all; Bergen, Wilhelmshaven, Calais, Cherbourg and Lorient can all be held by 9-factor fleets and one-factor ground units. R17 is outside Allied aircover; Portugal is beyond both aircover and paratroop range. This leaves only three hexes (Rennes, Caen and Dieppe) where the Allies can invade full force, plus the six ports susceptible to a paratroop. Still a lot to cover.

The danger at Casablanca is not that the Allies can land and exploit as far as even Oran if they chose to on the turn of invasion, nor that they might continue to fight their way east. The only real danger is a subsequent paratroop into Gibraltar or even Cadiz, which could open the entire Mediterranean to eventual Allied landings. Therefore, stopping a landing at Casablanca is not important, guarding against what might follow is.

In many respects, it would be much to Axis advantage to entice an Allied landing at Casablanca, because by retaining control of Gibraltar they ensure hard times for Allied North African exploits. Committed enemy forces could never SR back to the West. Should they actually send a paratroop unit there, so much the better. You need only guard Gibraltar against it, and consequently need not fear it dropping in France. Any overland campaign across North Africa would require a march all the way to Egypt to reach the first Allied source of supply. This would be a ludicrous operation.

Another option, probably the wiser one, is to not even conquer Morocco in the first place! Once Oran falls, no Allied action can occur in that colony for want of supply. Even subsequent invasion at Casablanca will not remedy this situation since no BH counter may be placed when it is a friendly beach invaded. So Casablanca could be secured for all time simply by not conquering Morocco, although this does yield five BRPs per turn.

And what danger might this lack of aggressiveness entail? Since no airbase could be built or remain in isolated Morocco, Britain could base only one airwing in the city of Casablanca. It has already been demonstrated that the Axis have adequate airpower to take Gibraltar with six air remaining from their total 40. Five of these could be used to offset those five enemy air factors at Casablanca. Thus, at the fall of Gibraltar, even more British air will be eliminated as any remaining at Casablanca will be intentionally destroyed for use elsewhere. They are useless in Africa; destroying five RAF factors outweighs the value of holding Morocco for three years, plus the energy and resources spent to conquer the country.

Because of the importance of Gibraltar, it is vital you defend the Portuguese beach to the fullest. It becomes the most important beach on the continent. Should the Axis allow an opportunity for enemy landings here, it will come with a fury as any chance to open Gibraltar will be seized immediately. This is the Western Allies' best tactic to bring heavy pressure on you.

The magnitude of losing Gibraltar would be compounded by not only the absence of Axis defenders in the Med, but also by the absence of any fleets in the Mediterranean! In fact, only the fleet displaced with the fall of Gibraltar would be in the Mediterranean if the enemy caught you napping. A single enemy fleet is all it takes to keep you from using the Suez Canal to get your navy into the Med (47.3). You would be better off had you forgotten about the Med and gone after Russia in 1941.

Does anyone believe it is only by chance that the north coast of Spain is exactly one hex beyond paratroop range from Britain? This, at least, is something the Axis can cheer.

I hope to have made clear that retaining Gibraltar is much more important than holding any of the French beaches—or Paris itself for that matter. This is true for the same reason a major Allied landing at Casablanca would be welcome relief for the Axis, knowing where the Allies are committed is far preferable to wondering where they will attack. Certainly, even with a large force committed through one Beachhead, the enemy might still invade another, but it would be with reduced facility and would finally exhaust their capacity for substantial landings. It's Marcus Watney's early war Italian assessment with reversed roles. "The threat is often worse than the deed."

Once the Allied army is tied down in the West, the Axis have the opportunity to swing into gear with their #1 West Front strategy—the Attrition option. The sure, there may be need for an Offensive option or two against the initial invasion, but only if such can blast the enemy back into the sea. Once ashore in force, however, there is usually much more to be gained in economic factors with an attrition strategy.

This is due to a number of aspects: overwhelming Allied air power, increased value of each hex in the crowded West, scarcity of Axis air and panzer units (still needed in the East), and a BRP exchange featuring no Axis expenditures and massive Allied costs for multiple Offensive options. As in the 1944 scenario, the correct way for Germany to respond is with airpower, landpower and panzer, versus air/foot Russia, and with infantry backed by a few panzer formations attritioning the Western Allies. Each hex comes so dear in the post-invasion West, you can drive the enemy to tears by taking several back per turn with "free" Attrition attacks. Carried to the extreme, West Front Offensive options alone might cost the Allies 120 BRPs in a single year, matched against the zero spent by the Axis for Attritions. This should never happen; but it does serve to illustrate the kind of exchange ratio which wins games.

Figure 5 shows a typical Atlantic Wall defense in 1942-43. It truly might be asked whether the Allies could stay by early 1943, but their build-up will be so slow due to your outstanding BRP situation and their escalated cost for fighting so hard so early, that you still have less to fear from them than from Russia.
Notice this total commitment is more Axis army than the Western Allies can throw onto the beach. But it allows your air and panzer formations to operate on the Eastern Front where you are still conducting major offensive actions. In any case, you want to have a substantial force on hand in the West to lock horns with the enemy on their turn of invasion. This requires about the same number of units shown. It is a good fit.

Some locations are easy to defend. Gibraltar (one fleet) and Casablanca (nothing) are the easiest. Also easy when fleets are available are the five port/beach hexes described earlier. Tough to defend are all the non-port beaches, except Casablanca. Some are tougher than others, depending on the proximity to Allied air and paratroops, but all of them can be hit at 1-1 or 2-1 odds with the most likely result landing Allied troops on the beach.

Those ports which can be hit by a paratroop drop and therefore must be defended by units in the city as well as adjacent to it, I classify as "easy but expensive" to protect. They are expensive in the sense that they eat up those wonderful 1-3 infantry you'd rather use to fill holes in the East Front. You might use Replacement units in the ports themselves; but once the enemy has landed, any on the front line are more hindrance than help. You will likely kill them intentionally to get them out of the way. Double protect these ports in linear fashion against both Allied paratroop units dropping in tandem—the dread "para-Mutual" attack.

**How Much is Enough?**

Once the fact of an Allied landing is accepted, it becomes a much simpler matter to defend than were one to try to stop the landing itself. For that matter, with the defense presented and the entire Axis navy available to intercept, everything possible has been done to keep those beaches clear, short of yielding in the east by stealing away the Luftwaffe and panzer corps as well. But the Allies would still land. After all, the strongest defense possible is only 39 factors (two 4-6 plus a 3-3 and 2-3 paras), until 1944 when it becomes 45 factors thanks to the addition of the 1st SS and Gross Deutschland. If the Allies haven't landed by 1944, you have won anyway. Besides, the paratroops threaten so much in Russia, it is criminal to use them for beach defense.

Even should you guard selected beaches against Allied 2-1 attack (Dieppe comes to mind), there is nothing to prevent them attempting a low-odds 1-1 designed to land lots of back-up force should they gain the beach. In fact, that is probably their best move, because it makes any subsequent Axis attempt to hurl them back into the sea much more difficult in the face of that extra Allied DAS saved by not committing it earlier as ground support. Since a 1-1 (Exchange works) enjoys an 83% chance of landing, and the Allies maintain plenty of DAS to cover this expeditionary force, chance of enemy success is high. The Axis may even go straight to an Attrition option. The Allies have landed!

**The Enemy—A Brief Profile**

Two great Allied advantages are at play here. Most obvious, the enemy enjoys the luxury of concentrating effort on the Atlantic Wall. This advantage is not negated by equivalent Axis ability to so concentrate, because low quality Axis units normally defending the Mediterranean are no match for the high quality stuff the Allies have saved by not fighting there. High quality, because that's the only quality these British and American armies, navies and air forces know. They use no scrubs.

*Figure 6: Compare this with the previous figure. This is the situation after some German infantry have come west and some Italian 2-3s have moved east. Extra air and armor might serve better purpose in Russia, but are shown in Spain and southwest France as added precaution against enemy invasion of Portugal. No Vichy are shown, although the likelihood some will be available is high.*
Second, there is a great sense of immediacy in the need for a European landing. Russia stands to win it alone or lose it for all with the kind of pressure Germany is applying. Ironically, Russian BRP strength may be such that only limited Murmansk convoys are required. Lend Lease, of course, is out of the question as Germany gobbled up Turkey, followed by Austria and Czechoslovakia long ago. The point is, Russia’s BRP situation might actually lend itself to enhance success of an early western landing.

Western Allied strength is a frightful thing when focused all at one point in this manner. Though I believe we will never see anyone seriously promote any deliberate attack on the Mediterranean. There may be some merit in developing Allied counter-strategy to the “Med Power Play”, built upon the concept of enticing the Axis into going after Egypt. I feel there is a fine line of BRP expense beyond which it is to Allied advantage to allow the Axis to venture a quest to take Egypt. British loss of 25 BRPs at Suez is, after all, a fair trade for some amount of Axis Offensive options, rebuilding costs and time investment. The trick would be to identify how many BRPs and to preclude loss of Gibraltar in order to avoid the devastating “Walk Like an Egyptian” stigma. Also, it would be interesting to see what a separate Russian player might think of your goodheartedness in distracting so much Axis attention away from him. Would he be willing to lower his BRP demands, which are bound to come no matter what once the German moves east? What other concessions might Britain elicit from Russia?

**Pattern Bombing the Kriegsmarine**

One apparent flaw in this grand strategy to defend the Atlantic Wall is Axis fleet susceptibility to enemy attack. Simple matter for Allied air power to rain substantial damage down upon Axis fleets. Advantages the Allies wield in such a naval/air war are the year-long lag between financing fleet replacement and actual construction of new vessels; limited replacement fleet counters might force extra fleet losses; combined German and Italian fleet losses make naval rebuilding less than optimum; Axis inconvenience in the form of SR consumption to reform full 9-factor fleets; and some Axis ships may have already been eliminated or damaged. Hah!

Scatter bombing the fleet is an extremely inefficient method of BRP attrition and will not easily reduce the Axis fleet strength to allow Allied landings. Those Allied advantages do not overcome the fact that the Axis combined navies total eight fleets to cover the four beach/port hexes involved. Fleets nine and ten are at Bergen and Gibraltar, outside the Allied air umbrella. Unless these navies have been greatly reduced by prior naval engagement, it is difficult to envision enemy air power chasing them from these ports. Let them try!

To illustrate, consider an Allied air attack using all 45 air factors. This ought to result in 33% losses on each side; naval and air cost three BRPs each to rebuild, but the Allies also pay the Offensive option costs. So, in one season, the Axis lose 15 fleet factors (45 BRPs worth) while the Allies lose 15 air factors and pay for two Offensive options (75 BRPs worth). Outrageous, of course. This attack costs the Axis only 60% what it cost the enemy and the fleets reform, probably suffering some additional losses due to scarcity of replacement fleet counters as mentioned earlier, to once again cover those beaches.

Should the Allies wish to attack individually, Britain could throw her four airings into the battle and cause you only 57% of her own expenses, or the U.S. could toss five airings at you and force 62% costs on your navies. But using only one air force per season will probably never catch up with the Axis rebuilding programs. Of course, I am assuming the Allies are doing nothing else at the same time; what could they be doing in consequence with all their air tied-up in this senseless bombing? But, were they also managing to do something else, my percentage costs should be amended since Offensive option costs could no longer all be assessed to this Strategic Command action. Notice, also, any available Vichy fleet freees yet another Axis fleet to defend these ports/beaches.

Allied expense is so high, I consider the whole thing academic. One Axis option is to not even bother rebuilding fleets. The Allies should have to spend an average 179 BRPs at their best rate (U.S. alone) to reduce enough fleets to open the first port/beach; and this only after more than a year of relentless bombing. This process can be expedited by using both air forces at a higher average BRP cost of 185, getting the job done on the third season of bombing. However, the Axis still have time to respond with conventional ground troop defense of any threatened beach, raising the question, “Why did the Allies spend so many BRPs for such little gain?”

Axis decision to not replace fleet losses, in effect cashing in on early war naval investment, is one method of directly converting armistice strength to BRP advantage. And why should they rebuild any fleets? After all, these fleets are of little use in the West once the Allies are ashore and able to SR across the channel. At this point of the game, any remaining fleets should return to the Mediterranean where, following eventual loss of Gibraltar, they can be employed to thwart Allied amphibious landings at locations such as Taranto, Malta and Port Said.

What I’m really saying is that Axis fleets on board at the conclusion of play are evidence of wasted strength, much the same as French fleets which turn Vichy in the early war. But the Axis player may be guilty of wasting opportunity to use his fleet, whereas the French probably never had such opportunity or, upon employing his fleets, were allowed the passage by an Italian reluctant to risk his own navy. But the motto my Axis fleets sail under is, “If you don’t employ them, may as well destroy them.”

**Enemy Double Turn Bypass**

The most important thing you must do in 1942 is ensure the Allies take a DT over Summer and Spring. Should they somehow manage to spend enough in Spring to avoid it you will face one over Winter ’42/Spring ’43. By that time there will be so many U.S. forces ready to hit the beaches or maul you from a previously established beachhead, you may as well pack it in than face two turns of such abuse. You have lost the game.

But it is very easy to prevent such a nightmare. The Allies cannot spend 25 BRPs to open Lend Lease in Spring 1942 because that possibility no longer exists. Though not specifically denied in the rules, I feel the Allies cannot spend BRPs for something which is impossible—it seems implicit. That nullifies their most common trick to elude a DT.
But just in case your economic situation is so robust you still face danger of an Allied “DT Bypass”, your coolant expenses might include DoW versus Norway and Sweden, or Offensive in the West to harass enemy fleets, counter-air or even raid England or Ireland, a Vichy Activation attempt, Foreign Aid, an Intelligentsia attempt, purchase of any lost 9-factor fleets (it’s illegal to spend BRPs for fleets which have not yet sunk), and finally suicide attacks followed by construction of lost units. In short, you have ample capacity to guarantee the enemy DT.

I almost hate to mention it, but if Russia does not declare war in 1941 you may need to do so by Spring 1942. Otherwise the Allies could avoid a DT no matter what else you do.

Fortunately, once you have the initiative, the Allies dare not let you get it back, for you still could knock out Russia on a DT. This is another reason why it behooves you to keep heavy pressure on the eastern enemy. That’s where you might still win an outright KIA; there is really no chance of it in the West.

Late War Western Dilemma

Figure 7 shows why attrition is the way to go in the West. An Allied spearhead in early 1944 seems to have Germany on the ropes. What happens when the Axis roll on the 61 + Attrition column? The Allies are sliced to ribbons, that’s what. Despite massive DAS, you cut into the enemy penetration and stop them cold. All the enemy air is useless on defense.

Any U.S. Attrition casualties, either by choice to keep a hex or by failure to retreat, won’t return to the continent for half a year! Since British armor have only five movement factors, deepest Allied exploitation penetrations will often be American armor by necessity. This plays right into your hands; any U.S. Attrition casualties, either by choice to keep a hex or by failure to retreat, won’t return to the continent for half a year! Since British armor have only five movement factors, deepest Allied exploitation penetrations will often be American armor by necessity. This plays right into your hands;

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Where It’s At

Ultimately, the real benefits of a “Mediterranean Power Play” might lie more in its threat than application. (Haven’t we heard this before?) If you conquer the Med once or twice versus your favorite opponent, they will eventually try early war tactics to stop or at least hinder you. Maybe a British offensive in North Africa to spoil Italian-held Libya would be cute. The Allies might try a northern Italian invasion, like we all tried the first couple of times we played JR. Even a pre-emptive invasion of Greece might be in order. Taken in Fall 1939, there would be nothing to fear from Italy as there is no war between that country and the Allies yet. Anycare to reactivate a 1939 invasion of Turkey? I maintain that throwing a “Med Power Play” around once in a while will at least diversify your gaming pleasure to a degree unmatched in this “classic” for years. The more flexibility you carry into each game, the more your opponents will respect you, and even yield elements of advantage as they exercise caution in deference to your “reputation”. You might even prompt them to hazard an unwarranted risk they otherwise might not even consider. They are stepping to your tune.

MORE TO COME?

I hope I have demonstrated that a “Mediterranean Power Play” has its place in your 3R repertoire. As mentioned, it’s nothing at all like a “perfect plan”. If we start finding such plans for this game, I’ll either stop playing THIRD REICH or push for revisions of the offending rules.

But the “Med Power Play” is a living and breathing entity. It has its highs and its lows. There’s nothing like the confidence one can feel about creating a true Atlantic Wall, or the depression of rolling death at Gibraltar on back-to-back 1-DT attacks. For many of us, the thrill of fighting the entire year of 1941 in the Mediterranean instead of on the Russian steppe is reason enough to opt for a southern approach.

I am the first to admit that this account has probably raised or left unanswered at least as many questions as it has addressed. I have not been as specific in certain areas as I would like, such as the Italian campaign across Tunisia-Algeria-Morocco or the German swing through the Middle East. These operations are basically straightforward, less abstract than others covered in greater detail—but couldn’t I use some illustration. For that matter, I believe every Axis efforts in 1939 and early 1940 could handle some coverage; but that seems like beating a dead horse, with all the effort already expended elsewhere in these pages on that topic. And I have scarcely mentioned SW, Foreign Aid, enemy variants... the list goes on. The situation in Russia alone might demand space equal to this “Southern Yeannings” piece.

Suffice it to say I would like to continue with more on the “Mediterranean Power Play”, but not here. This is enough for one reading. I would, consequently, appreciate it if those interested in additional material in these pages on this subject would make their feelings known either to THE GENERAL or to me (1141 Willshire Road, Lyndhurst, Ohio 44124).

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Our regular survey of what’s being played among the readership drew a considerable response this time, due no doubt to the fact that response to the “1988 GENERAL Readers’ Survey” has been impressive. Many took advantage of the fact that both forms were available in these pages on this subject; and provides some interesting insights. While ASL continues to dominate, both DIP and JR have a loyal following. All of Avalon Hill’s solitaire games make a strong showing, encouraging us to look at new solitaire designs in these pages with more frequency. And, while some worthy titles drop off the listings, others covered in greater detail—but couldn’t I use some illustration. For that matter, I believe every Axis efforts in 1939 and early 1940 could handle some coverage; but that seems like beating a dead horse, with all the effort already expended elsewhere in these pages on that topic. And I have scarcely mentioned SW, Foreign Aid, enemy variants... the list goes on. The situation in Russia alone might demand space equal to this “Southern Yeannings” piece.

Suffice it to say I would like to continue with more on the “Mediterranean Power Play”, but not here. This is enough for one reading. I would, consequently, appreciate it if those interested in additional material in these pages on this subject would make their feelings known either to THE GENERAL or to me (1141 Willshire Road, Lyndhurst, Ohio 44124).

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AREA 1702 wants 16+ for rated play in AK, BR, TRC, and W&P. John Elliott, 1208 5th Ave., Chicago, IL 60610.

Wanted hobby needs new blood! Game Gassmenterie, since 1976, offers DIP, TRC, VITP, players, and many others. Send info on games, 'zincs, and services. Send $1.00. W. J. Ely Hinton, Jr., 20 Almon St., Nashua, NH 03060.


24-year old seeks in TRC, SL, ASL, VITP, PPB, or PL. Also seek and TRC and VITP. Chad J. Mekash, 10 Lotth Dr., Hamilton, NJ 08690, (609) 772-3752.

Wanted! for and/or FM: SL, PPB, AIW flexible on systems. Adult players only. All letters answered. Michael, 988 4th St., Tacoma, WA 98402, (206) 356-2863.

Wanted! for and/or FM: SL, ASD, AIW flexible on systems. Adult players only. All letters answered. Michael, 988 4th St., Tacoma, WA 98402, (206) 356-2863.

Wanted! pbm for FM: SL, PPB, AIW flexible on systems. Adult players only. All letters answered. Michael, 988 4th St., Tacoma, WA 98402, (206) 356-2863.
THUNDER AT CASINO

9.6 Can you explain “screening” better?
A. Whenever a player has more combat units in an area than his opponent, he can protect some of them from CC attack by screening them with other units, such that there is at least one “screening” unit for each opposing combat unit. Those of his units not in this screening force are immune to attack during CC.

12.2 Can Anti-Tank Guns and Armored units screen in an adjacent area?
A. Yes, the circle around their attack factor is merely a reminder that they can also affect targeted enemies.

13.1 Why aren’t infantry units affected by screening?
A. Given the scale of the game, such effects would not be realistic.

14.3 Can Artillery be called in by an observer who is in the same area with enemy units?
A. Yes; this is not STORM OVER ANHREM.

5.6 If there are more than two German units in an Area, is the TEM subtracted from each die roll or the total die roll?
A. The latter.

8.35 If the Retreat Priority calls for an Armor/AT unit to cross a red boundary, is it eliminated if it enters the retreat area while the Armor/AT moved into the highest available area west of the boundary?
A. The latter. Note that if a combined force of Armor/AT units were retreating, the infantry would split away and enter the higher priority retreat area while the Armor/AT moved into the highest available area west of the boundary.

13.2 If both Construction units occupy the same area, can the Allied player use one unit to repair the other?
A. No. Only one level of Rubble may be removed by a Rubble 2 marker while both construction units are present.

14.3 Can an opposing player’s defensive fire “attack resolution DR” remove Smoke?
A. Yes.

17.2 When both players have choice of placing units, which side places the units first?
A. They count their units first, and the player with the most units in play does so first.

19.2 Why aren’t infantry units affected by Rubble?
A. They count as one category only and cannot affect their own personnel equipment.

A. Whenever a player has more combat units in an area than his opponent, he can protect some of them from CC attack by screening them with other units, such that there is at least one “screening” unit for each opposing combat unit. Those of his units not in this screening force are immune to attack during CC.

1.42 If British units in Vichy were deserters from the Turkish army-may British units stack with that minor’s units before the SR Phase?
A. No. Rule 27.42 prevails unless supply is restored before the SR Phase.

33.42 May British Variant #5 be played at the start of the 1942 and 1944 scenarios?
A. Yes. Note: Rule 21.42 prevails unless supply is restored before the SR Phase.

33.43 If France has a minor ally—say, Spain or Turkey—may British units stack with that minor’s units before 1942?
A. No. Remember that Europe is unified until 1942.

ADVANCED SUPPORT LEADER
A.82 A CE AFV moves and a squad chooses to attack it using Defensive First Fire. According to this rule, this General Collateral Attack lowers no Residual FP, True or False?
A. False. The Small Arms Attack is actually made versus the entire Location, and does not lower Residual FP. The accompanying General Collateral Attack (vs. the PRC) attacks by that amount lower Residual FP; see the last sentence of A 148.

A.86 Residual FP with an Air Burst is increased by one column; but when is it resolved versus Infantry, does the +1 TEM for woods get applied? A. Yes; the +1 TEM for woods does get applied.

A.91 If a HMG firing from a building has established a CA, can the HMG be used that same phase against an enemy Infantry that is more than two German units in an area? If the HMG’s Location across a hexside that is not within the HMG’s CA?
A. Yes.

A.93 Can an MG set up an Alternative Hex Fire Lane along a Continuous Slope? A. Yes.

A.223 If a MG has established a Fire Lane, would an enemy unarmored vehicle (with no PRC) entering the MG’s Location cause cancellation of that Fire Lane?
A. No. Note: Rule 12.

A.225 Is a commissar immune to DM when attempting Self-Rally?
A. No. A leader cannot affect his own personnel equipment.

A.261 If captured Personnel/equipment count as double their normal VP only at the end of play, what is their value during play?
A. They count as their normal VP during play. For example, a captured squad is worth two VP during the game (even if Exited); only at the end of play is its value increased to four points.

AH RBG RATINGS CHARTS
The following games are ranked by reader-generated overall Value rating. Further aspects of reader response to our titles is indicated 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 it values highly.
Infiltrator's Report

Want to display your loyalty to your favorite game company? No better way to do it than to wear its name proudly on your chest—and I'm not talking about a tattoo, but the next best thing...a T-shirt. Shown below are our svelte models (from left to right: Craig Taylor, Bill Peschel and Don Greenwood) wearing the latest versions. If you are interested in spreading the gospel of wargaming, you can order any of these direct from The Avalon Hill Game Company (4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214) for $6.00 each, plus the usual shipping costs of 10%. Simply indicate which shirt you wish, and specify size (sm, med, lg, or X-lg).

Congratulations to Don Burdick who finally persevered his way to the BULGE '81 championship in the AREA tournament after two rounds and four years when Frank Peterson surrendered, leaving Don as the sole survivor of the 25 original postal entrants. Don now holds two AREA championships, having bested Tom Oleson in the latter's first defense of his ANZIO crown. AREA members wishing to challenge Don for either of his titles may do so by writing Don Greenwood, who will pass qualifying challengers on to Mr. Burdick.

Seems, if you're looking for a good amateur 'zine devoted to sports boardgames, you have to turn to the British. Mr. Ellis Simpson of Glasgow is editor and publisher of Sensation!, a 56-page irregular publication (40p per issue). Sports aren't the only concern—the most recent issue we've seen (#36) had brief reviews on a number of wargames (including Lee vs. Grant and family games. But sports games, and news of the world of sports, certainly dominate the coverage. The activities in a number of boardgame leagues (including one for soccer and one for baseball) are regularly reported upon. If you are a sports boardgame fan who is interested in adding to your library, check out Sensation! More information can be obtained from Mr. Simpson (95 Ormonde Crescent, Netherlee, Glasgow G44 3SW, UK).

Our rather long look at RAID ON ST. NAZAIRE, with articles running the range from historical to analytical, drew both some kudos and some complaints. When the dust settled, the issue (Vol. 24, No. 4) polled a respectable 2.95 Overall Rating. Surprisingly, the historical piece, Mr. Seaman's "Operation Chariot" grabbed the top spot. The ratings for all the articles of the latest issue, based on a random sampling of 200 reader responses, are as follows:

OPERATION CHARIOT ............ 302
SERIES REPLAY .................. 268
TRAVEL GUIDE TO ST. NAZAIRE . 176
VARIATIONS ON A RAID ........ 108
MAN THE BEACHES .............. 98
THE INLAND DEFENSE .......... 78
SQUAD LEADER CLINIC ........ 72
RUNNING THE GAUNTLET ....... 71
ASL ARMOR STUDIES .......... 68
AH PHILOSOPHY ................. 27
STAFF BRIEFING—PESCHEL .... 12

Want to know about new game releases? Or how we rate the latest boardgames? How about an update on the current crop of T-shirt sales? A peek at the "1988 GENERAL Reader's Survey"? Don Bryant, Westminster, CA; Scott Cameron, Hicksville, NY; Tom Lavan, Irvine, CA; R.S. Levy, Baton Rouge, LA; Chick Lewis, Van Nuys, CA; James Mitchell, Champlin, MN; and Craig Tenhoff, Long Beach, LA. A number came close, in most cases splitting Haines and Newman, which left them with but one grenade attack in 232.

In Contest 140, devised by the devious Greenwood, proved a tougher challenge than we thought. Due in part to the "1988 GENERAL Reader's Survey" form on the reverse, there were a great many entries. However, only seven came up with the exact solution mapped out in the last issue's "Infiltrator's Report": Don Bryant, Westminster, CA; Scott Cameron, Hicksville, NY; Tom Lavan, Irvine, CA; R.S. Levy, Baton Rouge, LA; Chick Lewis, Van Nuys, CA; James Mitchell, Champlin, MN; and Craig Tenhoff, Long Beach, LA. A number came close, in most cases splitting Haines and Newman, which left them with but one grenade attack in 232.

In Contest 141, looking at the score for this game of BRITANNIA it's clear the big problem is to catch Red. With this in mind, a straightforward Angle move presents itself: drop the reinforcement in Lothian, then send two armies into Strathclyde and two into Cheshire. The armies in Strathclyde will fight to mutual annihilation with the Brigantes, denying Red five points. The armies in Cheshire will kill Harold and take the territory, earning five extra points for Blue and denying Purple one point. The other three armies each hold two-point territories. This leaves the Normans. Some examination shows:

1) The Normans can kill Harold, but they'll lose the game if they do. Since Harold can retreat to Cornwall or Avalon, the Normans must send one army into each (the cavalry army in Avalon would also conquer the territory); this leaves only three armies and William and all of them must go to Devon in order to get Harold. This attack gets Blue three points for Harold and one for Avalon, but loses three for twice, Downlands and Sussex. It does not cost Red two for Devon and Avalon—but not enough.

2) William can become King, but will lose the game if he does. The Normans can cover six territories with their six pieces (William can hold a territory by himself and the cavalry army can conquer a Saxon Territory); then the Saxons and Norman armies must be fought off the territories each however. This means changing the Angle move for if six Angles go two each to Cheshire, Cumbria and Bernicia, William will be King. But the Angles will be giving up four points in Lothian and the Pennines, and letting Red keep five (for Strathclyde), which cancels too much of the gains.

3) There's another possibility. Send the four Norman infantry armies against the four Saxon armies in England. Everyone vanishes in mutual annihilation reactions, which denies Red not only the four points for English territories but all others for Devon or Cornwall (since the Saxons cannot score more than half as many points outside England as inside and half again of zero is zero). With the Angle move, this knocks Red down to 104 points along with Purple. Green is now the leader with 106. But there's something you can do about that: send the cavalry army to Powys where it and the Welsh army destroy each other—and the Welsh lose two points. Now every other player is at 104 points; Blue has gained five with the Angle move but lost three for the territories the Norman armies were holding and is at 102. William could hold one territory to make 103, but it's not enough.

Therefore, William the Conqueror (?), in despair over not having become King or killed Harold or kept even one man of his army alive, rides over to North Mercia and throws himself on the spear of a friendly Angle. This gives the Angles three more points, and Blue the game by 105 to 104. The final position leaves England empty everywhere south of North Mercia, ready for the next invasion.
Play TAC AIR—the brand new conventional warfare game that examines the capabilities of the U.S. VII Corps in Southern Germany

Sometimes the best way to understand a large event is to focus on a small portion of it. TAC AIR highlights the possibilities in a hypothetical conventional war in Europe by examining only the forces and terrain located in the United States VII Corps area in southern Germany. This approach allows for the breakdown of the opposing forces into their component combat battalions, air defense batteries and aircraft flights. This scale also permits the representation of the often neglected “soft” command and logistics “tails” that play an essential yet vulnerable role in modern combat. While other modern era wargames abstract command, logistics, engineers, airpower and combined arms tactics, this unique game system practically reveals in these factors, although without overloading the game with details. Securing a victory in TAC AIR is much more than a matter of pushing units around to secure “high odds” attacks, just as real modern combat is much more than the advances or retreats of the headline-grabbing armored units.

TAC AIR examines the elements that underlie the mechanized movements that appear on maps.

With the game’s mixture of units of varying combat capabilities, winning requires a thoughtful and proper combination of forces. Employing ground combat organizations successfully calls for the proper allocation of all types of units. Armor and infantry are required for frontline combat, headquarters to command other ground units, supply columns to provide fuel and ammunition, artillery for support, engineers to create and clear obstacles, and mobile air defense batteries to throw a defensive “umbrella” over all. Tactical air units are the “kickers”—their ability or inability to provide essential air cover, support and reconnaissance can prove decisive to the units maneuvering below.

These “combined arms” game mechanics are provided by a deceptively simple and straightforward Turn sequence. This sequence of play provides for much player interaction, with few “dead” periods when only one side or the other is busy. Even while the other side is moving, players are watching for opportunities to engage with air defense units or deciding the best ways to employ artillery in coming maneuver combat.

Hits from combat are marked on ground units in the form of “disruptions”, and it takes four of these to eliminate a unit, although lesser numbers can seriously degrade a unit’s effectiveness (one disruption prevents attacking and two or more disruptions prevent movement and negate zones of control). At the start of a Turn, players may automatically remove a disruption from headquarters units and from units adjacent to their commanding headquarters units and also roll a die to attempt to remove disruptions from supplied units. Supplied artillery and air defense units can receive ammunition for the coming Turn. Determining proper chains of command and supply lines for these purposes is simplified by the colored symbol on every ground unit that shows its organization at a glance. Then, aircraft servicing is performed and available air units assigned to air control or a variety of air support missions for the coming Air Phase.

One side (usually the attacking Warsaw Pact) then moves its capable ground and helicopter units that are in command. These can fight “maneuver combats” versus enemy ground units after movement. Close attention must be paid to which side of a unit shows; the non-moving side is superior for defense and taking advantage of terrain, but the moving side is necessary for rapid movement and superior for attacking, although frighteningly vulnerable to the unfriendly attentions of roving attack helicopters and fighter-bombers. Engineers destroy and build bridges and create and clear obstacles in support of these moves. Attack helicopter and airmobile units are fast-moving and especially effective, but can be engaged by enemy air defense units as they are moved—naps of the earth flying and clever use of terrain are necessary to maneuver them safely into position.

As maneuver combats are announced, the attacking side can lay artillery barrages on the defenders and the defending side can reply with barrages on the attackers and counter-battery fire on the attacking artillery. This artillery fire is resolved before a maneuver combat and its effects can greatly influence that maneuver combat. The other side then follows suit by moving its ground and helicopter units, etc.

The “Air Phase” is next and really puts the tactical airpower into TAC AIR. Fast-moving air units are alternately moved during ten “Air Rounds” to perform the missions assigned to them earlier. Enemy air defense units may engage air units as they are moved. “Wild Weasel” units engaging in air defense suppression can turn the tables by attacking air defense units and electronic combat aircraft can degrade enemy air defense and air effectiveness. Air control units attempt to protect and intercept other air units by providing close escort and engaging in air-to-air combats by using radar guided missiles or engaging in classic dogfights. Air units with direct air support orders can use forward air controllers to attack front-line ground units, while those with interdiction orders seek to penetrate into enemy rear areas to attack headquarters, supply and reserve ground units and key bridges. These “iron haulers” may employ conventional bombs or stand-off munitions to accomplish their missions. Units with air reconnaissance missions attempt to fly through enemy airspace to spot targets for the coming Turn’s interdiction missions. Paratroopers to be air dropped also enter the mapboard during Air Phases.

Look for further TAC AIR information in Vol. 25, No. 2 of THE GENERAL magazine, due out in early 1989, which will feature the game.

Soon at all better game outlets! If not available at retail stores in your neighborhood, you may order direct from us as a last resort. Send $26 plus 10% for postage & handling (20% for Canadians; 30% foreign) to:

The Avalon Hill Game Company
DIVISION OF MONARCH AVALON, INC.
4517 Harford Road ★ Baltimore, MD 21214

For quick credit card purchasing call TOLL FREE 1-800-638-9292
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. 

Opponent Wanted

1. Want ads will be accepted only when printed on this form or a facsimile and must be accompanied by a 50¢ token fee. No refunds. Payment may be made in uncanceled U.S. postage stamps.
2. For Sale, Trade, or Wanted To Buy ads will not be accepted. No refunds.
3. Insert copy on lines provided (25 words maximum) and print name, address, and phone number on the appropriate lines.
4. Please PRINT. If your ad is illegible, it will not be printed.
5. So that as many ads as possible can be printed within our limited space, we request that you use official state and game abbreviations. Don’t list your entire collection, list only those which you are most interested in locating opponents for.

Advanced Square Leader--ASL, Africa Korps--AK, Air Force--AF, Anzio--AZ, Arab-Israeli War--IAW, Banzai--BANZ, Beyond Valor--BV, Bismarck--BS, Blitzkrieg--BL, Britania--BRIT, Battle Of The Bulge--BB, Bull Run--BR, Caesar Aquila--CAE, Circus Maximus--CM, Civilization--CV,


What did you enjoy most in The GENERAL? What did you like about the current issue? What would you like to see in future issues? Your feedback is valuable to us and will help us make the best magazine possible. The editors of The GENERAL are interested in hearing from you.

CONTEST #142

Unit Order Impulse

German Victory Draw Allied Victory

Chance of Allied Victory

Issue as a whole... (Rate from 1 to 10, with 1 equating excellent; 10 equating terrible) 

1. 
2. 
3. 

Name: 
Address: 
City: State: Zip: 

German Victory Draw Allied Victory

Chance of Allied Victory

Issue as a whole... (Rate from 1 to 10, with 1 equating excellent; 10 equating terrible) 

1. 
2. 
3. 

Name: 
Address: 
City: State: Zip:
I'm an attorney who just graduated from law school and finally has the money to spend on any wargame I want to buy. My three closest friends are likewise blessed with new-found purchasing power. All of us are well versed in the same wargame literature and have read every ORIGINS article we can find. We were thinking of entering both games very much; it's just that I don't have an endless amount of time to play them and I'd rather play a number of titles to just keep my interest. Therefore, I suggest the following divisions:

A. Experience Gamers playing for a $50 gift certificate.
B. Average Gamers playing for a $20 gift certificate.
C. Novice Gamers playing for a $10 gift certificate.

Third, one of the tournaments ought to be based on a new game. We frequently entered new games at ORIGINS, and the number of entries seemed fewer and better attended. Your recently surveyed idea of sponsoring competitive tournaments on AH products has merit, however, I think you should expand on it somewhat.

First, sponsor tournaments on only a few games.

Second, have divisions based on experience. One of our nightmares was the thought of entering a tournament like SQUAD LEADER or THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN and meeting someone who had read every ORIGINS article that had ever been written and had entered the game both times. We would like to have more variety in both games very much; it's just that I don't have an endless amount of time to play them and I'd rather play a number of titles to just keep my interest. Therefore, I suggest the following divisions:

A. Experienced Gamers playing for a $50 gift certificate.
B. Average Gamers playing for a $20 gift certificate.
C. Novice Gamers playing for a $10 gift certificate.

Fourth, the tournament should be on only a few games. We entered two games at ORIGINS, and the number of entries seemed fewer and better attended. Your recently surveyed idea of sponsoring competitive tournaments on AH products has merit, however, I think you should expand on it somewhat.

First, sponsor tournaments on only a few games.

Second, have divisions based on experience. One of our nightmares was the thought of entering a tournament like SQUAD LEADER or THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN and meeting someone who had read every ORIGINS article that had ever been written and had entered the game both times. We would like to have more variety in both games very much; it's just that I don't have an endless amount of time to play them and I'd rather play a number of titles to just keep my interest. Therefore, I suggest the following divisions:

A. Experienced Gamers playing for a $50 gift certificate.
B. Average Gamers playing for a $20 gift certificate.
C. Novice Gamers playing for a $10 gift certificate.

Fifth, invite other companies to attend. Let them participate to the extent they are willing to sponsor events in their own games.

Sixth, hold it twice a year, preferably around the time you release new products. You think you'll find many people willing to buy what you have to sell.

The key to the success of your tournaments will be the amount of effort your company makes in terms of sponsoring and promotion. Together, these factors will determine the outcome of the tournaments. However, with some effort you could make your convention a special gathering, better than recent ORIGINS conventions.

Mark Guttag
Bogota, New Jersey

Mr. Guttag's letter voice several concerns shared by us; witness our previous proposal for a dedicated AVH wargame tournament. Grand Jury has not been in a better position than it is now, but it is a situation of lesser than desired, but I too long for the days of the overflow player pool by offering various tournament opportunities. It's no wonder few player pools by offering various tournament opportunities. It's no wonder few tournaments are realistic. However, with some effort you could make your convention a special gathering, better than recent ORIGINS conventions.

1. In what month would you be most likely to attend such a convention?
   - April
   - May
   - June
   - July

2. In what month would you be least likely to attend such a convention?
   - April
   - May
   - June
   - July

3. Would holding the convention on a holiday weekend (such as July 4th, Labor Day or Memorial Day) make you more or less likely to attend?
   - More
   - Less

4. Do you prefer a two (Sat-Sun), three (Fri-Sun), or four-day ( Thur-Sun) convention?
   - 2 day
   - 3 day
   - 4 day

5. Name three AH/GV games you want to play at the Championships and the style of tournament you'd prefer to play in live or via modem:

6. How much would you be willing to pay for admission (Keep in mind that the higher the fee, the more "free" services we can provide.) The only other expenses to be incurred would be whatever lodging accommodations you make at the hotel or yourselves.
   - $5.00
   - $15.00
   - $20.00

7. Would you like to have a Parts Service booth at the convention to take orders for fulfillment on Sunday?
   - Yes
   - No

8. Would you like to attend seminars by AVH/GV designers? If so, on what subjects?
   - Yes
   - No

9. Would you like to attend seminars by AH/GV designers? If so, on what subjects?
   - Yes
   - No

10. Would you like to see tournaments broken down into different skill levels of play for the same game?
    - Yes
    - No

11. Would you like to see tournaments broken down into different skill levels of play for the same game?
    - Yes
    - No

12. Would you like to see tournaments broken down into different skill levels of play for the same game?
    - Yes
    - No
Uh, oh...
here comes big shot
with his Pass Rush of 1
and Interception Range
between 43-48.
I'd better dump it off
to my wide receiver
and quick...

Obviously Testerverde has the book on
former Bears linebacker Marshall. In fact,
he's got it on all the players if he's gotten
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years.

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CHENEUX, BELGIUM, 22 December 1944: Colonel Reuben Tucker personally appealed to General Gavin to allow his 504th Regiment to attack Cheneux. Friendly civilians had reported a large column of German vehicles, including tanks, encamped there. Normally an American infantry regiment would request a battalion of armor for support before making such an assault, but Colonel Tucker had an ace up his sleeve. His men had recently captured a whole truckload of panzerfausts, had practiced with them, and now were ready to use them on the enemy. Combined with the early arrival of the latest model of bazooka, Tucker figured his force was strong enough to carry the assault alone.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:

BALANCE:
+ Add one 6-5-8 to German OB.
★ Substitute a SdKfz 7/1 for the German Flak Pz IV/20.

ELEMENTS OF SS Panzergrenadier Regiment 2 [ELR: 5] set up in woods/building hexes numbered ≥ 4 (see SSR 2): {SAN: 3}

Elements of the 504th Parachute Regiment, 1st and 3rd Battalions [ELR: 5] set up in any or all of buildings S1, T1, U1, V1, and X3, and/or enter on Turn 1 (see SSR 2): {SAN: 3}

SPECIAL RULES:
1. EC are Moderate with no wind at start.
2. No Vehicle of either side may set up in a building. The American TD, plus all infantry not initially set up, must enter on Turn 1 on road hex(es) l1/Y1.
3. The American player has four PF counters (old PF counters or ASL Blaze counters may be used to represent these). Each PF is 1PP and may be used only once; regardless of effect, discard after use. As the American troops had practiced with PF, the TH procedure (C13.31) is identical to German usage and there is no Captured Weapon penalty. No PF Check dr is required of a unit that wishes to use such a counter.

AFTERMATH: The 1st Battalion of the 504th had to make three attacks on the 21st just to gain a toehold in the village. Fire from German 20mm Flak wagons was overpowering. On the next day, Julian Cook's 3rd Battalion marched six hours in order to attack Cheneux from a different direction. Although channelled by wire and terrain, the GIs, now supported by tank destroyers, were able to eliminate the remaining SS troopers in hand-to-hand combat and capture 14 Flakwagons and a battery of 105mm guns. On 23 December 1944, a proud Colonel Tucker reported to Gavin that the 504th Parachute "Armored" Regiment was ready for further action.
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