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R. MacGowan

★ The AVALON HILL
GENERAL
The Game Players Magazine

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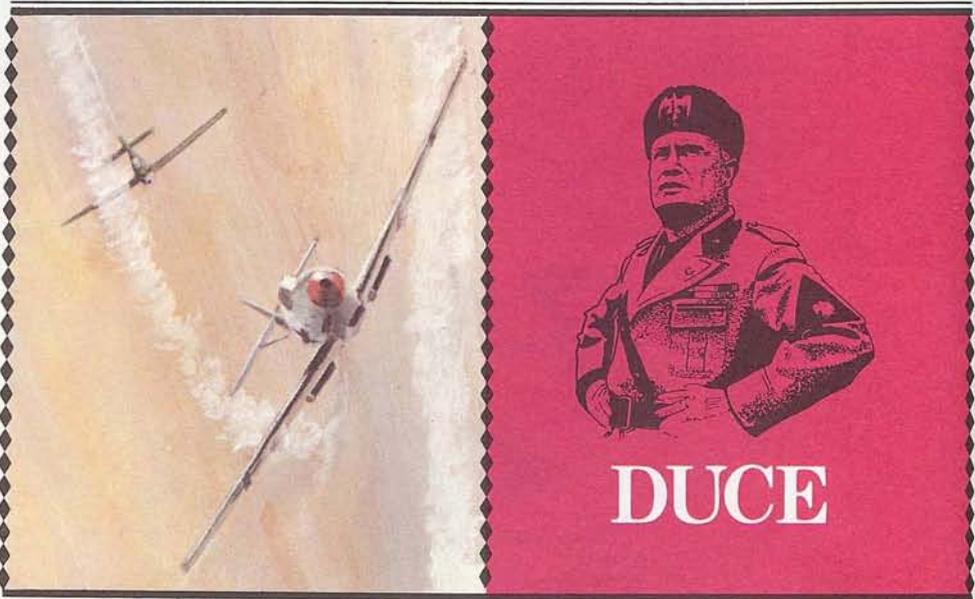
Most of the mail we receive deals with questions about upcoming games and when they will be available. I've always felt that the major task of *THE GENERAL* was to discuss games in print, rather than those on the drawing board. Nevertheless, this time around the Philosophy is being devoted to appeasing in small part your curiosity about what we are up to. Much of what follows then is a collection of progress reports by the various in-house AH designers and developers. The list is not all inclusive as we have a number of additional titles which are either still in negotiations, or are too sketchy at this point to ensure their eventual production.

Perhaps we should start by addressing the matter of *THE RISING SUN*—our erstwhile monster Pacific game which we've been citing for the past three years. After developer Frank Davis threw in the towel on the system as being too

unplayable we shipped the thing back to designer Larry Pinsky for a redo. He has been paring it down to a more manageable size and will be resubmitting it for development later in the year. We hope to get the thing produced by late '81 or early '82. Failing that, we have a backup design which is more of a sister game to *THIRD REICH* which is scheduled for publication in '83 regardless of the eventual disposition of *THE RISING SUN*. Talking about games three years down the road is limited to conjecture at best, but I prefer to think of it as a responsible production schedule. The hobby doesn't need more Pacific games, it does need more good ones.

So much for controversial opinions. Now for the designer/developer reports:

Continued on Page 42, Column 1



AFRIKA KORPS THEORY

A Tournament Player's View of AFRIKA KORPS

4
By Jonathon Lockwood

THE ASYLUM

The Replay

12
By Alan R. Moon

ROME WASN'T BURNT IN A DAY

Italian Play in THIRD REICH

13
By Mark McLaughlin

THE PERCENTAGES OF DOOM

CRESCENDO OF DOOM Scenario Evaluations

20
By Joe Suchar & Jon Mishcon

THE VIEW FROM THE COCKPIT

A Preview of the AIRFORCE/DAUNTLESS Game System

25
By David Bieksza

DIVIDING PRESSURE ZONES

A Weather Variant For THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN

27
By Tom Oleson

DESIGN ANALYSIS

Developer's Notes on the new AIR FORCE

28
By Kevin Zucker

AIR POWER IN VITP

Variant Units and Rules

30
By Craig Burke

THE NISCEMI-BISCARI HIGHWAY

A CROSS OF IRON Series Replay

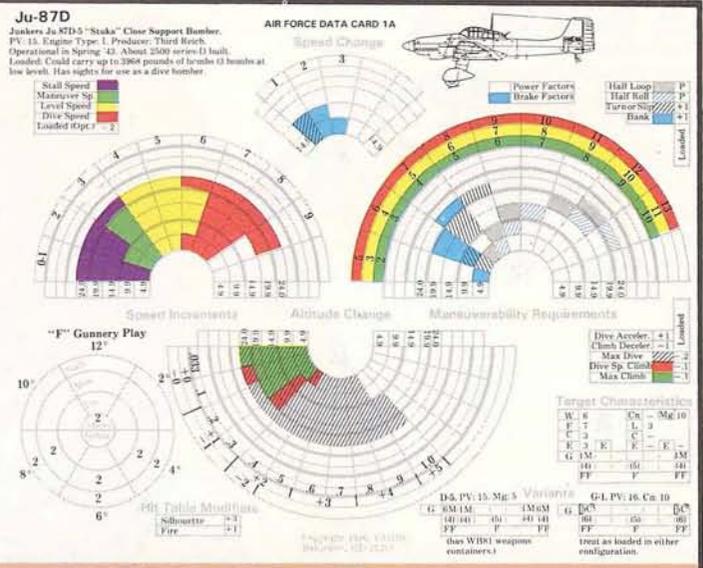
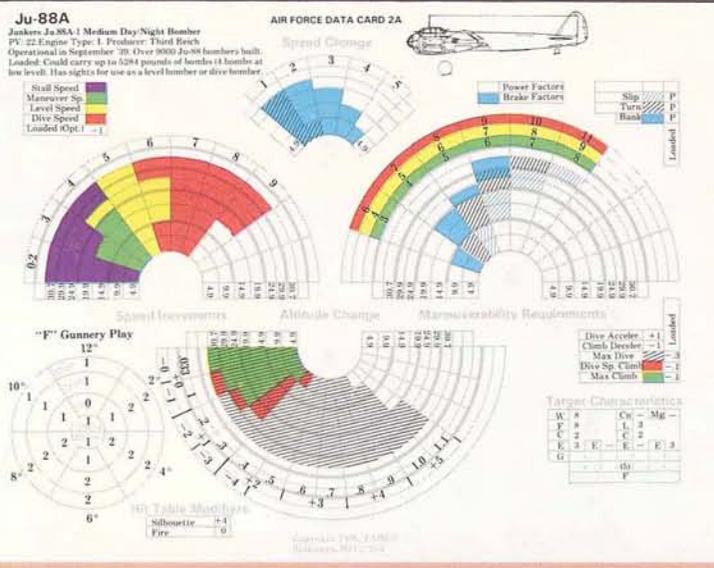
33
By C. Allen, S. Spoulos, & M. Anderson

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

45

QUESTION BOX & RBG

46



AIR FORCE allows you to re-create representative historical air battles from any period between the Battle of Britain of June 1940 through the massive air offensives over Germany: anything from a small-scale fighter clash over the Channel Coast to a night bombing raid over London or Berlin; a close-support tactical dive-bombing strike against front-line enemy troops or a daylight mission against industrial targets in the Ruhr, complete with Anti-Aircraft Artillery defenses. Each of the major aircraft types in the Royal Air Force, Luftwaffe and Army Air Force is represented, and can be used in any combination.

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maneuverability, climbing and diving abilities, and its ability to increase or decrease speed. Also shown are the damage-taking capacity and the firepower and range of each gun on the aircraft.

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AIR FORCE is a tense game of skill in maneuvering, and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of your aircraft compared to your opponents, playable in its basic version in an hour. Players may add any of the optional rules they like, and increase the number of aircraft in play, as they seek further challenges from the game; and virtually endless scenarios can be easily created.

ZTR2P

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- Junkers Ju.88A-1 Medium Bomber
- Avro Lancaster B.1 Heavy Bomber
- Heinkel He. 111H-3 Medium Bomber
- Boeing B-17G "Flying Fortress II" Heavy Bomber
- Messerschmitt Me.262A-1a "Schwalbe" Jet Fighter
- Boeing B-17F "Flying Fortress" Heavy Bomber
- Focke-Wulf FW.190A-8 "Wurger" Fighter
- Messerschmitt Bf.109E-3 "Emile" Fighter
- Republic P-47D "Thunderbolt II" Fighter
- Messerschmitt Bf.109F-3 Fighter
- DeHavilland Mosquito F.B. VI Series-2 Fighter Bomber
- Consolidated B-24J "Liberator VI" Heavy Bomber
- DeHavilland Mosquito B.IV Series-2 Light Bomber

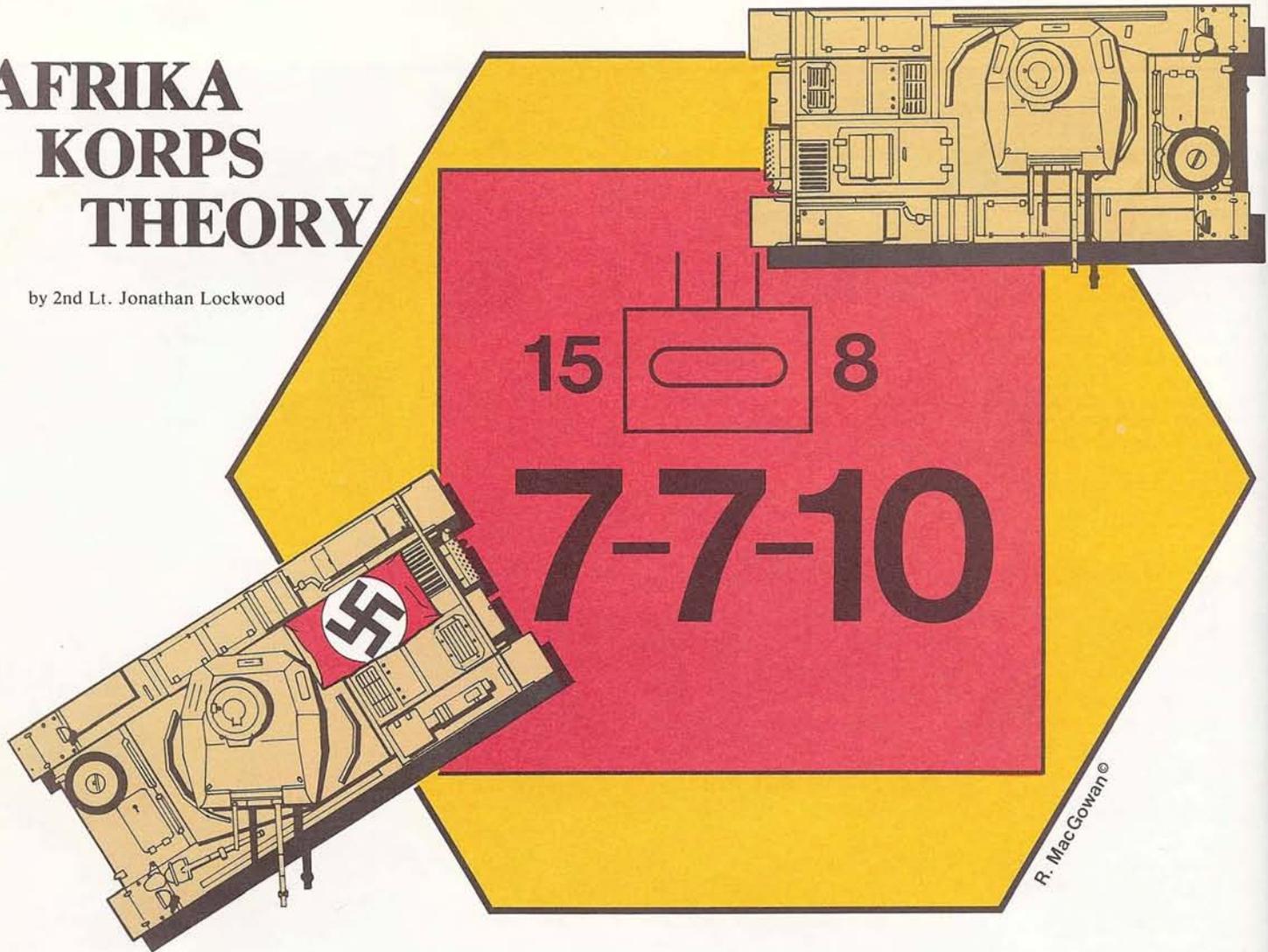
- North American P-51D "Mustang IV" Fighter
- Supermarine Spitfire V.B. Fighter
- North American P-51B "Mustang III" Fighter
- Hawker Hurricane II.C Fighter Bomber
- Supermarine Spitfire L.F.IX.E Fighter
- Hawker Hurricane I Day Fighter
- Republic P-47B Day Fighter
- Hawker Tempest V Series-2 Fighter
- Messerschmitt Bf.110C-1 Fighter Bomber
- Supermarine Spitfire I.A Fighter
- Messerschmitt Bf.110G-4 Night Fighter
- Junkers Ju.87B-2 "Stuka" Dive Bomber
- Consolidated B-24D "Liberator" Heavy Bomber
- Vickers Wellington III Medium Bomber
- Messerschmitt Bf.109G-5 "Gustav" Fighter
- ... plus many variant models of the above!



The revised Avalon Hill version of *AIR FORCE* is now available for \$15 direct from Avalon Hill, 4517 Harford Rd., Baltimore, MD 21214. Add 10% for postage and handling if living in the United States; 20% for Mexico and Canada; 30% if overseas. Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax. Past owners of *AIR FORCE* are urged to read the Design Analysis article on page 28 of this issue for further information on the changes between this and the earlier edition. Those who have not seen the earlier edition should read the article by Dr. Bieksza on page 25 for a more detailed description of play. For those opting for retail purchase, the revised AH edition is easily recognized by a new cover and a box-wrap similar in appearance to this advertisement.

AFRIKA KORPS THEORY

by 2nd Lt. Jonathan Lockwood



It is all too easy to lose sight of the older games with all the attention given to new releases. Although *THE GENERAL* is less guilty of this than most other hobby periodicals we too have succumbed in no small measure to the glorification of what's new at the expense of that which is seemingly familiar. One has only to look at the feature articles of the past year to see an alarming concentration of, if not exactly review articles of new releases, at least a combination of review-analysis slants in our major features. In our attempts to analyze the new games we also tend to review their features for the uninitiated. As a consequence the older titles are relegated more and more to the back of the issue, if discussed at all. Therefore, perhaps it is time we called a temporary halt to the worship of new titles, and turned back the pages of time for an in depth study of an old favorite. Such a look should not only prove nostalgic to the old timers among us, but highly informative to the newly initiated who haven't had the benefit of 16 years of piecemeal "classics" analysis. Given this premise, *AFRIKA KORPS* makes as good a subject as any. Of all the classics only *STALINGRAD* has received more ink in the hobby press, and it has been forced into semi-retirement by the emergence of *THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN*. *AFRIKA KORPS*, however, remains a front line seller with well over 100,000 copies sold and is indeed the most often played game of the North African campaign to this very day. For his part, Jon Lockwood is well qualified to present this analysis. He has competed in all of the national championships held to date (the *AH 500* regularly held at *ORIGINS*) and regularly is among the 8 or 16 finalists, having made it into the final four this year.

As to the game itself, no other wargame in my experience has carried its age so well. It is fitting then that in view of its fast approaching 17th birthday, we honor it with this feature and a brand new rulebook (announced elsewhere in this issue) to finally cover the ambiguities which have cropped up over the course of 17 years of intense competition. May the next 17 years be as enjoyable as the last 17 were.

My original purpose in writing *THE PALEVEDA GAMBIT* in Vol. 12, No. 5 of *THE GENERAL* was primarily to inject new life into an otherwise stereotyped wargame; i.e., *AFRIKA KORPS*. In my observations of literally dozens of tournament *AK* games, I had noticed that play patterns among the competent players were strictly "by the book." They HAD to be at that time, for any significant deviation from the norm usually turned out as not being very competent.

After I had introduced the Paleveda Gambit, however, I noticed that in following tournaments the Gambit was coming into more and more frequent use, despite criticisms that it supposedly threw away two 2-2-6's to no good purpose. While the Gambit may or may not have proven to be revolutionary in concept, it has certainly produced more than a minor rumbling. With this article I hope to bring out more of what *AFRIKA KORPS* resembles to me in terms of its chess like qualities, and to reexamine the various aspects of the game from this perspective.

THE THREE FACTORS OF SPACE, FORCE, AND TIME

This line of thinking draws directly from Dr. Siegbert Tarrasch and his chess theories, but I'm certain that he would forgive my taking a small liberty with his ideas here.

In ANY wargame, but most apparently in *AFRIKA KORPS*, three factors which are of primary influence are space, force, and time. In *AK* space can be defined as the area of the board which you control and in which you have freedom of movement. At the beginning of the game, the British player has nearly unlimited freedom of movement with the initial forces he possesses. The German player, although starting from the Agheila bottleneck, has by virtue of his highly mobile 21st Panzer Division the potential to control a great deal of space after his first move. In addition to this he threatens to control an area equally as large on his second move. It is this threat which forces a British response, for as the German freedom of movement becomes greater, that of the British player is correspondingly lessened. One of the facets of the struggle then, is the continuing effort on the part of the German player to restrict British freedom of movement and expand his own, while the British player attempts to maintain enough freedom of his own to respond quickly to any German initiative and restrict German movements wherever possible.

The second factor to be considered is force. In most wargames force is simply the number of combat factors available at any given moment to employ in an attack. This, however, is too general a definition. Force in *AK* is affected by certain rather unique subfactors, one of which is the highly

that one opportunity to make a game-winning envelopment of the British (or German) army via automatic victory.

Now how does one play THIS type of player? As I have previously stated, there is only ONE real type of British player; that being a positional one. So while my answer may seem insulting to the more expert players, it is nevertheless true; you play him the same way you play the attrition player. The only minor exception is that you do not sacrifice so many 1-1-6's as you would against the attrition player, instead preserving as large a force as possible for the inevitable battle at Alexandria. Some positional players don't have the stomach for an attritional slugging match, and may head back to Tobruch in desperation. Players like the ones I mentioned WILL have the stomach however, so it is wise to preserve as much force as possible for the decisive battle. Alexandria is the toughest place on the board to capture if the German supplies are not fairly regular, so you all know what THAT means. That's right. Set up your best possible line and pray for the intervention of the infamous fourth factor. This does not sound like a good thing to say in an article on theory, but all players must inevitably face up to the unpleasant reality that, all other factors being equal, whichever side is getting more than its average share of "lucky breaks" is the side which will have the winning edge. Your biggest consolation is that this edge is rarely more than a moderate one, so that superior play on your part will largely serve to cancel this edge.

It has probably become obvious to you by now however, that it is a rare player who is purely attritional or positional in his style of play. The attritional player requires more than average luck in order to succeed; the positional player requires an incompetent opponent in order to be able to play a consistently positional game. In tournament play it is unlikely that you will get much of either on a regular basis. I once read an article in which the author made a statement to the effect that an expert AK player (presumably German) could literally throw the die away as he maneuvered his opponent into a trap. Against mediocre players, that has a measure of truth, but an expert British player is quite capable of making that expert German player go scrambling frantically looking for that die he so casually "threw away" because against HIM he will definitely need it!

Figure 3: The first printed German opening. Note the lack of progress by the Italians along the coast road which indicates the German hasn't discovered the advantages of leaving the coast road temporarily to skirt Agedabia and thus save two MFs.



What point is this discussion leading up to? It is that, as an expert (presumably) German player opposing a British player of roughly equal ability, one must know when the proper time is to switch from a positional style to one of attrition, and vice versa. The most obvious example is at the El Alamein position. Here there is no room for maneuver; you have to slug it out with the British in order to take the position. The same rule holds for Tobruch. If one were to make a general statement characterizing the two types of players, it would be this; an attritional player counts factors, whereas a positional player counts squares.

THE VARIOUS OPENINGS

In this section we will be looking at eleven different opening moves. Six of them are German, and five are British. The general purpose of this section will be to examine the various offensive and defensive setups for the strategical thought behind each. Some of these openings are intended as answers to other openings, as we shall discover.

GERMAN ATTACK OPENINGS

Figure 3 shows a "golden oldie" if ever there was one! Originally printed in Volume 1, No. 5, this was the first recorded attempt at defining a precise strategy for *AFRIKA KORPS*. Although only the first move is illustrated, the original article continued through the next three moves (the last of which, incidentally, was refuted rather decisively by a certain James F. Dunnigan—a small world, indeed). As with most first attempts, it suffered from a lack of knowledge of the nuances of the game, but it was a creditable effort. Here are its salient features:

STRENGTHS:

- 1) A central thrust forcing a British defensive move to guard the passes.
- 2) It isolates Bengasi on the first move.

WEAKNESSES:

- 1) N19 is not seized on first move, permitting the British to occupy it on their turn. This in turn hampers German freedom of maneuver.
- 2) 21/3 is badly misplaced isolating Bengasi rather than aiding the rest of the 21st Pz.

3) Savena is horribly out of place in the southern desert where the speedy 21/3 should be. It will certainly not, as the authors believed, discourage a good British player from sending a 1-1-6 on a raid.

The remainder of this opening I have decided not to give, as a competent British opponent would not respond in the way AH assumed at that time. We must still remember in all fairness however, that this was a first effort; after 13 years of successive analysis, hindsight tends to be 20/20.

There were many other articles dealing with German openings, but with few exceptions, they assumed either extreme cowardice or outright stupidity on the part of the British. The two openings which follow are exceptions to that early trend.

The opening illustrated in figure 4 was originally published in Vol. 7, No. 4 by William Searight. This is the only German alternative to the soon-to-be discussed Hazlett Opening. This used to be my favorite German opening until a certain Carl Paleveda showed me the error of my ways. The first two turns of this opening are as follows:

D.A.K. 1st: Bologna W3, Savena, Brescia J3, Trenta, Pavia P13, 21/5, 104, No. 1 supply T22, 21/3 U24, Rommel P13.

D.A.K. 2nd: Bologna W3, Savena I3, Brescia F3, Trenta I15, Pavia N17, 21/5, 104, No. 1 supply S29, 21/3 P29, No. 2 supply N15.

What has the author of this attack in mind? What he is attempting to do, without really realizing it as such, is to utilize the potential of the 21st Panzer's ability to threaten a lot of British space to its maximum extent; put simply, he is trying to grab as much of the board space from the British as he possibly can on his first and second moves, precipitating an early retreat into Tobruch. Against the British defense as practiced at that time, it works admirably. Here are its main features:

STRENGTHS:

- 1) Utilizes speed of 21st Panzer very well.
- 2) Potential strong threat to Alexandria. (21/3 can capture it with Rommel's help on May II.)
- 3) Forces early retreat into Alexandria if standard defense used.

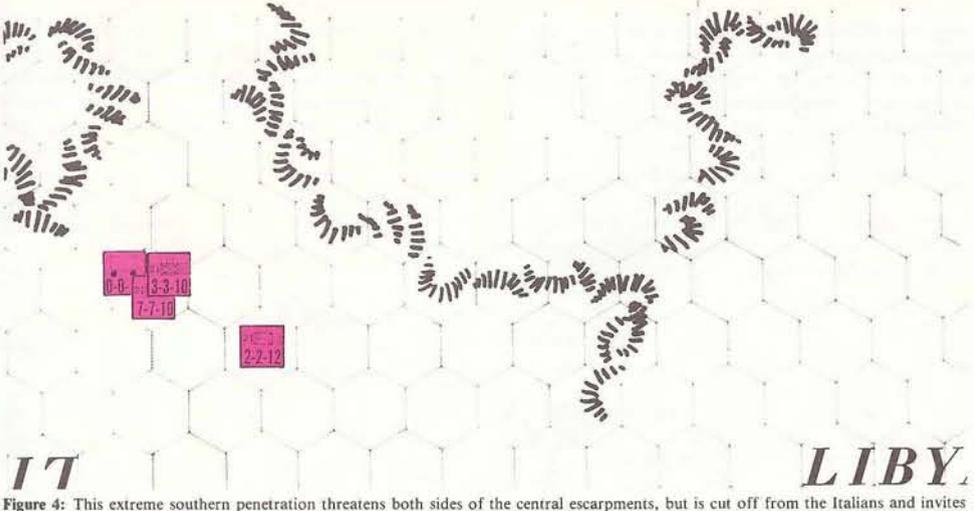
WEAKNESSES:

- 1) Rommel is needlessly tied down trying to boost the movement of units which would be better off on the coast road.
- 2) The Afrika Korps has split itself into two widely separated battle groups, each incapable of immediately being able to support the other. This flaw is the more serious one, inviting a refuting countermove by the British. The British player has two choices. He may move 2/3 to G4(!) as done by Tom Hazlett in a Vol. 12, No. 4 series replay. A move with potentially nastier long range implications is to execute the Paleveda Gambit (see Volume 12, No. 5). Overall, this is the only German attack opening I have seen that seems so potentially threatening, and yet lends itself to such a decisive refutation. The next opening we will discuss is not so vulnerable.

The opening shown in figure 5 is the one most commonly employed among competent tournament players. Its author, who earlier advanced his ideas on AK theory in the Afrika Korps Thesis (Vol. 8, No. 3) deserves due credit for an opening which has become every bit as much the "Old Reliable" to AK players as the Ruy Lopez is to chess. Let us look at its salient features.

STRENGTHS:

- 1) The Recce unit seizes the strategic N19 escarpment, insuring further German freedom of maneuver and reducing that of the British correspondingly.
- 2) It deals with Bengasi in the most economical manner.
- 3) It poses a potential threat to Alexandria.



IT **LIBY**
 Figure 4: This extreme southern penetration threatens both sides of the central escarpments, but is cut off from the Italians and invites aggressive British countermoves.

4) It positions the Italians so as to reach the battle via the coast road in the most efficient manner, assuming no resistance.

WEAKNESSES:

Against the AH Standard Defense (to be discussed next), there are no demonstrable weaknesses. At the worst the German has an even game with the British by June I. Against the yet-to-be discussed Paleveda Gambit and to a lesser extent the Garbutt Gambit, one might as well take this particular opening with its normal continuations and stick it in file 13. For continuations sake, its next moves are:

April II: 21/5, 104 P22 or T26, 21/3 U29, Italians advance as far as possible along road with exception of Savena and Bologna besieging Bengasi.

May I: 21/3 advances toward Alexandria, remainder of 21st to R29. Italians and 15th Panzer move to seal off central desert.

May II and June I are spent cleaning up any delaying 1-1-6's and driving the British into Tobrukh. I stated at the beginning of this opening that it was the "Old Reliable" among tournament players. This is because it is inherently very flexible. So much so that, as we shall see later, an answer to the "unusual openings" can be developed without changing its first move. That will be dealt with later. Now we shall turn our attention to some British defensive openings.

STANDARD DEFENSES

The British version of the "Old Reliable" opening was not developed by any one individual, as it seems to have "evolved" from a series of articles.

Figure 5: The Hazlett opening concentrates on securing the valuable O19 pass while still threatening a "Recce Down & Out" move on Alexandria and maintaining contact with the Italians. Note the additional MF gained by the Italians in leaving the coast road in anticipation of picking it up again next turn at H5.



Most of the articles dealt primarily with German strategies, and British defenses were set up primarily for illustrative purposes. Mr. Hazlett seems to have synthesized these former British setups fairly concisely in his own AK THESIS, so with maybe one or two exceptions the setup is as given in that article.

As seen in Figure 6, this defense takes up a blocking position in the western passes, temporarily thwarting the German's efforts to cramp his freedom of space. A flanking attempt by the 21st Pz through the central escarpments is similarly thwarted on the following turn by the 1-1-6s. With the arrival of the 15th Pz however, the German now has a decisive superiority in terms of force and can overrun with devastating effect if no retreat is made. This is the one great failing in this defense which is particularly galling to me. It condemns the British game to a passivity which is difficult to overcome in the middle game unless the German has bad supply luck or makes a compensatory bad move to give the British an opportunity. It is certainly not an inferior defense by any means; the British have roughly an even game vis a vis the Hazlett Opening with the arrival of June reinforcements. Herein however, lies the rub; an EVEN game is NOT necessarily a WINNING game. The purpose of an opening move in wargaming, as in chess, is not simply to "hang in there" and hope for good fortune to befall you. It is for the purpose of gaining that potentially game-winning initial advantage which can possibly be developed as the game progresses into the DECISIVE advantage. That extra turn or two of time you gain; that extra supply you

make him use; the improper dispositioning of forces your opponent makes in response to your move; any or all of these little advantages can later prove to be the one that saved your neck. With a leadup such as this, the more experienced among you probably already KNOW what opening is next to be discussed. As a final note for this opening however, here is a summary of the Standard Defense's strengths and weaknesses:

STRENGTHS:

- 1) Preserves British freedom of movement and board control for first few critical turns.
- 2) Virtual certainty of holding Tobrukh until June reinforcements.

WEAKNESSES:

Tactically, there are none. The strategic weakness here, however, is that the British are forced into early passivity and experience increasing difficulty in breaking out of this pattern prior to November.

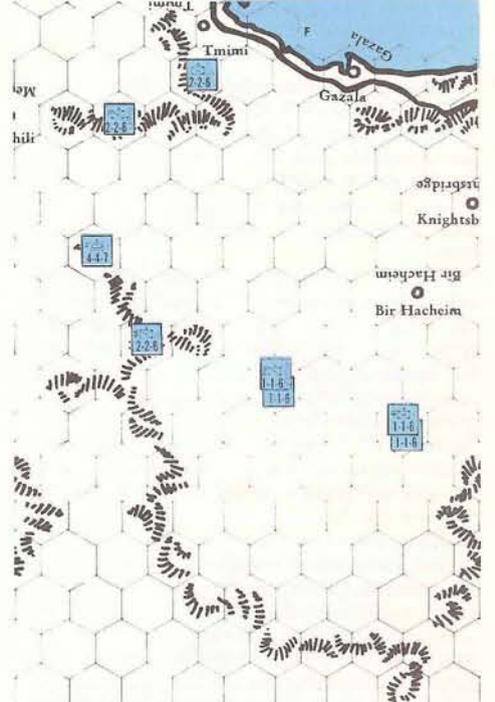


Figure 6: The standard British defense to the Hazlett opening. Note that the 1-1-6s do not arrive until the following turn if and when the 21st Panzer moves onto the central escarpment.

UNUSUAL OPENINGS AND COUNTER-OPENINGS

Even though the Paleveda Gambit shown in figure 7 was authored by Carl Paleveda and myself, I daresay that this is probably the most radical of the unusual openings, violating certain tenets of opening British defensive play as stated by Mr. Hazlett and Mr. DeWitt, the two major writers on the subject to date. These alleged violations of opening theory are dealt with below.

VIOLATION #1: THE GAMBIT ABANDONS THE WESTERN PASSES.

In all British defensive strategies to date, the emphasis has remained on the occupation of the western passes around Mechili and Tmimi. The obvious reason is to block a German thrust toward Tobrukh, at least temporarily. The positional weakness of this move is that it permits the Germans and Italians to unite their forces relatively early; something which a good positional British player would like to be able to delay for a time. The concentration of the German player is squarely focused on Tobrukh when the standard defense is used, which is also undesirable for the British.

What the Paleveda Gambit boils down to in terms of a chesslike opening is an early complication of the tactical situation. It trades force in a hoped-for favorable exchange for space and time. This brings us to the second violation:

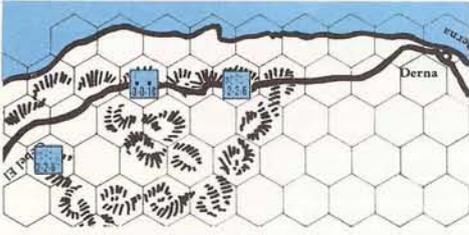


Figure 7: The Paleveda Gambit risks force and supply in an attempt to change the focus of the German attack and force the 21st Panzer back to the coast road.

VIOLATION #2: THE GAMBIT SACRIFICES TWO STRONG PIECES WHICH COULD BE BETTER EMPLOYED IN DEFENSE OF TOBRUCH OR AS PART OF A BRITISH DEFENSIVE LINE.

This criticism was voiced by Mr. Hazlett in a letter to the editor (Vol. 13, No. 1) in which he gave his analysis of the Paleveda Gambit and his suggested counter-opening. He further goes on to say that *AFRIKA KORPS* is, in the final analysis, a game of attrition, and that the British cannot afford such a high price for EVERY TURN (emphasis mine).

It is rare for me to have to publicly contradict one of the more respected competitors and writers, particularly in this field. But while I have great respect for Tom's ability, I must contend that he has totally missed the mark in his analysis. Aside from the rather obvious fact that the British are NOT going to be sacrificing a relatively high number of factors every turn (they only do it once), as Mr. Hazlett seems to be contending, I most heartily disagree with his statement that *AK* is a game of attrition in the final analysis. NO wargames are either basically attrition or maneuver. Rather, they are the skillful and properly timed combinations of both. If a game happens to be resolved by an attritional battle, it does not follow at ALL that the game itself is basically attritional. Conversely, if an *AK* game is won on a brilliant enveloping maneuver, it does not follow (as claimed in *The Afrika Korps Thesis*) that *AK* is basically a game of maneuver. It is the relative skill level of the opposing players which determines the nature of any individual *AFRIKA KORPS* game, or of ANY wargame. As I stated earlier in this section, the purpose of an opening move in a wargame is to attempt to gain that important initial advantage which can prove to be the game-winner. By forcing an early tactical complication in the situation, this is the basic aim of the gambit. It is not solely designed as a mini-game maneuver to keep the British on the outer Tobruch escarpments until the arrival of June reinforcements, although this generally tends to occur as a natural and desirable consequence of its employment. In essence, the equation that one is attempting to solve in evaluating the Paleveda Gambit is that of force versus time and space; how does one place a value on these factors in the early stages of a game?

VIOLATION #3: IN ORDER FOR THE GAMBIT TO CREATE MAXIMUM DELAY, IT DELIBERATELY SACRIFICES A SUPPLY, THEREBY GIVING THE GERMANS AN EXTRA SUPPLY.

Many players seem to feel that a captured supply is quite an advantage, somehow magically increasing the German supply capacity. This is a fallacy which bears correcting. In the first place, is a CAPTURED supply worth as much as a regular supply? The answer is no for this reason: A regular supply can always be replaced by means of the supply table, whereas a captured supply which is

expended CANNOT be replaced other than by capturing another supply. The only tangible thing that a captured supply gives its owner is one turn of attack, which is certainly nice to have, but not necessarily decisive. Moreover, in gaining the supply, the Paleveda Gambit forces the German to spend one turn and one REGULAR supply. Again, whether this exchange gives an advantage of sorts to the British remains for time and many games to tell. Here is a summary of the Paleveda Gambit's strengths and weaknesses:

STRENGTHS:

1) It severely hampers Italian movement, virtually forcing the German to concentrate on the block rather than on Tobruch.

2) It causes the German to waste both time and force in order to eliminate it.

3) It completely thwarts a southern thrust and also eliminates any immediate threat to Alexandria.

WEAKNESSES:

1) It give up two 2-2-6s, temporarily weakening the British position in terms of force, as well as giving up a supply if not destroyed.

2) It grants the German at least a foothold in the western passes, admittedly a valuable defensive position.

Further illustrations of this gambit are found in Vol. 12, No. 5.

I have a variation of the Paleveda Gambit which I call the 2/3 variation which is purely in the experimental stage at this time, as I have not yet been able to test it in face to face play. All moves are the same as in the regular gambit, with the notable exception that the positions of 2/3 and 9A/20 are reversed; this variation obviously makes the blocking force that much more difficult to eliminate. It just as obviously weakens the British force level at Tobruch to a dangerous level, creating more favorable conditions for siege. This opening's value lies in its shock effect in face to face play. In this it reminds me somewhat of the Kolibri or "Spike" Opening in chess. It seems to say to your opponent, "See in what contempt I hold you. I can play the most seemingly ridiculous opening that I wish, and you are powerless to exact a penalty." Until I am able to further explore the continuations of this variation as to its actual playability, it must remain in the realm of the psychological "gaffe" opening. Further continuations of this variation are left as an exercise for the reader.

The Garbutt Gambit shown in figure 8 is harder to overcome than it first appears, offering a lone 2-2-6 on C11 as bait. It is quite a lovely trap. If the German smashes it immediately on a high-odds surrounded attack, he expends a supply, needlessly diverts his force from its potential flanking maneuver, and leaves N19 open for reoccupation by the British, severely cramping German maneuver space. The alternative of isolating the unit results in the same cramped position for the German, his only added compensation is the extra supply he saves by not attacking. The lovely part about this gambit is that the 21st Pz is the only force which is able to take immediate and decisive action against the "poisoned" 2-2-6 on C11. What is still more attractive about this defense is that if the 21st continues with its normal flanking maneuver to the south, (which is, by the way, the proper response) then the proffered 2-2-6 can safely be withdrawn behind the western escarpment line on May 1, having accomplished its purpose of cramping Italian mobility and freedom of space without sacrificing one iota of force! It is for this reason a very solid defense and therefore highly playable. I strongly recommend it as an alternative to the more conservative British players who would LIKE to inhibit the German's operating space, but who understandably balk at the deliberate sacrifice of force inherent in the Paleveda Gambit (remember that I said UNDERSTANDABLY, not JUSTIFIABLY).

As an answer to this defense, we will be operating under the assumption that the German is using the Hazlett Opening. Although this defense presents a severe potential threat to the German's operating space, he should take note of the fact that the single 2-2-6 on C11 cannot force the issue by itself. It is therefore quite feasible to decline the gambit and proceed with a continuation along similar lines of the Hazlett vs. Standard Opening. Such a line might appear as follows:

APRIL II: Pavia C9, Brescia H9, Ariete H12, Savena H3, Bologna J3, Trenta W3, Rommel F7, 21/3 U29, 21/5 P22, 21/104 T26, Supply units with Rommel.



Figure 8: The Garbutt Gambit attempts to trade a 2-2-6 for a supply unit and a change in focus of the German strategic plan.

Full use is made here of Rommel's bonus, as the Italians can now threaten to cut off the 2-2-6 on May 1. (The British response to this is to pull back the 2-2-6 and substitute a more expendable 1-1-6 in its place. The flanking maneuver executed by the 21st Pz forces the same response by the British as in the Standard Defense, so in this respect at least the Garbutt Gambit is successfully declined. In order not to expend a supply killing one 1-1-6 however, the German is still forced to accept a somewhat cramped opening as far as the Italians are concerned. Here is a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the Garbutt Gambit:

STRENGTHS:

1) Performs same blocking action against a direct thrust at Tobruch as does the Standard.

2) The 2-2-6 on C11 which is offered as bait effectively cramps Italian maneuver, but cannot be taken or isolated without inviting a British counter-move that cramps the 21st's maneuver space as well.

3) The opening is close enough to the Standard Defense so as to transpose more easily into its more familiar continuations.

WEAKNESSES:

1) Although the 2-2-6 cramps the Italians, it is not aggressive enough to force a German response by the 21st Pz. This means that the German can, with only a slight modification of the Hazlett Opening, transpose his game easily into lines similar to that of Hazlett vs. Standard.

The Newbury variation is actually a gambit which is played off of the Standard Defense. I have put this continuation at the end of our subsection on unusual British openings to illustrate that the Paleveda Gambit is not the sole opening that violates opening theory for a positional advantage. The sole distinguishing feature of this opening from the standard defense is the westward sortie made usually by 22 Gds on the British April II turn.

Neither Mr. Hazlett nor Mr. DeWitt seem to be proponents of the move, but Mr. DeWitt does go into the maneuver in more detail in his article A DECADE WITH DAS AFRIKA KORPS (Vol. 11, No. 5). Therefore I will draw from his article when examining prospective German responses.

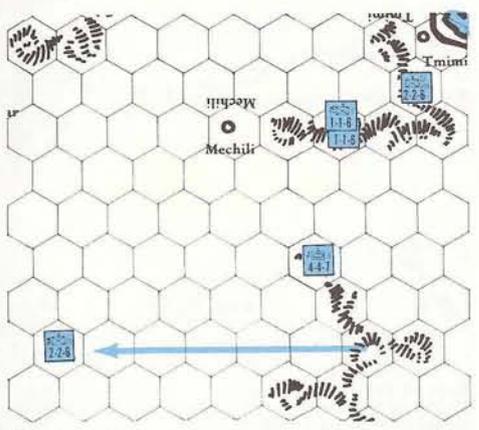


Figure 9: The Newbury variant offers a gambit of its own on the second British turn by offering up a 2-2-6 in exchange for threatening the German lines of supply.

The Newbury Variation aims at disrupting the incoming 15th Panzer's freedom of maneuver, while at the same time forcing a German response to its potential threat to his supply line. Put another way, it is an attempt to sacrifice force in order to gain some advantage in time and space. Mr. DeWitt gives three responses; the only three that I can see as an alternative to letting a savage little 2-2-6 run around behind your lines uncaged. They are:

- 1) **ATTACK THE UNIT.** This grants a minute advantage in force to the British because of the expended supply, and modest advantages in time and space.
- 2) **ISOLATE THE UNIT WITH THREE OF YOUR OWN.** As the author admits, this ties down three units for a month. This means a larger advantage in time for the British than in the first alternative, a slight advantage in space, and a small advantage in force for the German (a 2-2-6 is killed without expending a supply.)
- 3) **ISOLATE IT LATER WITH A NORTH-SOUTH LINE EAST OF TOBRUCH.** This seems to be the best alternative, with No. 2 and 1 following in that order. This, of course, is dependent upon how quickly the German gets into position to isolate it. If he takes too long, the 2-2-6 can reach a position near the German home base which severely cramps space for his supply units. This grants the British an indirect advantage in force, although he has no advantage in time or space, except as at the Home Base as just mentioned.

A final summary of the Newbury Variation would be:

STRENGTHS:

- 1) Disrupts German maneuver space and forces a response in order to guard supply lines.
- 2) Easily transposes into more familiar continuations for the British.

WEAKNESSES:

- 1) Involves a minor sacrifice of force.
- 2) The German has alternatives which can minimize the advantages of this move if executed quickly.

This concludes the subsection on unusual British openings. Counteropenings to deal effectively with these unusual openings, particularly the Paleveda Gambit, have been developed with only minor variations between the first two. We shall conclude our study of the various openings with a study of three counteropenings.

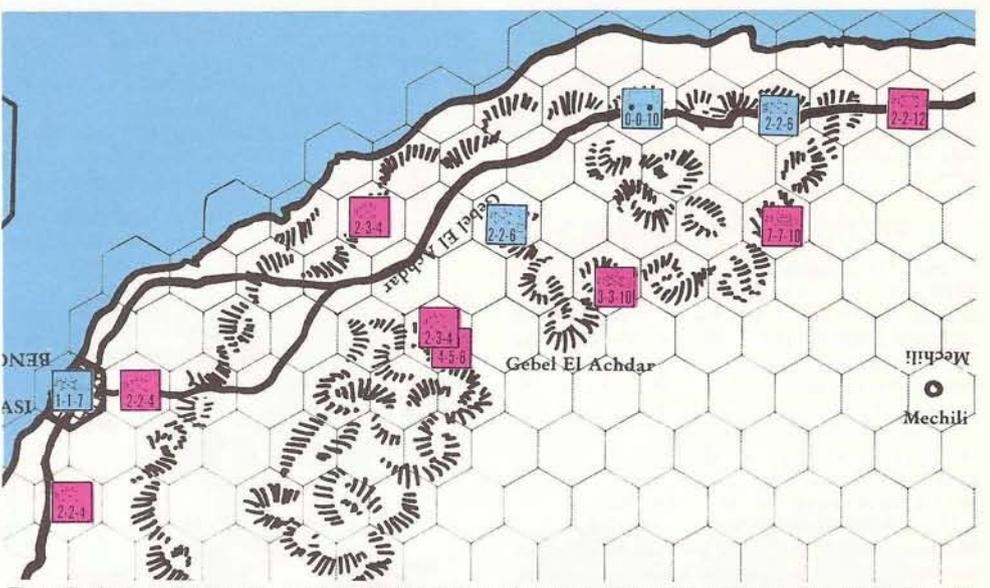


Figure 10: The Greenwood-Roberts counteropening has the Italians performing a limited bypassing maneuver while the 21/5, 104, and 3 occupy E11, F9, and C12 respectively. This quickly constricts the gambit but leaves the western passes to the British. The Hazlett counter is identical except that the 7-7-10 occupies the escarpment west of Tmimi (F17). The British can adopt a defensive line, but the release of 21/104 on the next turn as the Italians are able to further tighten the noose on the gambit forces prevents isolation of 21/5.

PALEVEDA GAMBIT DECLINED? GERMAN COUNTEROPENINGS

The unusual thing about the authorship of this countermove is that both Donald Greenwood and Tom Roberts came up with roughly the same responses, but without each other's knowledge. Greenwood developed his opening in pbm with me, while Roberts had the somewhat more difficult task of doing so while playing me under time pressures in the 1975 AH 500. It looks very similar to the Hazlett counteropening to follow, with a minor exception or two. It does not concentrate on occupying the western escarpment, instead preferring to "put the squeeze" on the blocking force at first, then threatening to overrun on May II and capture the supply. This forces the British player to either blow up the supply, thus isolating his units, or allow an overrun the following turn to capture his supply and isolate the surviving unit. It is so similar to the Hazlett Counteropening to follow that I am going to briefly discuss it along with this opening for comparison's sake.

The first opening move is naturally identical to the original Hazlett Opening. Continuations are as follows:

- April II: 21/5-F17, 21/3-C12, 21/104-F9, Ariete & Brescia-G7, Pavia-E5, Savena-H3, Bologna-J3, Rommel-H9.
- May I: 21/5-H16, 21/104-F17, 21/3-C12, Ariete-E11, Savena-C6, Brescia-F9, Pavia, Bologna-H12, 15/8, 15/115-M15, 15/33-M17.

Incidentally, in considering a British response to the German April II move, it is wiser to move 7/31 Motor to C7 and not D8 as suggested by Mr. Hazlett. This forces a position less favorable to the German as far as obtaining a 5-1 surrounded attack is concerned.

Both counteropenings assume that the loss of a supply in addition to two 2-2-6s is unacceptable to the British, and therefore refutes the opening. For my counterargument I merely refer the reader to the earlier discussions of the Gambit as well as the discussion of positional vs. attritional play. The proper response of the Gambit to both of these openings is to maintain the block for as long as possible, even at the cost of a captured supply. The gain in time and position should provide adequate compensation. Neither of these openings can PREVENT the British from executing the Gambit; they instead accept it and attempt to wrest advantage from it. The last opening to be discussed attempts to forestall use of the Gambit at all, but at a cost.

The Lockwood "counteropening" shown in figure 11 is more for illustrative purposes than for serious tournament use, as it yields the strategic hex N19, enabling the British to execute a modified Standard as shown, resulting in a decided positional advantage for the British. It is rather meant to show what it costs a player in terms of position when deploying to stop a specific opening move by the British. A knowledgeable British player simply has too many countermoves. Further details of this defense are again left as an exercise for the interested reader. This concludes our examination of the various openings.

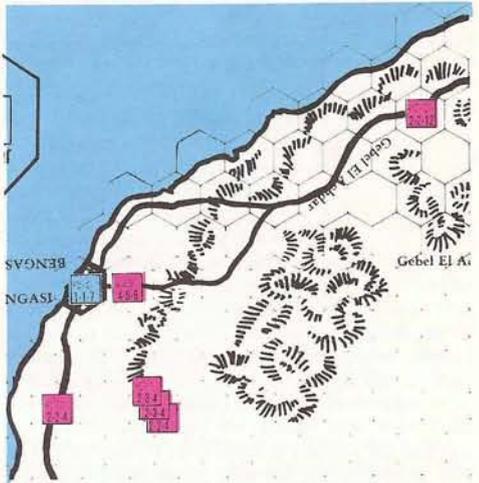


Figure 11: The Lockwood opening is really only useful against an opponent who is hopelessly addicted to the gambit. Another variation sends the two 2-3-4s at K5 through the central desert with Rommel instead.

THE MIDDLE-GAME

Studies have been made before of the "middle-game" in wargames. Witness as examples of this George Phillis' series on *STALINGRAD* a few years back, as well as Tom Oleson's mammoth analysis of *ANZIO* (Vol. 10, No. 5). As the terrain in *AFRIKA KORPS* is pretty much confined to clear, escarpment, and Qattara, our discussion of middle-game tactics and strategy need not be THAT comprehensive. Discussions of the middle-game have tended to be of a general nature for the assumed reason that individual games vary so much that such analysis would be a Herculean task. But

chess has far more middle game combinations than do wargames, especially *AK*. Has this prevented a plethora of books on the middle game in chess from being written? It certainly has not! And although each individual game is different, there are patterns of play and tactical situations which appear fairly regularly over the course of many games. This then, is the focus of our discussion here.

THE GERMAN MIDDLE-GAME

For the German, the middle-game can be said to begin with the investment of Tobruch, usually around June I or II. Of course, if the German botches his opening play, it may be July before the middle-game starts. In some cases it never starts. Accepted practice is for the German to initiate an all-out drive on Alexandria to capture it before November, when force takes a decisive swing in the British favor. Experience and common sense have shown this to be the generally superior course, so I am not about to quarrel with it. The only exception to this rule is given by Mr. Hazlett in the *AK* Thesis; he should consider a siege of Tobruch if the British have lost 2/3 and a couple of other strong units. This occurrence is quite uncommon, however. The good British player knows that Tobruch is his only redoubt which is capable of breaking the back of the German army. We will assume therefore that our British opponent is one who never weakens his Tobruch garrison below two 4-4-7's, something a good player should never do, anyway. A strong garrison effectively "ups the stakes" beyond the courage of most German commanders to risk any kind of attack.

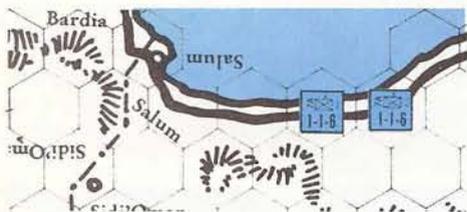


Figure 12: The infamous bottleneck pass where flanking maneuvers can be blocked with relative ease.

In any event, what is the first obstacle that presents itself to the German? The infamous K36 pass near Salum (see figure 12). Admittedly a beautiful delaying position for the British because it is a bottleneck of sorts, dealing with it depends here upon the German supply situation. If he has maximum supplies on board, he is strongly urged to follow the "axiom" stated by Mr. Burdick in an *AK* series replay (Vol. 12, No. 4): always attack when at maximum supply. The reasoning behind this axiom is that the more times that a German has to roll for supply, the greater the potential number that he can receive; and the more supplies that he receives, the more attacks or attacking turns that he can potentially have; and finally, the more attacks that the German can make, the more British force he will be able to potentially destroy. Sound reasoning with which I tend to agree. If you are going to be destined to get lucky breaks, you might as well create as many opportunities to get them as possible. The trouble with this axiom is that there aren't many clairvoyant wargamers around, and that supply "luck" can be judged as good or bad only in retrospect. The important consideration at the K36 pass is time, though. Trying to maneuver the British out of this position is too time consuming and favors the British. I consider it imperative for the German to force the pass by a high-odds attack, thus getting the British into terrain which gives the German greater opportunity to exploit his superiority in force.

Either before this time or during it, the British may have sent a unit behind your lines on a raid. Mr. Hazlett provides the best refutation in simply stringing a line of units and zones of control to

isolate them. Two additional comments are in order when employing this north to south maneuver, however. The first one is to never position any two of those units in a straight line (so as to avoid the nasty trick in figure 13). The second is to beware of any concentration of British units near your weaker units in the line. Otherwise the British can break the isolation of its raiding units by a timely counter-attack.

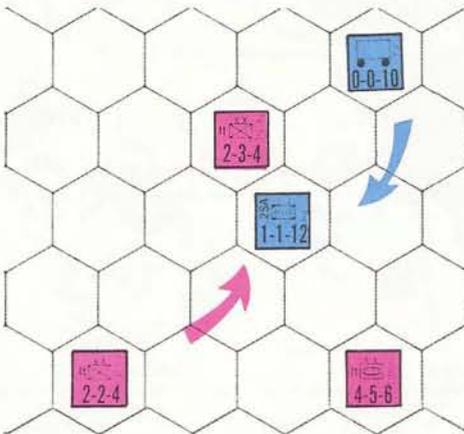


Figure 13: By attacking at 1-3 or worse without supply, the attacker can force a retreat outside to supply if he survives. If unable to attack at worse than 1-2 odds an isolated unit could still attack out against isolating units placed in a straight line in relation to each other if supply is available within five hexes.

A possible exception to this method of dealing with raiders can be considered if the raider is a 1-1-12. Since the British only have one of these units before November its quick destruction will effectively remove for a good while your opponent's capacity for a deep penetration of your space. This being the case, one might consider having a 7-7-10 available south of the escarpment line as a "Recon Killer." It does cost a supply, but the rewards in terms of cutting down the British ability to maneuver behind you are often compensatory.

As you advance, endeavor to keep as much of your mobile force in a switch position on the escarpment line as possible. This has a forking effect on the British defense and may force a retreat. Your goal, failing an outright capture of Alexandria before November, (which will not happen against better British opponents) is to at least force the British into the confines of the El Alamein position, where the British will have a hard time forcing the German back. It also renders the second 1-1-12 useless, as it has no place to run to. Alexandria's principal defensive strength lies not necessarily in the position itself, but in the fact that the German's supply capacity of three units dictates that the German will be physically unable to attack continuously for more than three turns at any given time, even if he should be receiving maximum supplies. It also helps both sides to know about where this point begins so that they may plan accordingly. The Rommel unit, if it is used to speed up a supply line, can help each supply unit only twice during its trip to the front. Calculating on this basis, we find our imaginary German "leash line" to be at J49 at its easternmost extremity, and then extending from there to the southwest in a straight line. At the very best, the German must pause for one turn after three turns of attack.

Another major consideration for the German during his advance on Alexandria is the presence of the east-west escarpment line beginning at the K36 pass at Salum and terminating at O52. This line creates several delaying positions for the British (see figure 14). The consideration of whether to use force or maneuver depends upon supply and on how much force the British are prepared to risk in order to hold it. If the British merely throw out two or three factors and you do not have maximum supply on board, then maneuver and isolation become

the order of the day. If, however, you have maximum supplies on board or the British risk more than 4-5 factors in a position which you are not able to immediately outflank or threaten to do so, then force in the form of high-odds attacks becomes necessary. Once the British are confined to the El Alamein position, the end-game at Alexandria begins. This is reserved for later discussion.

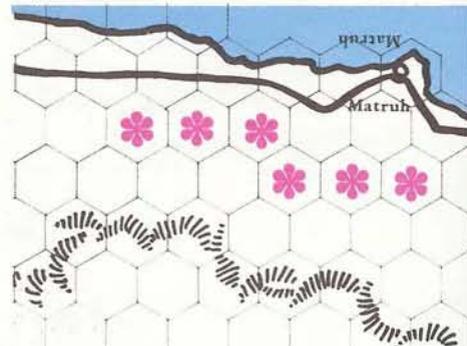
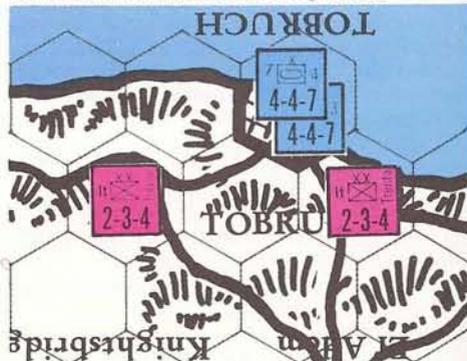


Figure 14: Besides the Salum pass, the escarpment line acts in concert with the irregular coastline to produce several other bottlenecks shown here by the red asterisks.

One final item to be discussed before leaving the German middle-game is the investment of Tobruch (see figure 15). Most novice and intermediate players employ two units at G24 and H26, usually two Italian units. The faulty part about this position is that it enables the British to spring units loose behind the line of your advance, necessitating a delay while you string a line across the board to isolate them. It is also possible for the British to break out in November by means of a 3-1 on one unit while soaking-off on the other. Needless to say, this pair of threats can cost you both space and time if they are permitted to be carried out.



Figure 15: The usual method of investing Tobruch is shown above, a better way is illustrated below. The best way, of course, is to place 2-3-4 in each of the three hexes surrounding Tobruch.



The second setup is mentioned by Mr. Hazlett in the *AK* Thesis. It entails positioning two 2-3-4's at H24 and H26, presumably to discourage an opponent from springing units loose behind your lines. It succeeds in stopping the first threat, but is completely ineffective in containing a November breakout. If you will notice, this setup gives the British another square to move units out onto and to attack from. Even though H25 is initially surrounded, the 3-1 which the British can easily obtain

on one of the units will give the other unit a retreat route when the soakoff attack is made. My proposed modification is exceedingly simple in itself, but there are two ways of carrying it out. The first method is to leave three Italian units behind at G24, H25, and H26 when you begin your drive on Alexandria. This is the conservative method for players who wish to seal up Tobruch and concentrate their undivided attention on Alexandria. For more aggressive types who aren't forgetful, Mr. Hazlett's setup is recommended until October 1. You then send one Italian unit racing back to Tobruch in order to transpose into the first setup. The only trick here is to be alert; if you forget until too late, you're in trouble.

THE BRITISH MIDDLE-GAME

The point to remember as the British during the middle-game is that Alexandria is your best ally in terms of spinning out time; the more time which the German consumes in trying to take Alexandria, the less he will have available for the safe reduction of Tobruch, and thus increases the possibility of his being reduced to desperation die rolls. The key first step in any such strategy is the retention of Alexandria until November reinforcements become available to stabilize the situation.

Looking at figure 12 once again, we can see that two 1-1-6s positioned at J36 and J37 stop a German overrun with minimal force for one turn and expends one German supply. There are bottlenecks almost as good as this slightly east of this position at Sidi Barrani, as well as at Matruh. Maximum use must be made of these bottleneck positions to delay a German breakthrough while the remainder of your force blocks attempts to turn your position by German flanking maneuvers with elements of the 15th and 21st Pz. If you are opposed by an attritional player, these tactics work fairly well. Against opponents whom you know to be of expert or near-expert calibre, it is deemed wiser to fall back more quickly so that your Alamein position will be that much stronger. By that I don't mean turn and run just be a little more ready to fall back if the maneuver player is beginning to stretch your lines dangerously thin. Better to fall back a little faster and preserve force than to chance losing a great deal of force via automatic victory. Discussing play in any further detail here would be repetitious, as much British strategy can be derived from our previous discussion of German "problems." Once there is no more room for flanking maneuvers at either Alexandria or Tobruch, then the end-game is reached; the subject of our next discussion.

THE END-GAME: ALEXANDRIA

The end-game at Alexandria can be subdivided into two basic subsections; those end-games in which Tobruch has not already fallen, and those in which it has. Books could be written on the various end-game positions at Alexandria. However, as I do not have access to a large number of various end-game positions with which to analyze, this discussion will necessarily be one of general principles and patterns of play, with illustrations where appropriate.

END-PLAY WITHOUT FALL OF TOBRUCH

This is definitely the more favorable situation for the British. The big consolation for the defender here is that Alexandria, unlike Tobruch, cannot be taken on one lucky die roll. The most common situation that occurs is one in which the Germans have the British confined at Alexandria with anywhere from two to as many as seven turns remaining before November reinforcements arrive. The general suggestion that I can offer here is to combine force with delicacy; if a square can be attacked from another square without the attacker's having to soak-off, then expose only one factor to

such an attack. If you have a salient in your line, one factor should be placed in the unoccupied salient square to present less of a target. If an escarpment square such as Ruweisat or Alam Halfa is part of your line, then your strongest units should be occupying it. These principles are illustrated in figure 16. A protruding undoubled square in your line is a potential disaster in terms of force, as the German should have no problem getting a 6-1 with no soakoff using two 7-7-10's and a 4-5-6 (unless of course, you think sticking stronger units out there will make your position any safer).

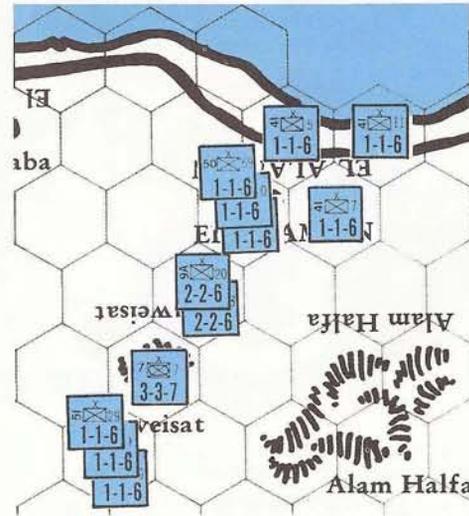


Figure 16: The principles of solid defense in the end game are well illustrated in this example.

During the first stages of the end-game in this situation, you are as strong as you are ever going to be before November. If you are going to counter-attack, then hit the small Italians and Recces first. In an attritional slugging match, you must deprive the German of his soakoff units whenever you get the chance. Once he runs out of those, he will be hard put to both attack and hold his line, let alone make soakoffs. If you are going to be conservative however, then remember this; the southern end of your line is less worth holding than the northern end, for the obvious reason that Alexandria lies directly behind the northern end. If you are going to trade off space for time in order to strengthen the line elsewhere, then the south is the place to do so.

Once November rolls around, most British players breathe a big sigh of relief, thinking that the game is won. Although the British receive a big boost in their force position and may even outnumber the Germans on the board, the advantage is not entirely in the British favor. For one thing, the supply table from December, 1941, to the end of the game is highly favorable to the Germans. As illustrated earlier, they will be enabled to maintain a constant attack for as many as 75% of the remaining turns. Coupled with their ten factors of November reinforcements, this bodes ill for the British if they are backed up too close to their home base. If your position is somewhat cramped, your counteroffensive should have the limited objective of regaining the Ruweisat line. After regaining that line, any further action on your part depends on how the German reacts to your limited counter-offensive. If he panics and heads back to Tobruch, advance cautiously and be prepared to grab back as much space as you can if his attack on Tobruch is successful. You will need it.

This last position, shown in figure 17, is one not seen too often in AK, although it has great potential for the British. It occurs when the Germans are very close to Alexandria, but the British cannot safely counterattack, even with their November reinforcements largely intact. This "redoubt" position is highly interesting, as the 4-4-7's are sent to sea

where they will shuttle back and forth with the 4-4-7's already in Tobruch, while the remainder of your force takes up the bottleneck position with three supply units as shown. The German must now either waste a great deal of time clearing out the redoubt or leave a large garrison to contain it. As this force has no base to guard, they can attack any German garrison, even at low odds, virtually without fear. The larger the garrison, the more hampered the Germans will be at Tobruch. If it is too small, the British could retake Alexandria or force a halt in the German siege of Tobruch. Of course, if the Germans make a lucky series of attacks on Tobruch to take it, the game is practically over. But it would probably have been over anyway if you had been forced to counterattack at low odds in the earlier situation. At least this way, your force maintains a threat to the Germans should they take Alexandria.

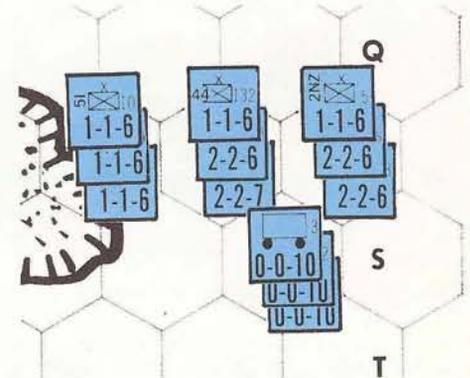


Figure 17: The Qattara Redoubt is a seldom used ploy which can be a game saver under the right circumstances. Up to three major units are at sea with the rest drawn behind the relative safety of the Qattara Depression to await developments.

GERMAN END-PLAY: How do the Germans go about battering their way into Alexandria? Much of this can be inferred from our previous discussion of British end-play problems, so this discussion need not be as long. Your main area for attacks should always be along the coast whenever possible, as this directly threatens your opponent's home base and cramps his space for counterattacking. If your opponent gives you an undoubled salient in his line, hit it at high odds, especially if it is in the north. If it is in the south, your best bet would be to ignore it. Such attacks there are a waste of time.

Whenever possible, Ruweisat and Alam Halfa should be taken by attacking from a square next to it and soaking off on the position itself, forcing a British retreat or counterattack. Along the coast, don't be afraid of soaking off in order to make good attacks in the north. Always keep in mind that the British concentration of force makes him far less suited to attack than does yours.

What to do if you are faced with a turn or two without an attack supply and a potential British counterattack? You might consider figure 18 as a possibility. The only problem here is that the British may launch 1-2 attacks on your exposed 7-7-10's, hoping to eliminate one at the cost of four factors in exchange. If you are leery of such attacks, you might as well forget it. Is it better to present a low-percentage target than to stack weak units around and with the 7-7-10, giving the British easier targets to attack? Besides, if the Britisher is that fanatical about getting a shot at your strong units, he can soakoff on the weak units and still get his 1-2. The point I am making here is, why worry? If your opponent has a penchant for counterattacking, he is going to do it no matter what kind of target you present. In that case, you would be wiser to position your forces so as to force as many soakoffs as possible. The setup in figure 18 should be used against an opponent whom you think is very conservative and not given to taking risks.

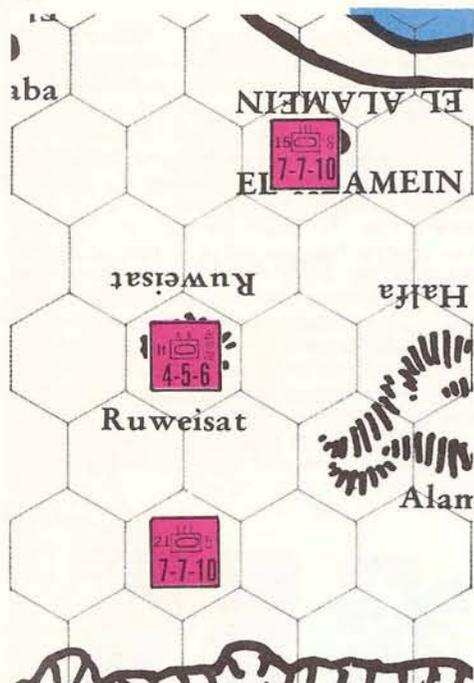


Figure 18: A useful shield for a supply-less German who does not want to give back ground to shield himself from British counterattacks, unless that opponent has a fondness for 1-2 attacks against exposed 7-7-10s.

As a last case in point, what should the German do if the British retreat into the Qattara redoubt? If the British force is weak and you are pressed for time, leave three units to contain the force and head for Tobruch. You will have to take your chances if the British make a breakout attempt there. In all other cases, the German should reduce the force to the point where the German feels that he can safely return to Tobruch. This varies with individual preference, so no hard and fast recommendations will be made here.

END-PLAY WITH FALL OF TOBRUCH

This situation, although far less favorable to the British, is also far less commonly found among competent players. If it occurs very early in the game, the British are finished against a competent player. If it occurs later in the game, usually as the result of a successful desperation assault, the result will be a down-to-the-wire slugging match with the British probably being eventually forced into low-odds attacks to protect their home base. Distinguishing features of this end-play are:

- 1) More counterattacks by the British at every opportunity especially when the Germans are very close to Alexandria.
- 2) Absence of the Qattara redoubt maneuver, for obvious reasons.
- 3) A greater willingness to resort to low-odds attacks on the part of the British.
- 4) Very conservative German play. Why should he take risks at this point?

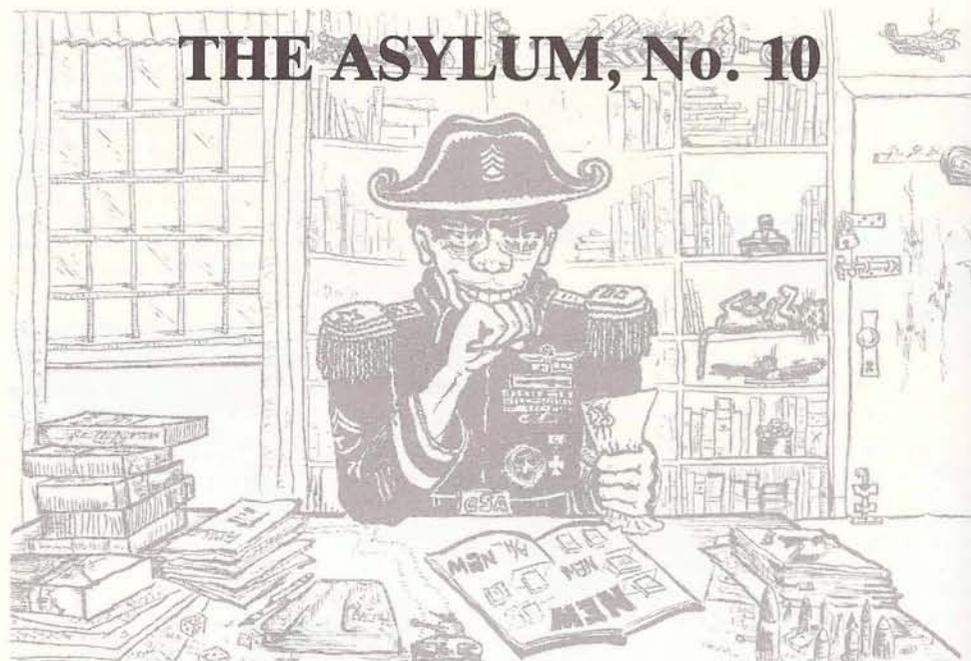
THE END-GAME: TOBRUCH

Discussing siege tactics at Tobruch is relatively pointless, as Hazlett and DeWitt have discussed its basic points already. They are:

1. Hit the strongest unit at 3-1 or better and soakoff with Italians.
- 2) Once the garrison is weakened to the point where it can be reasonably attempted, 3-1 the strongest unit and 1-2 the remainder. Be certain that you launch the 1-2 first, and that you attack with enough factors so that if successful both defending units are removed.
- 3) A 1-1 or 2-1 should be attempted only when limited time or heavy casualties dictate its necessity.



THE ASYLUM, No. 10



THE REPLAY by Alan R. Moon

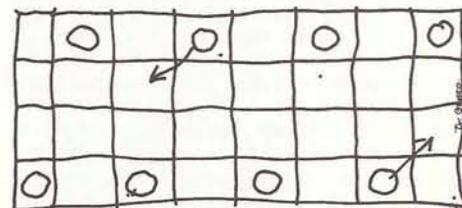
Red—Thomas N. Shaw
Black—Donald J. Greenwood
Neutral Commentator—Alan R. Moon

This game was played on the front steps of the E. Read St. offices one evening near dusk. The illustrations were done by a wino who just happened to wander by and got interested in the game. He said he'd been an illustrator before giving it all up for the easy life. He seemed like a nice guy, and even offered to share his refreshment with us, but it wasn't our brand.

Red Pre-Game Commentary: My strategy will be to sort of counter punch (or check—get it?), since I haven't played the game since I was a little kid.

Black Pre-Game Commentary: It's bad enough I have to play a game this stupid as a replay, but on top of that I have to play a moron like Shaw. I will annihilate him, once and for all, and show the hobby world just what a fool and no-talent he is. My strategy will be to "go for the throat".

Neutral Pre-Game Commentary: You certainly can't say this will be a friendly game. These two guys can't stand each other. From their opening comments I think it's quite clear they are both experts in this game though. Should be an exciting contest.

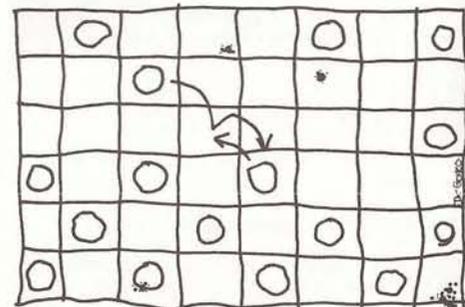


Red Turn One: There are so many good opening strategies and even though I have read all the books by the greats, I can't make up my mind. They all sound so good. I finally moved one of my men one space forward. This was a tough decision, as I could have moved any one of four men forward, but it was not as tough as other moves later on will be when I may have as many as twelve men I can move. I tried to look mean and determined and act aggressively while moving. He probably thinks he has the psychological edge, but my opening move

should put some doubts in the back of his head. He probably didn't expect me to be so familiar with the openings.

Black Turn One: What a jerk. One move into the game and I've already got the advantage, due to his dumb first move. My move, on the opposite side of the board, is what he should have done. He probably hasn't read any of the strategy books, while I, as usual, have done my homework.

Neutral Commentary Turn One: Wow! Excitement in the opening move. You rarely see this caliber of play, as it is unusual that two such equally matched opponents meet. No clearcut advantage yet to either player, but the stage is set.



Red Turn Two: I advance another man to a position adjacent to the enemy, forcing him to jump me. Though this only gets me a swap of men, I gain the initiative by clearing his men from the central rows.

Black Turn Two: What kind of moves are these? I jump him.

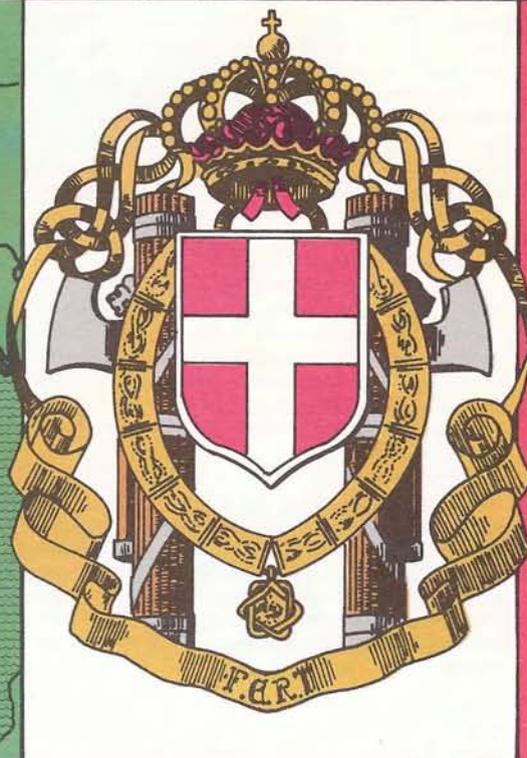
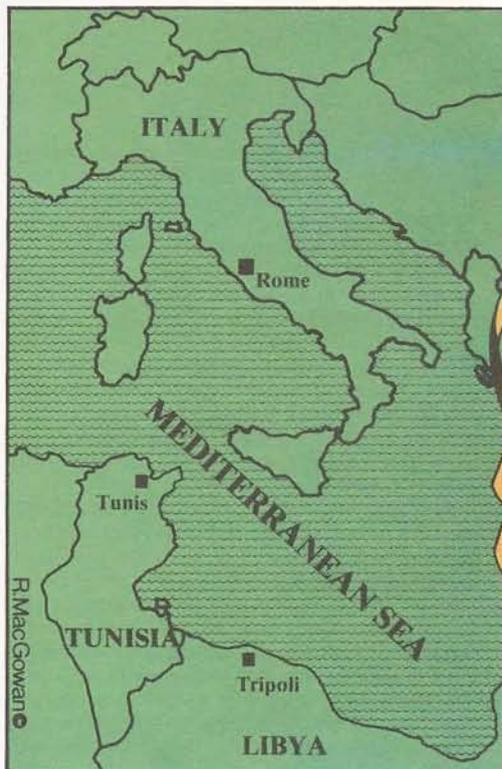
Neutral Commentary Turn Two: Tom becomes the aggressor and begins to force the issue. He doesn't seem to be afraid of the tiger Don is trying to make himself out to be. Don may be underestimating Tom.

Red Turn Three: I jump him back and gain my second uncontested spot on my center row.

Black Turn Three: Big deal. So, he makes one good move. Didn't cost me anything. I occupy the side square in my center row.

Red Turn Four: I move my man forward to block the path of the man he has just moved to his side center square. This surprises him again and retains

Continued on Page 44, Column 2



ROME WASN'T BURNT IN A DAY

Italian Play in Third Reich By Mark McLaughlin

"It is not difficult to rule the Italians—it is pointless!" Italian dictator Benito Mussolini once told a reporter. Il Duce's remark is similar in sentiment to the feeling that many gamers have when offered command of the neo-Roman empire of 1939 in Avalon Hill's *THIRD REICH*. To many an Axis player Italy is merely a sideshow in the great European war; in the two-player version of the game, Italy serves as a forlorn hope and replacement pool for units whose jobs are too lowly for the German master race. The surrogate sacrificial Italian lamb thus performs a function similar to that of the Cubans in their present alliance with the Soviet Union.

The attitude of an Axis player toward his Italian allies (and I use the term loosely) is often matched by the look of despair on the face of the poor unfortunate selected to represent Italy in a multiplayer game. Unlike the French player, who normally takes command of the American forces after his demise in late 1940, the Italian player looks forward to being completely blown out of the game by mid-1943 (a plus if he likes to go home early).

On paper, Italy unfortunately measures up to the less than optimistic opinions stated above, especially if a fortuitous variant chit is not picked. Italy's economy cannot sustain major combat losses for more than two consecutive turns and Rome lacks the BRPs necessary to declare war and launch an offensive against a major power in the same turn in 1939. Even if Italy could launch an offensive option on the same turn as they declared war on a major power, the military force at their disposal is far from awesome. The initial Italian army consists of only 14 factors (two 3-3 and six 1-3 infantry units and a 2-5 armored unit). The air force does have two units and there are four fleets, but the weak ground force limits Italy to one, or at most two, attack(s) per turn. Builds from the force pool

will double the army and add a fifth fleet, but the relatively weak stacks and poor exploitation force are rarely more than equal to those of a minor state.

As if the economic and military situation are not handicap enough, Italy's capital city can be invaded from three nearby beaches, all within range of vulnerable offshore islands where enemy fleets, aircraft and airborne forces can lend support to their invading ground troops.

These, then, are the disadvantages an Italian player faces; disadvantages which often cause a player to prejudice his strategy as that of a doomed, hopeless nation. These disturbing facts can, however, be offset by two challenging factors: diplomacy and audacity.

Diplomatically, Italy appears to be a mere lackey in the German camp, sort of an overstuffed minor ally. Imperial German Chancellor Bismarck observed, however, when his country allied with a weak Austria in the last century, that the weak can often control the actions of the strong member of an alliance, since he often puts himself in untenable positions from which he must be bailed out. Italy is the weak half of the Axis, but it is vital to the German's hopes for victory. Italy can strike at Germany's mortal enemy, England in a manner potentially more devastating than any attack the Reich can launch. Italian troops and planes can give the Axis a trump card in an early assault on France or against the Soviet Union's southern front. Most important of all, the longer Italy remains in the game, the longer the German empire remains intact.

Italy is the keystone to the Balkans, the south of France, Austria and, of course, the Mediterranean. Herein lies the independent-minded Italian's first and most powerful weapon: extortion.

Italy can demand German troops to garrison Rome or other sensitive areas while the Italian army is off on a campaign of its own. The crafty Il Duce can refuse to do the bidding of the powerful Fuhrer

in Berlin unless he receives BRP grants or garrisons, instead of vice versa. If the extortion demand doesn't sound particularly convincing, the Italian player can rapidly put himself in a position where defeat for lack of support would militarily embarrass his stronger northern ally. (The Italians would, of course, lose the game, but they would have the satisfaction of taking an impertinent Hitler down with them. Not only would this teach the Germans a lesson, but it would be in character with the Italian penchant for vendetta.)

The other weapon Italy has is audacity. In the early turns of the game France and England are normally fully occupied with the defense of Western Europe against the Nazi panzers. Italian refusal to send the Reggia Aeronautica and the few good corps in the army into action against France can prolong the war in the West. The longer France remains in the war, the longer Italy has to carve out a Mediterranean empire and loot the fringe countries. The constant refusal to send the Reggia Aeronautica and the few good corps in the army into action against France can prolong the war in the West. The longer France remains in the war, the longer Italy has to carve out a Mediterranean empire and loot the fringe countries. The constant drain of replacing air and land forces conducting offensives in France will deplete the English treasury and will thus curtail English interference in the Mediterranean. Italy can use this period to launch adventures in the Balkans, Turkey and perhaps even Spain. The time gained while England is mired down in Flanders can also be used to build up and prepare the Italian army in Libya for a spaghetti-blitzkrieg into Egypt and Suez.

Opening Moves 1939-1940

The meagre Italian army should be deployed in the fall of 1939 for an invasion of Yugoslavia (see *Figure 1*). The army should be placed as follows:

two 1-3 infantry in Tripoli, one each in Tirane (Albania) and on the beach above Rome. Trieste becomes an airbase and includes both air units and the two 3-3 corps. A 1-3 infantry is placed at Venice and another to the hex northeast of it. The armor unit is placed in Tirane. Either Naples or Taranto are good bases for the fleet.

The Italian player then declares war on Yugoslavia (10 BRPs) and has one or two choices: launch an offensive or declare an attrition option. The offensive option would consist of moving the army units of the 3-3 corps and the 2-5 armor to either side of Belgrade (markers A and B, respectively, in Figure 1) and incidentally moving up the 1-3s to positions adjacent to the other Yugoslavs (C and D in Figure 1). The air force launches a strike against their air force with four factors, eliminating it with the loss of one factor. The other six factors support the ground attack against Belgrade, making it 14:12 (1:1). This is about a 5/6th chance to eliminate Yugoslavia in one turn, since a "CA" result would make the Yugoslavs counterattack at 4:14 (1:4). An exchange would ruin the Italian army, temporarily, but would still leave the remaining two factors able to advance after combat and take Belgrade. An attacker eliminated result is, of course, possible.



FIGURE 1—Italian invasion of Yugoslavia; A = move by the two 3-3s; B = armor; C = two 1-3s, and D = one 1-3. Attrition Option in Fall followed by winter offensive.

If you trust to your luck or plan to turn against someone else in winter 1939, you can try the one turn wipeout against Belgrade. On the other hand, if you're not in a hurry you can declare an attrition option. The forces move forward to the same spots as they did in the offensive, and anything except a "6" on the die will eliminate one Yugoslav. In the winter turn the Italians will be able to attack Belgrade from at least one non-river blocked hex, thus assuring a 2:1 on the capital. Both methods cost the same BRPs (25—10 to declare war and 15 for an offensive) but require different amounts of time.

Assuming there are no losses to replace in the fall turn (either Italy chose the attrition option or freely conquered Belgrade) the Italians will have either 12 or 27 BRPs which they can use to create new units (the rules prohibit spending more than half of their 75 BRPs in one turn, and the war in Yugoslavia has used up either 25 or 10 already, depending on which option was selected). Italy should build the 12 army factors of the 2-3 infantry and 2-5 armor forces in the force pool and position them as follows: a pair of 2-3s in Rome and another 2-3 in each of the two mountain hexes adjacent to it. Put the 2-5 wherever you plan your next move: either along the French or Greek borders. The SR move should return the Libyan garrison to the homeland.

Winter offers Italy two options: France or Greece. Regardless of whether or not Yugoslavia has fallen, the Italians should declare war on either

Greece or the Allies and launch an attrition option, even a weak one, against their opponent. The BRPs cannot be saved in the 1939-40 year start sequence and should be used up.

The Greek option is the strongest lure for Italy. The Italians can declare war, move up the ground forces for an attrition (weak or strong depending on whether or not Belgrade fell in the first turn) and still build the fifth fleet. Most of the army can be moved by strategic redeployment to the Greek frontier and airbases should be built on the two Albanian-Greek border hexes in Albania.

Italy will begin 1940 with 95 BRP (her own plus Yugoslavia's 20). Germany, France and England should all be bogged down in Flanders and unable to divert their attention to Italian aggrandizement in Greece. If the Allies wish to intervene it will save Italy 35 BRPs—her biggest expenditure of the war—and seriously weaken the Western front against Germany.

The spring attack on Greece will almost always be an attrition, unless the winter attrition has already succeeded. The Italians move forward, set up a second-column attrition attack and, in the summer, launch an offensive towards Athens and an exploitation by one armor, several air and some fleets to obliterate the city. Of course, if the winter attrition worked this will be accomplished in the spring.

Historically, both Greece and Yugoslavia proved an embarrassment to Mussolini. Hitler eventually had to divert several panzer and Luftwaffe formations to defeat the two Balkan states and delayed his own invasion of Russia by six decisive weeks. The pitiful condition of the Italian army in this campaign can best be illustrated by a true story told to me by my friend's father, a veteran of the Carabinieri (elite Italian infantry).

The Carabinieri were advancing through one of the innumerable mountain passes of northern Greece when they were pinned down by fire from Greek Evzones (skirted mountain troops). Their captain called for armor support and, a few minutes later, a light tank rumbled up the road. The Evzones' fire slackened as their bullets bounced off the tank's armor. The turret traversed, the gun targeted on the Greek position and fired. The shell missed the Greeks and the recoil knocked loose many of the rivets which held the tank's armor in place. (Italian tanks were riveted, not single-piece cast). A second shot's recoil shook the whole tank and most of the armor plate fell off, leaving the crew sitting on the chassis, unprotected! The Carabinieri company, without even being ordered to do so, laid down its arms and surrendered to the Greeks.



FIGURE 2—Italian invasion of Greece. Italians should declare war and make a Winter Attrition, even with a single corps. Spring 1940 should be either an Attrition (if Winter Attrition failed) or an Offensive & Exploitation, complete with naval bombardment, if Winter Attrition succeeded.

Luckily for the Italians in *THIRD REICH*, the odds are normally against repeating history, at least in the Balkans. The attack shown in Figure II presupposes an ineffective winter, 1939 attrition and demonstrates a two-turn attrition-offensive subjugation of Greece.

With the collapse of resistance in Greece during the spring or summer of 1940, Italy is free to pick any one of a host of gambits in the Mediterranean. The limiting factors are the position of the Italian BRP treasury and the condition of France.

If France is still defiant, the Germans may need Italian help to finish her off. If the Germans will lend Italy the BRPs to cover some of the cost of a declaration of war and an offensive, the attack will be worthwhile. A stab at the back door of France can pick up two objective hexes, Lyons and Marseilles, and the BRP grant prevents Germany from ever requesting BRPs from Italy. If the Germans will not grant Italy the BRPs, Rome can launch its modern legions at more lucrative targets.

The two most inviting possibilities are Turkey and the Middle East. The Middle East adventure requires moving troops and air bases to Libya along the Egyptian border. If Italy has enough BRPs for both a declaration of war and an offensive, the Egyptian invasion will pay off tremendous dividends. England, presumably still defending France, will be weak. Italian forces can crush any troops covering the border and, through armor penetration, reach Alexandria on the first turn of the attack. A second offensive should take Suez and the canal, thus bankrupting England and paving the way for a 1941 Italian takeover of the Levant (Lebanon-Palestine—Transjordan-Syria).

If England is well entrenched in Egypt, Turkey becomes a very tempting target. Although it is a difficult minor state to conquer, Italy can launch a modest invasion to seize Istanbul and defend this objective hex almost indefinitely from attacks from the east. An aggressive Italian can, however, go for the throat, and attempt to conquer the country.

Anglo-French intervention may occur (which, again would save Italy that onerous 35 BRP declaration of war expense) but the British would have to come by sea, thus exposing them to the strong Italian fleet.

Italian operations in the Mediterranean depend on the existence of the French fleet. If France is ready to collapse, the Italians can disregard their navy; if France is still active, the Italian fleet should stay in port rather than take losses against a fleet which will soon be out of a job. A naval battle against the French is a downright idiotic waste of BRPs and Italian naval maneuvers in the Mediterranean should be timed to avoid that unpleasant event.

On to Suez: Italy Invades Egypt

The best way for the Italians to strike a blow for eventual Axis victory is to humble England at its weakest point: the Suez Canal. Far away from home and surrounded by beaches ripe for invasion and Axis colonies, the British Middle East is the only place on the board where Italy can outmatch the Allies.

Figure III shows an Italian offensive against Egypt. The defense is a delaying one designed by Robert Beyma in a previous *GENERAL* article (Vol. 16, No. 1). Air bases have been positioned at Tripoli and under each of the two air units shown to allow aircraft to shuttle from Italy and to bring Italian air power into play as far east as Alexandria. The pride of the Italian army, the 3-3s, 2-3s and 2-5s are packed against the border while a pair of 1-3s are in reserve for security details and attrition losses. Additional Italian troops are disposed throughout the empire with the fleet based at Messina.

The Italian invasion can be prepared for a late 1940 turn or, if the Italians have insufficient funds, early 1941. If Italy has 35 BRPs remaining at the end



FIGURE III—Italy invades Egypt vs the “Beyma” defense (*GENERAL* Vol. 16, Number 1). Italian airbases have been constructed beneath the air units.

of 1940, these should be used to declare war, even if no action other than an attrition one can be paid for. The BRPs aren't worth saving for growth and it at least gets the ball rolling in Egypt. The sooner Italy can attack, however, the weaker England will be in Egypt.

The British defense shown is designed to absorb rather than stop the Italian advance. It is unlikely that the British will deploy their heavy corps farther forward and risk a successful pursuit by Italian armor into the important Suez area. The attack shown will overwhelm the British with a 2:1 and a 3:1 against the frontier units, and the armor will have a 1:1 against the British armor by using two air factors or a 2:1 by using six. The remaining air should be husbanded to defend the armor against any British air forces which intervene during the attack or which are used in the following Allied turn. If the RAF flies to intercept or offers defensive air support, the Italians should destroy it and replace their own losses at the end of the turn. If the RAF refuses to take the losses (they would lose 5 against the Italians 3 if all 10 Italian factors were used) then the Italians can increase the odds against the frontier troops if they wish and still husband enough aircraft for defensive support.

During the redeployment section of their turn, the Italians should move the airbases slightly forward to within range of Cairo and Port Said. Any losses should be made good and moved to the front. The speed with which Italian losses can be rebuilt and brought back into the battle is a major strength over the more cumbersome, time consuming British redeployment via Gibraltar and the fleets in the Mediterranean.

With the first stage of the offensive completed, the Italians face a more determined defense by stronger British units. Weak in offensive punch, the Italians (unless the Germans have sent in a few panzer and Luftwaffe formations) are now reduced to the 1:1 and even 1:2 attacks usually reserved for desperate escapades. Rather than sit in boredom facing the British in Egypt, the Italians should consider the low odds possibilities. A defeat could, at the most, cost the Italians about a dozen BRPs to replace the infantry units which might be eliminated in the attack. Since these units can be rapidly returned to Egypt, there is little worry of an English drive to throw the Italians back into Libya. The Italians will be repositioned and can renew the attack the next turn; the roughly 50:50 odds in a 1:1 attack would probably even out in a second round. A victory, of course, would cost the British 50 BRPs for the Canal loss plus the replacement costs of the eliminated defenders.

The Italians should always keep at least 21 ground factors in their advance in Egypt to assure odds of at least 1:1 against British cities. England can always throw two armored corps for a defensive strength of 16 and one more air corps than the Italians for a total of 21 defensive factors in a critical city. A 1:2 attack is not advised, but it can pay off if the result is an exchange in which Italian infantry takes down British air and armor units.

Conquest of Suez presupposes a Britain weakened from constant or continuing warfare in France and still threatened by German air and naval forces. Spring and Summer, 1941, are the last definite turns in which the Italians will have this ascendancy over the British Empire; in Fall, 1941 at the latest, Russia will occupy almost all of Germany's resources and leave Britain free to fight in the Mediterranean rather than for the home islands.

The Italians should take Alexandria and Suez if a 1:1 can be used against either or both. Waiting for a 2:1 chance against either will allow England to reinforce the one that is not threatened and thus yield only a hollow victory. In the example shown in Figure III, the English will probably move the infantry unit into Suez and the armor to Alexandria and send a pair of infantry corps by sea to reinforce both. A weak English force might be left in the Levant to guard against amphibious attacks. A good British player will send his entire air force to Egypt once the Germans have begun their eastern war. Once these arrangements have been made, a 1:1 against either target becomes doubtful without German assistance.

If the Italians cannot get a 1:1 against each, the city which is not attacked should at least be masked by an adjacent combat unit to prevent British SR movement into it. Italian armor can always make a dash deep into the Levant to seize ungarrisoned colonies, even if the Suez cities remain in English hands. If they are lucky, the armor units will hold out long enough to cost the British the colonial BRPs; at the very least, it will cost the British BRPs for an offensive option and to replace losses incurred while rooting them out. Troops and time consumed there will not be available for a British counter-attack in Egypt and the Italians will have bought themselves another turn.

Once the British air force begins to appear in the Middle East, the Italians should move their air bases back out of range of the British aircraft but within range of their own troops to prevent massive British counterair operations. If there are no Allied airbase counters in Alexandria, Cairo or Suez, the Italians can keep the airbases within range of these cities for an opportunity attack if it is presented. Stalemate along the Canal can be broken by an amphibious invasion in the Levant, especially since the British fleet at Gibraltar is far enough away to make interception of the invasion fleet a fairly uncertain die roll. If the British do intercept, losses work out to the Italian advantage, since that is all the fewer fleets available for ferrying troops or supporting invasions against Italy.

Even if Suez and the Middle East cannot be taken or held in 1941, Italy will still be in a decent enough position to make offensive moves in 1942.

1942: Italy's Last Offensive

1942 offers Italy a difficult choice: with an economy of between 115-120 BRP (depending on growth and the conquest of Cairo), Italy can afford to buy the sixth fleet, the parachute corps and

launch an offensive all in one turn. With these forces, Italy can launch a final strike at the British empire in the Middle East.

Losses incurred in last-ditch offensives in Egypt or the Levant will be rebuilt in Italy, thus speeding up the redeployment necessary to defend the homeland and the Balkan conquests. Italy should begin to demand German assistance to garrison part of the neo-Roman Empire, even if the only troops sent to Italy are minor Axis allied forces. The more troops sent to defend Italy's European possessions, the larger the force Italy can afford to maintain in Africa to harry the British. If the German paratroops and an air unit can be weaseled out of Hitler for even one turn, the Axis can launch a surprise assault on Malta or put the punch together for an airborne-assisted Suez offensive.

Regardless of German assistance, Italy should attack somewhere in Spring, 1942. Once they let the opportunity slip, they will be relegated to the defensive for the remainder of the game. The air force should try to cause RAF losses; the navy should make a threatening move to entice the Royal Navy into battle and the army should at least attack something. At best, the offensive will gain ground and stall the British for a turn or two due to air, land and naval losses. At the worst, the Italians will be back home that much earlier.

As the Americans begin filtering BRPs and troops to England, English troops will be freed to enter the Mediterranean. Summer, 1942, will probably be the turning point in which Italy will be forced on the defensive. When this happens, a small delaying force should be left in Tripoli—a pair of 1-3s or replacements just to force the Allies into a useless offensive—while the main forces deploy in Italy. Africa cannot be defended against Allied attacks coming from both ends of the Mediterranean at once. The time it will take the Allies to deploy in Tunisia for the attack on Italy is a defense in itself: major forces caught in Africa will only cost the Axis unnecessary BRPs and will leave them weak in more crucial areas.

The Italian fleet and air force should make use of every opportunity to intercept similar Allied units. Bombarding the British in Malta can help reduce the awesome power the Italians will have arrayed against them. Replacement units stationed in the outlying areas such as Sardinia and Greece can be used to bait Allied ships which assist amphibious invasions against those targets. Italy must always keep at least 15 BRP in reserve for a counter-attack against an Allied landing in Italy.

Fortress Italy

The best defense of Italy is a defense in depth. The deployment shown in Figure IV illustrates a good, solid ring of troops around the heart of the Italian empire—Rome.

The first line of defense is the fleet. Reinforced by the creation of a sixth fleet (and by any fleets lost in 1941 which have been rebuilt) the Italian Navy will force the British to commit their entire fleet to gain a successful invasion. The second line of defense is the beach army. The Italian Peninsula and empire is dotted with invasion sites; three in Italy, two in Greece, one in Yugoslavia and one each in Sicily and Sardinia. Each beach should be covered by at least one factor, with those in Italy held by two, three or more factors. Two replacement units or a 2-3 infantry and a replacement make a formidable obstacle to amphibious attacks.

An enterprising Allied player will penetrate these first two lines in one turn. A third thin line, directly behind the beach garrisons, can absorb any exploitation attacks the invaders can mount. The Salerno-Taranto area should be protected by a line of 1-3s and the northeastern beach should be backed up by an armor unit in the mountains north of Rome (the movement costs to go around it will keep the exploitation units away from Rome). An armor



FIGURE IV—Defense-in-Depth of the Italian Homeland and Conquests. Airbases are built in Rome and Taranto.

unit is also stationed in the other mountain hex adjacent to Rome to prevent an Allied player with two turns in a row from invading, exploiting and hitting Rome all at once.

The last line of defense is Rome. The city should be garrisoned with the two 3-3s and the paratroops. Since it can only be attacked from three adjacent hexes (at least one of which will probably remain Italian anyway), Rome will be safe against all but a massive attack, which will probably not be able to get better than 1:1 odds against it anyway.

The defense in depth has one other link in its defense: the air force. The Italian air force should initially be stationed to guard the fleet at Taranto. From there, it can provide air cover for the other naval bases of Messina and Naples and can lend support to units on the beaches in Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia and Sicily. It is also out of range of Allied air power.

Once the Allies have landed in Sicily and built up major air forces in the island, the Italian air force should be withdrawn first to Rome and, when airbases are established within range of that city, the air force should be based at Spezia or even Trieste. Air units in Trieste can cover Rome, Cassino, Belgrade and the Yugoslavian beach hex. Unless the Allies are extremely weak in their assaults on the line next to Rome, the air force should not be risked until the last ditch fight for the capital itself—and maybe not even then. If the Allies will be able to get a 1:1 even after losing aircraft to the Italian planes, save them for a counter-attack in case Rome falls.

The Allied invasions of Greece, Albania and Yugoslavia are easier to defend against due to the lack of Allied air bases which can support them, but once ashore, the Italians cannot stop them. The long land front would require German or Axis Allied units to defend. As Italian troops are eliminated in Sicily, they can be rebuilt and the weaker units can be sent to the Balkans to reinforce those garrisons while the 2-3s replace them in the main battle lines.

By mid-1942, the Italian fleet should no longer be used for SRing troops to Italy. Its sole purpose is the interception of Allied shipping. Even unfavorable exchanges should be taken to reduce the Allied capacity to move by sea. The fleet should not be husbanded: if anything moves by sea, try to attack it. The Italians might as well install glass bottom boats so they can see where they'll be going.

The Messina naval base will have to be abandoned as air bases are placed within striking distance. Taranto, the other main naval base, should become the next home of the fleet when this occurs. As long as a navy is based at Taranto, the Allies cannot invade that hex, and thus the garrison need not be as strong as the other beach defenders. Once Taranto falls or can be bombarded, the remaining fleet should move to Trieste to cover the Adriatic beaches (note that Salerno beach is still within a 1-4 interception die roll from Salerno's beach, thus providing good coverage. The fleet could go to Livorno or Genoa to provide better Salerno coverage but might become exposed to Allied air in Sardinia).

The Italian Navy can also be used to counter-attack a beachhead gained by the advancing Allies. An amphibious invasion against their supply point will at least force the Allies to send their own fleets into battle with Italy's, and the combination of troops, naval gunfire and air factors might succeed in regaining the hex and cutting Allied supplies. The Italians also can try to invade ungarrisoned Allied beaches to take ground in the Levant or along the African coast. These annoying tactics will cost the British BRPs for colonies and for offensives used to regain them.

The defense shown in Figure IV can be considerably beefed up by the addition of two or three German infantry corps. As Italy slowly begins to crumble, the Italian player should point out to his German ally the need for heavy troops to shore up his empire. The Germans can afford a handful of troops more than they can afford to plug the hole left by a defeated Italy.

The defense shown will prevent the Allies from invading and seizing Italy in one quick campaign, as is shown in the previously mentioned article by Mr. Beyma. The defense stands a good chance of stopping an attack even against an Allied player who has two consecutive turns.

"Fortress Italy" can hold out against the entire British army and air force for several turns in this position without German help. The presence of one or two Luftwaffe units and Wehrmacht corps should put Italy in a position of siege, but a siege which is far more costly to the Allies in time, men and material than the Axis will spend to stop them. Italy will fall, of course, if major American assistance is sent to reinforce the British, especially if this includes airborne and air force corps. Such a diversion of forces, however, will postpone the main Allied effort against France and cost double BRPs for offensives.

Given Allied realization of the cost effectiveness of an Italian campaign, an Italy thus defended should be able to hold out until the end of the war with three to five objective hexes: Rome, Milan, Genoa and either or both of Belgrade and Athens. Continued possession of the latter hexes will depend upon Allied unwillingness to further divert forces away from the major areas and good defensive tactics by the Axis. This plan should give Italy a stalemate or even a marginal victory in a multiplayer campaign game. If the 1939 scenario is played, Italy should possess from six to eight objectives by the end of Summer, 1942: the five listed above and one or more of Tripoli, Alexandria, Lyon, Marseille, Malta or Istanbul. Since Italy will usually move last in the Summer, 1942 turn, a last ditch effort to regain a lost objective can be gambled upon with impunity in the 1939 scenario. A reasonably successful Italian player, however, will already be in possession of seven objectives—a tactical victory—and the final effort can be to acquire the eight objectives which will give Italy a strategic victory.

In the Campaign Game—the game variant most often played—Italy will eventually become a backwater player who uses his BRPs and forces to constantly counterattack at or around Rome in order to remain in the game. Rome will probably fall about every other turn until the Allies finally give up and invade France. When the Allies go to France, however, the Germans will also probably desert Italy in an attempt to stall the Allied juggernaut. Italian troops will also have to be diverted to guard the Franco-Italian border against an end run down into the Italian boot from the northwest.

Once the invasion of France is in full swing Italy will more than likely degenerate into a battle of attrition as the fleets transport men and replacements to the battle against Germany and as the air and paratroop units target on Berlin. By mid-1944, every turn the Allies waste in Italy adds to the life of the Axis, prolongs the war, and increases Axis chances for some form of victory.



FIGURE V—Italian invasion of Turkey
A = Naval Invasion: 1 × 3-3 infantry, 2 × 2-5 armor, 5 fleets.
B = Armor exploit Possibility.
C = Suggested Axis of advance.

The Gambits

As mentioned earlier in this article, Italy can also play to win through audacity. Audacity means doing something your opponent doesn't expect, and making it work.

Mussolini was obsessed with recreating the old Roman Empire of the "Mare Nostrum" (Our Sea). An Italian player can also attempt to fulfill Mussolini's dream through one or two gambits against the states and colonies which surround the Mediterranean.

The first Italian gambit is the obvious one, Egypt. As has already been discussed, this can be launched either in the Spring of 1940 or immediately upon the fall of France. The latter is preferable as it precludes any forays by the powerful French fleet and will catch Britain with her guard down. If this offensive is unsuccessful or becomes bogged down, Italy will be forced back on the defensive relatively early in the game. If successful, the British would be reduced to fighting from Gibraltar and Malta, both of which can be outmaneuvered by air and paratroop forces and, at least in the case of Gibraltar, by an invasion of Spain.

The Italians are normally forced to spend 35 BRPs to declare war on England. There are two ways of getting around this requirement: attacking Turkey or Spain. Either of these gambits may provoke Allied intervention and thus save Italy the expense of a declaration of war. This savings can be translated into two offensives or rebuilt losses.

The Turkish gambit, as discussed before, may force some allied intervention since the conquest of Turkey would do immeasurable harm to the Allied cause. The 30 BRPs Italy can gain in Turkey are only part of that harm: the opening of an Axis land bridge to the Levant and Suez and the threat to Russia's backdoor are potentially lethal to the war against the Axis. Axis forces in Turkey could also prevent or disrupt any lendlease efforts directed through Persia.

An Italian invasion of Turkey is shown in Figure V. A preliminary invasion of Greece is required to obtain airbases at Athens and Salonika and to provide a corridor to Istanbul. Turkey is defended by six naval factors (based at Izmir), four air factors (deployed at Izmit to cover the probable points of invasion), seven 2-3s (covering those points) and two armor units (placed at Ankara for security).

These Turkish dispositions are almost forced upon the defenders. Strengthening any of the invasion beaches or crossing areas would leave another one unguarded and open to the initial attack or exploitation. The unit guarding Istanbul and the border guard at the Greek frontier could be withdrawn to Asiatic Turkey, but this would give the Italians Istanbul without a fight and does not solve the exploitation problem.

The Italians begin the invasion with the Salonika air force units. Four air factors attack the Turkish air force and eliminate it. If positioned farther back, these factors will be held for interception.

The next step is the invasion near Izmir. If the Turks are doubled up there, it means they will be weaker somewhere else and the invasion can go to a weaker, more eastern beach or pour in across the straits. A naval invasion is launched by one 3-3 and one 2-5 with four fleets to provide the amphibious capability and to offer fire support. A fifth fleet is used to carry a second 2-5 for exploitation purposes. Italian naval strength is sufficient to prevent any important loss due to interception by the Turkish fleet. (Unless the Turks can intercept a smaller Italian fleet stack and roll to eliminate their entire fleet, Italian losses will be non-existent).

The invasion of Izmir beach is a 2:1 (5 land, 6 bombardment and one more air factor from Athens) at 12:6. Additional air factors may be thrown in to absorb exchange losses or saved for exploitation/defensive support use later on.

While the seaborne force is attacking, European side forces should make a 1:1 against the European garrisons to weaken the Turks and to clear the way to Asia. The Italians will make their next move in Turkey based on what the Allies do. If they have arranged a "flip-flop" (where they moved last in one turn and first in the next) with the Germans through BRP power, they will have a second chance at Turkey before Allied ground units can get in their way. If the Allies have decided not to intervene in Turkey, the Roman Legions can mop up the country and open pizza parlors in Ankara.

The Allied intervention into Turkey will be hindered by the knowledge that the Italian fleet can hurt any seaborne aid and that BRPs spent to declare war can cripple the English economy, limit her growth and severely curtail her strategic warfare builds. A further limitation is the availability of forces to intervene. The continuing war in the West should tie down most of the Allied army and only those units already deployed in the Mediterranean could possibly intervene, unless troops are shuttled in from the Western front. All things considered, the Italians should have a second shot at Turkey before significant Allied forces can hinder them. The Italians should be able to close up on or take Ankara before a relieving force can save Turkey.

The Italian second attack depends on how well the first succeeded and on how strong the Allied reaction has been (unless of course a "flip-flop" has been arranged). If the first invasion and the Turkish counterattack did not cause any significant Italian losses, the Italians can go inland to Ankara and storm it. If the 3-3s or 2-5s have been temporarily lost, the Italians can close in on the city to lay "siege" to it and prevent Allied relief forces from immediately entering Ankara. A combination of ground and air forces should still be able to at least pull off a 1:1 against Ankara.

If this second offensive has not conquered Turkey, the Italians ability to launch a third attack should still be strong enough to take the city. If the British have sent strong land units into Turkey, however, the Italians might be able to take an end-run amphibious invasion into Egypt or the Levant, both of which would have to be stripped of troops to allow a sizeable English army to operate in Turkey.

If Allied intervention becomes too strong, Italy can fall back to the straits and concentrate on a defense of Istanbul. German aid might be sought to relieve the pressure, and the Germans would surely welcome the chance to fight English troops in Turkey, since they could be directly moved and supplied from European bases and thus strike overland to the Suez. The old "Afrika Korps" gambit usually doesn't interest the Germans since it costs so much in time and BRPs to coordinate moves with the Italians and requires Italian aid to get to Libya, but the opportunity to go on their own through Turkey is too good an opportunity to pass up. The Italians could sweeten the deal by offering to give Germany the conquest of Turkey and its 30 BRPs in return for allowing Italy to retain the Istanbul objective hex.

Without Allied intervention, Turkey will fall on the second or third turn of a continuous offensive. If Turkey is attacked just as France has fallen and the Germans are massing in the East, the conquest will be all but automatic. With Turkey gone, the Italians can continue overland into the Middle East or combine that move with a naval action in Africa. Mosul in Iraq also becomes a tempting target. If the Allies have still not declared war on Italy, Italy might even consider stopping with Mosul and remaining out of the big war. The growing American presence in 1942 may, however, induce the Allies to declare war on Italy anyway, but Italy would be in a very strong position if she did not have to fight the Allies prior to that time.

The Russians, often casting around for something to do in the early portion of the game, may decide to delve into Turkey on their own. If they do, the Italians should stay away from the place and let the Russians play in Asia Minor. If the Russians have not attacked, Turkey is still a viable target for Italy provided the Italians take into account the possibility of Russian intervention which, all things considered, could actually work to the benefit of Italy and the Axis cause.

An attack into Turkey should be coordinated with the Germans. Although Italy and Germany are not yet allied in the military sense, they do move in the same segment of the turn and whatever happens to one can affect the other. The Italians should allow the Germans sufficient time to deploy at least relatively strong forces along the Eastern Front. If the Germans are strong there, the Russians will not pull their weak army south to confront the Italians in Turkey and leave the road to Moscow unguarded. The Russians cannot afford to spend 35 BRPs to declare war on Italy and then drop another 15 on an offensive if the Germans are hungrily sitting in Poland. In this case, Italy should be able to hit Turkey without fear of Russian intervention.

The other thing the Italians might try, again in collusion with the Germans, is a "trap" play. The Germans stay relatively weak in the East, thus not posing a threat to Russia, and the Italians strike into Turkey. A bored Russian player eagerly sends his Soviet armies across the Caucasus and joins the Turks in resisting Italian aggression. The Russians have thus bankrupted themselves and possibly saved Italy the 35 BRPs she would otherwise have spent to enter the war against the Allies. If Britain intervenes also they will have saved 35 German BRPs that would have eventually gone to declare war on Russia. Now, no holds are barred and everyone is at war as soon as the Western Allies attack Italy or Germany attacks Russia. The Axis is therefore, stronger by 70 BRPs and the Allies are weaker by 35-50. The Russians will either send a major force to Turkey to fight the Italians and thus weaken their defenses on the Eastern Front or they will send a minor group of units into Turkey which might delay but will not stop the Italians.

A major Russian move in Turkey will doom Mother Russia if the Germans are able to attack with any sizeable forces in a turn or two. The Russian forces in Turkey will have to be withdrawn to defend against the Nazis and then Turkey falls to Italy. A weak Russian force accomplishes nothing, and Turkey falls again. The collapse of Turkey adds 30 BRPs to the Axis, opens up the Middle East to their armies and exposes the Persian Lend Lease route to interception. Russians will also have to go south to defend their back door when they are needed to stop the Germans and thus further weaken Soviet defenses.

The overall result of Russian intervention in Turkey, provided the Germans can react within two turns, is highly beneficial to the Axis both economically and militarily. Although an Italian player who attacks Turkey and brings in Russia when Germany is vulnerable should be shot as a traitor, an Italian who plays the timing game and brings in Russia should be given a medal: it is the best aid he can ever give his German comrade. (Not to mention the fact that he adds Turkey to the Roman crown).

Spain can be attacked in a similar fashion but timing is also very important. France must be conquered or collapsing before Italy can make a move into Iberia lest the French fleet sally forth in a blaze of glory. Spain should be hit by a vulture-like Italy which is waiting in the wings for the Allied carcass to collapse. While England is repairing the losses taken in helping France, the Italians should jump across the Mediterranean and attack Spain.

At best, the Spanish invasion will add another laurel to Italy's crown; at worst it will draw the English into attacking Italy. Either way the Italians come out ahead: if the English don't intervene now they probably never will, and the Iberian Peninsula can be added to the Italian satellite empire. If the British do intervene, that will save the Italians the 35 BRP declaration of war cost, further reduce the English treasury and open the way for the Germans to cross the Pyrennes and aid the Italians in Spain. Once again, the Germans can take the opportunity to beat a British army on land and the Axis can divide the BRP and objective hex spoils between them (i.e., Spain's BRPs to Germany, Madrid's objective hex to Italy, or vice versa). Either way, Italy comes out ahead and England gains nothing.

The invasion of Spain is illustrated in Figure VI. This undertaking is conducted in a manner similar to an Italian onslaught against Turkey. The first turn of an attack must be directed against the Balearics. The island off the Spanish coast serves as both an air and naval base for the invasion of the Peninsula. Two 3-3s and four fleets, supported by 10 air factors in Sardinia will prove sufficient to stop the Spanish air and naval interceptions and still secure the island. A sortie by the Spanish fleet would only cost the Italians one naval factor at the expense of the Spanish navy. Even if held by a pair of 2-3s, the Italians can still manage a 1:1 against the island (or a 2:1 if no Spanish air or naval forces intervene and the fifth fleet is utilized). The fifth Italian fleet should not be used unless absolutely necessary, since it will be used to SR an airbase to the island.



FIGURE VI—Italian amphibious invasion of Spain (3 turns). Units depicted are Spanish defenses. Arrows show Italian moves.

Turn (1) Italian Air Forces in Western Sardinia provide support as five fleets and two 3-3 infantry invade and Bombard Ibiza Island.

Turn (2) Italian Air Forces in Ibiza attack Spanish Air Force while fleets and infantry seize Cartagena (beach and port). --- represents optional target beach and exploitation.

Turn (3) Italian armor, infantry transported to Cartagena advance inland and take Madrid. Air units staged forward for support.

The second turn of the invasion may come before the Allies can significantly intervene. The Italians stage the Sardinian air force to the Balearics and launch five fleets and two 3-3s against Cartagena. That hex is both beach and port and thus solves the Italian need for a supply port. If it is too strongly held a 2-5 can be substituted for one of the 3-3s and another 2-5 can be used for exploitation purposes for an invasion of the Barcelona beach with an exploitation to Valencia port. If the Allies have intervened, Italy is at war and can thus invade a beach with a 3-3 and a 2-5, place a beachhead marker there and use a second 2-5 to exploit inland. (Italy would also be able to invade Spain via France if Germany has conquered it and allows Italy to move through to hit Spain).

The invasion, regardless of where it is launched, is supported by 10 air factors which can eliminate any remaining Spanish air units or whatever air

force might be stationed within supporting range out of British Gibraltar. If used in this manner, the Italians will probably not be able to get more than a 1:1 against the beaches.

On the third turn Italy transports the armored corps to its beachhead in Spain (assuming that these corps were not already deployed there) and, with the 3-3 infantry, advances on Madrid. An air unit is staged to the occupied port (Cartagena or Valencia) to provide air support. If the Allies have not intervened on the first turn of the attack against Spain, this attack should succeed.

Britain must intervene in Spain: if she does not, Gibraltar will fall from a landward attack and with it the entire Mediterranean will become the Italian's "Mare Nostrum." Italy might be able to beat England all by herself in Turkey, but in Spain, German participation will be needed. German and Italian forces should be able to conquer Spain in two or at the most three turns, but English forces could keep the war going for several turns, especially if the Luftwaffe is needed in Russia. Once involved in Spain, however, the Axis must eliminate all the Allied units there lest the Americans use it as a giant aircraft carrier for their own counteroffensive.

Even if Spain is not conquered, the continued warfare for Iberia should at least keep the Allies away from Italy. If German troops can be used to take up much of the defense of Spain, Italy will have a free hand to hit the Levant and Suez without Allied interference.

Both the Turkish and Spanish gambits have the potential for adding large amounts of BRPs to the Italian treasury and both will tie up Allied units, thus postponing the ritual Allied Mediterranean cruise. Both gambits should save Italy the cost of declaring war on the Allies or, if they fail to intervene, give Italy time and space to trade in the latter half of the game. The main disadvantage to attacking either Spain or Turkey is the number of offensives which must be sustained to ensure conquest. It is a race against the Allies in both countries, and an unlucky or incautious move can turn the tide and prevent the Italians from succeeding in either adventure.

Malta

Malta is the thorn in the Italian side. It lies astride the Axis supply route to Africa and is in a perfect position to serve as an airhead for an Allied invasion of Sicily. Elimination of this thorn, however, is an extraordinarily difficult mission.

A decent British player will garrison Malta with a nine factor fleet and a 3-4 infantry unit. It is doubtful, yet possible, that the RAF will be present on the island. The fleet prevents an amphibious invasion and the infantry, quadrupled in its fortress, is a strong deterrent to an airborne coup de main.

There are two methods of attacking Malta. The first one is the more expensive: an airborne assault. The Italians have two factors of airborne and the Germans three. Combined with seven of the Italian air factors they can bring about a 1:1 on Malta. At least two additional air factors should be used for exchange purposes. If they win, the Axis can congratulate themselves on a handsome victory. If the attack fails, the Axis lose both airborne corps for good and the equivalent of 51 BRPs (15 for an offensive and 36 for 12 air/paratroop factors.) An exchange results in a similar loss, but at least Malta will be Axis. It is doubtful if Malta is worth this kind of effort.

The alternative invasion requires timing and advance planning. The Axis can normally count on a two turn-in-a-row sequence sometime in 1941. Italy can take out Malta with its own forces in those two turns without German aid. On the first Italian turn the air force attacks the British fleet. As long as at least one factor of that fleet is lost, the naval garrison of the port will fall below the nine factor requirement to prevent amphibious assaults. Addi-

tional aircraft can strike any RAF factors which are on or within range of Malta. Destruction of the British naval force is expensive (3 BRP per air factor lost in the attack) but the British will have to wait four turns before replacing their losses and the Italians will be back in the game on the next turn.

On the second turn in a row, Italy launches an amphibious invasion. Five fleets carrying the two 3-3s and providing nine bombardment factors, aided by 10 air factors, hit Malta at 2:1 (25:12) and stand an excellent chance of winning. Even on an exchange, Italy will still take the hex, although it would cost 30 BRPs plus 15 for an Offensive Option (27 for nine air factors, three for three land factors). A fleet should be SRed there immediately to prevent an Allied reinvasion.

As can be seen, Malta is an incredibly tough and expensive nut to crack and should not be attempted unless the Italian player has the time and troops to throw away. The forces are normally better used elsewhere.



FIGURE VII—Italian Air/amphibious assault on Malta. (Two turns).

1st turn—Air attack reduces British fleet to 8 factors or less.

2nd turn—(Two turns in a row). Airborne unit lands supported by two air units while three fleets bombard to support invasion by two 3-3 infantry conveyed by two fleets (invaded by sea).

Sixth fleet remains to SR into port on Malta to prevent reinvasion.

Figure VII demonstrates a typical 1942 Italian attack. The timing requirements are still necessary and the only additions are the airborne and sixth fleet units. These forces will not increase the odds, but merely make up for stronger Allied garrisons or naval interception. The odds can be increased to 3:1 by the addition of the German paratroops and three Luftwaffe units, but it would take an extremely crafty Italian player to weasel those prize units away from the Germans for two turns.

The seizure of Malta does give Italy another objective hex and cuts some support for the Allied invasion of Sicily.

France

Southern France is always a tempting target since it contains two objective hexes within a move of the Italian homeland—Lyon and Marseilles. The German player is always trying to coax the Italians into an offensive along the narrow coastal corridor between France and Italy in the hope of drawing off French forces from the main German threat. Although no BRPs will be gained from a war on France—unless the Germans pay Italy to attack—the two objective hexes are relatively easy pickings.

Italy should not jump into France while it is still a healthy obstacle to the Germans. The Italians should play the part of the reluctant vulture, jumping on a prostrate France on the same turn the Nazis march down the Champs Elysee. A last ditch

French offensive will not turn its fury against Italy but against Germany, and the French fleet will not be able to hurl itself upon the Italian navy. The Italians should save their BRPs in 1940 to be able to launch an attack on the same turn in which they declare war. Figure VIII is an example of the traditional Italian spaghetti-blitzkrieg.



FIGURE VIII—Italian intervention in France, 1940. (French defense is stronger than usual; if weaker, the attack becomes easier.) (1) attack, (2) armored exploit to Marseilles/Lyons.

Once again the workhorse Italian 3-3s and air corps dash themselves against the enemy with mild support from the 2-3 corps while the armor units wait in reserve for the exploitation to victory. The French defense which is illustrated is probably greater than the French player will be able to afford, but not improbable. The weaker it is, the easier the Italian task will be. The weakest hex should be attacked, although the mountain hex in the center of the defense offers an opportunity to attack either Lyons or Marseilles on an exploitation. If French forces are doubled up along the border and placed in these two cities, which is highly unlikely, the Italians should politely tell the Germans where to go and march off for brighter prospects.

The Italians never run out of options in 1940 or 1941, and should not be talked into suicide or into wild gambles which can only aid the German player instead of the Italian. The Middle East is full of beaches and colonies ripe for the taking. An amphibious attack on Lebanon can be exploited and Italian armor can drive through the streets of Jerusalem, Damascus, Port Said and even Cairo. With France out of the war and these areas under Italian control, the British will be hard pressed to regain the initiative or threaten the Italian heartland.

Traditional Traps

There are several traps no self-respecting Italian player should ever fall for. The first is the German plea to send all your unused BRPs to him for the 50% growth they can earn. This is like selling your soul for a popsicle. Once the BRP route is established, it can never be reversed: Germany will never be able to send you BRPs to keep Italy in the game during the final turns. Promises to send German troops to your aid are counterproductive. If you wish to use them for an offensive the Germans must be coaxed into spending 15 BRPs for that option (there are two chances of the Germans doing that: slim and none.) If Italy is on the ropes later in the game, German troops will have to go there anyway, regardless of how much you've sent to the Reich.

The other major bait the Italians are lured with is the German bullying for air and armor factors to be lent to him. Once they go north they will be used by the Germans as cannon fodder: testing the ground for landmines as it were. They'll die immediately and Italy is stuck with trying to dig up BRPs to replace them. Besides the expense, Italy is deprived of their offensive punch for a turn or two and will thus lose the initiative. If the Germans con-

vince you to send troops into Russia, you're an even bigger fool than old Benito himself. Keep the Italian army and air force under Italian command.

Finally, the Italian player has an occasional game in which he begins where he is so strong that there is little excuse for not making the Mediterranean an Italian lake. The variants allowing for additional BRPs and troops or the acquiescence of Spain are tremendous boosts to Italian morale. The first of these variants allows Italy to build up her full power in 1939 and smash the British in Egypt and the colonies in 1940, and allows Italy the military force she needs to conduct real blitzkriegs on helpless minors and colonies. The other variant dooms Gibraltar and the British position in the Mediterranean for most of the game. The last of these variants is the most beneficial, as the sizeable Spanish force provides a nice doorstop against British reentry into the Mediterranean and allows Italy the time to conquer everything in sight.

In the classic film, "In Which We Serve", there is a scene which points out the normal attitude of most gamers to the Italians in *THIRD REICH*. Steaming through the Mediterranean toward Crete, a British destroyer flotilla comes under fire from enemy naval vessels. Two crewmen exchange opinions:

"I bet they're real Germans."

"Ay, couldn't get the Itais to do that for love nor money."

"You can get the Italians to do anything for money."

"Na, can't get 'em to fight, that's why they were so lousy in the last war. It's on account 'o their warm, langorous southern temperament."

I have attempted to demonstrate, in this article, that Italy is not the sick man of 1939 Europe that she is often made out to be. Italian play offers a rich choice of objectives for an imaginative player who can turn a game from a mere historical recreation into a wide open struggle for mastery of Europe.

By the way, immediately after that dialogue in the movie, a torpedo hits the destroyer and it sinks. The torpedo is from an Italian warship.



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NEW KINGMAKER EVENT CARDS

Are your *KINGMAKER* games getting a bit dull? You can spice them up with the new Event Cards described in Vol. 14, No. 3. Avalon Hill is making available in a special expansion kit a new deck of 48 Events cards including 25 printed Treachery, Gales At Sea, Refuge, Vacillating Allegiance, Catastrophe, and Royal Death cards as well as 23 blanks for use in your own variants. The entire deck is backed by the same rich *KINGMAKER* design which makes the game such a joy to play and cards from the two decks will be indistinguishable from the rear. This special card deck is available for \$4.00 plus postage. Maryland residents please add 5% sales tax.

THE PERCENTAGE OF DOOM

CRESCENDO OF DOOM SCENARIO EVALUATIONS

By Joseph Suchar and Jon Mishcon

Joe Suchar and Jon Mischon were the collective MVP of the recent COD playtest and have been invaluable, especially in the matter of addressing scenario play balance. Where their opinions on a scenario vary from those of Dr. Medrow printed in the last issue, they conclude with the rationale for their differing opinions.

This article is meant to serve three purposes. First we would like to present to the newcomer to COD some guidelines for the play of each scenario. Someone looking at the scenario for the first time might well feel at a loss as to what to do. COI represented a quantum leap forward from SL, and we feel that COD represents a quantum leap forward from COI. The new rules have changed dramatically many of the old tried and true techniques of play calling for a new look at basic principles of play.

Second, we would like to provide the solo player with a set of "solutions" to the problems posed by the scenarios. We hope an analysis of these solutions will provide many hours of pleasure.

Finally, we hope the experienced player will be able to see something he may not have thought of. If so, then that will be the icing on the cake.

The format of our presentation is essentially what we use when we analyze the scenarios during playtest. First we observe the major strengths and weaknesses of both sides. Then we discuss some of the possible courses of action based on maximizing strengths and minimizing weaknesses. The majority of the scenarios are very complex and there are many approaches that can be taken. We have decided to focus on one or two for each. We have chosen what we consider to be the most "obvious." We make no claims of course that these are in any way optimal. We do feel, though, that each approach suggested is viable.



SCENARIO 21

Defender's Assets: possession of dominant terrain, concealment, ample wire and entrenchments.

Defender's Liabilities: poor rally capability, broad area to cover, poor anti-armor capability.

Attacker's Assets: magnificent rally capability, armor, bypass movement.

Attacker's Liabilities: need to exit over half of infantry force and not much time to do it.

DEFENDER:

We see two distinct choices for the defense. The first is a heights only defense centered on hill 498, hill 547 and the 2nd level building while using wire to channel the attacker into your fire. Suggestions for hill 498 (3DD2) are an entrenchment, two

squads with a LMG and ATR to cover road movement and bypass movement via 5S7 and 5S8. In 3N1, on the 2nd floor place a MMG, two squads, radio and the 9-2 leader. Boresight the MMG on 5L4 as this is a good spot to break up potential German fire groups. On hill 547 place a squad, a 9-1 leader and a MMG, boresighted on 5K6, in 3H2; a squad and ATR, boresighted on 3D3, in 3G3; two squads each, entrenched, in 3F2 and 3E3. Place an 8-0 leader in 3F5. Consider placing the bunker in 5EE4 facing DD4/EE5 with either ?'s or a squad and ATR to threaten rear shots on the German AFVs as they pass. In 3W5 an entrenchment with two or three squads, an 8-0 leader and the third ATR if you choose not to use the bunker as indicated. All ATR's now have good opportunities for rear shots and have interlocking fields of fire. Consider boresighting your artillery on 5H0 or 5T8. Place all your wire on board 5 in Q9 through L6 inclusive, O10 through K8 inclusive, J8, I8, H8, G9, F6, I6, and H5. This setup will prevent bypass movement through woods and no wire can be reached in turn 1 unless the German runs up the road I1-H3 which is unwise.

The second choice involves use of trap plays using entrenchments and the bunker to set up in forward positions. Use a covering fire force in 3N1. Some positions to consider are 5V8, 5P4, 5I4, 5C7, 5S4, 5X10 and 3C1. The forces assigned to these entrenched positions will depend on the extent you wish to bluff. The basic idea is to intimidate German movement. Remember that he has only 8 turns.

ATTACKER:

Do not count on your off-board artillery for much. It is best to put the 8-0 leader and radio adjacent to the hex in which the 75mm gun will appear e.g., 5H0 for leader and 5G1 for the 75. You should advance phase the leader on board. Note the 75 cannot cover both the building and hill 547 simultaneously. The armor should be used independently of the infantry as a mobile fire base. Send both as fast as possible to the heights of hill 522 or 534. If successful, Polish rout and regrouping will be seriously impeded. Keep your infantry together. Choose an axis of advance and stick to it. If the wire is not properly placed in the woods it is possible to arrive at 3N1 in four turns with the bulk of your force going straight through the woods. Use the two clearings which allow for adjacent hexes for fire against the stone building, e.g., three squads each in 5K6, 5J5, 5I6, 5I7 can bring 36 fire factors against 3N1. Another choice is broad charges through open terrain from 5AA1 through 5GG1. Aim for the north of hill 498. Use armor to force defenders off the hilltop by driving right onto 3DD2. With luck you should reach here by turn 3 with ten squads. If the bulk of the defenders are south of row Q on board 3, the Poles will be hard pressed to interfere. A third axis is centered on rows D and E of board 5 around and over hill 547. Remember to use bypass movement to cut around woods. Load a squad on your halftrack and drive it deep with your armor to draw fire. If you get through, dump the squad where you feel it will do the most good.

We rate this scenario 60-40 pro-German as presently constituted.

As an exercise in contrasting opinions, we offer the following critique of Dr. Medrow's proposed initial placements.

The wire is widely dispersed and hence easily avoided. This violates our principle of using obstacles to channel movement into defensive lanes of fire.

The minus leaders are both in known positions. This limits the potential for intimidation by modified fire. We note also the -2 leader is with a weapon it cannot modify.

The lack of obstacles in the woods allows the German to be at the east edge of the board 5 woods (5Q9 and surroundings) at the end of turn 2 and might permit the bulk of the attackers to assault the 3N1 building by turn 3.

Our overall impression is that this defensive position seems to allow the German to rapidly deploy all his strength against a portion of the defenders. The placement of so many units in reserve positions denies the defender use of maximum fire power to injure and delay the attacker. We feel this is especially critical in a short game.



SCENARIO 22

Defender's Assets: good morale and self rally ability, terrain, and weather conditions.

Defender's Liabilities: a bare minimum of force to do the job.

Attacker's Assets: ample time and manpower to develop a coordinated assault, AFV's which can carry infantry and break ground for them.

Attacker's Liabilities: essentially one—atrocious weather.

DEFENDER:

Given what we consider a minimal force, we suggest using obstacles and mines to seal off the two southern axes of advance while using your firepower to seal off the northern axes. Consider placing all wire on board 5 in hexes O5 through O10 inclusive, K4 through K10 inclusive except K8. Place six mine factors in 5Q6, six in 5P5 and eight in 5P4. The purpose of the mines here is to go for AFV immobilization to block the road. If he comes through this way with an AFV you get six shots, each with a 1/36 chance of an immobilization. Any infantry following behind can move through without penalty but remember your primary concern is blocking the road. Place a roadblock in 5K3 facing 5L2 and the other in 2K2 facing 2L1. In 5L2 an entrenchment with three squads, one LMG, three ATM; in 2M5 an entrenchment, two squads, two LMG; in 2M4 an entrenchment, two squads and two ATM; in 2L3 the 9-0 leader; in 2K5 an entrenchment with an ATR, HMG, three squads and the 10-1 leader; in 2J4 an entrenchment with two

squads, an ATR and the MMG; and in 2F7 an entrenchment. Bore-sight the HMG on 2N6 and the MMG on 2R4. Keep the firepower on the heights as long as possible but remember you can't stay there indefinitely. You must plan on fall back positions such as 2F7. If any tanks come near without infantry support they should be assaulted with the ATM's. These are quite effective and your good morale gives an excellent chance of placing them.

ATTACKER:

The harassing artillery fire is almost worthless. If it is effective you want a target hex such as 2L4 which could affect a hex such as 2M5 or 2N5 which can be threatened on turn 1. Beyond the obvious approach routes on the north face of hill 621 and the funnel between hill 621 and the woods there are two other alternatives. First is a concerted drive down the road through the woods of board 5. Second is a pure infantry thrust through extreme southern edge of woods, e.g., three squads starting in 5T9 could reach 5D5 in seven turns without a leader. So nine squads with a leader in one stack could threaten to exit board 5 by turn 9. The Finnish set up will determine the best axis. Keep in mind you can throw away 40% of your force and still win. It should be noted it will take seven turns to exit the trucks off board if started in 2X1 and they face no opposition. Remember to use your AFV's to break ground for your infantry to speed their advance. If the Finns set up on the 3rd level of hill 621 in forward positions consider setting up all your MMG's and the HMG on the forward edge of hill 621 (say 2U4 and 2T3) as a fire base.

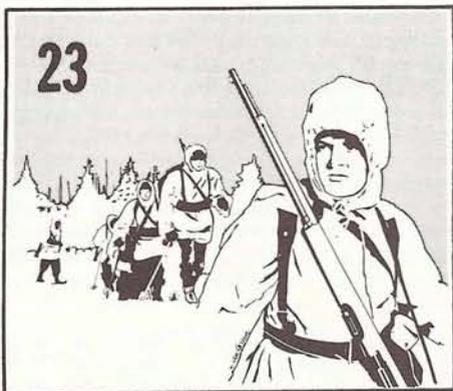
We rate this one 60-40 pro-Finnish.

Turning now to Dr. Medrow's analysis of this situation we would like to add that small minefields in deep snow are ineffective in our opinion because of the +1 modifier. They have no chance to affect the AFV's.

The roadblock in 2O2 does not prohibit motion along that axis. We feel that roadblocks are usually best positioned between two obstacles.

The crest line of hill 621 is the only position which can confront an assault on either side of the hill. In this setup the crest line is held lightly, and precariously far forward. It is possible to prep fire 36 factors with a +2 modifier on 2P5 by placing in 2V2 the HMG, MMG, LMG, three squads and the 9-1 leader combined with two MMG's, two LMG's, three squads and the 8-1 leader on 2U3. Note this gives a 28% chance of a KIA. This does not even involve the 10-2 leader. The prep fire may be followed by a combined tank-infantry assault from 2T3, 2U4 and 2T4.

The defender appears to be set up in small packets which are not mutually supportive. This seems to invite an assault by the entire Russian force against only one third of the defender's force by thrusting along the north face of hill 621.



SCENARIO 23

Defender's Assets: the game is mercifully brief.

Defender's Liabilities: badly dispersed, surprise turn allows very minimal initial resistance.

Attacker's Assets: excellent morale and firepower, superb mobility with pulkkas and skis, good support weapons and surprise.

Attacker's Liabilities: must not only accomplish a great deal on board but must exit also.

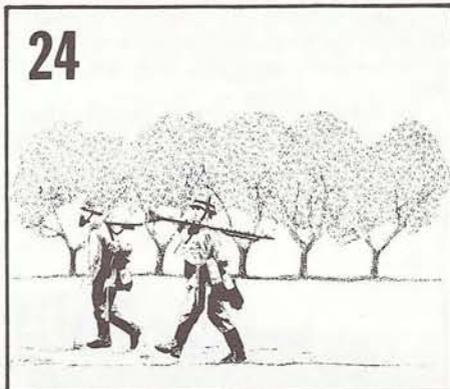
DEFENDER:

The best hope is to redeploy in the center of the town as rapidly as possible with an eye to retreating away from Finns. Set up initially as far as possible from board edges. Avoid firefights as your primary concern is survival.

ATTACKER:

You are too weak to break into four groups to completely encircle the Russians. You should however, come in on both the north and south edges to keep as many Russians between your forces as possible. Consider a split of seven squads on south edge and five on north edge to maximize destruction of buildings. Remember that unless the Russian errs and stands, the majority of your points will come from burned buildings. You must be very bold on turn 1.

We rate this scenario 65-35 pro-Russian because of the very tough victory conditions.



SCENARIO 24

Defender's Assets: limited ability to bluff with ?'s, British reinforcements are likely to enter game first, concealed movement.

Defender's Liabilities: terrible rally capacity, broad front to cover.

Attacker's Assets: adequate manpower, good support weapons, armor support, artillery, potent flanking force, ample time, scouts.

Attacker's Liabilities: essentially only one—the two bottlenecks on the exit road caused by the terrain on boards 2 and 5.

DEFENDER:

The German thrust will probably be either east or west of the forest on board 5. Your forces are inadequate to cover both with a static defense. One suggestion is to place the bulk of your force in woods hexes 5R7 through 5V8 with heavy dummy positions around 5E3. There should be two or three squads in the dummy positions to cause some doubt in the German player's mind. Consider HMGs in 5S8 and 5T8, with an AT Gun in 5V8 and dummy AT Gun in 5D9. If you wish to reach the building in 3M2 for a fire position with a HMG you should leave 5T8 on turn 1. You can then reach the 2nd level of the building by the end of the advance phase of turn 3. Use concealed movement all the way. If the German wishes to expose any concealed movement by rushing a vehicle back there boldly, your AT Gun should score. If the bulk of the Germans are coming along the west half of the map conduct a fighting retreat. If the main thrust is along the east

half though, fall back to the town with the bulk of your force. There you will try to block the road as long as possible. The AT Gun moves from 5V8 to hill 534 or back to the town. Your reinforcements should cut the road around 6I1 and 6Y1 with entrenched units. The bulk of the forces and all support weapons go to the chateau where from the second level you can interdict all exits by fire.

ATTACKER:

There is ample time to develop an infantry attack. There is no need to risk your precious vehicles prematurely. Use your infantry to secure a safe path for your armor to reach the hills of board 2 as soon as possible, i.e., your infantry and scouts should unmask the HMG and AT Gun positions. The infantry can safely advance on to board 5 using the woods around 4U3 and 4I5 as cover. The 7's can be pushed on to threaten the 2nd level building on board 3 or remain in tow for later deployment. The bulk of your force should be used to crush the Norwegians while the remainder presses deep to join the flanking force and armor in clearing the British from one road. Suggested entry for the reinforcements is board 2 west edge with a goal of threatening the chateau. Their advance to the chateau can be made under good cover using the woods and orchard. Remember to make maximum use of your scouts and be aware that a recent ruling limits you to a maximum of four scouts.

We rate this one 65-35 pro-German. If interested in balance we suggest cutting the scenario to 12 turns.

We agree with Bob's concept of covering one axis with essentially dummy forces. However, the placement of substantial forces, real or dummy, in isolated woods permits them to be easily neutralized. A concerted German drive can establish on turn 2 a strong fire base in and around 4T0. The fire lane from 5O1 to 5FF9 interdicts rout and reinforcement routes to the forward Norwegian positions.



SCENARIO 25

Defender's Assets: hidden placement, a variety of obstacles.

Defender's Liabilities: few units, poor firepower, terrible rally capability.

Attacker's Assets: superb mobility, good leadership, ample time to achieve objectives.

Attacker's Liabilities: none.

DEFENDER:

The defender has two basic choices. The first is an up-front defense. Consider the following: wire in 5Y4, 5Y5, 5Y6, 5Y7; roadblocks in 5Y8 facing 27, and in 5Z9, facing AA9; entrenchments in 5Y3, 5Y9, 5Y10, 5X9 and 2Y6 (Note that the entrenchment costs two extra M.F.'s for motorcycles); MMG, three 4-4-7, and the 8-1 leader on the bridge in 5Y8; two 3-4-7 and one 4-4-7 in 5Z9 on the bridge; a 7-0 leader in 5Z10; a 3-4-7 and 4-4-7 in 5X1. Note that the units in 5Y8 and 5Z9 are exposed

but at least they get the stone wall benefit of the roadblock. If the Germans choose to rush the position, you must not fire until the end of all German movement. This will give the best possible target selection for maximum damage. Be alert for penetration possibilities. If the German chooses to be cautious and enters dismounted, you should not stand and fight, but rather fall back. In this case you will have delayed him for two turns, minimum. You can fall back in one turn to the vicinity of 5S10 while the obstacles are being removed. The primary goal of this defense is to shock the German and hopefully induce a cautious, dismounted entry.

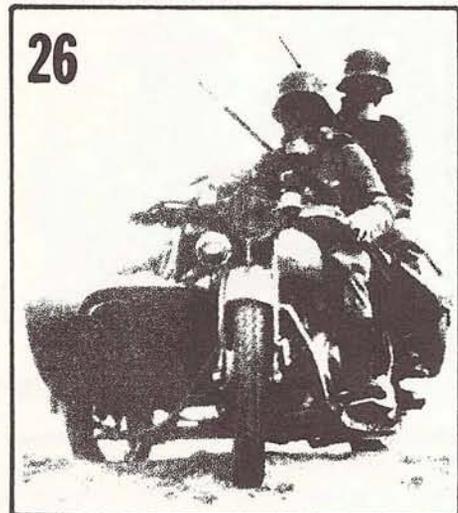
The second choice is more conservative. Set up as follows: entrenchment and 3-4-7 in 2EE4 (note the LOS to 2W1); entrenchment and 3-4-7 in 2Q1; entrenchment and 3-4-7 in 2W6; entrenchment in 2X5; entrenchment, two 4-4-7, a MMG and 8-1 leader in 2Y6 (boresight the MMG on 2P9); roadblock on 2R7 facing 2Q8 and in 5R9 facing 5S9 a wire in 5K3, 5P5, 5Y8, and 5Z9; three 4-4-7 in 5S8; and a 7-0 leader in 5R8.

This setup denies the opportunity to move deeply in a hurry while offering some good shots in the open if the German is not cautious. If he is cautious it offers the opportunity to conduct a fighting retreat while protecting the units in 2Q1 and 2EE4. 2P9 is boresighted since it forms the center of a fire base just outside Belgian infantry fire range.

ATTACKER:

Some of the options available are: 1) Use of scouts on detached cycles to reconce paths of penetration and potential enemy positions with minimal loss. 2) Use of a pure infantry thrust through the pine forest to get to the Belgian rear. Note that three squads and a leader can enter at 2A3 and reach 2R2 in four turns. Hence it is feasible to send half of your force through the forest while the other half advances along the obvious approach routes. It should be remembered that cycles can be pushed through woods hexes. Players may wish to make up counters to designate pinned and grounded units.

We rate this scenario 65-35 pro-Germans. To achieve a better balance we suggest cutting off one turn from the game length.



SCENARIO 26

Defender's Assets: concealment, and good defensive positions.

Defender's Liabilities: few units, awful rally capability, uncertain reinforcements.

Attacker's Assets: superb mobility, excellent morale and leadership.

Attacker's Liabilities: limited number of units.

DEFENDER:

We feel there is only one option for the defender. Place all units in the chateau along with

the Queen. Consider placing one squad in each of the 2nd level chateau hexes except one. In that one place the royal family. Remember that if the royal family is with a squad, the squad's fire power is impaired. Place a LMG and leader in M6 and O3 along with the squad in each hex. Cover all units with ? counters. Also suggest ?'s in building 6J8 on 2nd and 3rd levels. It is a good idea to block stair wells on level 1 in chateau with ?'s. Since this is a passive defense you must, of course, hold all fire till the end of German movement. The goal is to hold on till reinforcements arrive. The probability is 13/18 that you will get the reinforcements on or before turn 4 and 4/9 that you will get them on or before turn 3. If the reinforcements arrive by turn 3 the Germans will be very hard pressed. A cute trick is to put all counters in the chateau and hide the royal family in the 3rd level stone building. If the German isn't thinking clearly he will concentrate all his effort on the chateau. When the reinforcements arrive they can reach the 3rd level building and extricate the Queen.

ATTACKER:

Make use of scouts in detached cycles to explore ? positions. If the defender is concentrated in the chateau you will have to rush it. Do not do so till turn 2 after having achieved jump off positions which will enable you to assault with all squads. You must not go in piecemeal. It is possible to use the -3 and -2 leaders with fire groups to reduce the chateau by fire but the tradeoff is the increased risk of reinforcements appearing while you stand and shoot.

The outcome of this scenario depends so heavily on the turn of entry and quantity of reinforcements that we are unable to rate the game.



SCENARIO 27

Defender's Assets: dominant fire and observation positions, artillery support.

Defender's Liabilities: poor rally capacity, less than adequate support weapons.

Attacker's Assets: Rommel, adequate forces, good support weapons, armor.

Attacker's Liabilities: only one—the need to make a river crossing.

DEFENDER:

We see two distinct options for the ATGs. *One:* Use them exclusively to get the tank ferry. Suggest 3DD2 and 3F3 (if necessary you can move F3 to H2) or 3K7 and 3J7. The ferry is a small hull down target at 13-24 hexes. You have a 35% chance of a kill within the first four shots and the chances are excellent you will have more than four. If successful this removes the armor threat on your side of the river.

Two: Kill as many tanks as possible with the prime targets being the PzKw IIID's.

We also see two distinct options for the infantry. *One:* Attempt to contain the reconce force by placing strong forces to inhibit their movement.

E.g., if Germans set up in area of 7L9, nine squads in 3U10, 3W10 and 3Y8 will make movement very difficult. You then wait for the German to come to you. Place the mortar in 3N3 to fire indirect with a spotter in 2nd level 3N2. Also place a leader with radio in 3M2 or 3N1. Another leader with radio may be placed on an appropriate hilltop. Place some infantry in woods line to cover other approaches, e.g., 3C8. Move forward only when targets are available. Place your sniper near the river bank. Remember you can advance phase without loss of hidden status, e.g., U10 to V10.

Two: On turn 1 make a massive charge on the reconce units in an attempt to destroy them and then occupy river bank positions. If the German spreads his reconce forces the job is that much easier. If they are concentrated this is a riskier proposition. If the rush is successful the Germans are in deep trouble—if not, you are!

ATTACKER:

Suggest for safest concentration placing the reconce force in 7L9 and 7K9. Note that 7M10, 7K10 and 7J10 can be covered by supporting fire from opposite bank. Setting up in 7Y9-7Z8 and/or 7FF9-7FF8 offers more movement potential but is much riskier as you are more vulnerable to French opening prep fire.

The most useful craft are the four sturmboats as they allow you to cross quickly and repeatedly. E.g., placed with squads in 5W1 and 5V1 you can reach opposite bank by turn 3. We advise making the crossing in force at one point though not, necessarily the same crossing point chosen to meet the victory conditions. Rommel should be with the maximum number of machine guns near the crossing point for fire support. E.g., in 5R1. AFV's and artillery spotters should be spread to maximize coverage of opposite bank ensuring maximum chance of destroying ATG's. The overall plan for the German should be to get as much as possible into and across the river as soon as possible.

We rate this one 50-50 and a real nail-biter excluding the arrival of French armor. Should the French armor appear early we recommend having sturmboats pick up the reconce force and running like hell.

We find much to differ with in Dr. Medrow's analysis of this scenario.

The reconce forces are divided and are subject to a withering prep fire from hexes C9, D9 and E10 as well as I10, J9, and K10. If the prep fire is successful a followup close assault can drive either or both groups into the river.

The French setup appears to be both isolated and open to substantial fire. Of particular concern are the AT gun in 3R9 and the stack in 3I8. The ATG shield will not cover all avenues of fire. If the hilltop stack fails to entrench (approximately a 33% chance), the following defensive fire from the reconce units and from across the river has an excellent chance to smash the position. Furthermore, we see no threat to an advance of the reconce units onto board 3. In summary we feel the setup does not take advantage of the weakness of the restricted reconce setup and is itself vulnerable to both German forces.

We also disagree with the position on the east bank. We would prefer the establishment of fire positions along the length of the river bank (AFV's are particularly useful for this) to provide for the maximum number of fire angles. This allows for flanking shots and limits French mobility.

**SCENARIO 28**

Defender's Assets: hidden placement for gun, excellent leadership, superior AFV firepower, good support weapons.

Defender's Liabilities: broad front to cover, weak armor protection.

Attacker's Assets: adequate forces, good all around armor.

Attacker's Liabilities: poor rally capability, radioless AFV's, need to traverse open ground.

DEFENDER:

We suggest placing MGs in exposed positions to get as many shots at French infantry as possible as they cross open ground. E.g., 9-2, 9-1, two squads and HMG in 3M2, 3rd level (we like two leaders in a crucial position as they enhance each other's morale); 9-1, two squads and three LMG's in 6J8 2nd level. Needless to say your top priority targets are the leaders rushing across the open. The guns may profitably be situated to bombard the chateau, which the French will want as a fire base, and to cover the town approaches. Suggest a 75 in 3R3 and the other in 6Z10. Boresight them on the chateau. We like the ATG in an ambush position such as 6Z6, 6Z9 or 6E9 so as to catch French armor in the rear. Put the open topped tank destroyers on hill crests such as hill 498, all three hexes of hill 522, and one on hill 547. Note an SPW 251/10 can reach hex 3D3 on turn 1. The StuG's are best employed for close-in defense at the leading edge on the French armor thrust, which will usually be aimed at building 3N1. Be aware of armor bypass infiltration and the use of trailbreaks through woods. Note that the Kubelwagen can tow an ATG along roads at good speed. The remaining infantry and halftracks are best held out of French MG range to be used in later stages of the game. Be aware that if the French hold the chateau and building 4X1, they need occupy or contest only one stone building on board 3 to win.

ATTACKER:

The French, even with their superior armor protection, cannot duel with the tank destroyers which have hull-down and height advantages. Hence the French should strive to make this an infantry battle using their tanks to provide support for an infantry assault. To that end the French would do well to move their armor as quickly as possible into the orchard where they are protected from fire from the heights. The infantry should sweep as rapidly as possible into the chateau and the orchard realizing that there is no way to do this without notable losses. Once a combined infantry-armor force is in the orchard the building in 3N1 is very vulnerable. The chateau makes an excellent fire base and should hold the two MMG's. Be wary of a late game thrust by halftracks with infantry to contest the chateau or the building in 4X1. A neat trick is to contest town building with crews from voluntarily abandoned AFV's.

We rate this one at 50-50

**SCENARIO 29**

Defender's Assets: partial hidden placement, potential ability to wire a bridge.

Defender's Liabilities: weak forces to cover two widely separated areas.

Attacker's Assets: good leadership, armor support, adequate mobility.

Attacker's Liabilities: vulnerable while on bikes, unknown game length.

DEFENDER:

Consider placing a MMG and a squad or two in 2R2. A leader in 2R3 is necessary for rally purposes. This position threatens scout car motion on both bridges. If possible, try to entrench. The remaining force is split between the bridges although occasionally we assign a bridge defense solely to the demo expert with a pre-wired charge. This course can be quite risky. Potentially valuable fire positions include 2AA1, 2I3, 7K10 and 7Z8. Remember that infantry adjacent to open topped AFV's and one level above suffer no modifier to their fire on a crew.

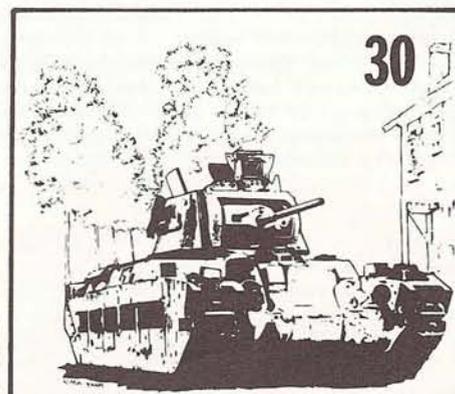
ATTACKER:

You can either be bold or cautious. A bold rush might consist of sending both scout cars and all nine squads across the stone bridge on turn 3. This will secure a crossing or suffer horrible casualties.

A cautious approach would involve recce by fire from the north side of the river. E.g., LMG positions in 7Z1 and 7W1 supported by scout car fire can clear most of the French fire positions around 7Z9 and any exposed MG positions. This will allow an untroubled crossing, but the time required to locate and suppress the French may be fatal.

As a final observation we feel the bold charge will almost always work against chit 1 while failing miserably against chit 4. The cautious approach works well against chit 4 but time runs out when employed against chit 1.

We rate this at 55-45 pro-German.

**SCENARIO 30**

Defender's Assets: adequate forces, good leadership, ability to immobilize AFV's.

Defender's Liabilities: minimal AFV killing power except for the 88's, weak armor protection.

Attacker's Assets: superior armor.

Attacker's Liabilities: poor mobility—tough victory conditions.

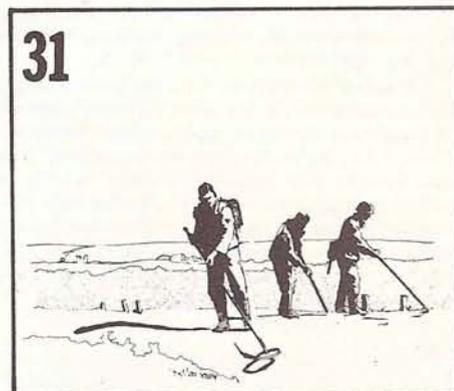
DEFENDER:

Your weak armor and poor firepower will make any attempt to contest the British advance face to face suicidal. Your best move is to channel the British advance by threatening his flanks with immobilizing fire. Three of the eight AFV's on board by turn four have two shots. Hence you have eleven shots each turn which is enough to threaten both flanks simultaneously. And this does not count the AT guns available. We suggest AT and tank positions behind wood lines using the infantry to threaten close assault in wooded areas. If you play it right, the British will find themselves in the middle of board 4 when the 88's arrive. Be wary of the British ability to kill from hill positions on board 3. Consider bringing in the 88's unlimbered in such hexes as 6Q1, 6A6 or 4GG3, depending upon the axis of the British advance. If the British have ignored or abandoned the hilltops it is possible, though risky, to attempt to reach a crest such as hill 498 by towing the 88's and exceeding the printed movement allowance (see 79.2). If successful, you will dominate the field. Remember to act in concert with all your weapons. There should always be interlocking fields of fire so that no unit can be attacked alone.

ATTACKER:

Your course is clear. Keep moving! Establish A12's on hill 498 and either 534 or 547. Move as many A11's as far as possible each turn with the intention of being able to exit board 6 by no later than turn 11. Keep the A11s CE as long as possible—stay in motion—don't wait for stragglers. If the 88's arrive before turn 8 it is sufficient to get the six A12's off the board to win. The A12's not on the heights should seek out and destroy any AFV's not properly covered by flanking fire.

We rate this as 55-45 pro-German.

**SCENARIO 31**

Defender's Assets: good leadership, support weapons and defensive positions, hidden placement for guns.

Defender's Liabilities: none.

Attacker's Assets: excellent leadership, good support weapons, armor support, adequate manpower.

Attacker's Liabilities: the need to cover open ground.

DEFENDER:

There are too many defensive variations to be specific. We would rather present what we consider essential elements for any defense.

1. Place the 37MM IG in a 2nd or 3rd level hex—it may be portaged like a HMG and leader

modifiers also apply (see notes F and G on page 98). This is a very potent weapon against lightly armored AFV's and infantry.

2. Place the 60mm mortar in an entrenchment adjacent to a 2nd level building for indirect fire.

3. Use kindling attempts to set fire to woods that pose jump off and maneuver threats. We like setting fires in 5S10 or 5I4 for example. After a few turns of spreading fire the German will be denied the use of the woods road and a good jump off position for an assault on the chateau.

4. Place the 75's in close proximity to the chateau with interlocking fire lanes to keep German armor away. Suggested positions are 6O7, 6Q4, 5O10 and 6J3. Do the same with the AT Guns but remember they may be placed in building hexes, e.g., 6N4 and 6K4. Note that these placements allow the guns to be covered by infantry fire to defend them against infantry assault. The judicious use of entrenchments and trenches can link them to the chateau.

5. Use AT mines on roads, e.g., 4W2, 6Z5 and 5Y10. Place booby traps in chateau hexes such as 6O3 and 6M6, both on the first floor.

6. Obstacles should be placed to channel German vehicular movement, e.g., roadblocks in 6Q9, 6W9, 5Q6 and 5W10.

7. Place the bulk of your infantry in the chateau with all of your MG's—all on the 2nd level.

8. Boresighting possibilities are: HMG on 6Z10, HMG on 6Z1 and the spotting round on 6Z6.

ATTACKER:

Time is on your side. You have excellent mobility and the opportunity to develop your knowledge of the French positions before your assault. Initially, scouts and half squads may be used to probe potentially dangerous hexes such as 4Y9, 4X8, 6Z10, 5Y4 and 5X10. It is also worthwhile to commit at least one AFV to the rear of the chateau to bring French rout positions under fire, to maintain desperation morale and ensure that the rear hexes of the 3rd level building can be brought under fire. Remember that you can use the 150mm AFV for either direct or indirect fire. When safe to do so, the Sig-1B may be placed hull down in 4Y10 to bring both multi-level buildings under fire. If used for indirect fire it may be placed behind any wood line at least 12 hexes from the chateau.

The major infantry thrust may be made through 6Z10 into the woods of 4V2 and 6U10. Alternatively, it is possible to filter your force through the woods of board 5 to strike the flank of the chateau. The route chosen will depend on your success in discovering and suppressing French positions. Fire positions around 4U3 and 6Z2 are beyond French infantry fire range while remaining within your range. Your armor need not close with the chateau until a path has been cleared by your infantry.

We rate this one 55-45 pro-French.

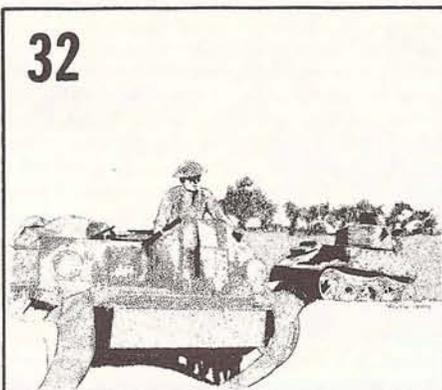
We think that Bob's observation on the dual approach to French victory is well made. However we feel that the defense as presented has certain weak points. Some of these may be:

1. The guns are not supporting each other nor are they all adequately protected by infantry fire. An isolated broken crew takes the weapon out of action. The 75 in 5Y4 is liable to be discovered early and fall to infantry fire.

2. We believe in the use of kindled fire to block lines of advance. No provision is made for the use of this device.

3. Light minefields tend to be more of a nuisance than a deterrent in a game where casualties form a basis for victory.

Our disagreements here, as elsewhere, seem to stem from a fundamental difference in principles of play. Needless to say we make no claims that ours are better than anybody else's. In this situation we would favor a mutually supporting, tightly linked defense.



SCENARIO 32

Defender's Assets: adequate force, good leadership, reserves, mobility.

Defender's Liabilities: widely dispersed.

Attacker's Assets: good morale and leadership, air-power, smoke capability.

Attacker's Liabilities: vulnerability of parachutists, difficult terrain objective.

DEFENDER:

We feel the primary objective should be holding the south edge of board 7 while using the forces on boards 4 and 6 to inflict the maximum number of casualties on the German. If possible we suggest withdrawing the force on board 4 to the other side of the river as soon as possible.

A suggested setup is:

Board 3: Place a Bren carrier and squad in each of these hexes: A10, A6, A5 and A1, with the leader in A4. This should prevent strafing fighters from killing more than one Bren carrier per run. Position the Greeks in and around the woods of BB5, AA7 and hill 498 to guard against German capture of the reinforcement entry point. It may be worth considering a squad or two in 2nd level of M2 to cover the open slopes of hills 534 and 547.

Board 2: ATG in O5, leader and crew in N6, squad in N5. (If the squad is able to entrench this will allow the crew to access the ATG while still having a covered route to the woods). Other squads are in I3, O1, S1 and N3.

Board 7: 40L in AA1 with crew, 20L with crew in Y1, 94L and crew in S1, squads in R1, W1 and the leader in Z1. The intent is to move the 20L along the road to 2J2, then uphill to 2J3 and 2I4 in time to fire on the incoming German armor. This placement helps defend against a glider assault on the south shore of board 7.

Board 4: Three squads, HMG and the 9-1 leader in W1, two squads in X1, ATG and crew in E5. The ATG and crew are meant to threaten the German armor and reinforcements. The gun should be destroyed if there is a chance it will be captured. Boresight the HMG on 4K10.

Board 6: The squads on this board cannot be saved, and hence should be placed to inflict maximum casualties on any paratrooper. Use hexes K9, N5, (both 2nd level), P9, R9, and X8 with the leader in K9, ATG and crew in AA1.

ATTACKER:

As usual we have found that there are essentially two choices, a conservative landing and a bold one.

The conservative landing will minimize casualties, but will pose grave difficulties in the capture of the bridge. We suggest choosing drop hexes so that a forced change of boards will still keep you near your target. For example, a choice of 6P9 as an initial drop hex will allow you to go to 4P9 in the event of a die roll of 4 or 5. This will allow a 5/6 chance of a successful drop. Other choices are 6U9 and 4W9.

A conservative glider landing would follow an axis such as 4I7 to 4O4 and/or 4R6 to 4Y3. While the gliders are landing we suggest a strafing run on the AA Gun positions to draw fire away from the landing.

A bold approach would entail landing the gliders south of the canal. Areas to be considered are centered around 7Y2, 2Q1 and 2A1. Even bolder would be landing along slopes of hills 534 and/or 547 along axes 3E5 to 3I1 and/or 3F7 to 3K5.

We recommend a split of two fighter and two dive bombers. The fighters pose the recurrent threat of sweeping MG fire on any units moving in the open. In addition they are potent vehicle killers. A good argument could be made for all four aircraft being fighters.

Because of the difficulties in achieving a cohesive drop we rate this one as 60-40 pro-British.



THIRD EDITION COI

The *CROSS OF IRON* rulebook is now in its third edition. The changes therein are restricted to those amendments listed in the *CRESCENDO OF DOOM* Rules Amendments section. Purists who would find it convenient to have a *COI* rulebook with these changes actually printed in the appropriate rule sections may find it worth the \$2.00 purchase price plus the customary 10% postage charge.

4th EDITION SQUAD LEADER RULES

The 4th Edition *SQUAD LEADER* rules incorporating those changes listed in the *CRESCENDO OF DOOM* gamette are now available for mail order purchase for \$2.00 plus the usual 10% postage and handling charge. Although not necessary for play of the game (the only changes are those listed in the COD rules), purists may appreciate having these changes readily available in the proper section of the rules as opposed to having to refer back to an errata sheet or handwritten notes in the margins of earlier editions. Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.

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THE VIEW FROM THE COCKPIT

A Preview of the Air Force/Dauntless Game System

By Dr. David S. Bieksza

Articles of a review nature are rather rare in *THE GERNERAL*. Although Dr. Bieksza's comments pertain to the Battleline edition of *AIR FORCE*, and not the revised *AH* version, much of what he says is applicable to both. As many Avalon Hill enthusiasts probably have no experience with *AIR FORCE*, we thought this preview of the original game system would make good companion reading for our Design Analysis on the recently revised version.

The mention of Battleline to the average Avalon Hill wargamer is likely to evoke the response of *WOODEN SHIPS & IRON MEN* or *SUBMARINE*. Avalon Hill's polishing of these two high-quality naval games together with its broad following brought them to the attention of many who ordinarily would have ignored them—myself, for one. After *Origins '80*, the likely response will be *AIR FORCE*. The Battleline version of this and the companion game *DAUNTLESS* have already gained widespread popularity, so in anticipation of publication of an improved edition I intend to present a brief description of the existing *AIR FORCE/DAUNTLESS* game system.

In contrast to the strategic orientation of *LUFTWAFFE*, *AIR FORCE* (abbreviated *AF*) and *DAUNTLESS* (*DL*) are intricate, tactical-level games. Each counter represents one airplane; each turn corresponds to ten seconds of real time; and each speed factor (i.e. movement point) is equivalent to about 50 miles per hour. At this scale a full twenty-turn game equals less than 3½ minutes of real time, and the six-section mapsheet represents a volume of air space roughly five miles by eight.

AF and *DL* are therefore closer kin to *RICHTHOFEN'S WAR*. The counters are nearly identical in format: a top view of the aircraft represented by the counter (to establish facing) and minimum identification. The characteristics of the aircraft are presented on Airplane Data Cards (ADC's) and the aircraft's current status is controlled on a log sheet. But here the similarities end. The ADC's contain an enormous quantity of data. The heart of each card is a Movement Characteristics Chart that describes thirteen flight parameters varying according to altitude in 5000-foot increments. Though overwhelming at first glance, the chart actually permits easy and rapid retrieval of required information.

Movement must be plotted simultaneously, much like *WS&IM* and *SUBMARINE*. Unlike the naval games, however, the armchair pilot has more to worry about than simply turning left or right. His aircraft's log sheet records current altitude, speed, and bank attitude. During the movement phase the plane must expend its entire movement allowance (i.e., speed) by some combination of forward movement and maneuvers. The maneuvers are limited to: a 60° change in bank attitude; a 60° turn in the direction of the bank; a one-hex side slip in the direction opposite to the bank; a one-hex half roll which changes bank attitude by 180° without a change in facing; and a half loop which changes both bank attitude and facing by 180°. All maneuvers except banking count as one hex moved.

Each of the maneuvers is denoted by a unique code for ease of plotting. While "R" is easily remembered to indicate a right turn, it is less clear that "T" means a left slip. Nevertheless, after a small amount of practice players can complete the plotting for multiple aircraft in as little as five

minutes. Several factors speed the bookkeeping. On the average a plane's speed lies between five and seven hexes per turn, a number low enough for convenient plotting. Damage oftentimes reduces the available options (see below). And massed bombers in the advanced rules are handled in groups, with one plot controlling three or four aircraft even though damage is still recorded individually.

The crucial limitation to the execution of any one maneuver is that the aircraft must fly straight ahead for a number of hexes specified by the Movement Characteristics Chart on the ADC's, typically about three hexes. An important exception is the slip: a plane has the option to immediately turn zero, one or two hexesides after conducting a slip. This provides great flexibility in changing direction (though the Expansion Kit rules decrease this flexibility somewhat) and is the most common maneuver used. The exact number of required hexes of straight-line flight changes according to the type of maneuver, altitude, speed, and a "loaded" configuration (such as the carrying of bombs or external armament packs). A convenient side effect of having a written record of movement is that straight-ahead movement during the previous turn can be applied to a maneuver in the current turn.

Vertical movement is superimposed over the horizontal (hex-by-hex) movement. Climbs and dives are plotted in multiples of 100 feet, and interact with movement through the hex grid only insofar as the speed for the following turn is reduced or increased. The Movement Characteristics Chart indicates the maximum change a climb or dive can achieve per turn at a given altitude. In addition speed factors are gained or lost according to a fixed rate, most often plus or minus one per every 300-foot change in altitude. To counteract deceleration power factors may be applied, and to counteract acceleration brake factors may be applied. Both correspond to speed factors on a one-to-one basis, and again their availability varies according to altitude.

The difficulty in this straightforward arrangement is that all maneuvers except banking also consume speed factors. Power factors are invariably insufficient to maintain a steady speed through multiple maneuvers or hard climbs. Combining a series of maneuvers with more than a modest climb is a sure way to learn the rules concerning stalls. Similarly, the number of brake factors is small enough that a dive at the maximum rate will soon boost the speed over safe maximum, at which point the wings fall off. A hard-diving plane usually descends with a series of slips/two-hexside turns, which handily absorbs the excess speed.

After movement is completed, combat occurs simultaneously but without plotting. A fighter's "FF" (fixed-forward) armament automatically hits the closest enemy plane in the 60° "clock sector" directly in front of it according to the facing of the counter. An ADC lists gun factors according to type (cannon or machine gun), location (groups of weapons on the wings or in the cowlings), and range (typically about five hexes). Gunfire factors are cross-referenced versus range—each 500-foot altitude differential counts as an additional hex—in order to determine which of twenty tables are to be used to resolve the combat. The higher the number of the table, the greater the damage inflicted, and only the two lowest tables have a chance of a "no damage" result. Modifiers may increase or decrease the hit table number. The size of the target and weapon system efficiency of the firing aircraft

are positive modifiers while firing when inverted is a negative one; the net modifier is cross-indexed versus gun factors to yield the final shift.

The roll of a die yields the number and location of hits inflicted. Holes can be punched in the wings, fuselage, cockpit, engine, fuel tank, or guns. Not until the number of hits in any one location (except for gun hits) reaches the maximum noted on the ADC is the airplane shot down. This system causes contradictory feelings for a player. On one hand, it is nearly impossible to down a plane with a single attack. Gun-camera film of planes exploding in mid-air just cannot be duplicated in the games. This is the origin of the only criticism I have heard directed at *AF* and *DL*. Neophytes would oftentimes choose a small number of aircraft from the Battle of Britain to learn the system. A few waltzes with a low concentration of weakly-armed planes would convince them that nobody ever gets shot down. The key to an exciting dogfight is the use of a large number of better-armed, late-model fighters. With more machines in the confined air space (an experienced player can efficiently handle four to six planes), more targets are likely to blunder into an enemy field of fire.

TABLE 1:

Effect of Damage on Aircraft Performance

location	penalty
fuselage	none
wing	maximum dive speed reduced
cockpit	limit to which maneuvers may be performed
engine	power factors reduced
fuel	none
gun	gun factors reduced according to how many grouped in that location

On the other hand, each attack is almost certain to inflict some damage on one's opponent, which engenders a feeling of progress that would be missing from an "all-or-nothing" type of combat system. The importance of accumulated damage is that it degrades the damaged plane's performance. Table I lists the effect of hits on flight characteristics. Fuselage and wing hits can be shrugged off. Gun hits reduce firepower but contribute nothing to possible destruction until all armament has been knocked out; then excess gun hits become wing hits. Fuel hits are worrisome because no airplane can absorb more than a few. Likewise only a few engine hits can cause destruction, but in addition each hit cancels a power factor. Many models have only one to begin with, so when that is lost the plane must dive in order to conduct even a simple turn without losing speed. Finally, only a few cockpit hits are needed to cause destruction, but in addition each hit progressively restricts which maneuvers may be conducted. The key to survival in a dogfight is unpredictability of final position at the end of the turn. When engine and cockpit hits reduce this flexibility, the damaged plane becomes more and more of a sitting duck.

Up to this point I have been describing the basic rules, which concern only combat between fighters. The easily-assimilated advanced rules add on more realistic layers to the system and expand the types of planes available in a wide variety of scenarios. The two most interesting rules which pertain primarily to dogfights are deflection and inline engines. Deflection provides another modifier to the hit table number. It varies from +2 to -4 according to the relative clock positions of firing plane and target—the most favorable position (no surprise)

has the firing plane on the target's tail, while the least favorable situation is two aircraft approaching head-on. The closest equivalent to the critical hit in *RICHTOFEN's WAR* is an engine hit on an inline engine. Rugged, air-cooled radial motors could have entire cylinders shot away and would still function, but liquid-cooled inline motors were vulnerable to cooling system damage. Therefore whenever an engine hit is scored on a plane with an inline engine, there is a chance the engine will freeze and destroy the aircraft. A frightened tail gunner on an Me-110 once shot down a P-51 Mustang in this manner—the only bright spot for me in an otherwise dismal dogfight scenario.

Use of bombers provides equally intense action. The two main scenarios involve either day or night bombing. During daylight hours massed bombers approach multi-hex ground targets defended by heavy flak and interceptors. (This solitaire scenario can be converted to face-to-face play by adding escorts and more interceptors.) The bombers defend themselves with "F" guns—flexible armament. The limitation of attacking the single closest plane applies to bombers as well as fighters, so (somewhat unrealistically) the entire strength of the bomber's machine guns is concentrated on a single interceptor. Woe to the interceptor—in some clock sectors a late-model B-17 can deliver the same punch as a P-47! Because of this defensive armament and the tougher construction of the bomber (increased wing and fuselage hits, two to four motors, and dual cockpits), interceptors generally receive the worse of the encounter.

The advantage for the defending side lies in the heavy flak batteries that defend the ground targets. Antiaircraft artillery uses the same hit tables determined by cross-referencing gun factors with range; no modifiers apply. The optimum range for heavy flak is between 25 and 36 hexes, so the bombers must run a lengthy gauntlet of flak bursts. Like air-to-air combat, flak attacks the nearest enemy plane, and also like air-to-air combat, flak never misses.

The interceptors may have an ace (so to speak) up their sleeves by using air-to-air rockets (in *AF* only). Each rocket hit automatically destroys one bomber—as many as three with one salvo! Also, an IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) rule provides nuisance value on behalf of the interceptors. If flexible guns wish to fire at a target where a friendly plane is closer, there is a small chance of the friendly plane receiving the fire by mistake. This dilutes the defensive firepower slightly, but on one memorable occasion two of my opponent's B-25's simultaneously helped a Zero shoot a third B-25 out of the sky.

The night bomber battles are completely different. Small groups of bombers must cross the length of the mapsheet while night fighters, lacking radar due to presumed countermeasures, attempt to inflict enough damage to force jettisoning of bomb loads. Both bombers and interceptors appear at random intervals (though on preselected hexes), and must search for each other visually. Once again the interceptors have a tough mission to perform. They are widely outmatched in the eyeball department, so they cannot count on closing in undetected for a crippling burst. Some bomber groups may even slip through completely unspotted. Once the night fighter has visually acquired an enemy plane, the fast-moving bomber may remain out of range if a climbing approach or tail chase is necessary. Even then, the random arrival times tend to pit one fighter against a trio of bombers. Though such a scenario may seem dull, the appeal is in using the exotic night fighter variants, such as the Ju-88 wielding an extra pair of 20 mm cannon in the fixed-hex ("FH") position.

Tactical bombing scenarios are also provided, most of which are solitaire and generally involve the player's medium bombers or ground-attack fighter variants attempting to blast targets in the face of

light flak opposition. Individually, light antiaircraft guns are weak, but sheer numbers (up to 40!) make them *very* effective. I once raided an airfield complex with a variety of Me-109's. One plane carried external cannon packs, which gave it the wallop of a moving van and equal maneuverability. It lumbered along at minimum altitude and erased several flak positions unlucky enough to be situated in its field of fire. Just before it ran out of ammunition, nearly every gun on the map concentrated on it and brought it to earth with fuselage hits—the only time in my wide experience that fuselage hits ever proved to be fatal.

The Pacific Theater equivalent pits the raiders against surface vessels ranging from capital ships to merchantmen. I expected these scenarios to provide a more satisfactory accounting of tactical naval air power. First, the ships literally whiz across the ocean, easily dodging dive bombers and torpedo planes. Secondly, a warship is assigned heavy and light flak factors which can be fired into *each* clock sector on every turn. The classic tactic of splitting torpedo bombers into two groups for an "anvil" attack only serves to double the vulnerability of the carrier planes. Thus, the attacking force tends to line up in single file, with the poor slob in front acting as "flak catcher."

With the vast selection of planes available in *AF*, *DL*, and the Expansion Kit, the entire spectrum of aerial warfare in World War II may be explored. I could easily triple the length of this article in discussing scenarios, planes, and tactics, but a better alternative is my encouragement to try out the system yourself. This rare combination of realism and playability should not be missed.



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4.	D. Cornell	19	2175OHK	4
5.	D. Garbutt	15	2107EGK	5
6.	D. Burdick	17	2105EDJ	7
7.	P. Kemp	10	2034EEI	8
8.	F. Freeman	10	2018DEE	8
9.	T. Oleson	26	2006SSZ	6
10.	J. Kreuz	12	2001FFK	9
11.	D. Barker	24	1997GHM	13
12.	J. Beard	7	1970DFI	16
13.	L. Newbury	19	1964EGK	12
14.	M. Sincavage	6	1962DDI	11
15.	P. Siragusa	10	1962CEG	14
16.	R. Leach	19	1933GJN	15
17.	B. Sinigaglio	2	1891CEE	22
18.	J. Zajicek	20	1865GJP	17
19.	R. Moore	2	1836GEB	18
20.	C. Combs	7	1834QKD	20
21.	N. Markevich	9	1827CEE	19
22.	K. Blanch	19	1805FGK	35
23.	W. Knapp	11	1795JLR	24
24.	L. Kelly	10	1794UUZ	23
25.	R. Kolkick	2	1785CDF	25
26.	F. Sebastian	12	1758FHN	27
27.	W. Letzin	13	1745DDH	33
28.	B. Downing	6	1743DFN	26
29.	E. Miller	3	1732GJN	28
30.	D. Greenwood	18	1731FEI	30
31.	S. Martin	10	1730EGH	29
32.	N. Cromartie	2	1725FFM	31
33.	G. Smith	1	1716CCG	—
34.	D. Munsell	12	1698FEH	36
35.	R. Hoffman	3	1697DGK	37
36.	T. Baruth	2	1693CDF	39
37.	I. LeBouef	5	1692GIO	40
38.	W. Scott	13	1681GFM	41
39.	T. Slafka	12	1681EFK	42
40.	R. Zajac	6	1669FGH	45
41.	D. McCarty	3	1669CEH	43
42.	D. Tierney	2	1660HFJ	44
43.	A. Sloley	2	1653DCH	46
44.	P. Carson	10	1650ECE	47
45.	W. Thomson	1	1642FFI	—
46.	B. Schoose	1	1638CFG	—
47.	C. Braun	1	1637CGI	—
48.	D. Stephens	2	1636HID	50
49.	B. Hayden	1	1624HIN	—
50.	J. Kenower	1	1605CEF	—

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DIVIDING PRESSURE ZONES

A WEATHER VARIANT FOR RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN by Tom Oleson

There's a saying around the track that "You can't beat a horse with no horse", which is another way of saying that everything in life is comparative. *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* may not be a realistic simulation, but compared to what? If *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* were a horse, some critics would be prepared to shoot it for dog food, but they don't name their replacement. On the grounds of realism, the only other game covering the entire war in Russia which is touted as better than *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* is the gigantic *DRANG NACH OSTEN*. One could easily finish a *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* scenario in less time than needed to just setup *DNO*, so it seems to me that comparing the two isn't entirely fair.

This is not to say that *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* is perfect: far from it. One of its many shortcom-

ings is the potentially exaggerated influence of weather. If one uses the historical weather the, to me, desirable element of uncertainty is eliminated. If one uses monthly weather, doubling the number of weather rolls halves the luck factor, but since the number of rolls is still relatively small, the course of play may still be so much influenced by "unseasonable" weather, that the players feel that luck outweighs skill.

In Nebraska, there are days when you choose between leaving the house with suntan lotion, or a snow shovel, depending on whether you go out the front door, or the back. Not so in the Russia of *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN*. If it snows in Leningrad, it's snowing in Sevastopol, too. Here is a way to change that, and greatly reduce the luck factor in the weather die rolls:

1. Divide the map into three zones (see map):
 A. North—all hexes entirely north of the line NC.
 NC.

B. South—all hexes entirely south of line SC.
 C. Center—all hexes or half-hexes south of line NC, and north of SC. Note that the center zone "gains" the half-hexes. Examples: the hex just north of Kalinin is in the center zone, as is that just north of Kharkov.

2. Whenever a weather die roll is called for, there will be not one roll, but three, one for each zone.

A. The center zone will use the Weather Chart on page twelve of the rule book, with no change, regardless of whether the die roll is per two-month turn (rule 4.1), or per one-month impulse (26.8).

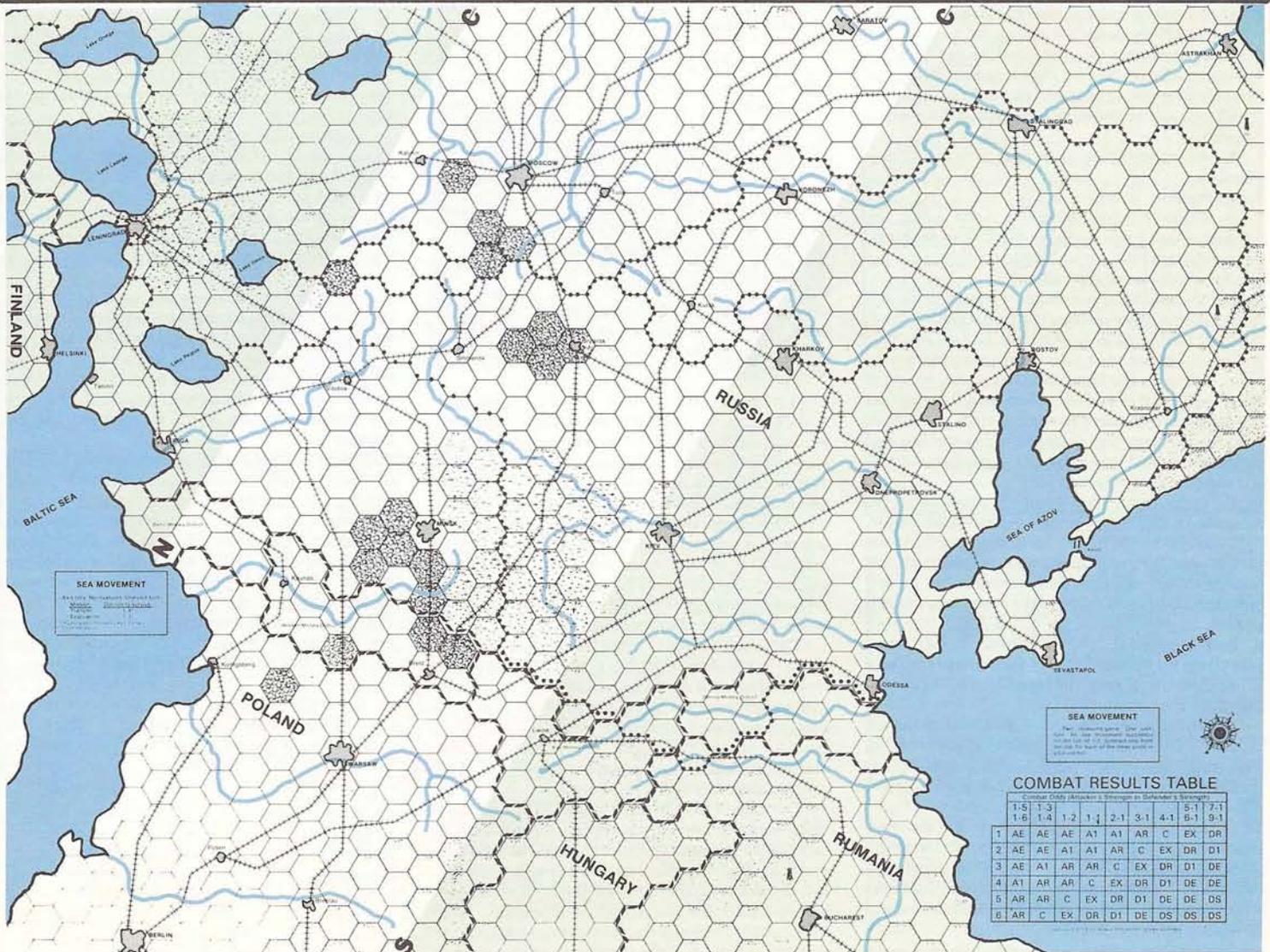
B. The other two zones will use the following tables, if playing under rule 4.1:

C. Alternatively, if using monthly weather (26.8):

die	Mar/Apr		Sep/Oct		Nov/Dec	
	North- South					
1	C	C	C	C	C	C
2	C	C	C	C	LM/M	LM
3	LM	LM	C	C	S	LM/M
4	M	LM	LM	LM	S	M
5	S	M	M	LM	S	S
6	S	M/S	M/S	M	S	S

die	North-South			North-South				North-South			
	M	A	M	S	O	S	O	N	D	N	D
1	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
2	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	LM	LM/M	LM	LM
3	LM/M	LM	LM	LM	C	C	C	M	S	LM	M
4	S	M	LM	LM	LM	LM	LM	S	S	M	S
5	S	S	M	M	LM	M	LM	S	S	M	S
6	S	S	S	M/S	M	S	M	M/S	S	S	S

D. Key:
 C = clear
 S = snow
 M = mud
 LM = light mud



COMBAT RESULTS TABLE
 Combat Odds (Attacker's Strength vs Defender's Strength)

1:5	1:3	1:2	1:1	2:1	3:1	4:1	5:1	7:1	
1:6	1:4	1:2	1:1	2:1	3:1	4:1	5:1	7:1	
1	AE	AE	AE	A1	A1	AR	C	EX	DR
2	AE	AE	A1	A1	AR	C	EX	DR	D1
3	AE	A1	AR	AR	C	EX	DR	D1	DE
4	A1	AR	AR	C	EX	DR	D1	DE	DE
5	AR	C	EX	DR	D1	DE	DE	OS	OS
6	AR	C	EX	DR	D1	DE	OS	OS	OS

A result such as LM/M or M/S means that the die must be rolled again. If even, the weather is the first alternative listed, if odd, the second.

The probabilities in the table are close to those in the Weather Chart in the standard rules, except that precipitation is more likely to be mud in the south, snow in the north.

3. Using 26.5 (historical weather), changes are as follows:

- A. Central zone, none, uses weather listed.
- B. Northern zone, where mud is indicated, use snow rules.
- C. Southern zone, where snow is indicated, use mud rules.
- D. All else unchanged.

4. Stukas:

A. A stuka is considered to have been used in a light mud/mud zone if its headquarters is in such a zone, or none of the defenders in the attack it supports is in a clear weather zone. If the headquarters is in a clear zone, and even one of the defenders involved is, then the use is considered to be in clear weather.

B. If a stuka is used in a mud/light mud zone, as defined above, no other use of stukas is possible that turn, even though another zone may have clear weather, with a stuka or stukas available. As explained in rule 15.7, one stuka may be used per mud turn in 1941-42, zero thereafter.

C. If no stuka is used in a mud/light mud zone, then in any zone or zones where clear weather prevails, three stukas could be used per turn in 1941, two in 1942, and one in 1943, as explained in part "A".

D. No use of stukas is possible in snow. A stuka is in snow if its headquarters is, or none of the defenders is in clear weather, mud, or light mud. A stuka could be used in an attack against defenders partially in snow, if at least one of the units under attack was *not* in snow, nor was the stuka's headquarters.

E. All other rules governing stukas are unchanged.

5. Movement:

A. Units moving within a zone obey the weather rules of that zone, so there is no problem, nor would there be any problems moving from zone to zone, with identical weather.

B. Movement is considered to increase in difficulty in this order—clear, light mud, snow, mud. If a unit starts in a zone with one sort of weather, and moves into a zone with *more* restrictive movement, it stops in the first hex in that zone, provided it had sufficient movement allowance to enter that hex, considered under the weather rules of the zone it is coming from. For example, a unit starting in a clear zone, would stop in the first hex of a zone with any other sort of weather.

C. Conversely, movement is considered to decrease in difficulty in this order—mud, snow, light mud, clear. If a unit starts in a zone with one sort of weather, and moves into a zone with *less* restrictive movement, it may continue, but paying movement costs according to the zone from which it started.

6. **Rail movement:** the restriction during snow turns (rule 9.1) is in effect if at least two of the three zones are snow. If only one zone is snow, the restriction does not apply.

7. **Supply:** section 17 of the rules discusses supply sources. There are two such—cities (whether "reached" for supply purposes by a rail line, or directly), and the friendly board edge. There are different supply rules for snow, and non-snow. Under the weather variant, a unit suffers the snow penalties if its supply source hex (city, not the line to it; or the final rail hex adjoining the friendly board edge) is in a snow zone. Even if the unit itself is in snow, it does not suffer the snow supply penalty if its supply source is not.

Continued on Page 44, Column 2

DESIGN ANALYSIS



AIR FORCE II

The Story Behind the Avalon Hill Revision of AIR FORCE

By Kevin Zucker

"The solidity of matter was being dissolved into mere mathematical relationships in space . . ."—Julian Jaynes discussing the impact of particle physics at the outset of the century, in his *Origins of Consciousness* . . .

The kind of quantitative thinking incorporated in our games and their approach to probabilities are in keeping with the over-simplified application of Physics prevalent in all our society. Philosophy, Music and History, not to mention Government and Politics, are dominated by mathematical interpretation. And though the game's only possible value may be as an historical record of mathematical relationships on a macroscopic scale, their attempts at modelling are not different in kind—though necessarily suffering a lack of all scientific rigor—from those constructed of the world of particles in the last three-quarters of a century.

The point of all this, I think, is not to trivialize what is great by associating it with our insignificant efforts, but hopefully to emulate more closely what is great and abandon our present ways of thinking. The odds against three of our air-choppers crashing on their way to Teheran were supposedly 10,000 to 1. And if some foolish designer tries to tackle this one, they will create a game in which an historical outcome is either legislated, or occurs in only one of ten thousand playings. Yet this outcome is *precisely* the only possibility, given the participants, their state of mind, confidence, sense of right and wrong—in short, the historical moment was against them, and we all knew—in spite of twentieth-century quantitative thinking—that any such attempt would be a fiasco.

A game can only crudely model a couple of interdependent probabilistic equations—"systems", we call them—with those probabilities converging as they are repeated over time toward some mean outcome inherent in the very structure of the probability tables. What the tables say is what will happen. Of course, there is a huge gap between these one or two systems and the "real world"—a gap the same as that between a name and the thing named. Once we have the "name" we are ready to make the metaphorical leap of imagination, to create in our minds the world of all things in that gap.

The only question, then, when looking at a game, is whether what there is of the game corresponds to what we already hold in our imaginary conception of the "thing named." If there are enough historical reference points, and we can generate some framework of rationale to glue everything together, the game is "realistic." If we can't accomplish this, it's a bore.

The game I have in mind is *AIR FORCE*, which I had been working on until it disappeared into the recesses of Colonial Composition about six weeks ago (i.e., mid-March). The game is quite popular, and the decision had been made not to redesign it before I took on the project in December. I felt many changes would be necessary, as I have recounted below, to make the game realistic accord-

ing to my subjective standard, and many of those who wrote in similarly felt that the game had too many shortcomings to hold their interest in its present state. In this case I realized that months of research and testing would be required, and that those who loved the game the way it was would not want to see it changed, because that would require a change in their existing imaginary conception of air warfare. Besides, it was reasoned around here that an entirely new air warfare game would be preferable to an entirely redesigned game under an old title. So . . . redesigning was never really an option I considered. But I felt, in reading the letters of those urging no change whatsoever, that there was little conscious awareness of the role their own imagination played in what they perceived as "realistic."

O.K., then, what is the difference between the old *Battleline* version of *AIR FORCE* and the new *AH* version? I have explained some of the systemic changes further on; here I will summarize the changes in terms of components.

The new maps are mounted on hard board and, though devoid of terrain (how much can you see from 34,000 feet?) most owners of the original version will want to get copies of the new maps. There is one other difference—the hexes are slightly larger, so that the map sections can be geomorphic, the result being that each board has one less hex row.

The counters will have the same basic silhouettes, but they will be multi-colored (silhouette and background in contrasting colors) and a little more "national" identity will be introduced. Oh, hill counters are added, and we used different silhouettes for non-aircraft counters (big deal). Owners of the original version don't really need the new counters.

The rules had to be rewritten, even where no changes in effect were made. Though perhaps "flavorful," they lacked real specific and concise meaning. I felt often I knew what the author meant, though he could rarely wrestle a complete thought onto paper intact. A few new rules were added (see below), and the whole was made clearer—I would recommend you get a copy, though a friend familiar with both versions can probably explain the changes. The tables were reworked to eliminate one of the modifier tables (with minimal change in effect).

The Plot Sheets are identical, except they are now printed in light blue instead of black. And finally, the data cards are changed (also see below) but players accustomed to the original cards will probably want to stick with what is comfortable.

The methods developed to express the maneuver characteristics of the aircraft are the game's most important innovations. To begin, each aircraft is given a speed profile; from its top speed at each altitude is extrapolated the break-points of level speed (it may go faster only when diving), its best maneuver speed, and stall speed. This simple notion is the conceptual breakthrough which makes the

game a success. Invariably, at increasing altitudes the upper limit of stall speed increases, while both the upper and lower limits of dive speed expand to crowd out, first maneuver and then level speed, so that the maximum ceiling always has one remaining possible level speed. Whether the designers culled these speed-increments from tables, or narratives, or just "piped" them up, the method is a clean and straightforward solution to the first question any air warfare game must address.

Next comes the question of maneuvering. While not handled quite as elegantly, a workable system was devised in which aircraft must fly in a straight line for a given distance (depending upon altitude, type of maneuver, and speed increment) before performing a maneuver. Thus, a maneuver is a quantum event. You fly along, storing up the required Movement Points (energy), and suddenly your aircraft is upside down, or again flying a straight path off in a different direction. Simplicity is here emphasized, and the system works well within the limits of the hex-grid. (Now a really interesting game could be done on blank paper with compasses!)

Add to the above some similar restrictions on climbing and diving rates, engine power and air braking ability, and you have a complete idea of the information contained on the Maneuver Characteristics Cards (one for each particular aircraft type).

Every silver lining has its cloud, as my buddy Redmond would say, and the cloud in this case is the combat system. Aircraft specialist David C. Isby was hurriedly summoned from New York upon my first discovery of certain strange symptoms (to change metaphors), but a complicated reconstructive surgery was diagnosed as the only possible remedy, and the lengthy hospitalization entailed was not deemed warranted. At first, we thought a "quick fix" might be possible, requiring a rationalization of firepower strengths. On second look, however, we discovered that the flaw lay with the Combat Tables, which were apparently concocted without reference to actual combat situations, and were then grafted on to the independently-derived firepower strength tautology through the use of two modifier tables. But not even an infinite series of modifier tables could result in a realistic firepower effect, given the tables and the system; with whatever skill you hitch them together, a wagon cannot be pulled by a team of toasters. Thus, in the game the heavy bombers have nothing to fear from a measly fighter, which

must expend most or all of its ammunition to score a kill, while the bomber has every hope of downing the pesky fighter. With gunners like these, the Air Force would have had bomber escorts for bombers. Probably part of the problem is the premise, built into the Tables, that the greater the weight of firepower, the greater the number of hits, always in all circumstances. In fact, it is next to impossible for an aircraft to avoid getting at least one hit!

This problem with the combat tables could have been of limited impact, had the balance between the maneuver and combat systems been appropriately weighted to the former. The real problem, then, is that firepower is too decisive in the game, to the extent that a Player will prefer a Bf 110 to a Spitfire. In fact, it was the failure to bring these two elements of maneuver and combat into balance which kept *AIR FORCE* from becoming the all-time classic it could have been. A few minor changes, such as limiting the cumulative impact of bomber firepower, were applied in the hope of alleviating the problem somewhat.

Having decided not to go into a full redesign, there were still a few problems with the maneuver system, excellent though the basics were. First, there was the problem of simultaneous plotting. The system made no allowance for pilot reaction to an aircraft being tailed. To solve this, we stole the idea of "Advantage" from Dr. Isby's *AIR WAR*, although in application the new system is somewhat different. Here, both sides first plot, but an aircraft with the "advantage" can specify any one "disadvantaged" aircraft as the one he will tail; he then gets to see the plot of that aircraft (only) executed, and then must follow the specified aircraft, changing his plot to conform to the actual move. Then there was the problem that players would tend to fly around the board in a perpetual banked-wing attitude, to increase their opportunities and reduce their reaction time. This was solved by specifying a 100-foot drop in altitude for each Game-Turn an aircraft ended in bank without performing a maneuver. And so on.

The main problem, I felt, was to highlight the best feature of the game, the aircraft data cards, to make them more functional and to provide graphic interest. Particularly since the counters and map are devoid of interest or information, and because Players must reference to the cards several times in a given Game-Turn, I sought a treatment that would give the Player, at a glance, all the needed information concerning speed, maneuverability, etc.

The problem with the existing format was that it required close scrutiny and careful cross-indexing plus, often, the addition of two such indexed numbers together so that, when plotting his move, the actual options were not displayed before his eyes for comparison.

Reproduced below is the old Ju87D card. Comparing it with the new card for the same aircraft shown in the ad on page 3, you'll see how easily one can "size-up" the special strong and weak areas of the aircraft, whether they're better at high altitude, in a turn, in a climb, etc. Such easy comparisons will make it possible for players to know their own aircraft and their opponent's without laborious study. For instance, if I am being tailed, but I know that my turn radius is tighter than my opponent's at lower altitudes, I have a good chance of escaping. With a profile of characteristics, such comparisons can be made visually at a glance; with information presented digitally and in tabular form, I would have to place the two cards side by side and check all the characteristics until I found something favorable.

Note: Two further "gamettes" in this series will be released: *DAUNTLESS*, providing Pacific scenarios, and *STURMOVIK*, covering the Eastern Front and the Mediterranean.



THE AVALON HILL GENERAL & COMPANY INDEX

After dozens of requests for it, we've finally compiled an index for *THE GENERAL*. But what an index! Virtually everything that has appeared in the first 16 volumes of *THE GENERAL* is referenced and cross referenced ad infinitum.

The main subject matter is, of course, a chronological listing of gaming articles by subject matter with specific author, volume, and page references. There is, however, much more including indices for contests, RBGs, philosophies, covers, letters, and miscellaneous articles.

The index also includes a running commentary on the development of the Avalon Hill Game Co. from 1952 to the present. This "Time Line" is a wealth of information for the trivia buff or serious AH devotee and includes a complete listing of Avalon Hill titles in the order of their publication, complete with design/development credit and miscellaneous information.

This 20 page, 8" x 11" booklet is yours for \$4.00 plus the usual postage charges direct from Avalon Hill at 4517 Harford Rd., Baltimore, MD 21214. Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.

PLANE TYPE: Ju-87D

Junkers Ju-87 D-5

Close support bomber

ALTITUDE (x 1000')	MOVEMENT CHARACTERISTICS CHART												
	SPEEDS				SPEED CHANGE		ALTITUDE CHANGE		MANEUVERS				
	STALL SPEED	MANEUVER SPEED	LEVEL SPEED	DIVE SPEED	POWER FACTORS	BRAKE FACTORS	CLIMB RATE	DIVE RATE	BANK	TURN	SLIP	HALF-LOOP	HALF-ROLL
0-4.9	0-1	2-3	4-5	6-8	1	3	.3	.9	3	2	3	4	5
5.0-9.9	0-1	2-3	4-6	7-8	1	3	.2	.9	3	3	4	5	6
10.0-14.9	0-2	3	4-6	7-8	1	3	.2	1.0	4	3	4	6	7
15.0-19.9	0-2	3	4-6	7-9	1	2	.2	1.0	4	3	4	8	9
20.0-24.0	0-3	-	4-5	6-9	1	2	.1/3	1.0	5	4	5	9	10
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LEVEL SPEED	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1
DIVE SPEED	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+3	+3	+3	+3	+3
LOADED (OP.)	0	-2	-2	-2	-	-	+1	-2	+1	+1	+1	P	P

POINT VALUE: 15



TARGET CHARACTERISTICS CHART									
W	6					Cn	-	Mg	10
F	7					L	3		
C	3					C	-		
E	3					E	-	E	-
G	1M	1	1	1	1	1	1	1M	
	(4)	1	1	(5)	1	1	(4)		
FF						F		FF	

SILHOUETTE MODIFIER: +3
 FIRE MODIFIER: +1
 TYPE ENGINE(OP): I
 BLIND SPOTS(OP):
 H: A(+1), 12(+2), 2(+1), 4(+1), 6(+2), 8(+1), 10(+1)
 M: 12(+2), 2(+2), 4(+2), 6(+2), 8(+2), 10(+2)
 L: 10(+2)
 B(-2), 12(+2), 2(+2), 4(+1), 6(+1), 8(+1), 10(+2)
 "F" Gunnery Play (Op):
 H: A(2), 12(0), 2(0), 4(2), 6(2), 8(2), 10(2)
 M: 12(0), 2(0), 4(2), 6(2), 8(2), 10(0)
 L: 0 in all directions.

NOTES: Operational in Spring '43. About 2,500 series-D built. Could carry up to 3,968 pounds (up to 3 bombs at low level) loaded with bombs. Has sights for use as a dive bomber.

Variants: D-5 with WB81 weapons containers (15pts):
 Reduced Mg ammo to 5.

Treat variants as loaded in these configurations.

Producer: Third Reich
 Name: "Stuka"

FACTORY OUTLET

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

Air Power in VITP

Variant Units and Rules By Craig Burke

Have you ever wondered why variant articles proposing corrections to a game's historical order of battle are so prevalent? Do the designers of this hobby really do such a poor job of research that they can be shown up by any casual gamer with a history book? Or, are well meaning gamers duped into believing that the designer is all wet simply due to their own slanted point of view or scanty research? Any true historian will tell you that one source does not a thesis make and gamers should keep this in mind before jumping all over an element of a design which disagrees with something they've read or believe to be true. Craig Burke's variant proposals for *VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC* offer us an excellent view of just such an occurrence.

This is not meant to incriminate Mr. Burke. His variant, after all, is being printed here and contains some truly excellent proposals—some of which I'd like to have seen in the original game. Yet, some of his other suggested changes to the game do not hold water when examined under closer scrutiny. Therefore, we asked Richard Hamblen, designer of *VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC*, to comment upon Mr. Burke's proposed changes. The results, while not meant to embarrass this particular author, should have a sobering effect on other potential variant authors. In any case, the combination of sound design suggestions and not-so-sound changes makes for fascinating reading and offers considerable insight into the design process when coupled with Mr. Hamblen's reply. I hope you'll join us in giving some of these new rules a try to see what new feel they impart to this fine game.

Do not mistake me—*VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC* is an excellent game. It makes you ponder without becoming ponderous. Parrying and bullying, faking and committing, you're always wondering how your opponent is going to react. Will he catch on to your plan? Never guess? Not care, because he has his own surprise planned for you?

Though the game is near-perfect, my historical research leads me to believe that a few minor additions and revisions can enhance the game's accuracy, variety, and vitality. Surprisingly, the historic improvements I propose do not upset the play balance of the game, but rather counter-balance and provide more 'action' without the tedious encumbrances some variants offer. So I herein present 'Burke's Laws'.

The Pacific War was one in which airpower clearly predominated. Surface ships near enemy land-based or carrier-based aircraft were helpless against air attack. The capture of forward air bases became the prime goal of both protagonists and caused most of the main naval battles. Almost all surface battles in the time span of the 8-turn game were between light cruisers and lesser-sized ships not represented in the game. Except for the one big battleship night action around Guadalcanal and an occasional heavy cruiser force, no other surface battles between capital ships ever took place. (The Leyte Gulf surface battles were an ineffective, desperate 'Charge of the Light Brigade' for the Japanese.) The new rules I am presenting deal mainly with more proper application of airpower.

Selecting the time of battle—Not one American or Japanese aircraft carrier included in the game was sunk in a real 'night action' so it seems difficult to comprehend in *V.I.T.P.* the comparative frequency with which a 'night action' results in the loss

of an aircraft carrier. The carrier's effective air reconnaissance and striking arm made it nearly impossible for an able commander to get himself trapped in a gunnery duel. The carrier's inability to sustain damage demands an 'arm's length' doctrine. In many instances throughout the war, aircraft carriers had to run away temporarily from the battle arena for the night, returning the next morning to launch aircraft. Land-based aircraft could not dictate the time of battle as well as mobile aircraft carriers, as ships could skirt known airbases and know where they will be tomorrow. Ships can't skirt an aircraft carrier they don't know is there. Therefore, I would allow the 'day action' advocate a +2 instead of +1 on the dice if he has a non-crippled carrier in his force. This makes it a tad less likely that carriers will succumb to big guns, but the threat still remains a deterrent to an unbalanced fleet.

Changes of Speed—Change the *Lexington's* speed to 8. *Shokaku*, *Zuikaku*, and the *Lexington* had similar top speeds. The *Saratoga* was just a hair slower, so only the *Lex* gets it. Why not give the *Lex* her due and give the Allies a carrier that can keep up with the best of them? In several play-test games, the *Lex* ran up against the Japanese 1-1-8 heavy cruisers and managed to sink a couple (while retreating from the rest of the horde) in the process. This is what carriers were supposed to do!

Armor Factors—As stated in other variant articles, the British 0-2-7 carriers with their armored decks are undervalued. Every British carrier got hit by kamikazes late in the war and none suffered like the wooden-decked *Essex* class. I'm tempted to give them a 4, but a 3 seems more appropriate.

Airstrike Factors—The *Ryuho*, *Chiyoda* and *Chitose* are undervalued here, as they operated equal or more aircraft than *Shoho* or *Zuiho*. Their planes were sent to land bases and the carriers used as decoys to lure the Americans away during the Leyte landings. They shouldn't get the attack bonus because, by then, the planes and personnel were less than superb, but they should have a factor of 2 to account for their real capacity.

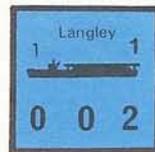
The Japanese 22nd Air Flotilla was a crack anti-ship unit. Give that air unit the attack bonus against floating objects. The US Marine and Naval air units also get the bonus. The placement of these may tell you where your opponent expects an attack or wants to guard something valuable.

Turn of Entry—The *Ryuho* actually came out in November, 1942 and so should be moved up from turn 6 to turn 4.

Amphibious Units—In the island-hopping drive begun in late 1943 the US Marines' amphibious support forces had oodles of surface forces and escort carriers too small to be included individually in the game but, nonetheless, should be represented. I would give every US Marine unit an airstrike factor of 'bonus 1' if it comes out or is rebuilt on turn 6 or later. Some 16 escort carriers (CVE) with over 350 aircraft helped support the real landings so a measly 'bonus 1' shouldn't be too hard to envision. The Japanese had only a few CVE types so their Special Naval Landing Forces do not get any bonus. The Marines may use their airstrike factors in normal air battles, plus they can use their airstrike to 'soften up' garrison troops immediately prior to landing. Roll the die once for the pre-invasion airstrike. If playing the standard invasion rules, reroll for the damage. If playing the 'battle on the beaches' optional rule, a successful airstrike nets one hit. Like

normal aircraft carriers, the airstrike is nullified when damage equals the armor factor. (The blank flipside of the Marines can be used to indicate the 'new improved' brand of Americans.)

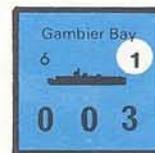
Additional Forces



USS Langley—This poor hapless historic ship (our first aircraft carrier) was overwhelmed and sunk off Java (by the *Ryujo*) as it tried to reinforce American air garrisons. Though actually sunk on turn 2 (February, 1942) it was caught in the general surprise holocaust in Indonesia. From a play-balance point of view it could rightly draw off a light carrier from other first-turn attacks to insure its sinking and unavailability to the Allied cause. Put the *Langley* in Indonesia with the *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse*. When playing "Victory At Sea" (See Vol. 14, No. 4) the *Langley* becomes even more important to dispose of as it could free the *Ranger* from anti-sub patrols in the Atlantic.



Jintsu and Helena—Light cruisers played a leading role in the Solomons campaigns and should somehow be represented. The game would bog down if every ship were included in *VITP*, so I have added only these two representatives. *Jintsu* starts on turn 1 and *Helena* starts on turn 2.



Unyo and Gambier Bay—Slow, vulnerable, but handy for light air support, the CVE's performed valuable missions. Each piece represents an amalgam of similar vessels lumped together. (Note: the *Gambier Bay* was the only 'carrier' sunk by enemy gunfire as the *Myoko* and *Yamato* blundered into the Support Group for the Leyte landings.) Other CVE's are included as the air component of the US Marines.



Osaka SNLF—I don't feel the present number of SNLF's represent Japan's ability to secure or hold bases. Early in the war the Japanese were spreading out far more than the current game allows and later were able to hold out in fanatical pockets of resistance. Giving the Japanese an extra piece seemed the best way to correct this. Entry is on turn 2. The 'softening up' ability of the US Marines air component should counterbalance the overall increased strength of the SNLF's as the game enters its last three turns.



'Hybrids' Ise, Hyuga, and Mogami—As a result of the disastrous carrier losses at Midway, the Japanese were scrambling to make up their carrier deficiencies with a number of hasty conversions. These three ships had their rear-most turrets taken out and flight decks erected. The air component is added at the expense of weakening the gunnery values of the ships. The ships are considered 'converted' if, by the turn indicated (5 for *Mogami*, 6 or later for the others) the Japanese have lost four carriers of two airstrike factors or better, and the unconverted ships start their turn in Yokosuka Naval Yard. Thus, with the *Shinyo*, the four 'new' carriers 'make up' for those lost in some battle. As is obvious to the *VITP* player, as it was to the Japanese in the real thing, the carriers are a weak but welcome filler for the big gap until their new generation of planned carriers come out. The Japanese shipbuilding industry must be admired for turning out such ships (and their CVE's) before the Allies could come out with their own conversions. The hybrids' main threat is that their combined die rolls on invading US Marines could disable them and prevent a landing. It seems likely that if the namesake pre-carriers were sunk, some other ship in their class would have been converted, so allow any two 4-4-4 battleships to be converted and, similarly, one 1-1-8 cruiser. (Fun can be had with two *Ise*'s, etc, on the board.) If all of the ships of that class are sunk, no other conversions can be made. Presumably, if things got *that* bad, the other types of ships would be too busy elsewhere.



Shinyo—A much larger, slower, and better-protected carrier than the *Shoho* class was made out of a converted liner and steel from the fourth *Yamato*-class BB. Once again, pilots and planes were inferior, so no bonus is given. Entry on turn 6 is conditional, like the hybrids.



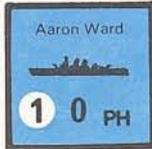
Submarines—Patrolling Japanese submarines scored a number of successes early in the war, sinking the *Yorktown*, *Wasp*, and torpedoing the *Saratoga* twice. This is all feasible, given the average die-rolling luck in the game. The American submarine piece, however, has only about a 67% chance of hitting anything. Considering that by the end of turn '8' of the real war the F-boats had sunk the *Taiho*, *Shokaku*, *Unyo*, *Kako*, and *Oi*, the American piece seems greatly undervalued. I propose the 'bonus 1' sub comes out on turn 8 after its 'big brother bonus 2' comes out on turn 7. Both can be used on subsequent turns. (Note: the *Shinano* was actually sunk by one submarine, an impossible feat in the current game.)

Midget—A Japanese midget submarine severely damaged the *HMS Ramillies* in Diego Suarez (call it Ceylon) in 1942. Midget subs almost made it into Pearl Harbor but for the alertness of the destroyer *Aaron Ward*. A Midget sub factor can be used against any ship in Pearl Harbor on turn 1 and

against the *Ramillies* on turn 2. Then it is removed from play. If it survives the attentions of the *Aaron Ward* upon entering Pearl Harbor, it can take a bonus 1 pot-shot at any ship. On turn 2, before patrolling ships move, take a shot at the *Ramillies*. In Ceylon only, a roll of '4' will disable the *Ramillies* in port, preventing its sailing that turn.



Aaron Ward—The guardian of Pearl Harbor cannot leave port and can only be used as a defense against the Japanese Midget. It has a bonus 1 shot to try to stop the sub. A 4, 5, or 6 will prevent the sub from entering Pearl Harbor. If, for some reason, the carriers raiding Pearl get bored, they can attack the *Ward* and let the sub have a free shot.



Repair Facilities—Singapore's repair facilities were used by the Japanese. Give Singapore a single repair point that can be used by whomever controls the port.

All-out Repairs—During the real war, the *Yorktown* was crippled at the Battle of the Coral Sea (Turn 2) and yet took part in the Battle of Midway (turn 3) by way of some round-the-clock repair fever at Pearl Harbor's dockyards. To recreate this in the game, allow both sides, *once per game*, to use *triple* the repair points needed and get *one* ship back out on the 'raid' phase of the repair turn. This would probably be used by the Allied side early in the war, and the Japanese later on. The player using this rule needn't tell the other player until 'raiders' are placed.

Rather than let idle repair crews stand around and watch a ship spend its whole turn in drydock, allow any repairing ship (or any other ship that has *elected* not to move) to redeploy at the end of the turn (before air raids are conducted) to a base in the next sea area or any red port, if the ship uses *double* its repair points. This option can be used anytime.

The Pearl Harbor Raid

I agree with others' ideas to limit the Japanese surface fleet to ten ships. But besides the *Ward/Midget* episode, other important changes should be made to reflect the surprise and confusion of the strike.

Attack Bonus—Give attacking Japanese planes the attack bonus when shooting at the 7th AF. This represents the ridiculous ease of strafing immobile targets lined wingtip-to-wingtip in the open. If the 7th AF survives the first two surprise rounds, the Japanese no longer get the bonus.

Hit Bonus—The initial wave of striking planes caught the American ships at anchor with boilers unlit, guns unarmed, and damage-control parties ashore with Saturday-night hangovers. Give the Japanese airstrikes a +1 on the damage die re-rolls on the *first surprise round only*. (By the time the second wave hit, the Americans were ready, and *MAD*!) The +1 damage does not apply to the 7 AF, however, because those lined-up aircraft had no fuel in them to start fires.

The Aftermath—If the Japanese elect to play after the first two surprise rounds, they must allocate their airstrikes *before* the Americans roll for their Location Uncertain ships. Allocation would be general, either for Pearl or the Hawaiian Islands sea area. Once committed, the airstrikes cannot be recalled. The first round following the two surprise rounds is automatically a 'day action', but the last round must be rolled for if the Americans elect to stay and fight it out. Though some variants would permit raiding Japanese ships

still in the Home Islands to join the Pearl Harbor Attack Force (If the Central Pacific had no American patrolling ships come in under the Location Uncertain rule) I find that hard to swallow, considering that the long trip from Japan would take place *between* rounds of combat. Forget that. The Pearl Harbor raid was intended to be a 'strike and flee' affair and any ships leaving Japan *after* the Pearl Harbor attack couldn't possibly have helped the Japanese carriers defend against an American surface fleet. The fleet size limitation will put a twinge of doubt and fear into the Japanese raid. The Americans, however, would be fools to stay and fight unless the Japanese were arrogant and stupid enough to be deeply committed to the battleships at Pearl. Any smart Japanese admiral would set aside at least four carriers to deal with the American carrier possibilities and targets that are twice as easy to sink rather than muddy the waters at Pearl. After all, it was the carriers they were after in the first place. If the Japanese can't swarm in and sink what's left of Battleship Row on the last round of combat they weren't doing something right earlier. Staying is suicide for the Americans. Cross the equator and see the lovely malaria-ridden isles of the South Pacific or you'll become an artificial reef somewhere off Diamond Head.

Against an alert American, the best place to put the I-boat is in the Hawaiian Islands for a possible shot at an American carrier. If the American is forgetful and doesn't double up his patrolling cruisers in the Coral Sea or U.S. Mandate, a well-placed I-boat has a 50% chance of 'winning' two points for the Japanese and possibly taking a cruiser away from the Allied war effort. More important, if the selected area will be the location of a major Japanese thrust on turn 2, the Allied advantage of 'possession' in determining the time of battle will also be lost.

Anti-Aircraft 'Mufflers'

The game's optional rule #23 concerning anti-aircraft is too blasted complicated and requires strenuous mental bookkeeping when large forces are present. A simpler, yet 'realistic', method is explained below.

How many of you, playing the standard rules, have had several CV's accompanying a lone, hopeful amphibious unit and have the enemy send in a single 'suicide' carrier to sink or disable that amphibious unit while you stand by helplessly? It's happened to me a lot (and I've used the play myself). It's often worth it to trade a CV to prevent a landing, and why send any accompanying vessels to likewise get blown out of the water? As the hopeful invader, one asks what good is it to escort an amphibious unit when all the carriers in the Fleet can't guarantee one paltry attack from ruining everything? Read on.

Obviously, both sides used their CV's to defend against incoming air attacks in the real thing. It doesn't work 100% of the time, as craft, cunning, and luck often gets the attack through anyway. A fine example is the Midway debacle. Even late in the war the massive US air umbrella couldn't stop an occasional plane from blasting a CV into a smoldering wreck. Thus, there should be a way of 'muffling' but not entirely eliminating an incoming strike group.

In a situation where a player wishes to use part of his force to defend, he secretly writes down on a slip of paper how many airstrikes will be doing what this round (eg. 12 attack, 4 defend). The opponent does the same and then they compare notes and separate their forces. Only *one* unit per side is allowed to break down its airstrikes into *both* attack and defense; all others must commit themselves wholeheartedly. Defending units cannot attack that turn but rather 'muffle' the incoming attacks in a way explained below.

If there are more attackers than are defended against, their airstrikes over and above the defense roll normally. The airstrike units that are defended against have their attack reduced to one die roll per unit of whatever quality they began with. Example: *Akagi* (bonus 4) and *Shoho* (bonus 2) meet *Essex* (bonus 4), *Cowpens* (bonus 2) and *Monterey* (bonus 2). The Japanese secretly decide to attack whole hog and the Americans decide to defend with the *Essex* and attack with the other two CVL's. The defending four airstrikes from *Essex* reduce the *Akagi's* attack to bonus 1 and the *Shoho* attacks normally. The two American CVL's attack normally, unhindered by any Japanese defense. If the Americans had defended with their whole force, then the *Akagi* would get a bonus 1, and so would the *Shoho*, but the Americans would not get to attack. If the Japanese defended with everything and the Americans attacked with everything, then the *Essex* and a CVL would each get a bonus 1 shot and

the other CVL would attack normally. If both sides defended, nothing would happen and the round would be over. If both sides attacked, it would be a 'normal' battle. If instead of the two CVL's with bonus 2 apiece, the Americans had another bonus 4 CV a similar event could occur using the breakdown option. The American, realizing that the Japanese have only 6 airstrikes at their disposal, might 'break down' one bonus 4 to defend with 2 and attack with 2, thus giving a total of 6 defense, 2 attack. The 'muffler' method favors the side with the most carriers, as each attacking CV or air unit gets at least one shot regardless of the defense. It may seem unfair that a bonus 4 and a bonus 2 end up getting equal shots, but remember this is a strategic rule that will balance out in practice. Early in the game the Japanese have the advantage in CV's and CVL's. Later, the Americans reverse that situation so it all works out. To be fair with the 1-shot carriers or the US Marines airstrikes, a bonus 1 becomes a

regular 1, a regular 1 (*Hermes*, and the hybrids) take on a -1 penalty on the dice. (Thus the '1' carriers can only disable a ship, and are ineffective against land-based air.)

As in most real situations, the defender has the advantage. Allow the defender the chance to be able to defend with one less factor per round. If, for instance, the *Akagi* and *Essex* faced each other, and the Americans presume the *Akagi* will attack, the *Essex* could defend with 3 and attack with 1. The three defending airstrikes would leave the *Akagi* only one shot anyway, yet leave the *Essex* able to attack. If the *Essex* defended with 2 and attacked with 2, then *Akagi* would have two non-defended rolls to attack with. In other words, the attacker will always get at least one shot per attacking unit, but gets no 'credit' for his 'muffled' portion. (Note: You can't 'cheat' by breaking down a "4" carrier into two attacking waves of two airstrikes apiece; no unit may attack more than once per round. Also because only one unit can break down into offense and defense, you can't have a string of CVL's each defending with one and attacking with one. That would be taxing on the mind to keep straight.) So far I've talked about carrier airstrikes only.

Land-based air simply doubles on defense, or offense for comparative purposes only. Any attacks are normal. Confused? As an example, suppose the *Akagi* and *Shoho* are up against the 7th AF. The Japanese elect to attack (the American guesses that will happen). For comparative purposes, the air unit's 2 airstrike factors become 4. Thus he could 'muffle' the *Akagi's* complete attack. Or, since this is a 2 for 1 deal, the air unit could defend with one real factor (and muffle 2 attacking airstrikes) and attack with one real factor. The one real factor would take 2 Japanese defending carrier factors to muffle it. So if the *Akagi* elected to defend and the 7th AF attacked whole hog, the *Akagi* would have to expend at least 3 airstrike factors to reduce the air unit's normal 2 factors to a muffled 1. Fractions favor the defender.

Land-based air on both sides doesn't complicate matters. Since the players wrote down the airstrike allocations beforehand (doubling the LBA in his computations), those figures are the ones to compare and adhere to. Obviously, when a player with a 2-shot CVL and an American LBA unit announces he will attack with 'four' and defend with 'two', he must be 'attacking' with his LBA. Remember, too, Japanese LBA is worth six.

For clarification, a non-bonus airstrike can muffle a bonus airstrike (defender's advantage in the air) but the attacker decides which of his units will be muffled with the announced number of defending airstrikes. Naturally, the first airstrikes to be muffled will be the non-bonus type, leaving the greater possibilities for the bonus airstrikes to reach their targets.

Explaining this 'simple' method for muffling airstrikes takes a lot longer than its application in the game. Usually it's obvious which side is going to attack all out, so the recipient can judge his defense possibilities accordingly. Most of the time, in a battle involving both land and carrier-based airstrikes, the LBA will defend as the carriers attack. What the muffler rule does is increase dramatically the risks of a 'suicide attack' (the previously possible 'bonus 4' which should be able to thwart a landing, now becomes a chancy 'bonus 1' to a more proper proportion. It also enables sacrifices, ploys, and miscalculations of the real conflict to be re-enacted on the game board.

Quick Comments on the official V.I.T.P. Optional Rules—

The 9-turn Game—Any Japanese player who opts for the 9-turn game is either a masochist or is so far out in front of the Allies he couldn't care less.

RETURN FIRE

By Richard Hamblen

I don't mean to be any more critical of Mr. Burke's variant than he meant to be critical of my design. Let's just call this my variant of his variant of my game.

In proposing a change to the system for selecting the time of battle, he overstates the rarity of surface battles, but his general point is well taken. The DRM of +1 for daylight battles is a gamesmanship answer to the design problem. His suggestion of a +2 DRM is certainly justifiable from a simulation viewpoint.

In advocating a change of speed for the *Lexington*, he betrays his source as 'Ships and Aircraft of the U.S. Fleet'. This source is faulty. My research clearly indicates that the *Lex* was a speed 7 ship.

Craig is not alone in claiming that the British carriers and their armored decks are undervalued in the game. I concur with this up to a point. In fact, the same case could be made for the *Taiho* and *Shinano*, and all U.S. carriers arriving after turn 3. The point is that although these armored flight decks were good protection against dive bombers, they did absolutely nothing to protect the vessels from torpedo attacks. For that reason I prefer a special rule in which all hits against these vessels must deduct 1 from their respective damage rolls. This change is even more favorable than increasing the defense factor of these vessels to a 4.

The question of airstrike factors for *Ryuho*, *Chiyoda*, and *Chitose* embraces more than just the number of aircraft the ship could carry. The capacity for these vessels rests squarely between '1' and '2' factors (1 point = 20 planes). All five of the mentioned vessels had a capacity of 30 or 31 aircraft. I rounded the *Zuiho* and *Shoho* up because they were worked up with complete attack crews and were used as attack carriers. The *Chitose*, etc. were never fully crewed and their aircrews were not balanced attack forces, nor were the carriers used in an attack capacity. Consequently, I rounded them down. Therefore, I feel that the air factors given in the game are correct as is.

Mr. Burke is also correct in citing the *Ryuho* as being available in November, 1942, but she was not crewed with air staff until quite a bit later.

The concept of an air factor for the US Marines is an interesting way to account for the presence of the Taffy carriers (CVEs). Putting it on the back of the current counters and then flipping on turn 6 is an excellent idea. A good proposal.

On the other hand, including the *Langley* is just plain incorrect. She had been converted into a plane carrier (i.e., in crates), and was by no means an operational CV.

Adding the *Jintsu* and *Helena* might be ok for those who want more ships to sink, but has its drawbacks. There were, after all, dozens of these on

both sides. If you were to include them in the game you might as well have them reappear every turn like destroyed aircraft and that would lead to some very unrealistic tactics. I really see no rationale for altering the scale of the game to take a sampling of these vessels into account. The next step would be to add destroyers. For the same reasons I am against the inclusion of CVEs like the *Unyo* and *Gambier Bay*. If they were included the US should get three or four to the one for the Japanese. Why muddy up the basic simplicity of the game system for this?

I violently disagree with the inclusion of additional Japanese landing forces. The Japanese already have all the landing capability they should have. In fact, the game allows them to expand their landing capability too much already. The fanatical pockets of resistance referred to were isolated bunches of starving men who were simply ignored while the war progressed.

The inclusion of the hybrids is one I considered myself, but the battleships should have gunnery factors of 2, not 3. Note also that the *Mogami* was rebuilt as a seaplane tender and should not be included in this rule.

The *Shinyo* was an escort carrier, not a front line CV.

The American submarines are probably undervalued and deserve an additional one point craft arriving a turn earlier than the existing F-boat, but I don't feel that giving it a double attack factor is either realistic or wise in terms of play balance.

Adding the midget submarines and the *Aaron Ward* seems to be a concession to those who want more counters to play with. Still, the midget subs could have been a factor at Pearl Harbor and who are we to assume that they had no chance at all to influence the outcome. Limited as they are to the first turn, they seem harmless enough, and entertaining.

The alternate proposal for repair facilities is simply excellent. I wish it was in the game itself.

Likewise excellent are the proposed changes revolving around the Pearl Harbor raid—particularly those referring to the Aftermath and the attack bonus vs. the grounded 7th AF. The added damage to the ships in battleship row is highly questionable however. While the author is quite correct in citing the unpreparedness of the American fleet at the outset, this is partially reflected in the design which allows the Japanese to attack twice during the raid.

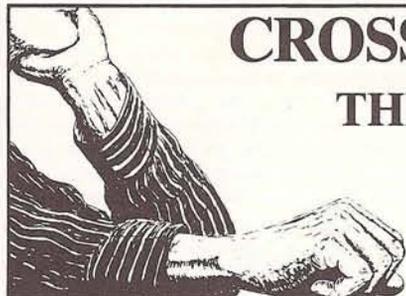
The Anti-aircraft Mufflers is also a nice variation although it becomes more complicated than it needs to be, and could have a drastic affect on play balance.

Lastly, the *Midway* class simply wasn't available during this time frame.

CROSS OF IRON SERIES REPLAY

THE NISCEMI-BISCARI HIGHWAY

German: Martin Anderson
 American: Steve Spoulos
 Commentator: Courtney Allen



We are again privileged to have very experienced participants for our Series Replay. The three principals in our cast are not only veteran SQUAD LEADER players, but also include the designer and principal playtesters of the Series 100 and Quick Play COI scenarios upon which this replay is based. Designer Courtney and his partners in vice have had far more opportunities to play this scenario than the average reader. They were playtesting it long before it was published last September. There certainly can be no question of their command of the rules. This replay was only the second ever submitted without a single error of any type committed in the recording or legality of moves for any game. Those readers who are unfamiliar with the Niscemi-Biscari Highway Scenario can acquire it and the four other scenarios which comprised the Quick Play COI scenario inserts by ordering Vol. 17, No. 2 of THE GENERAL as a back issue.

SETTING THE SCENE

The general flow of this scenario tends to center around the weaknesses of the American forces involved and how well the respective players maximize or minimize those weaknesses. So by way of introduction, it is worth looking at the opposing forces and how they interact.

Just by adding up the number of units involved one can see that the American player comes out on the short end. Having only five squads to defend an area where the opposing force can enter from either map edge creates some interesting decisions for the American player. The prudent placement of the few mines available can be of some help here, but the wise player must vary their placement from game to game to keep the German player guessing. With the entry of the German units on the first turn the general direction of his attack will be known. Once this threatened area is realized, the American player can concentrate his forces in this area and offset the numerical advantage to some extent.

Since most of the German infantry units will not be able to position themselves to prevent the shifting of American squads on the first few turns, he must use his best available deterrent, the PSW231. With proper placement of the AC the German player can interfere with American squad movements. Against this armored car (hereafter referred to simply as AC) the American player has some very formidable killing power. This killing power takes the form of a bazooka with a frontal "To Kill" of 8 or less and two ATG's with a frontal "To Kill" of 7 or less. With penetration range effects the latter can be increased to 10 or less. The problem comes when the American tries to hit anything, especially if the target is moving. The bazooka has an effective range of only three hexes. The ATG's, being captured weapons, use the red "to hit" numbers along with having an additional +2 DRM imposed. Add to this the lower breakdown number of 11, a +2 DRM again for captured use and you're only going to get an average of three to four shots off before each gun is lost to breakdown. Right away one can see that it's not worth the risk of breaking a gun on infantry targets with an attack factor of 4 on the IFT as long

as the AC is still on the loose. Intensive Fire shouldn't even enter one's mind. Remember that once a captured weapon breaks it is removed from the game. Thus not only does one lose a great threat and intimidation factor against the AC, but also the additional DRM protection for its gun crew. Therefore, the only shots the ATG's should be taking are ones where they have a good chance of hitting the target. This usually means targets at ranges of 6 or less.

A not so obvious weakness in the American OB, but one of the most important is the relative short range of their squads and the lack of infantry support weapons (in particular MGs). Although the American squads themselves have very good inherent firepower (in fact it's twice that of a German squad), they lack the range and support weapons to extend that firepower to the extent that the German player possesses. Subsequently one would expect to see the German player keeping his distance and avoiding close range (\leq four hexes) firefights with American squads, until at least such time as some G.I.'s have been neutralized or eliminated. A few MGs, a couple squads and the 9-2 leader forms the best supporting firebase while the remainder of the German force closes in slowly under cover of protecting terrain.

American Setup & Initial Comments

Martin and I have played this particular scenario many times. We have also played other scenarios often, therefore we are not strangers to each other's style of play or our general outlook on a particular scenario. I used this knowledge in my setup. I know that Martin prefers the 5GG5/5GG6 entry. I also know that he is a bold player who tries many unorthodox approaches to a particular situation. He has had many successes doing this, though at times this same approach has cost him valuable units and even more valuable time.

The overriding factor in the setup is the knowledge of Martin's preference for the 5GG5/5GG6 road entrance. My left flank is dangerously weak and I made it even weaker with the placement of the mines at 4AA3 and 4BB3. This is all a calculated risk that I hope will turn out in my favor. The placement of the fifth squad in 4AA1 is to deter any extremely bold advance through open terrain. The placement of Miller at 4BB1 is to facilitate the quick return to combat of the 5th squad if it should go down to fire from oncoming Germans. The placement of the 4th squad in 4Y8 is to facilitate reinforcing either flank without going through open terrain under fire as the standard German move is to place the armored car so that it can fire down the "Y" axis cutting the battlefield in two. The placement of mines can be very crucial. I chose to help defend the area I think is the key defensive position on the board—the woods at 4Z3/4AA4. If that position falls early in the game, the Americans will be hard pressed to hold their positions. The ATG positions are fairly standard in that you want to give them some fields of fire but you don't want them to be eliminated early in the scenario. The ATG's act as a deterrent to an overly aggressive armored car driver. The remainder of the units have been placed on the northern flank with

the idea of not leaving a completely open door to that approach. I feel the key to the American chances in the game will revolve around how well I can diminish his aggressiveness and delay his approach to the 4Y9 and 4CC6 objectives and how well I can reinforce the point of attack without suffering casualties. Another factor will be the extent to which the German can use his leadership DRMs and support weapons to negate my firepower before closing. These two factors coupled with his superior range could have a most definite effect on the American forces.

German Comments on American Setup

In this scenario the German may enter from either the south or north edge of board 5. Both have advantages. From the south, the gully provides a protected route straight towards 4X1, one of the three victory buildings. In addition, units may skirt the southern edge, generally out of range of effective enemy fire, threatening 4CC6. From the north edge the German player has the advantage of cover in the woods, and if he breaks through can threaten to sweep through the wheatfields and capture 4Y9. My decision as to which side to enter will be based upon my prior experience and the American player's setup.

I have had poor luck previously with this scenario as both sides, losing almost every time I have played. When the scenario was initially being designed, I always drove from the north and I remember nothing but a series of sloughing matches in the woods north of 4X1. More recently I recall losing two close games, one as the Germans and one as the Americans, where the Germans attacked from the south. Subsequently, I won as the Germans on a drive from the north. Despite this experience I have formed the strong belief that the German's chances are better from the south and have resolved that in this game I will drive from the south.

Steve's setup almost makes me change my mind. Placement of a unit in 4Y8 is unusual, apparently he desires a reserve to reinforce either side, generally a unit is found in 4T1, 4S2, or 4R1, the absence of one gives CEing Germans the opportunity to advance to 4S1 or 4R1 on the first turn. A north end sweep looks very promising. However, the American does have some mines and their presence in 4S1, 4R1, 4Q2, 4T1, or 4S2 might turn a romp into a crawl, during which the Americans could reinforce the area, bottling me up in a few hexes. So, I will attack from the south.

NEUTRAL COMMENTARY ON AMERICAN SETUP

The initial American setup shows a strong defense of the southern entry edge. So much so that the back door on the northern map edge may have been left a little open. A look at the terrain around the northern edge reveals an ideal defense for the American. With the multi-groups of covering terrain positions, the American squads can have first fire on the attacker at short ranges, taking advantage of their large inherent firepower. If a squad should break, it can fall back to another covered

position, knowing that it has a good chance of rallying (58%) because of their immunity to DM. With these advantages the American would indeed like to channel the German attack through this area, but only if he has defended it adequately, I'm afraid this setup has not secured the northern flank. By the end of the first player turn, double timing German squads with the use of a leader could be well into the first defensive position on the northern edge. Hexes 4R1, 4Q1 and 4S1 can be reached by the end of the initial German Advance Phase without undergoing any form of defensive fire. The AC could also be moved to 4R3, with the remaining squads moving to a firing position at 5U9. These moves would prevent the American squads in these advance positions from pulling back without sustaining some heavy fire. The defense of building 4X1, which is a difficult position to defend to begin with becomes even more difficult to handle. Rout from this building, especially with the AC roaming around is a real problem. From this advanced position the German also has plenty of time to threaten building 4Y9 followed by an attack on even building 4CC6, totally bypassing building 4X1 if it becomes too heavily defended. To prevent such a move, the squad in 4W1 would be better put to use in 4S2 along with Blumberg in 4T1. With this setup both squads in 4U1 and 4S2 can give mutual support with Blumberg providing the link for possible fire group formation, LOS link through the wheatfield in 4S1 and immediate rally potential should any of the squads break. The close range LOS's (\leq four hexes) would allow maximum use of their firepower in preventing a rapid penetration to the rear while not weakening other defensive positions. Some mine factors could also be used here as well, in addition to or even instead of a squad.

The squad in 4AA1 is somewhat of a calculated risk. It prevents the quick German advancement down the southern map edge along row GG and the road paralleling the gully but risks German return fire during the Advancing Fire Phase and possible Defensive Fire during the following American player turn. Firing at extended range, he has only a small chance of inflicting any damage unless the German is very bold and runs through open ground with a -2 DRM. More likely though the German will install a firebase in building 4FF6 and direct it with the 9-2 leader hoping for a KIA. Actually there's a 17% chance of a KIA from the return fire possible, leaving the American position and the game in a tough position to recover from. Miller in 4BB1 does allow the squad a 72% chance of rallying if broken, but a failure here to rally would probably mean his death from later incoming fire.

With the bazooka in 4X1 and the ATG in 4CC6, the other gun in 4Z3 seems somewhat wasted. A position further in the rear and protecting the northern flank would put it to better use. 4X8 is a good possibility. From there, most movement of the AC toward the rear victory building can be tracked, as well as adding an additional garrison force to that building area.

The placement of the ATG in victory building 4CC6 is very good. Not only does it allow a good coverage of the southern map area but also gives a +2 DRM to the crew occupying the building. This can be most beneficial when it comes under fire from positions directed by the German 9-2 leader.

The placement of the squad in 4Y8 is also clever. The concept of reserves is overlooked by so many games that it's nice to see it used well here. From this position the squad will be able to reinforce either board edge quite easily without subjecting it to adverse fire.

Even though the American choice of boresighted hexes may work out, it may be more advantageous in a scenario where the chance of hitting a target is so reduced, to boresight hexes outside their covered arc, and adjacent to victory building hexes or thereabouts. This will give a little better

chance of hitting a target if the gun has to pivot during a final rush on a victory building during the final game turns.

Regardless of the fact that the location of mines always seems hard to criticize when one is trying to second guess an opponent's moves, I feel the locations in 4BB3 and 4AA3 are questionable. Locations around a victory building make better use of their potential. The victory buildings will inevitably attract German squads like a magnet so the chances of units moving through a mined hex will increase if placed nearby. Looking at the total American setup with the obvious gap left in the northern flank area I'm sure the German will suspect the locations of mines in that area. This may cause the German to be a little less cautious on the southern edge, so these locations could work out.

In summary, I would say the American shows a good comprehension of the general situation but has failed in tying the northern flank down and, in so doing, given the German a chance to put his foot

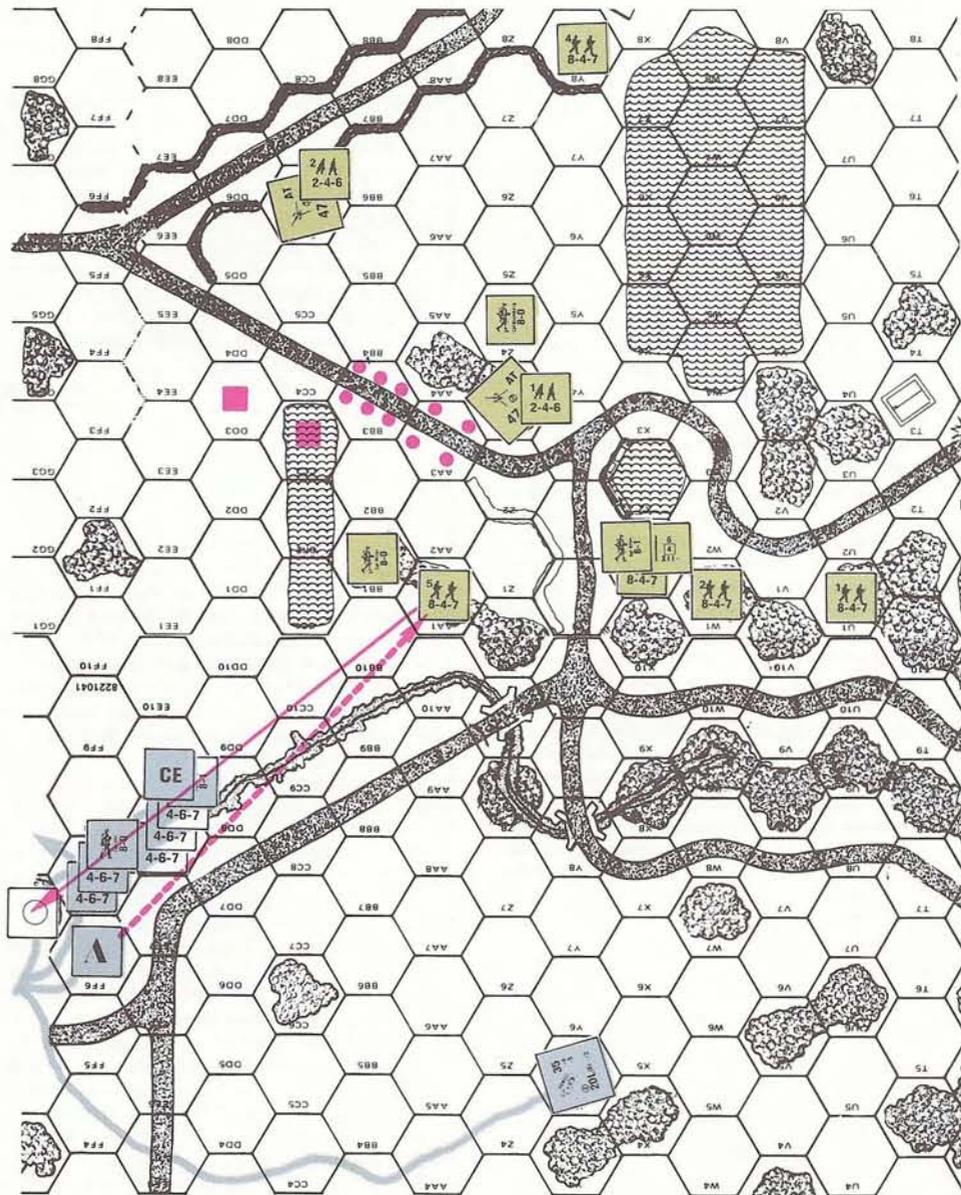
in the door. With the shifting of a squad and/or mine factors, the hole could easily have been filled. If and how the German makes use of this opening will determine how serious an error he has made.

Note that most of the other exceptions I've made to the initial American setup are in no way perfect themselves. The American player must make some very hard decisions about his opening placement and how he intends to defend his position for eight turns. The dilemma created by these decisions and how they interact with the SL system usually makes for an interesting scenario.

GERMAN TURN ONE:

Pre-Movement Phase Comments

My strategy is to establish a strong fire base to cover two attacking groups, one down the gully and one down the southern edge of board 4. Movement (especially CE) through SGG7 is dangerous as



German Turn 1: Pitz's planned doubletime move into 5EE8 never materialized as the American 5th squad's Defensive Fire into 5GG7, coupled with poor German morale check rolls, eliminated squad A while breaking Pitz and squads B and C. The potential for a cataclysmic opening was thwarted by the German's good sense in moving Uhl's force through 4FF6 instead of following Pitz through the more dangerous woods. Stack A represents Stahler (9-2), three squads, four LMGs, and a MMG—the German firebase whose initial fire in the Advancing Fire Phase achieves a 1MC which the offending 5th squad passes.

All game illustrations will be keyed in the following manner. Regular movement will be shown by solid lines of the side's respective counter color. Advance Phase movement will be shown by a solid arrow. Rout movement will be traced with dashed lines. All fire will be illustrated in red; Prep Fire with solid lines, Defensive Fire with dotted lines, and Advancing Fire with dashed lines. Units which are eliminated or broken during that player turn are half (diagonally) colored. The American minefield is shown by red dots in this illustration only. The boresighted hexes of the AT Guns are shown with red squares in this illustration only.

the 5th American squad has a shot on the 4 fire table. While this risk is minimal, the game could end with one roll of the dice on the first turn.

I will use my armored car to cut his ability to reinforce north/south by positioning it along the Y hex row. My experience has shown that all too often the armored car is lost early on in the game to some senseless charge. I intend to preserve it to the end of the game when its presence will be truly threatening.

DEFENSIVE FIRE PHASE

Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
5	5GG7	4	0	3	2	9 10 10 7 8 4 8

ADVANCING FIRE PHASE

Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
9-2, F, G, H, 4 LMG	4AA1	6	-1	7	1	6

Combat Chart Explanations: If a leader breaks, all units in the hex will first make their normal MC, and then all units will make the MC indicated by the IFT. All units make MCs in numerical or alphabetical order after all leaders have done so. Morale Check die rolls resulting in broken or eliminated units are shown in bold type.

End of Turn Comments

As I feared, Steve got a lucky dice roll on 5GG7. I compounded the problem with some very poor MCs.

GERMAN TURN 1 NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

Although the German almost received a written invitation to enter from the northern map edge, he chose to enter from the south. He must either have a very strong passion for the south edge or a great fear of possible mines in the north. This game may end up more of a psychological contest than anything else. Either way the German has elected to enter from the south and has made a fairly safe opening move against the American set up in 4AA1. Actually there's little to question here, though I think his intended effort down hex row GG is a little weak. Instead he has chosen to use the largest base fire possible with his 9-2 leader in 5FF6.

With three squads tied up in this group he will have to keep it advancing forward to fill the ranks of other groups as the German losses mount. In what seems to have been an effort to make it to the end of the gully (5AA10) and the subsequent advancement into woods 4AA1 and/or 4Z10 in two turns, the German double timed Pitz and three squads and paid an awful price. There's not much one can say about a '4' attack with a result of a 2 MC, but to follow it with MC dice rolls as bad as the German had is an extraordinarily poor bit of luck to start the scenario with. Not only has the German lost a squad on the first player turn but some valuable time as well. His advance on the woods in and around 4AA1 will be seriously delayed.

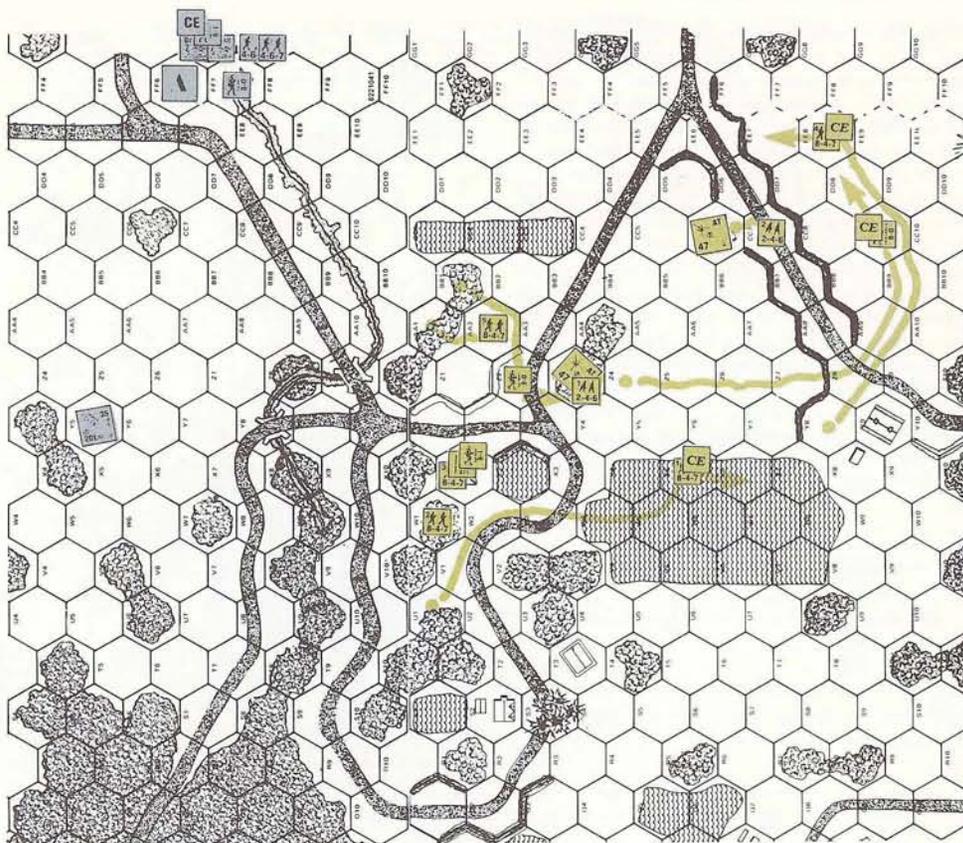
The positioning of the AC along the Y row will, as the German points out, help slow down the American reinforcement from one board edge to the other, although moving it forward into 5Y6 would have given it a 12 hex range to 4Y8 and thus maximized its firepower. Any position much forward of this would give an aggressive American player possible shots with the bazooka.

The German Advancing Fire came up with the expected result, but the American was able to come up with a fortuitous MC roll at the right time to result in no net effect.

AMERICAN TURN ONE:

Pre-Prep Fire Phase Comments

As expected the German came down the board 5 gully to escape fire from 4AA1. He did receive fire at 5GG7 and a few units went down to this. His return fire proved ineffective though accurate. The loss of one of his squads this early may prove a bit demoralizing. The armored car along the Y hex row is as predicted. I will choose to move rather than trade bullets with the German strength at this range.



American Turn 1: Pitz rallied himself but was unable to also rally his DM affected men. The American player, for his part, has withdrawn his forces out of LOS of the German fire base at 5FF6 while also acting to reinforce his threatened right flank.

RALLY PHASE

Unit/Weapon	Hex	DRM	DR	Result
Pitz	5GG7	+4	4	Rallied
B	5GG7	+3	7	No Effect
C	5GG7	+3	7	No Effect

End of Turn Comments

The 5th squad retreats to 4AA2 in order to make the adjacent string of woods inhospitable to German advances. The attempt to reinforce the right flank begins. Two squads remain to keep the road closed from 5Y10 to 4Y3 and to force the German down my right flank. I moved the crew at 4CC6 to escape heavy German fire. The squad at 4EE7 again is to help defer excessively bold German advances. I am hoping that with some forces down he will be a little less aggressive.

AMERICAN TURN 1 NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

This being a turn of maneuver for the American he makes good use of it by repositioning his defense to meet the German threat. Realizing the large firepower potential from the German units in 5FF6, he correctly chooses not to exchange fire and retreats out of LOS from his position in 4AA1 to AA2. Even with the large distances traveled by many of the American units, none were exposed to defensive fire. This left the German with no targets to fire at during the Defensive Fire Phase, which makes for a rather uneventful player turn. The squad in 4AA2 will be in a good position to defend the woods area he just vacated with point blank fire into the better defensive hexes except for 5Z10, which can be covered somewhat by units in 4X1 as well. With Miller advancing into 4Z3, squad 5 has an excellent potential rout path to the same hex via 4Z2. Because the squad must avoid the mines in 4AA3, this may be a mixed blessing. If indeed the squad must rout, the reason for not routing through the shorter route (in MF's) through 4AA3 will become obvious to the German, thus revealing the location of the mines. The advance of squad 4 to

4EE7 will give some needed firepower to the southern edge during the subsequent German turn and slow the German advance along the GG row.

GERMAN TURN TWO:

Pre-Movement Phase Comments

Despite the shocking success of his first turn DF, during his first movement phase Steve elected to abandon his front line positions in 4CC6 and 4AA1, presumably because of Lt. Stahler's long range firebase. He has also reinforced the southern edge, apparently to prevent me from flanking him from that side.

RALLY PHASE

Unit/Weapon	Hex	DRM	DR	Result
B	5GG7	-1	4	Rallied
C	5GG7	-1	7	Rallied

Since I have no prep fire and both my squads have rallied, I will develop my plan by cautiously advancing down the southern edge, renewing my advance down the gully and moving Stahler to a position where he can fire into the woods and down the southern edge.

ADVANCING FIRE PHASE

Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
231/MC	4X1	1	+2	9	—	
231/Gun	4X1	3	+2	10	—	
9-2, G, H	4EE7	4	-1	9	—	

End of Turn Comments

With my movement of the armored car and squad to 5BB7 I hope to pin the units in building 4X1 long enough to advance on the building with Hamblen's group.

GERMAN TURN 2 NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

With the successful rally of squads B & C, Pitz and his platoon are off and running once again, but this time minus one squad. With the abandonment of the forward position in 4AA1, Pitz is allowed to

make a faster advance along the road. The German finally sees that the three squads and five MGs with Stahler are a bit of an overkill and moves squad F and 2 LMGs forward. But the firepower he can muster holds little hope of suppressing the building 4X1 defense. A better move would have been to follow up with Pitz's group and advance into the gully at 4BB9 as well. An alternate would have been to advance Pitz and squads B & C to 4BB7 under the AC with squad F. The way it stands now the German has broken his force up into four separate groups, few of which can do much to support the others. The German must first neutralize a few American positions before splitting up and threatening from a number of directions.

Without fear of defensive fire, Stahler moves to 4EE7 from where he can fire on squad 4 in 4EE7. Squads D & E follow a similar logic and advance to 4FF1 from where they are in normal range of 4EE7 and 4CC6 but still at extended range of all return fire.

AMERICAN TURN TWO:

Pre-Prep Fire Phase Comments

The German continues to move boldly. He forces me to move out of 4EE7 by placement of his fire group in 5EE7—they are beyond my range. I expected Stahler to move closer to the action and did not expect the AC to move off of the Y row. Once again I will attempt to reinforce the woods at 4AA4.

PREP FIRE PHASE						
Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
8-1, 3	5BB7	4	0	4	1	8

DEFENSIVE FIRE PHASE						
Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
231/MG	4X1	2	+2	8	—	—
231/Gun	4X1	6	+2	8	—	—
D, E	4CC6	8	+2*	5	1	5
9-2, G,H MMG, 2 LMG	4CC6	12	0*	8	1	5

*The crew does not receive the gunshield DRM because it was moving.

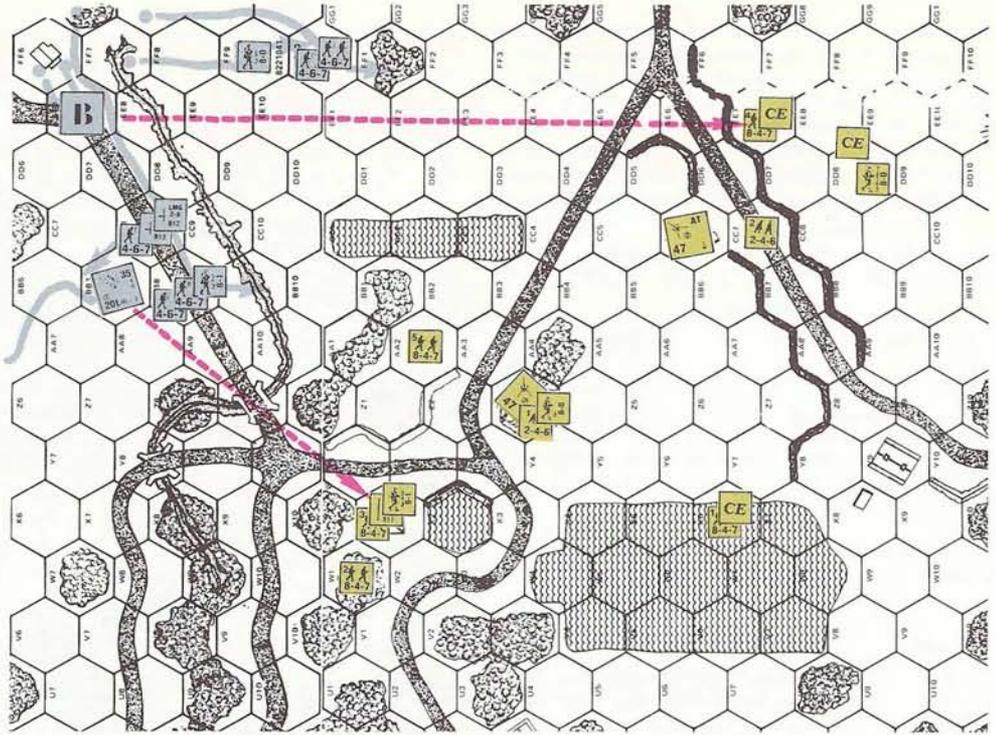
End of Turn Comments

I feel that I am in good position—no casualties yet and I have bloodied the Germans though I don't like their presence in 4FF1. I did some merry-go-round movement around the building in 4X1. The reason for this particular movement is battle fatigue. I changed my mind a couple of times and went back to where I started.

**AMERICAN TURN 2
NEUTRAL COMMENTARY**

The American may not fire often but when he does, look out! The German squad in 4BB7 breaks to some pretty faint fire. By neutralizing that squad the American has put one more squad and two LMG's out of action for a number of player turns. The German will have to use Stahler to rally him, thus hurting the German even more by losing the use of his -2 leadership DRM for directing fire. The movement of the AC last turn has allowed the movement and advance of 1st squad to 4AA4 which will help in preventing German squads D&E from moving down row GG, while still remaining out of LOS for the time being. With this protection, squad 4 should have moved to 4FF7 and advanced to 4FF6 with Blumberg moving to 4GG7. From here, squad 4 commands most of the south edge even while still being out of LOS of Stahler. Should squad 4 break as a result of fire, say from squads D&E, he can rout to Blumberg in 4GG7 with squad 1 in 4AA4 protecting against any rush of that position if squad 4 should break and fail to rally immediately.

The movement of the 2nd crew back into building 4CC6 should have waited until the Advance Phase. Fire from 4FF1 into 4CC7 would have



German Turn 2: Pitz rallies his two broken squads, and with the Americans now out of either range or LOS once again moves west—this time on the road, until advancing once again into the gully. German Advancing Fire from Stahler in firebase B (two squads, two LMGs, and a MMG) and the PSW 231 is ineffective. Squad F advances into BB7 to use the armored car (thereafter AC) as cover in the expected coming firefight with 4X1.

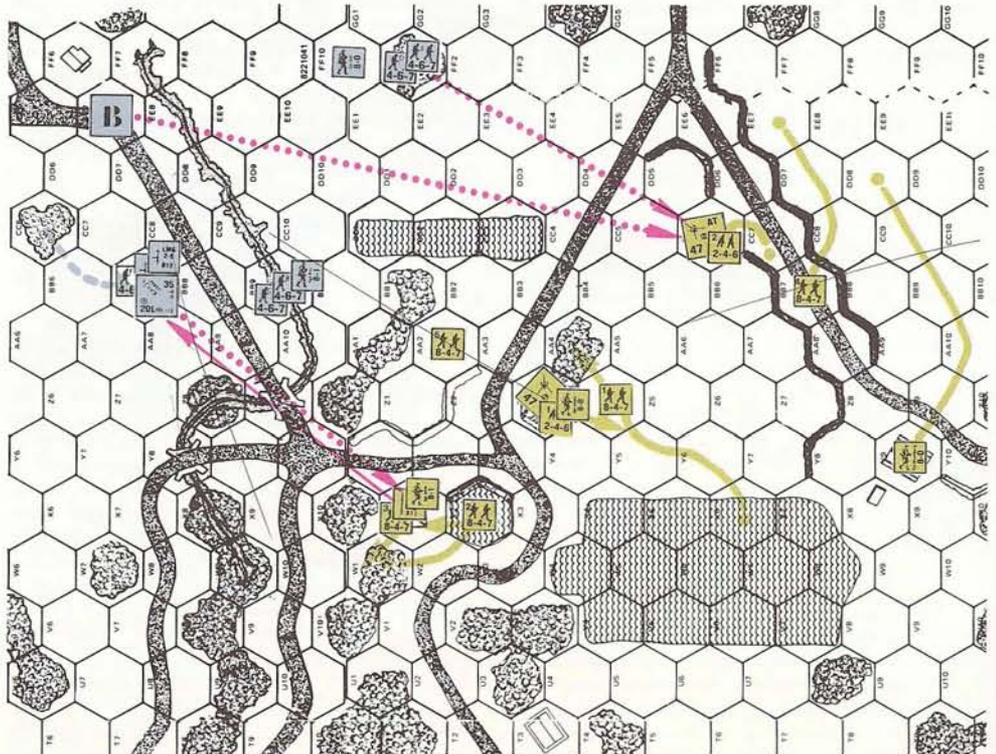
had a 72% chance of a morale check with no other units having a shot, while fire from 5EE7 into building 4CC6 has a 83% chance of a MC along with a 42% chance from fire originating in 4FF1. It's possible that the American did not realize that crews do not receive the benefit of gun shields while moving. Whatever the case he came up with some great dice rolling once again as the situation required. If I know my SL games, the German's turn for a good dice roll or two should be coming up soon.

The dancing around buildings 4X1 by squads 2 and 3 I can't figure out. It must have something to do with a Greek religious ritual.

GERMAN TURN THREE:

Pre-Prep/Movement Phase Comments

Again Steve manages to blunt one of my lines of advance by breaking my squad at 5BB7 (perhaps this move was a bit gutsy) but then elects to retreat



American Turn 2: Allan's Prep Fire breaks squad F and sends it routing back to the 5CC6 woods. The AC's return fire in the Defensive Fire Phase is ineffective. Stahler uses sustained fire to get a 12 firepower attack on the crew in 4CC6, but the American crew is gutsy—passing both that and another level 1 MC caused by squads D & E with a pair of '5' MC dice rolls.

his force covering the southern edge, though he advances back into 4CC6. Perhaps he feels this is sufficient force to protect the southern flank.

My goal this turn is to dispose of 4CC6 by prepping it from Stahler's firebase. I will then continue my advance along the gully and down the southern edge and send a squad into the center to threaten Steve's interior lines. I also hope to draw units off the north/south road so I can put the armored car in the American rear.

PREP FIRE PHASE

Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
9-2,G,H MMG, 2 LMG	4CC6	12	+2	6	1	7
231/MG	4X1	2	+2	7	—	—
231/Gun	4X1	6	+2	6	—	—

DEFENSIVE FIRE PHASE

Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
4	4CC3	4	0	6	M	9
1	4GG3	4	-2	8	M	5
8-1,2	5Z10	8	+2	12	—	—
5	5Z10	8	+1	7	M	5 8 12
C1	4CC3	2	0	12	—	—

ADVANCING FIRE PHASE

Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
Pitz, B	4AA2	2	-1	5	1	11
D	4AA4	2	+1	2	1	9

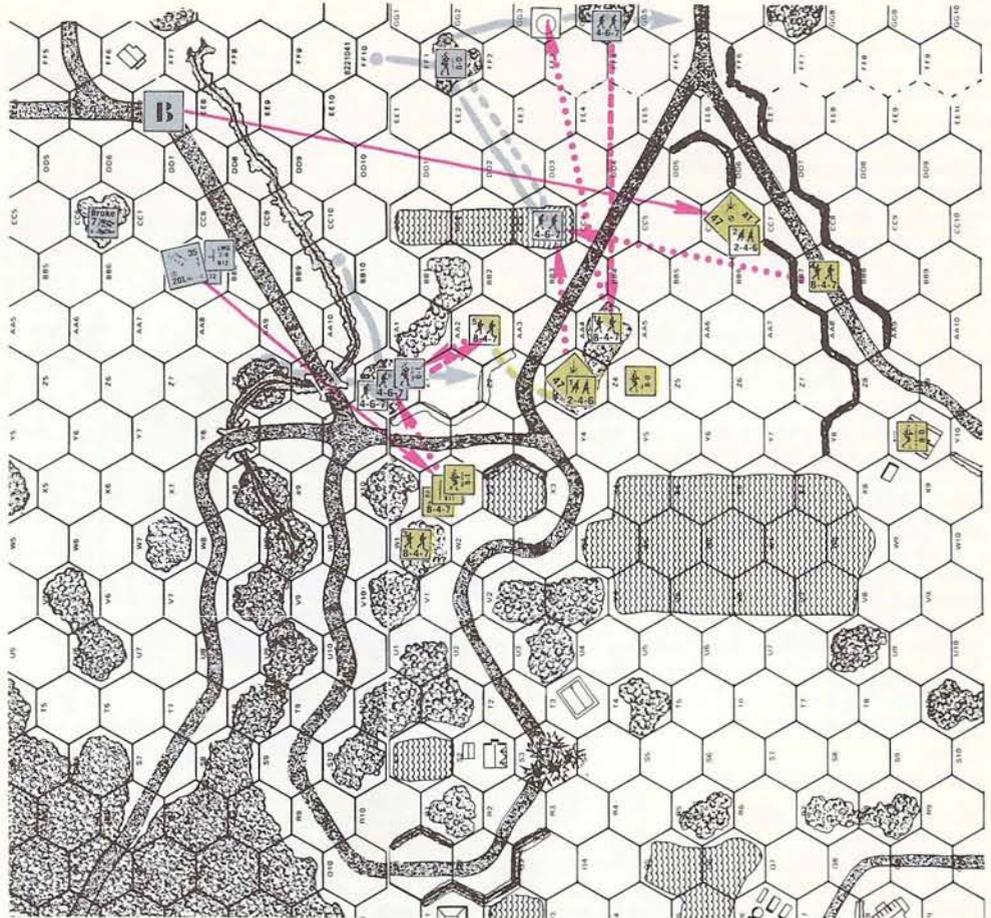
End of Turn Comments

My plan went well through the Prep Fire Phase. Steve naturally reacts to the threat to his interior lines, unfortunately with great success, two of three squads fall to low odds attacks. One cannot even pass an 8MC! However, thank God, I get my revenge in the Advancing Fire Phase when two American squads fall to even lower odds attacks. My advances have faded in strength, but one squad sits in Steve's center behind a stone wall and another has turned the southern flank.

GERMAN TURN 3 NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

With this player turn comes a lot of action from the dice. Luck finally runs out for the crew in building 4CC6 and it breaks. With that, the German moves in but instead of concentrating splits his forces once more by dividing his southern edge group! On top of that he missed the LOS from 4AA4 to 4GG3 and takes a shot with a -2 DRM attached. The way the American has been rolling dice, he could have very easily lost another squad right there. Instead, the squad has little problem in passing a normal MC. The movement of squad E to 4CC3 served little real purpose, except to cut the possible rout path of squad 5 through 4Z2. What it did do was give the American another shot or two at an unsupported German squad. Even more important, the move broke up the only force the German had operating on the southern edge and posed no real threat to the American defense, actually being too far away from Pitz's group to add any meaningful support. A move to 4CC2 would have avoided the fire from the squad in 4BB7 and still have been able to fire on 4AA2 with a 12% chance of breaking the squad there.

The German can make few complaints about the Advancing Fire effects on the American squads in 4AA4 and 4AA2, both of which resulted in the breaking of the squads positioned there. If Miller had been left in 4Z3 and not advanced out last turn the American would have had a good chance of bringing one, if not both squads, back next turn. The way it stands now the German advances squad B to 4Z1 in hopes of eliminating a squad or two in 4Z3 in the coming Defensive Fire Phase. A somewhat tricky way of getting Miller into 4Z3 for the next Rally Phase would have been to voluntarily break him and subsequently rout to that hex. Since he had not been fired on this turn there would have



German Turn 3: Stahler's firebase B breaks the American crew in 4CC6, which allows squad E to move into the wheatfield at 4CC3 where it is met and broken by Defensive Fire from squad 4, and must rout back from whence it came. Defensive Fire from the 5th squad breaks squad C but return Advancing Fire from squads B & D break squads 1 & 5 and sends them routing to 4Z3. Pitz voluntarily accompanies squad C in its rout to 5C8.

been no DM status and he could have rallied on an 8 or less. The chances involved may have been worth taking.

The German wisely chooses to rout "Pitz" with the broken squad C in hopes of getting some of his numerical strength back by the next German player turn. With the breaking of two squads this turn, the German is down to four operating squads, only two of which are in advanced positions. The advance of squad D to 4GG5 may be a bit risky at this point in the game. Should the squad lose the exchange of fire with the American squad in 4BB7, Stahler and his group do prevent any ambitious moves by the American in that direction with the intentions of eliminating the Uhl group while in a broken state, so it may not be too bad.

Why the American chose NOT to rout the crew in building 4CC6 to 4Z8 is beyond me. Maybe he feels he can work Blumberg into the building to rally the crew there. I am sure the German would like to see an 8-0 leader like Blumberg in building 4CC6 with the fire he can put on it from Stahler's firebase B.

AMERICAN TURN THREE:

Pre-Prep Fire Phase Comments

What happened???? The German advanced boldly and I thought recklessly, but he survived and actually came out with the advantage. He actually knocked down three of my units and cleared the 4AA1 woods. I am going to shoot it out. I have a firepower advantage locally plus first fire. I will go for it!!!

Post Prep Fire Phase Comments

My shooting was very good. The bazooka even landed a hit on the German squad in 4Z1. The two squads in 4Z1 were also hit hard but I came up empty and the German squads survive.

RALLY PHASE

Unit/Weapon	Hex	DRM	DR	Result
C	5Z8	+3	7	No Effect
E	4FF1	+4	6	No Effect

PREP FIRE PHASE

Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
4	4GG5	4	0	9	—	—
3,2	4Z1	16	+2	5	2	3
8-1,Baz*	4Z1	6	-1/+2	8/2	H/2	3
C1	4Z1	2	+2	9	—	—

*Squad 3 is actually firing the bazooka under Allan's direction.

DEFENSIVE FIRE PHASE

Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
9-2,G,H, MMG, 2 LMG	4CC6	12	+2	4	2	10
231/MC	4X1	2	+2	5	—	—
231/Gun	4X1	6	+2	9	—	—
B	4Z3	4	+1	7	—	—
D	4BB7	4	0	4	1	8

End of Turn Comments

Have I snatched defeat from the jaws of victory? One of my squads goes down and one of the crews has seen his last day. The southern flank has crumbled. I will need some luck to revive my units in 4Z3 and 4Z9.

AMERICAN TURN 3 NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

The American position at the beginning of this turn is not as bad as he fears. The only area in any real trouble is the south edge. With only one German squad in a forward position, the threat there is not that great. It obviously would have been worse if the German had kept squad E active in this area.

The choice to exchange fire this turn was the correct one for the American for the most part though in no place did it pay off. The German squad in 4Z1 countered two good American attack

die rolls with two good MC dice rolls of its own. With the victory building 4CC6 threatened by the presence of the German squad in 4GG5, squad 4 in 4BB7 should have probably shown the better part of valor and moved to a position out of LOF, such as 4BB8-4AA9-4Z9 and advanced to building 4Y9 from where he could protect against a rush of building 4CC6 and even 4Y9. As it works out the German does win the exchange of fire between 4BB7 and 4GG5 even though the American squad had first fire. The German is now in a good position to take building 4CC6 in the following turn. With the rout of squad 4 to 4Z9, the American situation can actually be saved somewhat. Blumberg will be able to move into 4Z9 during the Advance Phase and has a 58% chance of rallying the squad during the next player turn. And if a German squad should move into building 4CC6 during the next player turn, just how long he could hold onto it before being reinforced would be interesting. Surviving virtually unsupported in a building out on a limb such as this, will be difficult at best.

The crew occupying building 4CC6 pays the price for not having routed last turn and is eliminated by defensive fire from Stahler's group, unfortunately being the only target the group has this turn. The situation around building 4CC6 is looking a little bleak at the end of the turn but the American hasn't lost yet. The rallying of a few broken squads can save the situation.

GERMAN TURN FOUR:

Pre-Movement Phase Comments

During Steve's turn things really went my way. The squad in 4Z1 survived an amazing amount of fire (Iron Crosses for all!), the only American squad protecting 4CC6 and 4Y9 breaks and the crew in 4CC6 dies. Unfortunately I can only rally one squad on rolls requiring 7 and 8 respectively!

Since there are no Prep Fire targets, my immediate strategy is to thrust down the southern edge where I should be able to take 4CC6 with no problem. Then I hope to revitalize my thrust towards 4X1 by getting into a position where I can rally two squads. I will also send my MGs forward. In addition with his squads off the north/south road I will thrust my armored car into the rear of his position.

RALLY PHASE				
Unit/Weapon	Hex	DRM	DR	Result
1	4Z3	0	4	Rallied
5	4Z3	0	10	No Effect
4	4Z9	0	7	No Effect
E	4FF1	0	7	Rallied
C	5C8	-1	9	No Effect

DEFENSIVE FIRE PHASE						
Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
8-1,2,3	5CC6	8	0	7	1	5 6
1	4GG9	4	+1	8	—	—

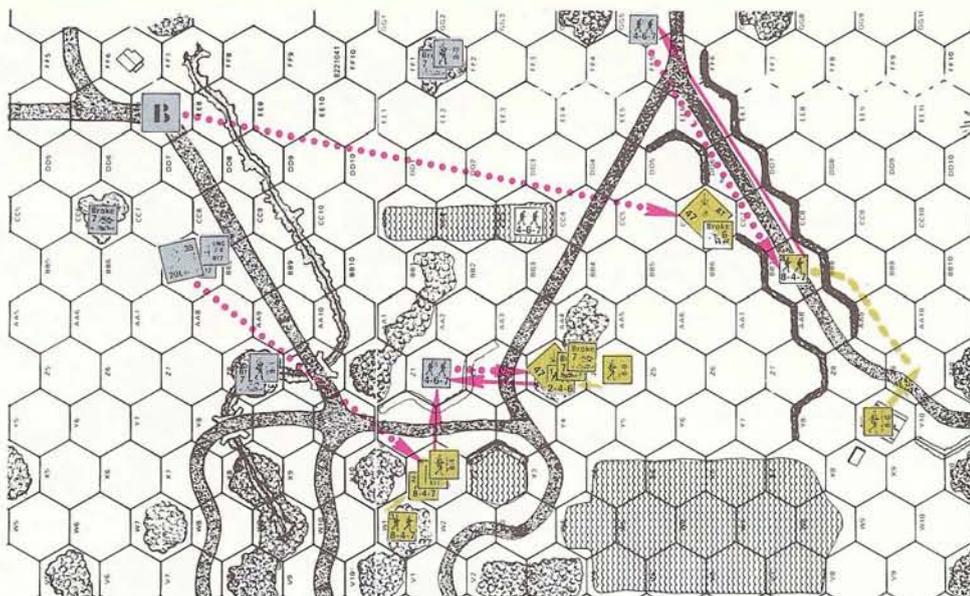
ADVANCING FIRE PHASE						
Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
D	4Z9	2	0	5	M	8 5
E	4Z9	1	0	7	—	—

End of Turn Comments

A good dice roll against 4Z9 but the elimination of the squad there was too much to hope for. The advance to 4DD6 should get me building 4CC6 next turn.

**GERMAN TURN 4
NEUTRAL COMMENTARY**

The rallies for both players this turn were not very good with the German getting one out of two and the American only getting one out of three squads returning to the action. This creates an interesting situation for both players. The German must make use of the American broken squads and the gaps they leave while he can. The American strength in and around building 4X1 is too for-

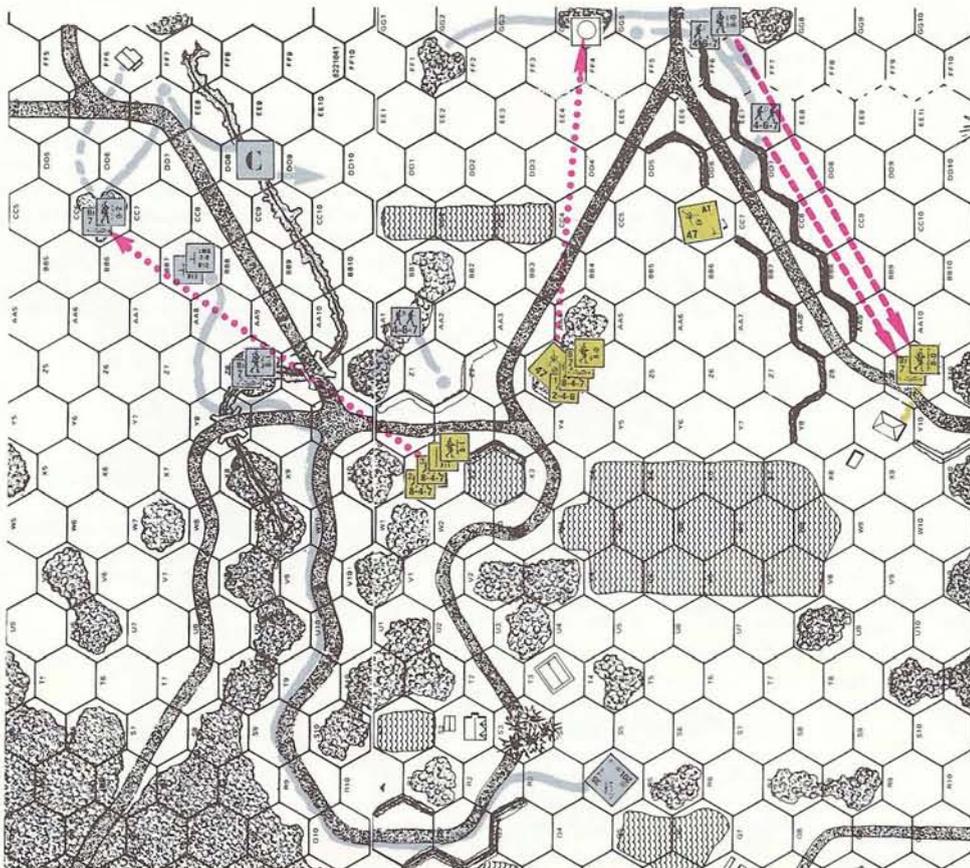


American Turn 3: German squads C & E still suffering from DM fail to rally, but squad B weathers a pair of 2MCs caused by Prep Fire from the 2nd & 3rd squads including a bazooka hit by the 3rd squad. The German Defensive Fire is more effective as Stahler's firebase B eliminates crew 2 with a second failed MC. More important, however, is squad D's outduelling of squad 4 which breaks and routs back to 4Z9. Miller and Blumberg advance in an effort to rally the three broken G. I. squads. If they fail the American right flank will cease to exist.

midable to contest piecemeal so the German wisely saves the squad in 4Z1 for another day by moving out of any possible lines of fire.

Finding the need for more squads upfront, Stahler must leave his fire group to close alone, while he moves to rally the squad in 5CC6 left there since turn 2. Once again the German must pay the price of an earlier mistake and temporarily loses the use of his most valuable leader.

The movement of the AC could have been done earlier since the chance of an immobilization by the squad in 4W1 is only about 10% and the chance of getting a hit from the bazooka in 5W10 is at best, 8%. It will take another turn for the AC to get into a position to do any good. The low level attacks on building 4X1 had only a small chance of success anyway, so a position behind the main American defenses should prove more beneficial.



German Turn 4: Both sides rally a squad, but the American is more seriously harmed by the failure of squads 4 & 5 to rally, than the German is by Pitz's inability to rally squad C. B squad wisely moves out of the possible crossfire created by the rallying of 1st squad to await reinforcements, while Stahler's firebase of two squads, two LMGs, and a MMG (now represented by counter C) moves up without him as he moves back to retrieve F squad. The AC uses its speed to advantage to circle behind the American position while the German southern thrust almost pays big dividends when the Advancing Fire of D squad causes a MC for Blumberg and the already broken 4th squad. Fortunately for the American they both pass with no ill effects. Although the American Defensive Fire doesn't draw blood it does keep F squad under the affects of DM. The German wisely takes advantage of the American fire to rout Stahler and F out of LOS of future attacks.

The important portion of this turn is the advance on building 4CC6. Basically, I find little fault with the move of squad D to 4EE7 with Uhl and squad E ultimately advancing to 4FF6. The only suggestion I can make would be to have double-timed squad D to 4DD6 and foregone its Advancing Fire on 4Z9. Although squad D's advancing fire almost paid off big, with the possible elimination of a squad, being the last to occupy and thereby "control" building 4CC6 has a better chance of paying off. With the advancement of a squad into the building, the American would not only have to force the squad from the building but REOCCUPY it to deny control status to the German. Squad B in 4AA1 should then be advanced to 4BB1 from where he adds additional covering fire for squad D which would be occupying building 4CC6.

AMERICAN TURN FOUR:

Pre-Prep Fire Phase Comments

The German advance is going well. One building has all but fallen. I chose not to fire the bazooka at the moving AC because the chances for a hit were little better than those of running out of ammunition. I am still surprised that the MMG group is not closer to the action and the AC is still out of position. I am going to do some shooting—if the squad at 4DD6 goes down I will attempt to retake building 4CC6. I hope to knock down the unit in 5Z10 and further delay his advance.

RALLY PHASE				
Unit/Weapon	Hex	DRM	DR	Result
S	4Z3	0	4	Rallied
4	4Y9	0	4	Rallied
C	5Z8	-1	10	No Effect
F	5FF6	+2	7	No Effect

PREP FIRE PHASE					
Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect Result
4	4DD6	4	0	4	1 9
8-1,2,3	5Z10	16	+2	8	M 6
Baz*	5Z10	6	0/+3	3/3	H/1 4

*Squad 3 fired the bazooka.

DEFENSIVE FIRE PHASE					
Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect Result
B	4X1	4	+2	8	—

Post-Prep Fire Phase Comments

Shot very well again—knocking down the squad in 4DD6. Fire heavily on 5Z10 once again, but with no effect.

End of Turn Comments

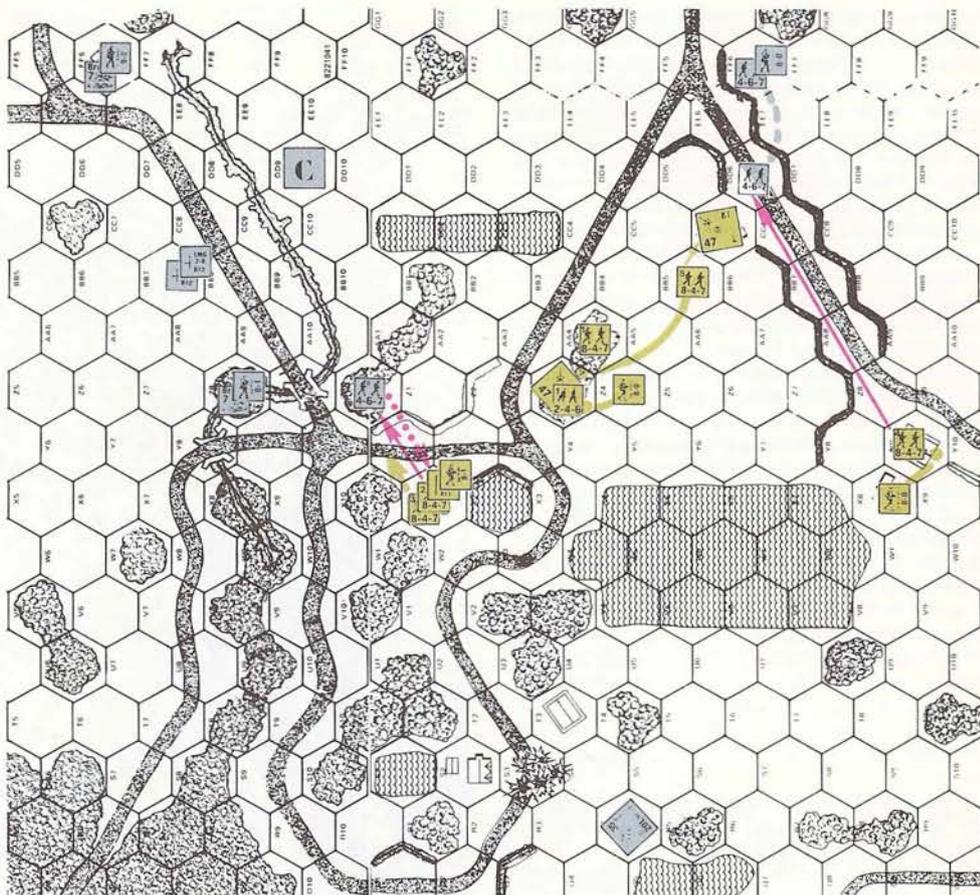
I feel that I have regained the advantage again. I think he will be forced into some desperate chances soon, but I will remain cautious as I have seen the situation change twice within a turn.

**AMERICAN TURN 4
NEUTRAL COMMENTARY**

Pitz just cannot rally squad C. Stahler and squad F failed to rally likewise but this was a little more expected. Both American squads rally putting the latter back in the driver's seat.

Once again squad B, this time in 5Z10, stands up to an amazing set of American dice rolls. With the failure of the squads in 4X1 to break squad B, the American once again chooses to fire the bazooka and once again with great dice rolls; back-to-back 3's. Even with the MC obtained, I feel the use of the bazooka at infantry, especially with such terrain modifiers, is a risky undertaking. With a breakdown number of 11 the American should not be firing at targets with low probability of success. This becomes especially true now that one of the ATG's has lost its crew and is unmanned. The threat, if any, from the German squad in 5Z10 just does not warrant the use and possible loss of the bazooka. The AC is still very much alive and well.

The breaking of the German squad in 4DD6 from the Prep Fire in 4Y9 makes for an easy reoccupation of victory building 4CC6. With that, the



American Turn 4: Squads 4 & 5 rally in the nick of time, and the Germans have no such luck with squads C & F. Prep Fire from squad 4 breaks D squad, allowing the 5th squad to move back into CC6. Bazooka and small arms fire from 2nd & 3rd squads cause two MCs on squad B which the latter weathers in fine style. The seeming strong German advantages of the last turn have disappeared, so much so that the American is now advancing against pesky B squad!

American is again in a very good defensive position. So much so that he chooses to advance out of building 4X1 with one of the squads and come out after the German squad in 5Z10! There is really no reason to tempt fate by giving the German a better chance of obtaining a MC on an American squad and therein possibly reduce the strength defending victory building 4X1.

With the AC's present location in 4R4 I don't understand why the ATG in 4Z3 has not been pivoted to a covered arc of 4Z4/4Y4. The AC does not have the MPs to get over to the southern board area in one turn and the bazooka still protects the central area. With the covered arc as suggested, the gun could help protect the rear buildings now that the gun crew in building 4CC6 has been eliminated.

Defensive fire at Stahler in 5CC6 means yet another turn will probably be needed before squad F will be rallied. By the way, a LOS does exist from 4X1 to 5DD6 through which Stahler passed on his way to squad F allowing an 8 attack with a -3 DRM. This could have meant the game for the German with a 42% chance of a KIA. The safe move, out of range of the American squads would have been through 5EE6 to 5DD5 and on to 5CC6.

GERMAN TURN FIVE:

Pre-Prep Fire/Movement Phase Comments

The shock is too much! Though my squad in 5Z10 again survived tremendous fire, Steve saves 4CC6 with another incredibly lucky roll on the 4 table! I cannot believe it! Such luck . . .

My position now is very bad. 4CC6 and 4Y9 are strongly held, my southern threat is repulsed, and Steve has a good central reserve position in 4AA4 and 4Z3. 4X1 is strongly held and he feels strong enough to frontally assault my squad in 5Z10. However, I did rally two squads by the gully.

My Turn 5 strategy, with hope of victory nearly gone, is to push Pitz behind 4X1, my MGs into the 4BB1 woods to take out Steve's forces in 4AA4/4Z3 while Stahler will pick up the LMGs in 5BB7. The armored car will move behind 4Y10, maybe a lucky shot will break the squad there. After much thought I decide that my squad in 5Z10 will stand and try to blow away the American squad in 4Y1 in the Prep Fire Phase. It is my turn for a '2' or '3'. My only consolation is that I do threaten everywhere. One KIA and the Americans will be stretched thin.

RALLY PHASE				
Unit/Weapon	Hex	DRM	DR	Result
C	5Z8	-1	8	Rallied
F	5FF6	-2	8	Rallied
D	4FF6	+4	10	No Effect

PREP FIRE PHASE					
Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect Result
B	4Y1	8	+2	6	M 5

DEFENSIVE FIRE PHASE					
Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect Result
2,3	5Z10	24	+3	8	1 6
Baz	5Z10	6	-1/+3	7/4	H/M 11
5	4FF6	8	+1	6	1 5

ADVANCING FIRE PHASE					
Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect Result
231/MC	4Y9	1	+2	7	—
231/Gun	4Y9	3	+2	11	—

**GERMAN TURN 5
NEUTRAL COMMENTARY**

Pitz is finally able to rally C squad, but just barely, needing and getting a dice roll of 8. Squad F also rallies while squad D, under DM, does not. After four turns of play, the German has accomplished little in the way of breaking up the American defense. The American force is almost at

original strength and in a good position for the defense of the three victory buildings. The German situation is definitely at a level below that of the American's. He has managed to spread himself rather thinly with a number of unsupportive groups, although he has been able to filter a group, though not too strong, down the southern board edge which does pose a threat to the two rear victory buildings. To pull this scenario out of the fire, a concentrated attack on building 4X1 must be launched followed by a final attack on either building 4CC6 or 4Y9.

The German movements this turn seem to agree with my feelings though he once again chooses to attack in a piecemeal fashion.

The flanking move of Pitz and one squad has its merits but only if he reinforces the move. Squad B in 4Z10 is the closest candidate. Its Prep Fire into 4Y1 had only a 18% chance of breaking the squad there, so a move following up Pitz's group would have proven to be more beneficial in the long run.

I don't think the time spent in going after the LMGs in 5BB7 is worth it. Stahler and the accompanying squad should therefore have continued moving (by doubletiming) to 5BB8-5BB9 and finally to 5AA10. During the Advance Phase both this group and the two squads and MGs that moved into 5BB10 can advance into 4AA1. From there, fire can be directed into the 4CC6 building and the woods in 4AA4. This could then be followed next turn by Advance Phase movement to 5Z10 for the attack on building 4X1 supported by Pitz's group from the north.

The American defensive fire did little but break the squad in 5Z10 and this required another bazooka hit to do it. I am starting to wonder what the American loads that bazooka with. Grapeshot! Once again the American fails to pivot the ATG in 4Z3 toward the north edge. He wouldn't have had to take a shot, just pivoting the gun would have been enough.

The advance of Pitz into 5V8 is very difficult to justify when considering the risks involved. With the CE status present, the woods offer no additional terrain benefit. The group therefore risks not only a 84% chance of a MC but a 17% chance of a KIA from Allan's group in building 4X1. Advancement to 5V9 out of the LOF would surely have been a more prudent move. From 5V9 the American northern flank is still threatened and yet avoids the fire from 4X1. The loss here of Pitz and/or another squad would certainly be a difficult obstacle for the German to overcome in his present situation.

AMERICAN TURN FIVE:

Pre-Prep Fire Phase Comments

My deadly bazooka strikes again—it makes you wonder sometimes how a 24 factor attack fails and a To Hit die roll followed by a 6 factor attack succeeds. I was surprised to see him trade shots with me from 5Z10. I thought his squad would die. Not this time. I am going to do some shooting once again. I think I have the advantage if I can knock off a squad or two. If so, I have a good chance of winning. The squads in 4BB1 are the key right now.

RALLY PHASE

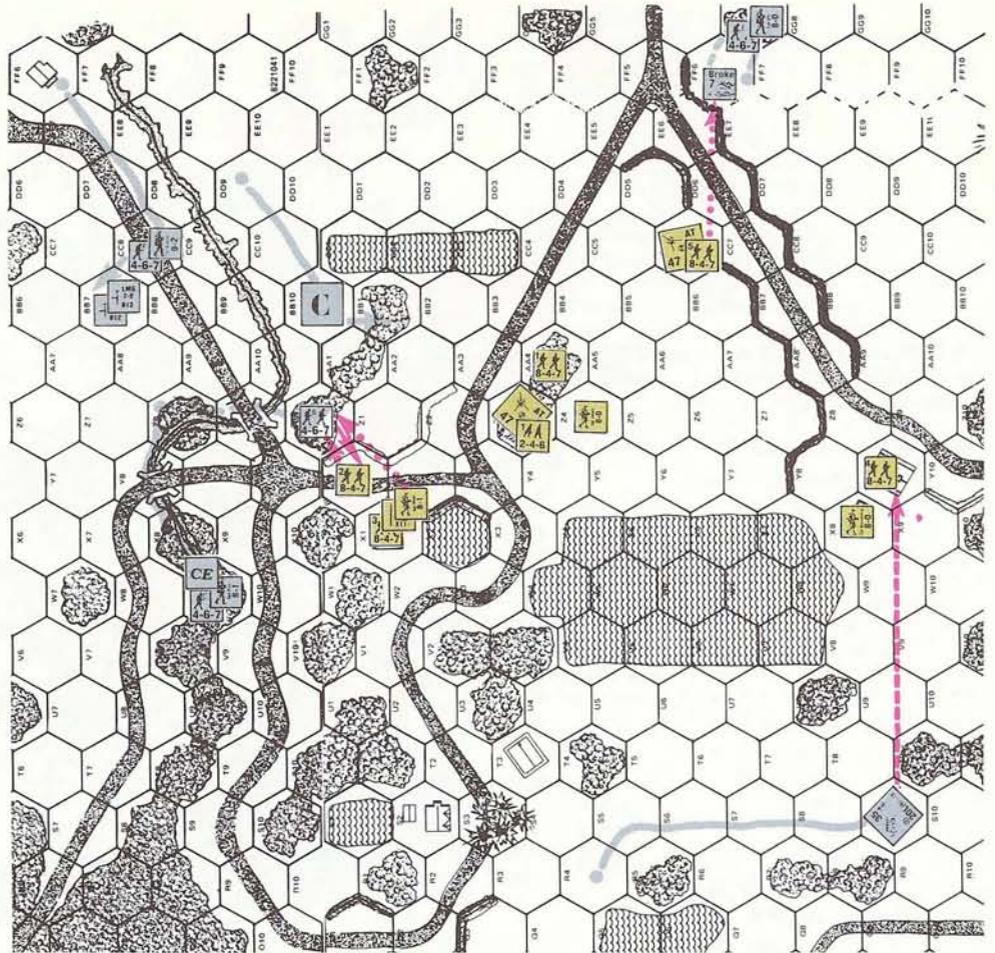
Unit/Weapon	Hex	DRM	DR	Result
D	4GG7	+4	6	No Effect

PREP FIRE PHASE

Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
5	4BB1	4	+1	7	—	
1	4BB1	8	+1	6	1	44
8-1,3	5BB7	4	-1	8	—	

Post-Prep Fire Phase Comments

All my attacks failed. This may be the start of something bad.



German Turn 5: The German rallies squads C & F, but his Point Blank Prep Fire fails to stop the advancing 2nd squad. Consequently, B squad finally breaks in a hail of fire and routs back to Z8, since vacated by Pitz in a CE flanking run along the gully to 5W9. Broken squad D survives a IMC generated by 5th squad and routs back to Uhl. In the Advance Phase Stahler picks up the abandoned LMGs in 5BB7, and his old firebase, group C, moves into the woods at 4BB1.

DEFENSIVE FIRE PHASE

Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
G, H, MMG,						
2 LMGs	4Y2	20	0	7	2	3
2L, 9-2, F	4X1	12	0	5	2	6 8
231/MG	4Y9	2	+2	9	—	
231/Gun	4Y9	6	+2	6	—	
Pitz, C	4X1	4	+1	7	—	

End of Turn Comments

I ran the 2nd squad from 4Y1 through a 20 factor attack and got lucky—I missed seeing the possible incoming fire LOS from 4BB1. My squad in 4X1 went down. This could mean real trouble from Stahler and Pitz. Things could be shifting. I am a little worried, though I still feel the advantage is mine. I chose to rout Allan and his squad rather than stay and risk further fire. I still hold the other two buildings.

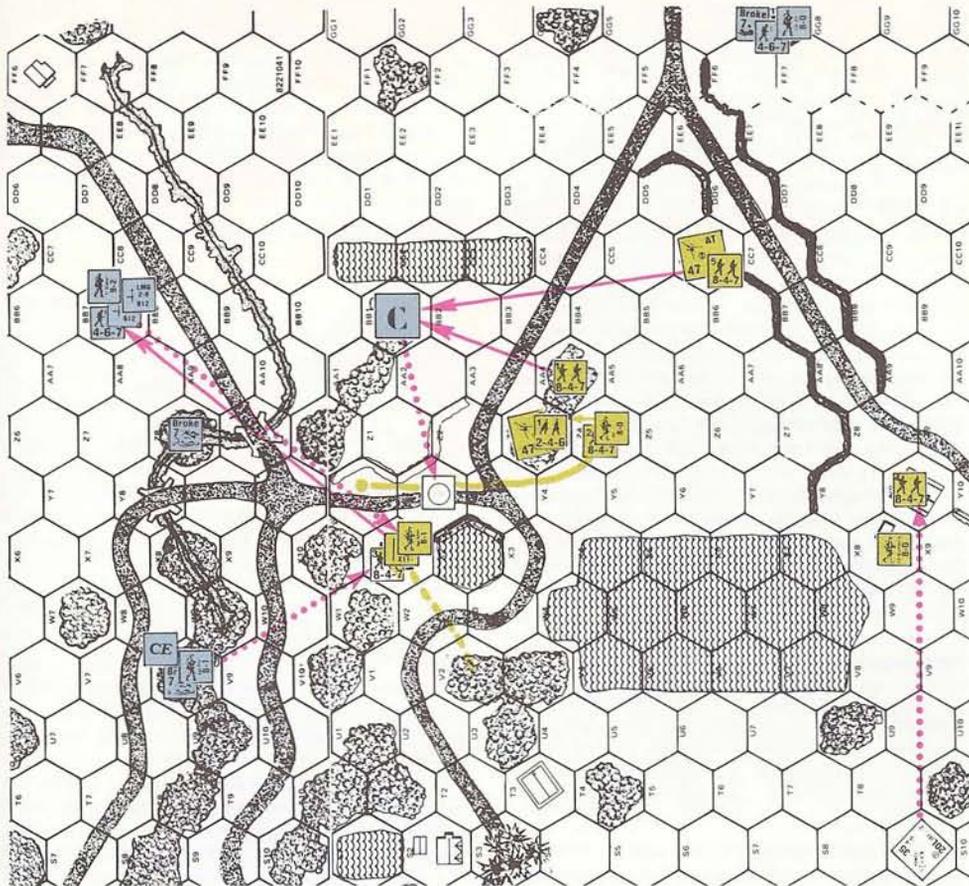
AMERICAN TURN 5 NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

The two prep fires on 4BB1 were nice tries but the German is starting to counter the American's hot dice rolls with some of his own. The decision to Prep Fire the units in building 4X1 is not an error in itself, but he sure made it into one with the movement of squad 2 to the woods position around 4AA4. If the Prep Fire on 5BB7 had been successful in neutralizing Stahler's group, I could possibly see where the American would be less concerned with the defense of building 4X1 and might choose to reposition squad 2. But with the strong possibility of the units in 4X1 breaking from the Defensive Fire of Stahler's fire group, a position AROUND 4X1 out of the LOF of any and all German units would

have made more sense to me. A position such as 5X10 looks good. From there a squad could advance to 4X1 should the squad there break during the Defensive Fire Phase. If the Defensive Fire has no effect the unit could advance to 4W1 or even remain in 5X10, from where the advance of both Stahler and Pitz could be slowed down and still have a rout path back to building 4X1 should the squad subsequently break.

Even realizing the greater potential for a result from the Defensive Fire of Stahler. I still cannot see how the American could pass up the attack on Pitz's group in 5V8 with a -1 DRM. I also wonder about the reasoning behind the new ATG covered arc in 4Z3. Since the crew receives the gun shield DRM from fire originating in 4BB1 with its original covered arc, the only reason I can see for pivoting the gun to 4AA3/4Z2 would be to fire on the infantry targets in 4BB1. With a breakdown number of 9 or less I just cannot believe he will risk losing the gun to breakdown for a 4 shot on the IFT. We will have to wait and see what he has in mind.

With the German Defensive Fire and the breaking of the only squad in building 4X1 I am sure the American wishes he had left the squad in 4Y1 alone. Choosing to rout out of the building, the German will finally have a good chance for his first victory building next turn. The choice to rout out of the building, though understandable with Pitz's group hanging around, may have been a mistake. With no DM status the squad, along with -1 DRM help from Allan, will rally on a 8 or less (72% of the time). With "control" of a victory building at stake I think it worth taking the chance. It is also worth noting that Allan could have carried the bazooka with him as he accompanied squad 3 on its rout to



American Turn 5: Suddenly it is the American who is experiencing difficulties again. Three different Prep Fires fail to phase the Germans despite a IMC on firebase C. Although the 2nd squad survives a dangerous move behind the 4Z3 woods, the squad in 4X1 breaks before the sustained MG fire of Stahler and F squad. Equally important, 3rd squad routs from the building accompanied by Allan, and leaves the bazooka behind! The American also appears to be preparing to chance a shot with his AT Gun against 4BB1 judging by the pivot of the gun.

4V2. Leaving it behind has cost the American a valuable AT weapon and will allow the AC a great deal of freedom in movement.

With the evacuation of 4X1 this turn the American has given his opponent a much needed ray of hope.

INTERMISSION

Intermission? Yes, readers we've run out of space and will have to adjourn until next time before determining the fate of Corporal Uhl, Lieutenant Stahler, and friends. The December issue will feature the exciting conclusion of this replay.

In the meantime we suggest you take this opportunity to get out your game and try your hand at this scenario—both from the start and from the point at which we've dropped the action in our demonstration game. If you start from the beginning see if you can improve on the performance of either player given the advantage of hindsight and the benefit of their experiences and analyses. This should prove an especially worthwhile exercise for those among you who play solitaire. See what you could do against this American setup, but make allowances for your foreknowledge of the mine locations and boresighted hexes. If playing from the start of turn 6, see if you can predict not only the winner of our replay, but more importantly, the tactics used in those final three turns which determined the ultimate winner. You may be surprised at the outcome.

Take notes on your test plays and let us know the tactics you used to avoid the fate that befell one of our participants. It could make for a good discussion in the letters page on SQUAD LEADER tactics.



SERIES 100

CROSS OF IRON SCENARIOS

SERIES 100 is a pad of ten new scenarios for *CROSS OF IRON* printed on the same index stock and in the same style used for both *SQUAD LEADER* and *CROSS OF IRON*. These scenarios were designed by *COI* playtester Courtney Allen and playtested by members of his Interest Group San Francisco playtest group. Afterwards, they were retested by other regional groups of the *COI* playtest team—most notably Jon Mishcon, Joe Suchar, and John Kenower who contributed greatly to their final evolution. For those disdaining the "design your own" approach, here is your chance to experience more *COI* scenarios which have been tested for balance and constitute top quality playing aids. Now is the chance to employ more of those special armor units provided with *COI* which don't see action in any of the official scenarios.

The ten scenarios comprising SERIES 100 are titled as follows: BLOCKING ACTION AT LIPKI (1941), SLAMMING OF THE DOOR (1941), BALD HILL (1941), THE PENETRATION OF ROSTOV (1942), NIGHT BATTLE AT NOROMARYEVKA (1943), BEACHHEAD AT OZEREYKA BAY (1943), DISASTER ON THE DNIPIER LOOP (1943), BLOCK BUSTING IN BOKRUISK (1944), COUNTERATTACK ON THE VISTULA (1944), THE AGONY OF DOOM (1945).

SERIES 100 is available by mail only from Avalon Hill for \$4.00 plus usual postage charges. Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.

SQUAD LEADER T-SHIRTS

Yes, we are following up on the success of the *PANZERBLITZ* T-shirts with yet another offering on what has become our hottest game. Now you too can become a *SQUAD LEADER* whether you play the game or not. The back of the shirt is adorned with the same Avalon Hill logo you've seen before on the *PANZERBLITZ* shirts. Be sure to specify size: small, medium, large, or extra large. \$5.00 plus 50¢ for postage and handling. Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.



MAGNETIC GAMES

Now you can convert your favorite game for vertical display or secure in-play storage with magnetic tape, unmounted boards and just an hour of your time. All you'll need is a metal surface and an unmounted gameboard. We supply the magnetic strips with self sticking adhesive already applied. You just cut the 1/2" x 1' strips into half inch squares and apply them to the unit counters which came with your game. The result is a 1/8" thick counter which will stack six high even when the mapboard is mounted in a vertical position for display purposes. Never worry about that pbm move being jostled again between turns.

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

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

AH PHILOSOPHY . . . Continued from Page 2

SQUAD LEADER

Progress on the *SL* gamettes is pretty much at a standstill due to the press of work on other projects. The next gamette, *G.I.: ANVIL OF VICTORY* has been researched and is now awaiting printing of four new boards before playtest can begin. *G.I.* will abandon the gamette box for a regular bookcase package so that we can fit the four new boards and other components inside. Boards 8 through 11 will not be used in *G.I.*; rather they will be held for separate parts sale for those who want more variety in their possible terrain configurations. An article explaining the rules for the new terrain on those boards should appear shortly. In addition, we will publish a Series 200 set of scenarios for *COD* and yet another set for use with boards 8-11. Those scenarios are currently undergoing by mail playtest. The main focus of *G.I.* will not be on new rules, but rather on the new American equipment and different terrain types. It will also include the "missing" items from the British TO&E; i.e. the PIAT, and the wealth of American made AFVs in British service. Scenarios will range from Africa through Italy, Normandy, and on to the final days of the German Reich. *G.I.* will add a great deal of variety to the *SL* system with very little additional complexity. Don't expect to see it before late 1981.

Further down the road we may be doing an African Theatre gamette and one on the Japanese as well as a Campaign Game version which would provide a system for tying scenarios together and give each player the role of a Battalion commander. It would also update all the existing counters. Finally, when all of this is accomplished we will turn our attention to updating the entire system within the confines of one hard bound book. This would do away with the P.I. approach to learning the rules and would serve as a complete compendium of the final rules to the game system for the player who has fought his way through all the gamettes. In essence it would combine all the rules of the Programmed Instruction manuals into one source so players would not have to combine rules from three or four different rulebooks.

THIRD REICH REVISION

The new rules have been done for several months. We are waiting for printing of the new mapboard before beginning by mail playtest. The new mapboard eliminates all of the ambiguities and corrects the terrain errors of the original design. It is both more pleasing to the eye, more accurate, and less confusing. This, coupled with the completely rewritten rulebook, will turn *THIRD REICH* into a completely new game. Rules changes have not been limited to attempts for greater clarity. Player balance problems have been addressed and a number of more sophisticated rules have been added. Strategic Warfare and the Murmansk Convoys sections have received especially noteworthy improvements. In addition, an entire new political subsection has been added which adds a whole new dimension to the game. It now plays much more cleanly and is far more realistic to boot. Owners of the present version will be able to update their games by purchasing these new components separately.

AFRIKA KORPS REWRITE

I've finally given in to the requests of the old classics players to do something about the rules ambiguities present in this old favorite. Long one of our most popular games for competitive play, *A.K.* has nonetheless suffered from a set of rules held together by questions and answers in *THE GENERAL* and the tradition followed by the old timers. This rewrite will attempt nothing other

than a clarification of all possible ambiguities in the rules. Play of the game will not change in any way. The new rulebook will replace the existing one, plus the battle manual and situation card. It is currently undergoing by mail examination by a number of old time *A.K.* players. Notification of its availability in print will be made in these pages in a later issue.

GLADIATOR

This is the flip side of the *CIRCUS MAXIMUS* game originally published by Battleline. Like its earlier partner in print it will appear in gamette version at a reduced price. Unlike *CM*, however, it needs quite a bit of work! The game is essentially a man-to-man combat simulation with both players writing orders in advance and conducting movement and combat simultaneously somewhat akin to the *WS&M* system. Gladiators come in four different types; light, medium, heavy and retarius (the net and trident type that almost did Kirk Douglas in *SPARTACUS*). Short and exciting, it needs a completely rewritten set of rules and some development to make the mechanics flow smoother. It should be available by Christmas.

. . . Don Greenwood

MOONSTAR

This game will be the next member of the Leisure Time Game Line. Designed by noted designer Alex Randolph (whose credits include *TWIXT* among others), it is an abstract game that combines astrology, number calculations, and memory.

The board represents the twelve constellations (stars) of the Zodiac and the playing pieces represent moons and planets. Players set up the board and pieces, throw a number of dice equal to the number of moons, and then bid on the maximum score that can be made. The highest bidder plays the round and scores points for making or failing to make his bid by distributing the dice on the moons and moving the moons around the board a number of stars equal to the die on them, trying to land them on stars with planets. Players play rounds one after another until one player totals enough points to win.

The game is actually twelve games in one. Game One is the basic game which introduces the rules used throughout the game. Games Two-Twelve are variations of the basic game, introducing challenges, more moons, less time, different planets, betting, and combinations of these. In addition, several games introduce astrological themes with players each having special stars, planets, moons, and goals.

A fast-paced, action game, playable by two or more players in under thirty minutes because the bidding and playing of each round is regulated by a sand timer.

To be published in February 1981.

BUREAUCRACY

Another addition to the Leisure Time Game Line, this game allows players to enter the world of Civil Service. Two rulebooks allow players to learn the game in one of two ways. One of the manuals is just a rulebook and this is the one for game players. The second rulebook is written in the language and style of the bureaucracy. It is thoroughly confusing, humorous, and enjoyable, adding the flavor and feel of big Government where a system within a system leads to no system at all.

For two or more players. Each player may choose one of four lifestyles; lifer, overachiever, empire builder, or hustler. Each lifestyle has its own advantages and disadvantages. For in-

stance, hustlers and empire builders can lie and cheat, but face the possibility of scandals.

The object is to accrue enough prerequisites to be promoted up the Bureaucratic ladder, till one player finally becomes the Director of the Bureaucracy. However, there are many pitfalls along the way including crises, power plays, dealings with the Credit Union, grievances, and demonstrations.

To be published in February 1981.

FLAT TOP

The revision of the Battleline game that is the best carrier game on the market. My work on this game has been a labor of love, *FLAT TOP* having been one of my favorite games since its publication.

The game system will change very little, though the rules have been changed from the conversational style to a more formal AH approach to reduce ambiguities and questions. One scenario has been added as an introductory mechanism to the game system, while the rules are now in a basic rules/optional rules layout. The game is too complex to warrant both a basic and advanced game, so most of the advanced game rules have been incorporated into the basic game.

Observation has been somewhat simplified and many rules have been clarified. The counter mix has been expanded and the map has been redone to make it more attractive and conducive to easy play. For naval or carrier buffs, this will be the ultimate as an excellent game has been brought up to an even higher level, mixing playability and realism to the maximum. The game is in playtesting and should be out sometime in early 1981.

MICROCOMPUTER GAMES

The first two existing AH games to be put on your computers will be *ACQUIRE* and *STOCKS AND BONDS*.

ACQUIRE will be playable in one of three ways. You against the computer. The computer against the computer (good for demonstration games as a way to learn the rules of the game). And by two, three, or four players. The rules are exactly the same as the regular game, except the computer does all the bookkeeping, allowing the players to concentrate on strategy and enjoying themselves.

STOCKS AND BONDS can be played by one-ten people. Again, the computer does all the work, allowing the players to just sit back and enjoy the game. And this one even has sound effects!

Also on the tentative schedule are *MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL* and *RAIL BARON* (which would be playable by one-six people). Keep watching *THE GENERAL* for updates.

Both to be published in early 1981.

. . . Alan R. Moon

GUNSLINGER

The *GUNSLINGER* project is nearing completion. Once it became apparent the game would not be ready for Origins the major card decks were redesigned to convey the same information in a simpler and easier-to-use format. Though not essential, the change has made the game even faster and easier to play.

GUNSLINGER recreates second-by-second gunfights and other brawls from the legends of the old west. The game functions through two types of cards. The first type controls the actions the players do; each player gets an assortment of cards that is determined by his abilities, and plays them to

control his actions in the game. The other type of cards are drawn during play to determine the outcome of shots, punches and other random actions, taking the place of dice and combat charts. The system takes distance, aim time, calibre, skill, morale, types of guns and more into account but can be used quickly and easily. Playtest battles have been fast, furious and a lot of fun.

In-house design playtesting is about over; I am now in the process of assembling artwork and components for the by-mail playtest and the final game.

ALPHA OMEGA

We are just starting on the rewrite of the Avalon Hill rewrite of the *ALPHA OMEGA* rules. The basic system of play will remain the same, but we are considering a variety of gimcracks and geegaws to add "chrome" and flavor to the game; these must be thoroughly playtested before any final changes can be made, however. The final redesign of the mapboard and counters will have to wait until this design playtesting is done, so it will be a while before the new *ALPHA OMEGA* sees the light of day.

TRIREME

TRIREME is awaiting spare time again. The basic issue is how to combine the *BATTLELINE* game with the prototype I had designed before we took over *BATTLELINE*. For those familiar with the *BATTLELINE* version, the most likely changes are a system for handling large numbers of ships and new counters that reflect differences in nationality and boarding tactics (both from my version). Don't hold us to this though—Don Greenwood and I have to thrash this all out when we get some spare time simultaneously.

MAGIC REALM RULEBOOK REWRITE

The combat rules—the heart of the problem—have been rewritten, and I am now simplifying the rest. A variety of the charts to cross-index spells and other rules have been designed, and of course all of the material from the *GENERAL* article in Vol. 16, No. 4 is also ready. Generally the game will be the same except that it will be explained in better fashion; a few changes will be made in accord with some excellent suggestions that have come in from all of you out there. This project will pick up speed immediately when *GUNSLINGER* goes into mail playtest.

... Richard Hamblen

BATTLE OF THE BULGE

I know that many of you are waiting impatiently for the release of the new *BULGE*. Expect to see it sometime between January and February. Although it is in by-mail playtest, several significant changes have been made to simplify the game and rules plus adding a new item, ranged artillery fire, which has proven to be very popular. In fact, in my last two test games, I do not hesitate to say I played two of the most exciting one-on-one games of my life. Those who know me will tell you I am basically a low keyed person and when I become enthusiastic enough about something to sound like an ad agency you can believe it is sincere.

In a brief recap, the new *BULGE* has been built on the solid foundation of the classic *BULGE* we all knew. All of the old order of battle inaccuracies have been corrected and the map shifted slightly to include more of the critical northern area of the battle. Several new modules have been added which open a lot more vistas of strategy while adding very little dirt to the sequence of play. Something all designers and developers strive for, I might add. Both sides now have airpower and ranged artillery fire. In addition, the Germans get to send commando teams behind the American lines, capture fuel

dumps, and mobilize their Fifteenth army in the north to tie down Allied reinforcements. Other special features include, German Nebelwerfer rocket units, blowing up and building bridges, Skorzeny's special armored brigade, Van der Heydte's parachute drop (which by the way, was Germany's last airborne drop of the war) and a lot more. I think you will be pleased with this game when you see it. We also plan to include a lot of design history and philosophy either with the game or in *THE GENERAL*. It will be well covered from all sides.

AMOEBAS WARS

This is our current, but tentative title for a new space science fiction game. We have been very fortunate to find several excellent outside designers in the past couple of years who have provided us with strong designs with little need for inhouse development. I have been lucky to work with two, Bruno Sinigaglio, the designer of new *BULGE*, and Gary Donner, the designer of *WIZARD'S QUEST*.

AMOEBAS WARS is another Donner creation built along the same clean-cut lines as *WIZARD'S QUEST*. It has proven very popular in the Saturday playtest sessions and requires strategy and decision. Players begin on the periphery of a galaxy once dominated by a powerful empire now in ruin. It is the object of each player to take control of the galaxy by capturing the Pentar; the Empire's base of power. While competing with themselves, players must also contend with huge space amoebas capable of swallowing entire space fleets. They also can multiply rapidly into unguarded solar systems.

The real beauty of the game lies in the play of the power cards. Somewhat reminiscent of trick-taking in conventional card games, the player with the highest card gets to move first and use all the power cards played but, after his turn is through, the player throwing the second highest card takes his turn and gets to use all of the cards lower than his. The lowest card played will be used by all players in the turn. A player must weigh the desire to go first or last with the realization that the card he plays can be used against him by all of the other players who play higher. This, along with some highly interesting game mechanics for inter-ship combat which are improvements of the old *RISK-WIZARDS QUEST* system, make for some very tense and exciting games.

... Mick Uhl

THE GUNS OF AUGUST

This game, designed by veteran player Robert Beyma, is the first World War I game we have decided to publish since the infamous *1914* hit the shelves a dozen years ago. Since the latter game has slipped almost to the bottom of our RBG Rating Chart, there is a general impression abroad that World War I is inherently dull; a static situation which cannot be made into an exciting game. If you purchased *1914* and have been stuck with that impression all these years, you're in for a very pleasant surprise!

The game we call *THE GUNS OF AUGUST* resembles *1914* about as much as *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* resembles *STALINGRAD*. First of all, don't be misled by its title—*THE GUNS OF AUGUST* simulates the entire First World War from August 1914 to the armistice four years later. As a matter of fact, the Campaign Game is designed to last through 1919 if neither side fulfills the "sudden death" victory conditions which can end the game at any time.

The problem of playability is handled in two ways. First the game scale. *THE GUNS OF AUGUST* is a corps level game which is played in monthly turns. So the battle of Verdun, for instance, lasts only ten turns. The second way we are ensuring playability is by including individual

yearly scenarios for both the eastern and western fronts. This produces a series of interesting games each of which can be played in 3-6 hours. The real interest and excitement, however, is the situation each player faces in the Campaign Game where the war is won or lost on the mobile eastern front. Imagine playing the German side in *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* with an enormous Allied army relentlessly attacking the Westwall in 1944 and you'll have some idea of why we think you'll change your mind about World War I once you've played *THE GUNS OF AUGUST*. You may even start to like those almost invulnerable trenches which always made you think The Great War was a bore.

THE GUNS OF AUGUST will be published in early 1981. If you're interested in playtesting this game during November please write to me immediately.

We will soon be publishing a 2nd edition rulebook for *WAR AND PEACE*. The new edition will incorporate the errata and optional rules published in Volume 17, No. 1 of *THE GENERAL* as well as a few additional changes pertaining to the Campaign Game. When the new rulebook becomes available, we will publish an announcement in these pages explaining how to obtain a copy.

... Frank Davis

STRUGGLE OF NATIONS

This game concerns Napoleon's last campaign in Germany, 1813. The major remaining design problem concerns the treatment of provisions, particularly for the French. The design intent calls for a dynamic interplay between considerations of supply and maneuver, but the current supply system may be too labored for many players. At the other extreme is a possible version which treats supply as a constant, but this is also unsatisfactory.

I have made several trips to New York and Washington to study Napoleon's correspondences for a possible solution, as next to nothing has been written on this subject. It's clear that the army did not have enough Administrative capacity, nor Napoleon enough brain capacity, to keep more than a fraction of the army moving and nourished. Arrangements made during the armistice of June 7 to August 15 kept starvation at bay until about September 20, which is remarkable enough considering that the stores of wheat, rice, etc., were calculated to last only until that date. One "sleight of hand" solution that occurs to me at the moment is to restrict the French to about one or two APs per turn, but allow them to expend "negative APs" which would come, so to speak, out of the army's hide.

BACK BURNER

DAUNTLESS and *STURMOVIK* (ex-'Expansion Kit') in the Air Force system will be given the 'gamette' treatment, without playing board or basic rules, but including new Aircraft Data Cards, counters and special rules along the lines explained in this issue's Design Analysis. The problem here is in mechanical production—I'm trying to find a less labor-intensive way of preparing the data cards.

SUEZ '73 is a Prados design with some nice rules showing Israeli tactical doctrine in an operational-level game. This one could be brought out without major changes and may get put ahead of *Struggle of Nations*.

Except for a couple of test playings, I have done nothing with *SHENANDOAH*, and have not evaluated what sort of re-development will be necessary.

... Kevin Zucker

AND FROM THE DEEP RECESSES OF OUR SPORTS DEPT.

Projects in which I am currently involved include the following: A "facelift" for *MACHIAVELLI*, which will mainly concern itself with bringing the rather simple and abstract map more in line with the flavor of the game, along with certain clarifications and corrections to the rules; a new *STATIS-PRO FOOTBALL* game, featuring the playing abilities of individual backs, linemen, and specialists for every team in the NFL (courtesy of Jim Barnes, our one man sports game factory); a tennis game, all-new boxer cards for *TITLE BOUT*, and a new set of player cards for our very popular *MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL* game featuring the 1961 American League. And of course there is *ALL-STAR REPLAY*, our sports game magazine which is perpetually "just going to press."

. . . B.C. Milligan

That should be more than enough to whet your appetite for what's ahead in the near future. Now allow me to end this column with a pair of commercials. Some of you have asked how to read your mailing label so you'll know when your subscription is expiring. Usually, if all goes according to plan, you'll receive a resubscription form letter enclosed with the last issue of your current subscription. However, if that fails, you should still be able to tell from the mailing label on your envelope. The numbers 9/80 appearing on your address label refer to the last issue of your subscription and in this case refer to the 9th month (September) of the year 1980.

Lastly, I leave those east coast gamers who are mourning the passage of *ORIGINS* to the west coast next year, with the reminder that *ATLANTICON* will be attempting to provide a viable alternative to east coast gamers unable to make it out to California. The latter has been heavily endorsed by Avalon Hill and a host of other game companies and will be held next July 24, 25, and 26th at UMBC in Baltimore. The *ATLANTICON* group is actively soliciting volunteers to sponsor or run events of all types and can be reached at P.O. Box 15405, Baltimore, MD 21220.

Lastly, those of you who use our Opponents Wanted Advertising service will notice that we have doubled the token fee from 25¢ to 50¢ starting with this issue. This is one price hike which has not been brought about by inflation. Rather, it is a form of rationing. Even the doubled fee does not come close to paying our costs for this service. The price hike is our way of trying to discourage those who really don't care that much about the ads from using them just to see their name in print. Lately, we've had more ads than our limited space can handle. Hopefully, by increasing the token fee we can discourage enough of the insincere advertisers to make room for those with a genuine need.



AIR POWER IN VITP . . . Continued from Pg. 32

What good are Kamikazes or the *Shinano* when you're bound to lose 10+ POC in the process? Use the 9-turn game for novice, feeble-minded or hard-luck Allied players only. Out of deep sympathy for any Allied player who must beg for a 9th turn to beat his opponent I have added the super-carrier *USS Midway*. Armed with radar-directed guns, armored decks, and 135 of the latest attack aircraft, the *Midway* would have been formidable indeed, if it had joined the fleet in time to participate. (Note: The three CV's of the *Midway* class were made from the other *Alaska*-class battle-cruiser hulls)

Gunnery Radar—It shouldn't matter much by turn 7 so take it or leave it.

Task Forces—I doubt whether further complications and die rolls of this sort add much 'realism' to a strategic game. At any rate, delete the mandatory 'night action' and roll for it for reasons discussed earlier.

Island Combat—It's good for those times when a healthy amphibious unit fortifying a base would otherwise succumb automatically to a wheezing, crippled enemy invader. Adding the increased power of the 'new, improved' US Marines after turn 5 gives the Allies a much needed boost to their island-hopping campaign. In almost every game I've played, it's no easy matter for the Allies to secure advanced bases and to accrue POC. The Allies are walking a tightrope the whole 8 turns.

Anti-Aircraft—We won't go through that again! Though the airstrike-rebuilding rule would be fine in a 20-turn game covering the same time period, I don't feel that it has merit in *VITP* where each turn spent landing on new aircraft and crews would take five months or so. Neither side could have afforded the down time on their precious carriers. Repairing ship damage *does* take incredibly long but replacing aircrews does not. Though carrier warfare is exhausting on planes and personnel in a real battle, the attrition of planes and crew is already cleverly included in the game by the very nature of the standard 'disabled' result.

Conclusion—I feel that all of the above changes in the pieces and procedures have sound historical logic behind them and add to the excitement of the game. 'Advanced' versions of simulation games need not add more tedium (chess, remember, has no 'advanced' rules). Rather they should increase the historical options so the C. in C. (you, the player) can make greater use of sound strategic thinking. Simple play mechanics don't necessarily make a simple-minded game (chess, again). I feel my additions fit comfortably within the framework of the game's simple play mechanics yet allow more flexible responses to create stimulating historical simulations.



RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN . . . Continued from Pg. 28

8. Russian Airdrops: section 18 of the rules discusses such drops, which occur only on snow turns. As in paragraph six above, a snow turn for paradrop purposes is in effect if at least two of the three zones are snow. Only one zone with snow is insufficient.

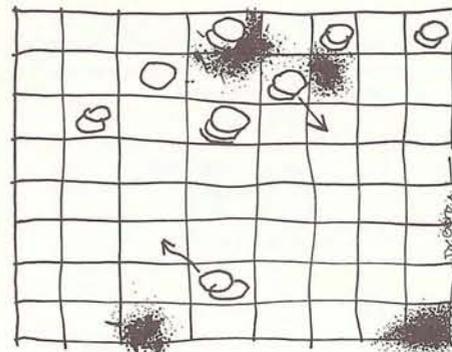
9. Axis Replacements: section 21.2 of the rules states that "Axis replacements are available once per year on the first clear weather impulse of each year. (German HQ units are replaced during the *second* impulse of the first clear weather turn.)" As explained in sections six and eight, a turn is considered clear for this purpose if at least two of the three zones are clear. Less than that is insufficient. Note that if monthly weather is used, it is possible for the first month of a turn to be considered clear (Axis replacements enter if it is the start of a year), but the second month to not be clear (HQ would not enter).

10. Victory Conditions: section 24.3 of the rules explains sudden death victory conditions, which also cite "first clear weather turn of each year". This would be decided on the same basis as that applying in sections six, eight, and nine above.



THE ASYLUM . . . Continued from Pg. 12

the initiative, by blocking his advance while advancing myself. Next turn, I will be able to move any one of three men onto his side of the board.



Black Turn Four: I can't lose to this turkey. What will the guys say? What will my readers say? What will my mother say? But his play has been flawless to this point. Maybe he's playing over his head.

Neutral Commentary Turn Four: Tom is using a variation of the Rip Van Winkle Opening introduced at the recent Seniors Meet. Seems Don is not familiar with it and overconfidence may turn out to be his real foe in this match. In a semi-final match against this opening, Arthur Van Winkle (great, great grandson of Rip) countered with a new variation of the Sleeping Beauty Defense and pulled out a narrow victory. The general line of play is to expect exchanges in central rows in the early game, while advancing rearward men to the front for the middle game. This can be blended with one of the many Pill sacrifices or be converted into the more aggressive German Gambit. This will prevent a Dwarfian Draw no matter what strategy the opponent uses. My pre-game prediction that Tom would use the Social Security Trap in the early game and then move into the Pension Plan Ploy has not panned out.

Neutral Commentary Turns Five-Forty: In the middle of the game, it became impossible to keep up with the players. They played with such blinding speed, that I would be writing my commentary for one move (and the wino would be illustrating it at the same time), while the players were already several moves further on in the game. So, I missed much of the middle game. Don's contention that I was sipping from the wino's bottle is completely untrue. Tom seemed a little giddy though.

Red Turn Forty-One: I will begin to align my forces for the final victory, forming a solid wall of kings before advancing on his man. Why take chances now?

Black Turn Forty-One: So, he's gonna rub it in now by playing cautiously. He makes me sick. Well, I won't concede.

Neutral Commentary Turn Forty-One: Don's situation is desperate. And while his determination is admirable, his attitude leaves something to be desired. Tom has introduced a new variation of the Buck Rogers Endgame that may well come to be known as the Shaw Shift. Remember that you heard it here first.

Red Turn Forty-Two: With six kings and one man to be kinged shortly, I am probably being too cautious, but I am enjoying the taste of victory and don't mind drawing it out.

Black Turn Forty-Two: He'll be sorry.

Neutral Commentary Turn Forty-Two: This game has been played at an exceptional level of play. There couldn't be a better game for a replay.

Aftermath & Neutral Commentary Summation: On the next turn, Tom advanced his last man to the final row and asked Don to crown him. Don did. There will be no rematch.



Letters to the Editor . . .

Dear Editor:

The subject of my letter does not concern rules questions, tactical suggestions, or the merits or demerits of sundry *GENERAL* articles. Quite simply, this correspondence addresses a problem that has been inherent in the wargaming world since its inception and continues today as unabated as Soviet logistical nightmares. This problem, as one might well guess, is that of counter storage. I am particularly concerned with this problem, and not passively so. I personally own some 98 wargames, with five more on the way, from a wide variety of publishers and covering an even wider variety of subjects. Allowing for a large number of blanks and the 112 wooden blocks used in *DIPLOMACY*, I have approximately 28,665 counters to take care of, and that is quite a lot when you stop to consider it. I am sure that all game companies realize this problem, as it can often be so painfully evident. But whether it is in evidence or not, some of my recent purchases seem to suggest that you fine people are not only doing nothing to alleviate this problem, but are, in several cases, aggravating it.

Now, I am not complaining about the absence of inherent storage mediums such as plastic trays and the like, as my standard storage mode is the coin envelope, and these can be obtained most anywhere. But even if you have these, you still need a generous amount of space in which to position the envelopes after the counters are inserted therein. This is absolutely no problem in most AH games, as a fairly large area is left over in the box for such envelopes as are necessary. Some of your games, however, do not seem to realize the necessity of this. The most blatant offenders are the *SL* gamettes, *COI/COD*. Each gamette seems to have an escalating number of counters, requiring (for optimum storage) some 25-30 envelopes each. The very size of the boxes, already filled as they are with extra boards, the scenario cards, and the voluminous rules, cannot begin to accommodate their counters. Not even a *SQUAD LEADER*-sized box (which narrowly holds its own counters) could take on all the counters of even one of these games. Personally, I was finally forced to amalgamate the entire series' counters (all 3034 of them) in a separate metal filing box, meaning that some day I may well trot off somewhere with the game boxes and completely forget to bring along the counters. Such a thought is enough to demoralize anyone.

Another one of your games that fails in the storage convenience area is the epic *WAR & PEACE*. *W&P* is a game that by the very nature of its system cries out for a storage tray. This is due to its changeable unit system which requires quick access to a large off-board counter pool in order to obtain the proper denomination of a particular unit. The problem is not the fact that the game itself does not come with a tray, as they are clearly available separately from AH, but the fact that the game's vast number of counters (1000+) requires at the very least two trays, but the space left over in the box after the four map sections, charts, and rulesbook are taken into account will just barely accommodate one tray, much less two. Consequently I, myself have stuck to envelopes, and therefore if I want to get involved in a scenario such as "Napoleon at Bay", I'm forced to dump out the contents of all seventeen envelopes all over the table, which is a bloody great inconvenience.

I know there are a lot of gamers out there who never even considered this problem, and who really just don't give a damn. It is not considered likely by this gamer that anything will ever be done to correct this, and I do not expect you to do anything about it anymore than I expect you to print this ill-written letter.

Tim Williams
Clarksville, ARK

To the contrary, I thought you stated your case eminently well. The matter has been brought up previously in these pages but perhaps it is time to discuss it again. Although you don't take us to task for it, we should probably begin with the rationale for not having unit counter storage trays contained in each game. The answer is simple economics. After producing the immensely more expensive mounted mapboards in our games we simply can't afford to put in a counter tray and still remain price competitive with other companies who only give you a paper map. By offering the trays separately as a mail order item we can attempt to please both the individual who wants the convenience of a counter tray regardless of cost, as well as those who would rather resort to their own unit storage solutions and save some money in the process. The present handling of the situation is what we perceive as the best way to please the greatest number of people.

The immense amount of counters in the SL gamette boxes is a different type of problem, albeit a pleasant one as problems go, somewhat akin to having too many coins to fit in your change purse. The rationale for the smaller boxes in the gamette series was simply to reinforce consumer identification of the product as a gamette—i.e. not a complete game. He had to have SQUAD LEADER and any other preceding gamettes in order to use that title. The idea was to stress consumer awareness of the difference and help him avoid mistaken purchases at the retail level, and in this the packaging has been quite successful. And, as you yourself pointed out, even a normal sized box would not hold sufficient counter trays to accommodate all the counters in these games. One would need an extra bookcase box to hold the necessary counter trays for each gamette anyway. However, with the use of the gamette style box for other products like the Microcomputer and smaller games (CIRCUS MAXIMUS) the initial rationale for the gamette boxes is becoming less and less valid and I will probably abandon the packaging for the upcoming G.I. gamette so as to be able to include four new boards with that title.

As for normal bookcase boxes not being large enough to accommodate the necessary counter trays for games with large numbers of counters, I again have no response that you'll want to hear—it is just an inherent evil of games with too many components. To retrofit for larger boxes just to hold sufficient number of counter storage trays that we can't afford to provide in the game anyway at a competitive price is pure folly even before we consider the additional shipping problems that would accrue from such a move. And if you think WAR & PEACE presents a unit storage problem, I can't wait till you see THE LONGEST DIELJAY.

★★★★★

Dear Mr. Greenwood,

This multi-purpose letter is my first to Avalon Hill, or any other game company for that matter. Just have a few opinions to express and a "Letter to the Editor" format seems to be the right vehicle.

First, I would like to acknowledge the services of your parts lady, Chris Shaw. I am sure Chris is overworked and underpaid (isn't everybody), but her dedication shows. Whenever I call her, Chris is knowledgeable, informative, precise, and courteous. Mail service is prompt. As one of those behind-the-scenes people, Chris probably gets little public recognition for her services. My hat is off to her for a job well done!

Next in order is a commendation of Avalon Hill for its continued excellence in physical components and graphics quality in its games. There is just something innately satisfying about a mounted mapboard—it's akin to playing chess with weighted pieces—the "feel" is better. Avalon Hill is also to be praised for its continued resistance to the current trend of other game companies, i.e., a few well conceived and well designed games per year as opposed to glutting the market with "dust-collectors."

Avalon Hill's only problem seems to be the late schedule of *THE GENERAL*. *THE GENERAL* is a quality magazine which I thoroughly enjoy reading cover to cover, even though feature articles sometimes cover games I do not play or even own. The fact that *THE GENERAL* pages feature or discuss only Avalon Hill games is no drawback. Avalon Hill is the top of the mountain. Does Universal Studios tout or even acknowledge motion pictures from Paramount? Of course not, they are in business to make money—pure and simple.

Now for a few comments on the current state of the gaming industry and a few of its raging controversies. As a subscriber to almost all the major gaming magazines, I read article after article arguing the realism versus playability issue. Bunk! It is my opinion, and I feel the opinion of most gamers, that play balance and playability are of prime importance. Any game should give all participants an approximately equal chance of winning. There is nothing worse than playing a two game set wherein first one player and then the other demolishes his opponent due to poor play balance. If chess were that unbalanced, it would have died of lack of interest a thousand years ago. Given equal luck in die rolls and equal playability, a game worth its salt should not be decided until the last turn or two. Now that's player interest and excitement.

Playability is in the same relationship to play balance that cleanliness is to godliness. Games are meant to be played. Rules should be clear, concise and unambiguous (were it so!). Extraneous paperwork and bookkeeping should be held to a minimum. The game itself is of the essence, not the associated condiments.

For the realism buffs, I offer the following. In no way can a game simulate warfare in a realistic manner. A realistic wargame would have the usual components with the following additions: (1) a pint bottle of gunsmoke, (2) a pint bottle of dirt mixed with sweat and blood, (3) a pint bottle of the stench of death, (4) tape cassettes with gunfire, clanking tanks, the screams of dying men and horses, incoming fire, airplane engines, and buzzing insects, and (5) an all expense paid trip to the battlefield of your choice—approximate cost: two thousand dollars—useable one time only. A wargame simulates the concepts of movement, combat, supply, command and control, etc. with paper and cardboard. The gut wrenching fear, the pain of seared flesh, the sheer panic cannot possibly be simulated realistically. The effects of war on man and machine can be portrayed through game mechanics in an abstract way, but this is not realism. If an "unrealistic" change in the order of battle or some game mechanism is necessary to achieve play balance and playability—do it!

The trend toward numbering each hex of a mapboard is certainly welcomed by all gamers. The benefit is especially acknowledged by PBM enthusiasts. I don't have any statistics on the number of games played FTF versus PBM, but I do know many gamers who are 99% PBM. AHKS is evidence of the growing popularity of PBM gaming.

"Monster" games are suitably named. The "if it's bigger, it must be better" syndrome is getting out of hand. As before, games are meant to be played. *THIRD REICH* is about as big as a player should have to contend with. Games like *THE LONGEST DAY* are not playable, time or space-wise for the majority of gamers. Monster games have their place for gamers who can devote a major portion of their life to a study of the situation depicted in the game. Most of us cannot devote ourselves thusly.

Robert Cross
Derby, Kansas

★★★★★

Dear Don:

After years of mounting variant maps such as "Coral Sea" with a variety of watered down glues and rubber cement and getting badly wrinkled results, I found a product specifically made for mounting paper and light cardboard. It's a spray adhesive that you apply to the map back, wait a few minutes to dry and then press onto the board (a brayer or rubber roller is recommended for a good grip). There are several brands (3M, Letraset) and it pays to comparison shop at the local art supply and stationery shops.

I also took up "magnetic gaming" this past summer and have found a product that greatly helps holding down mapboards. It's a 3M product called Post-It. It has a masking tape type adhesive on one side and a paper adhesive on the other. You tack it onto the steel surface you're using and stick whatever mapsheet you're going to use on it. When you tire of it, you just peel the old one off and put the next one up. The only damage it does is to put a slight curl in the map when you peel it off but this disappears the next time you use it. It is also great for holding the various CRT sheets, time records, etc. that the game requires. Post-It comes in rolls, strips and tiles (I personally use the tiles so that the mapboard is firmly held with no bulges) and is also great for displaying the Playmate of the Month.

Dale Du Gray
Calgary, Alta.

★★★★★

Dear Mr. Greenwood,

I sub to the General for conflict oriented articles & info. SF and Fantasy fits in; *RAIL BARON* does not! It seems you're determined to have we subscribers help pay for that unrelated TRASH. So, I will not be resubscribing. I wish you would take your favorite game—*BOX CARS*—and shove it.

Buck Rogers
San Rafael, CA

I'm afraid that if the inclusion of a single page article on RAIL BARON in the same issue which handed you twelve additional pages you weren't expecting was enough to evoke such a reaction that we wouldn't have had you long anyway. A certain amount of tolerance is expected from anyone and I wish you luck finding another gaming magazine which is able to fill every single page with something you like. By the way, I like your TV show.

Dear Sir:

One of my long term "difficulties" with Squad Leader (and many other games with a glut of counters) has always been the lack of any real structure or organizational restraints. As an example, the Russians always kept their platoons and companies fairly massed out of necessity, since radios just weren't there and messengers had to be used to shift units around (plus, the Russians derived most of their "discipline" from the "herd instinct" and political commissars). The Germans, on the other hand, had radios at platoon level plus fairly reliable squads so they could spread out more.

It is really amazing, in view of the historical differences in Soviet and German infantry formations, to see Russian conscript squads wandering all over the board in carefree abandon (until a LMG fires a few rounds at them) with the same freedom as the best SS squad. Note that in Design-Your-Own (DYO) scenarios, no company level structure is presented for typical use, so gamers end up believing that Russian units with their horde of squads (Hill 607 is a prime example) had no real organization and everybody pretty much "did their own thing".

While you did an excellent job in presenting the Supplementary Rule dealing with AFVs without wireless and caught the heart of the issue in a very playable yet thorough manner, perhaps a similar infantry rule might be possible.

In my own gaming, I usually play DYO scenarios using companies and platoons, and very small games (usually just one or two boards), which are very quick to play (about an hour) and easy on the mind.

We use a standard Soviet company of 12 Squads (broken down into 3 platoons) with one leader and 2-4 light machine guns and anti-tank rifles. The company support fire comes from one heavy machine gun (two in a Guard company) and two 50mm mortars, with three crews to man the "heavy" weapons. During 1941 and early 1942 scenarios, the leader must be at the front of any attack.

Since our games are mostly fairly small in scope, we make the following restrictions on Russian movement and positioning:

1. The squads making up a platoon must stay adjacent (at least until they "break"), which models the Soviet tendency to use platoons as their smallest independent unit.
2. Platoons must stay within 2 hexes of a squad from another platoon, and maintain a clear LOS to neighboring units.
3. Failure to maintain the distance and LOS criteria decreases all movement rates by "1".
4. Companies must be within 4 hexes of another company's units.

The Germans, on the other hand, suffer no such limitations, and one finds that the tactical results are in line with our conception of the Russians (large, unwieldy groups that must be kept together to remain effective) and the Germans (very mobile and self sufficient units). Since our concern is mostly with 1941-42 era fire fights, the general conception of German infantry superiority has some validity.

Since a large concentration of Russian infantry usually forces one to bunch up anyway, the preoccupation with such hairsplitting detail may seem trivial, but in DYO gaming we've found it to be of immense value. First of all, when one is using 12-24 Russian squads (2-3 companies), there is plenty of room for "unrealistic" maneuver.

But, more importantly, the use of a structural guideline brings more order into the tactical situation (seeing 48 squads rambling about always "blows my mind"), and makes the games considerably more interesting and historically "meaningful".

Since the Soviet infantry and armor suffered from very similar communications and unit size problems (units had to be kept large due to a shortage of radios and leadership initiative), their battlefield mobility in a game should be restricted in a similar fashion. After all, the Russians often had magnitude, firepower and quality (the T34) in their favor, but were basically peasants at heart.

Lorin Bird
Mechanicville, NY

WIZARD'S QUEST

Q. Page 3 of the rules states; "only a force including a sorcerer may attack the wizard." Page 4 states; "a hero leading an attack can attack all types of forces plus the dragon and wizard." Which is correct?

A. The page 3 statement. A hero cannot attack the wizard.

**WAR AND PEACE
CAMPAIGN GAME QUESTIONS**

Q. On the mapboard Prague is depicted in red, but according to the Campaign Game Card its production is restricted to landwehr. Which is correct?

A. The Campaign Game Card is correct.

CRESCENDO OF DOOM

90.12 Is the breakdown number of a captured weapon used by a non-elite squad (or non-crew) decreased by 2 twice; once for being captured and once for not being a qualified crew or assault troop?

A. No—it is decreased only once.

Q. Would a tank which ends its Movement Phase in a different hex with its turret covered arc changed have to use both case A and C?

A. No—only case C. A tank can freely change its turret covered arc as it moves without further penalizing its Advance Fire. However, if the tank actually fired outside its Turret Covered Arc during the Advancing Fire Phase, then both Case A + C would apply.

90.5 May a crew which abandons its AFV reenter it during the Advance Phase of the same player turn?

THE QUESTION BOX

A. No

92.74 If a mounted cavalry unit goes berserk, must it charge the nearest enemy unit if that enemy unit is not occupying a hex which a charge can be made (92.81)?

A. No, in this case it must charge the nearest enemy unit which is occupying a hex which can be charged. If no such target is available the berserk unit must remain in its present hex until there is (110.2) or it breaks out of its berserk status (11.5).

96. Can snipers fire on a soft vehicle and with what effect?

A. Yes, however, vehicles are never affected by the -2 DRM for movement in the open. Furthermore, if the vehicle is moving (or in motion—135.3) To Hit modifiers J, O and P could apply. A KIA result would eliminate the truck and a failed MC result would cause immobilization or elimination as per normal infantry fire rules (51.4). However, passengers would be affected only if the vehicle was moving (or in motion) and even if the truck was eliminated would have a survival roll.

96.3 Could a sniper in close combat use its sniper DRM if it is night and it is still concealed?

A. Yes, but only as long as it remains concealed.

99.7 Can more than one paratroop squad be armed by a single arms cannister?

A. No—as each squad is armed it destroys the arms cannister it used.

104.7 Can a squad with a range of only "5" fire a MG 11 or more hexes?

A. Yes.

107.421 If a player fails his battery access dice roll after already having placed a FFE counter, what takes its place?

A. A red spotting round.

107.61 + 107.7 Are units subjected to harassing smoke subject to morale loss as if it were a normal HE FFE?

A. No

108.292 Does Deep Snow cost pulkkas double movement? Are pulkkas ski-equipped (do they gain MP going downhill)? Does a leader increase a pulkkas's MP?

A. No, No, No.

109.1 What is the DRM for a HE critical hit against an infantry unit in a wooden building behind a stone wall?

A. -2. The wall has no additional effect.

109.6 Are partisans who normally get +2 terrain effects DRM in woods still subject to the -1 air burst DRM?

A. No—in their case the DRM for an air burst in woods is 0.

112.5 In this example, could the STG III elect to use reverse bypass movement to back up one hex-side, change its covered arc focal point to I7-I8-J7, and remain in the same hex?

A. Yes, at a cost of 8 MP. It could also back into J7 at a total cost of 12 MPs.

112.6 Does a wreck in bypass mode ever affect LOS?

A. Yes—it is treated as a stone wall along the hex-side of the wreck's covered arc for LOS purposes.

114.3 + 73.1 Does a unit in ski mode get one extra MF for staying on a road throughout its turn?

A. No.

116.2 Can a side create scouts ad infinitum as long as they don't have more than 1/4 the number of squads on board at any one time?

A. No. Scout creation is limited to a maximum of four per side per scenario regardless of how many are in play at any one time.

Q. Does the 11+ BX number of the A9, A10, and A13 CS tanks affect the smoke depletion number? **A.** No—a dice roll of "11" would break the gun which could later be repaired. The smoke depletion situation remains unchanged.

116.51 May a scout destroy support weapons or ordnance in its hex?

A. Yes, unless specifically stated otherwise, scouts have the same capabilities as other infantry units.

116.6 May scouts take prisoners or force adjacent broken units (or broken units in the same hex) to rout?

A. Yes

116.6 & 13.41 Can a broken unit rout toward an enemy scout in its LOS?

A. No, but it could cross open ground in LOS of enemy scouts because they have no firepower.

AVALON HILL RBG RATING CHART

The games are ranked by their cumulative scores which is an average of the 9 categories for each game. While it may be fairly argued that each category should not weigh equally against the others, we use it only as a generalization of overall rank. By breaking down a game's ratings into individual categories the gamer is able to discern for himself where the game is strong or weak in the qualities he values the most. Readers are reminded that the Game Length category is measured in multiples of ten minutes and that a rating of 18 would equal 3 hours.

	Cumulative	Physical Quality	Mapboard	Components	Ease of Understanding	Completeness of Rules	Play Balance	Realism	Excitement Level	Overall Value	Game Length
1. CRESCENDO OF DOOM	2.04	1.93	1.64	2.33	3.20	2.31	2.18	1.36	1.56	1.82	19.5
2. CROSS OF IRON	2.17	2.09	2.04	1.88	3.37	2.52	2.44	1.60	1.69	1.94	20.5
3. RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN	2.24	1.98	1.85	2.02	2.24	3.07	2.78	2.41	1.78	2.07	28.5
4. SQUAD LEADER	2.25	1.97	1.85	1.82	3.58	2.94	2.36	2.02	1.82	1.92	13.6
5. W.S. & I.M.	2.34	2.40	3.07	2.38	2.88	2.39	2.07	1.85	1.88	2.10	9.2
6. ANZIO	2.36	2.11	1.74	1.94	3.74	2.88	2.62	2.00	2.09	2.15	21.7
7. BISMARCK	2.37	2.16	3.00	1.69	2.97	2.63	2.72	1.84	2.09	2.31	18.8
8. WAR AND PEACE	2.43	2.37	2.32	2.54	2.34	2.56	2.61	2.54	2.29	2.32	17.0
9. PANZER LEADER	2.50	2.41	2.17	2.34	3.65	2.60	2.67	2.19	2.34	2.20	13.1
10. RICHTHOFEN'S	2.52	2.28	2.62	2.12	2.63	2.94	2.60	2.66	2.39	2.45	6.0
11. CAESAR-ALLESIA	2.53	2.92	2.71	2.78	1.71	1.85	3.36	2.64	2.71	2.07	27.9
12. 1776	2.56	2.16	1.76	2.45	3.27	2.62	3.08	2.72	2.63	2.36	33.4
13. 3rd REICH	2.57	2.12	2.47	2.34	4.15	3.22	2.59	2.24	1.95	2.05	34.9
14. PANZERBLITZ	2.58	2.00	3.00	2.03	4.03	3.00	3.06	2.05	2.07	2.05	14.0
15. KINGMAKER	2.60	2.26	2.84	2.34	2.83	3.07	1.86	3.65	2.14	2.41	20.2
16. DIPLOMACY	2.60	2.35	2.26	3.13	1.87	2.39	2.09	4.57	2.30	2.43	32.6
17. CAESAR'S LEGIONS	2.64	2.32	2.36	2.31	2.14	2.23	3.73	3.05	2.86	2.73	13.5
18. SUBMARINE	2.65	2.58	3.48	2.42	2.90	2.87	2.55	2.38	2.22	2.47	12.1
19. STARSHIP TROOPERS	2.67	2.27	3.11	2.07	2.43	2.70	3.57	3.39	2.20	2.32	17.3
20. ARAB ISRAELI WARS	2.68	2.34	3.03	1.86	3.31	2.70	3.57	3.31	2.51	2.52	13.5
21. CHANCELLORSVILLE	2.68	2.62	2.57	2.45	2.26	2.52	3.43	3.07	2.55	2.64	18.8
22. VICTORY-PACIFIC	2.70	2.47	2.36	1.85	2.21	2.79	3.38	3.91	1.94	2.53	18.0
23. DUNE	2.76	2.45	2.40	3.00	1.98	2.43	2.75	4.20	2.80	2.83	11.9
24. NAPOLEON	2.77	2.04	2.96	2.03	2.25	2.86	3.25	4.18	2.46	2.89	9.1
25. FRANCE 1940	2.82	1.75	2.05	1.85	3.30	3.25	4.05	3.00	3.40	2.75	16.0
26. JUTLAND	2.83	2.84	-	2.39	3.27	3.06	3.24	2.53	2.61	2.67	29.7
27. RAIL BARON	2.87	2.98	2.82	3.45	2.07	2.29	2.05	4.69	2.76	2.68	21.6
28. LUFTWAFFE	2.87	2.41	2.91	2.04	2.86	3.02	3.73	3.41	2.82	2.64	24.2
29. MIDWAY	2.88	2.75	3.12	2.56	2.78	2.90	3.66	3.08	2.37	2.73	15.7
30. AFRIKA KORPS	2.90	3.04	3.10	2.92	2.12	2.29	3.39	3.57	2.91	2.77	13.5
31. ALEXANDER	2.93	2.99	3.21	3.19	2.55	2.98	3.43	2.76	2.43	2.86	12.7
32. ORIGINS OF WW II	2.98	2.69	2.58	2.80	2.00	2.22	4.00	4.06	3.11	3.40	9.6
33. WIZARD'S QUEST	3.03	2.63	2.21	3.25	2.62	2.60	2.23	5.13	3.42	3.21	13.2
34. CRETE - MALTA	3.04	2.80	3.10	3.00	3.03	3.05	3.43	3.18	2.76	3.05	18.8
35. GETTYSBURG '77	3.04	2.52	2.48	2.50	4.32	3.79	3.07	2.46	3.02	3.21	27.6
36. D-DAY '77	3.07	3.72	4.54	3.69	2.19	1.94	3.00	3.19	2.94	2.44	20.2
37. BLITZKRIEG	3.09	3.39	3.28	3.30	3.14	2.89	2.25	3.67	2.81	3.05	24.0
38. TOBRUK	3.10	2.85	4.68	2.13	4.32	2.77	3.06	2.11	3.00	2.96	21.6
39. WATERLOO	3.18	3.29	3.27	3.11	2.01	3.11	3.27	4.32	3.21	3.01	16.2
40. WAR AT SEA	3.21	3.18	3.96	2.74	1.74	2.35	3.73	5.12	2.93	3.15	6.9
41. BULGE	3.21	2.93	2.80	3.31	3.08	3.40	3.53	4.11	2.81	2.95	20.0
42. FEUDAL	3.25	3.18	4.33	2.64	2.28	2.33	2.12	5.38	3.58	3.38	7.5
43. D-DAY '65	3.43	3.72	4.54	3.69	2.56	3.09	4.38	4.50	3.60	3.56	17.8
44. STALINGRAD	3.44	3.43	3.74	3.40	2.07	2.52	4.37	5.15	3.28	3.04	20.0
45. TACTICS II	3.51	3.43	4.30	3.59	1.45	2.18	2.32	5.57	4.59	4.20	11.6
46. MAGIC REALM	3.54	2.74	2.81	3.13	5.29	4.42	2.80	4.06	3.39	3.26	19.9
47. 1914	3.87	3.18	3.40	3.26	5.46	4.32	3.86	1.95	5.48	3.86	55.0
48. GETTYSBURG '64	3.88	3.59	3.84	3.54	2.68	3.39	5.08	4.51	4.34	3.98	12.5
49. KRIEGSPIEL	4.04	3.77	4.20	3.85	2.13	2.94	2.93	6.09	5.20	5.29	9.8
AVERAGE	2.92	2.73	3.02	2.70	2.79	2.82	3.24	3.38	2.90	2.84	19.6

READER BUYER'S GUIDE

TITLE WIZARD'S QUEST

\$15.00

SUBJECT Multi-Player Fantasy Game of Conquest

WIZARD'S QUEST is the 49th game to undergo analysis in the RBG. Its cumulative rating of 3.03 was somewhat disappointing. However, it must be remembered that *THE GENERAL* readership is largely wargames oriented and many see Fantasy games as an intrusion into their hobby. In addition, most simple games (*WAR AT SEA* is another example) notoriously do poorly in the RBG ratings.

WIZARD'S QUEST's best rating came in the Mapboard category with a 2.21, ranking it ninth. While ninth isn't bad, even this rating is disappointing considering the combination of high level artistic attractiveness and functional graphics the mapboard displays.

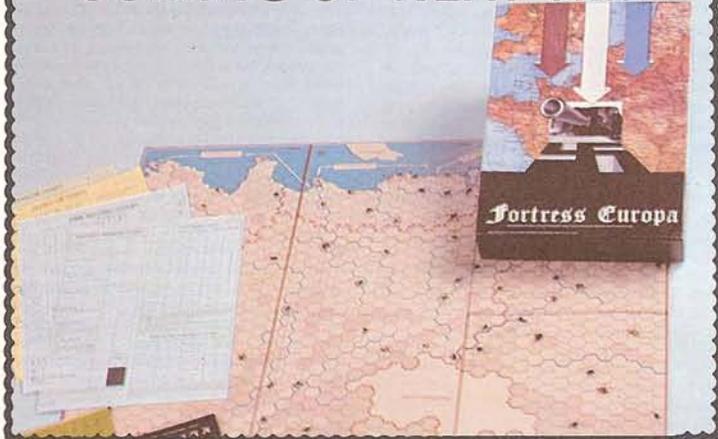
Other better than average ratings were garnered for Physical Quality—2.63, Ease of Understanding—2.62, Completeness of Rules—2.60, and Play Balance—2.23. Since play balance in a multi-player game is solely dependent on player skill, it is especially surprising to see how it did not do even better than seventh in this category. The ratings for Ease of Understanding and Completeness of Rules are an indication of the high level of playability of the game.

The worst rating came in the Realism Category—5.13, ranking it 45th. Again, as with *DUNE* and *MAGIC REALM* though, this is a misnomer due to the contradiction in terms between Fantasy and Realism. This is really not an appropriate rating category for Fantasy games. Players will rarely look at this rating and ask themselves how real a fantasy game is in relation to what it is trying to be (as they should).

Other below average ratings were garnered for Components—3.25, Excitement Level—3.42, and Overall Value—3.20. The Components rating is hard to fathom since the components are done in much the same style as the mapboard.

1. Physical Quality 2.63
2. Mapboard 2.21
3. Components 3.25
4. Ease of Understanding 2.62
5. Completeness of Rules 2.60
6. Play Balance 2.23
7. Realism 5.13
8. Excitement Level 3.42
9. Overall Value 3.21
10. Game Length .. 2 hours, 12 min.

COMING UP NEXT TIME



Vol. 17, No. 1 of *THE GENERAL* rebounded strongly in the ratings department following the discontent with the *DUNE* feature of Vol. 16, No. 6. The wargaming majority among the readership expressed their pleasure with the return of battle game emphasis to the tune of a 2.79 rating; making it the most popular issue of the past year. Not surprisingly, the feature presentation of *NAPOLEON'S EMPIRE* by Mark McLaughlin took top honors in the individual article voting with a resounding 300 point edge over its nearest competitor, based on our scoring system of three points for first, two for 2nd, and one for 3rd for 200 random samples.

Napoleon's Empire	478
Arms & Armor	173
Pop Quiz	113
Recounting	96
WAR AT SEA Series Replay	83
Where did he Come From	61
Operation Adler	52
Design Analysis: WAR & PEACE Errata	43
The Final Glory	26
The Asylum	22
Optional Rules for WAR & PEACE	17
Merlin's Used Horse Lot	14
Staff Briefing	13
Avalon Hill Philosophy Part 79	9

Congratulations are in order for David Jameson whose article "TACTICAL ALTERNATIVES IN 1941" took the Editor's Choice Awards by a narrow margin over Jeffrey Paul Jones' "PANZER LEADER: AN OVERVIEW". Jameson won a \$100 bonus for his efforts. The percentage breakdown of the voting for the other nominees was as follows:

Tactical Alternatives in 1941	24%
Panzer Leader: An Overview	22%
Cross of Iron Series Replay	16%
Essence of Dune Modules	14%
Analyzing the Gustav Line	11%
Fire As Your Guns Bear	11%
Diadem Series Replay	2%

Dedicated to the premise that all multi-player games are more enjoyable when played by mail is Roy Henrick's little fan zine *ENVOY*. Patterned after the many *DIPLOMACY* fan 'zines that exist solely to carry postal *DIPLOMACY* games, *ENVOY* also carries postal games in *KINGMAKER*, *RAIL BARON*, *WAR & PEACE*, *BISMARCK*, *MAGIC REALM*, and *MACHIAVELLI*. Some of them are even AREA rated. Those of you interested in playing any of these games by mail might want to invest 85¢ in a sample issue of Roy's monthly publication. Send it to: Roy Henrick, P.O. Box 34277, Richmond, VA 23234.

AIR FORCE/DAUNTLESS enthusiasts should take note of the *AIR FORCE/DAUNTLESS SOCIETY*—a special interest division of *AHKS*. The Society is run by Jim McAmis as a labor of love. Jim's experience with the game goes back to the very start of the game when he playtested the original miniatures rules from which the game evolved. For \$7.00 annual membership you receive AF/D notepads, a membership card, opportunity to order specialized stationery, reliable game masters for multiplayer and campaign games, and a subscription to the bi-monthly newsletter "Flying Simulators" which is chock full of specialized info on this game system. Jim can be reached at P.O. Box 593, Stone Mountain, GA 30086.

Would you believe *SQUAD LEADER* has made it into the movies. Recent movie goers who have seen *THE FINAL COUNTDOWN* starring Kirk Douglas will recognize that game being played in the background of the messhall as none other than Avalon Hill's own award winning tactical combat game. Now if we can just get them to hire Don Greenwood as a technical adviser . . .

Infiltrator's Report

It was only a matter of time! From England comes news of the first wargaming resort—a sort of fantasy island for miniatures enthusiasts. Noted British military miniatures expert Peter Gilder has bought a large property built at the beginning of the 17th century for his new business venture . . . 'Holidays for Wargamers'. The converted inn is nestled amidst an attractive setting within the Yorkshire Moors' National Park. The inn caters to a maximum of five people but offers lodging, three meals per day, Peter's expert guidance, and the best in miniatures facilities for the very reasonable sum of 95 pounds per week. The guests arrive on Sunday, and plan their week's activities over the evening meal. The guests may choose their period, scale, or type of gaming or opt for instruction in modeling of terrain, painting of figures, or visits to nearby battlefields or figure manufacturers. The actual gaming takes place on a 'L' shaped table measuring 24' x 6' with a 10' "boot". The table is housed in its own building on the grounds. The walls are lined with tray upon tray of exquisitely painted figures, ships, vehicles, and scenery in custom-built display cases. The scenery is interlocking and available for numerous periods or can be removed to reveal a blue grid for naval games. Beneath the table itself are again numerous trays of substitute terrain ready to be moved into position on the table as if they were so many *PANZERBLITZ* boards. Each player also has his own "periscope" which allows him to share the view of the battlefield with his inch-high soldiers. After a day's play video equipment is available for viewing of appropriate films including a series of educational tapes on wargaming in miniature. Could the first boardgaming resort be far behind?

CONVENTION CALENDAR

The following list of gaming conventions is made strictly on the basis of the presentation of a date to us by the convention publicity chairman. Avalon Hill does not necessarily attend or endorse the gatherings listed below, nor do we mean to suggest that events using Avalon Hill games will be held there, although it is likely that at least casual, open gaming with AH games will be present. Readers are urged to contact the sources listed for further information before making plans to attend.

NOVEMBER 14-15-16

WINTERCON XI, Rochester, MI
Contact: Metro Detroit Gamers, P.O. Box 787, Troy, MI 48099

NOVEMBER 14-15-16

PHILCON '80, Philadelphia, PA
Contact: 873 North 24th St, Philadelphia, PA 19130 NOTE: SF Convention with games room.

DECEMBER 5-6-7

BEAST IV, Stillwater, OK
Contact: Mike Baker, 216 Kerr Hall, Stillwater, OK 74077 NOTE: *DIP*, *WS&IM*, *KM*, *VITP*, *WAS*, *BIS*, *TRC*, *PB*, *DL*, *MD*.

MARCH 27-28-29

CWA's SPRING GAMEFEST, Glen Ellyn, IL
Contact: Jeff Clark, 1210 S. Chase, Wheaton, IL 60187. NOTE: *SL/COI*, *WAS*, *AH Classics*, *DUNE*, *RB*, *FS*, *WS&IM*, *TRC*

Due to a comedy of errors and much to our chagrin, the name of artist Rodger MacGowan was deleted from three recent game covers which he designed for us. Although the name credit will be added in later runs we would like all of Rodger's fans to know that he executed the artwork for the *FORTRESS EUROPA*, *MIDWAY CAMPAIGN*, and *THE LONGEST DAY* game boxes. Sorry, Rodger.

For those *SQUAD LEADER* enthusiasts who also happen to have access to a TRS 80, Jon Mishcon (*COD MVP*) offers copies of his *SL/COI/COD* random scenario generator program at cost. Cost is \$5.00 on tape and \$9.00 on disk for 16 and 32K, and enthusiasts are free to copy for distribution. Interested parties can contact Jon at 66 Edwards St., Franklin, NH 03235.

The winners of Contest No. 95 on *WAR & PEACE* were: D. Ang, Bakersfield, CA; S. Gilliat, Chester, VA; M. Johnston, Portland, OR; S. Kirk, Shrewsbury, MA; K. Doormanlaan, Oegstgeest, The Netherlands; T. Schoffield, Houghton, MI; S. Slingsby, Springfield, PA; D. Tyson, Charlotte, NC; J. Vesper, Ypsilanti, MI; and T. Widener, S. Connellville, PA.

The key to the solution of Contest No. 96 is restraint. It is important to explore further possibilities which may offer better chances of success rather than opting for the first (and most obvious) possibility that comes to mind. The obvious solution, of course, was to simply attempt to rally one or both of the German broken squads in 3Q4 and then move into the buildings at R3, O5 and N2 to claim six stone building hexes and victory. This would have resulted in a *probable* draw, however, because the German needs dice rolls of '3' or less to rally his broken squads which are under the effects of Desperation Morale. The probability of rolling a '3' in two tries is less than 16%, so that in the vast majority of games this strategy would result in no additional mobile German units, leaving the Germans able to retake only two stone buildings for a maximum of five stone hexes and a draw. Yet, by *refusing* the Rally opportunities and opting instead to attempt to *deploy* (121.41) the existing unbroken squad 2, the German has a 58% chance (dice roll of 7 or less) of successfully gaining the additional mobile unit it needs to also move into building 305 and win the game.

Any solution not predicting a probable German victory or attempting to rally a broken squad (thus eliminating the chance of deployment) is incorrect. Ties will be resolved on the basis of best actual movement paths to *ensure* victory once the deployment is successful. For instance, the half squads have to move Q3-R2 and P3-O4 to avoid defensive fire opportunities from the French squads in O6, R5 and S5 which could have fired on any movement into P4 and R3. Once adjacent these half-squads force the broken French units in O5 and S3 to rout away before the German *advance* into the victory hexes. More importantly, Cpl. Uhl had to use CE movement to reach hex M2 during the Movement Phase. Otherwise, he would not be able to *advance* up the staircase and onto the broken French squad! If Uhl doesn't advance into the broken French squad, thus eliminating it in his Advance Phase building M2 is still contested according to Special Rule 28.1 and the French would win with four stone hexes to three for the German. Technically, in case the deployment dice roll fails, the German 1st squad should also use CE movement T7-S8-R7 to avoid the majority of fire in a near-suicidal attempt to get into R6 and thus deprive the French of that two-hex building.

OPPONENTS WANTED

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PL, JR. have 217 games. Pbm or fit most AH AREA 1600. AIW, PB, WSIM, AK, KM, SL, CAE, TRC, you pick wren, 1 side, Dan Curtis, P.O. 833, Livingston, AL 35470, 205-652-7710.

Multi-player pbm TRC need seven players plus alternates. State side and pass pbm experience. Only dependable gamers need apply. Write or call: Michael Kelly, Westhills Circle B-8, Carbondale, IL 60629, 618-549-2316.

Rates, P.O. Box 381, Kalkaska, MI 49646, 616-258-2725.
Novice wants fit opponent for AL, JNS, PB, VTP, W&P, WAS, WAT. Any age. Unable to travel very far. Dallen Agnew, 3450 31 Mile Rd, Romeo, MI 48065, 925-2227.

26.8. AREA rated all letters answered. Ed McGrath, 256 Vandenberg Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11205, 718-343-0809.
AREA 1517 BDG seeks similar ratings for pbm PB, SL, You choose st, 1 choice side, Joseph Wilkowiak, 845 Kenmore, Buffalo, NY 14223.

Wanted: AREA opponents for most games, especially AZ, AOC, BL, CAE, CL, GE, PB, PL, SSI, SSI, SSI, SSI, SSI. All letters answered. Rating 1060. Jeff Miller, Box 312 Valley View Dr., Millville, PA 18631, 717-359-1529.

Fit opponent wanted for PL, JR, COI and BL. Any wargaming clubs in Edmonton? Marcell Heald, 446 McLaughlin Village, Edmonton, Alta, Canada T5X 1T2, 456-0909.

Adult gamer new to High Desert desperate for fit opponents for AF, DL, SL, COI, COD, SL, SUIB. Will take all comers. Ronald Finkelson, P.O. Box 205, Lucerne Valley, CA 92356, 248-7236.

Wanted: opponents for JR and just learning AZ and 1776. Will learn SL, COI and COD for matches. Right now am only good at JR. Martin Johnson, Surfside Pkcs, C-419, Farrington Hwy., Maiala, HI 96792, 696-7317.

Wanted: capable opponent for DL, AK, WSIM or N&P in Joplin or Webb City area. Also looking for games to trade. Kurt Zachary, 1415 West Aylor, Webb City, MO 64870, 873-5192.

Wanted: AREA rated all letters answered. Ed McGrath, 256 Vandenberg Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11205, 718-343-0809.
AREA 1517 BDG seeks similar ratings for pbm PB, SL, You choose st, 1 choice side, Joseph Wilkowiak, 845 Kenmore, Buffalo, NY 14223.

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GENERAL BACK ISSUES

Only the following GENERAL back issues are still available. Price is \$2.50 per issue plus 10% postage and handling charges. Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax. GENERAL postage coupons may not be used for this or other parts orders. Due to low quantities of some issues we request that you specify alternate selections should your first choice be no longer available. The index below lists the contents of

each issue by subject matter; feature articles are designated by an asterisk (*), series reviews are italicized, and the number following each issue is the reader rating of that particular issue as a whole. The numbers following individual subjects refer to the number of articles about that game in that issue. Issues listed in red are one color reprints of previously out-of-stock issues.

- Vol. 12, No. 2—*Tobruk, Panzerblitz, Bulge, Blitzkrieg, Panzer Leader, Stalagrad . . . 3.10
Vol. 14, No. 2—*Kingmaker—7, Alexander, Squad Leader . . . 3.27
Vol. 14, No. 3—*Arab Israeli Wars—3, Stalagrad, Russian Campaign, Third Reich, War At Sea . . . 3.17
Vol. 14, No. 4—*Victory in the Pacific—2, Stalagrad, Third Reich, Richtofen's War, Jutland, 1776 . . . 2.53
Vol. 14, No. 5—*Squad Leader—3, WS & IM, Russian Campaign, Midway, Starship Troopers, Third Reich, Miscellaneous . . . 2.77
Vol. 14, No. 6—*D-Day, Victory in the Pacific, Panzer Leader, Caesar's Legions, Tobruk . . . 3.51
Vol. 15, No. 1—*Gettysburg—3, Squad Leader, Starship Troopers, Russian Campaign . . . 3.48
Vol. 15, No. 2—*Panzer Leader, Stalagrad, Third Reich, D-Day, Rail Baron, Victory in The Pacific . . . 3.44
Vol. 15, No. 3—*Assault on Crete—3, Invasion of Malta, Russian Campaign, Third Reich, Squad Leader, War At Sea, Misc . . . 3.44
Vol. 15, No. 4—*Submarine—2, Caesar's Legions, Panzerblitz, Third Reich, WS & IM, Squad Leader, Waterloo . . . 3.31
Vol. 15, No. 5—*Midway, WS & IM, Origins—Third Reich, Afrika Korps, D-Day, Squad Leader, Feudal, Alesia, War At Sea, Starship Trooper . . . 3.13
Vol. 15, No. 6—*Cross of Iron—3, Victory In The Pacific, War At Sea, Arab-Israeli Wars, Starship Troopers, Panzer Leader . . . 2.66
Vol. 16, No. 1—*Anzio—3, Panzerblitz, Third Reich, Napoleon, 1776, Diplomacy . . . 2.67
Vol. 16, No. 2—*Bismarck—4, Panzerblitz, Afrika Korps, 1776, WS & IM . . . 3.28
Vol. 16, No. 3—*Panzer Leader, Cross of Iron, War At Sea, Tobruk, 1776, Midway, Misc . . . 3.33
Vol. 16, No. 4—*Mazig Realm—3, The Russian Campaign, Cross of Iron, Third Reich, Misc . . . 3.23
Vol. 16, No. 5—*The Russian Campaign, Submarine, Starship Troopers, War At Sea, Panzerblitz, Rail Baron, Napoleon, Blitzkrieg, Misc . . . 3.27
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CONTEST NO. 97



It is the Allied late October, 1941 turn. The Afrika Korps is threatening to cut off the Allied home base and thus prevent the November reinforcements from landing. To that end the German has just used his supply #3 to sustain a 3-1 attack which eliminated 50/150 and 9A/18 leaving the Allies with the units shown, plus supply #2 which could arrive in the British home base at the start of his turn. Bologna is shown following its retreat after a 1-5 soak-off.

At this point the Germans have lost 15/115 and Pavia. Brescia and Trenta have Tobruk under siege and Savena occupies the home base. Supply unit #1 is west of Tobruk. Allied losses total 14 factors—12 one factor units and one 2-2-6. Two 4-4-7s and the 3-3-7 hold Tobruk. If the Allies can hold open the home base for the November reinforcements, the Germans will be in trouble; with four 4-4-7s and the 3-3-7 available the Germans cannot prevent 3-1 counterattacks.

The Allied objective is to prevent German combat units from being adjacent to the home base at the end of the German early November turn. To enter, fill out the chart below with the move which is most likely to maintain British control of their home base for another turn. List the hex of every British unit at the end of the movement portion of your turn. If attacking, list the defender, battle odds, and the order of attack; i.e., if three units are all attacking in the same battle which you want resolved first, print a "1" in the Order of Attack space for each of the attacking units in that attack.

Unit	Hex		Odds	Order of Attack	Disposition after Combat
	Occupied	Attacking			
22 Gds					
9A/20					
7/31					
50/151					
50/6SA					
2SA/6					
70/23					
51/29					
2SA/7					
2SA/4					
51/9					
51/10					
1 Supply					
2 Supply					

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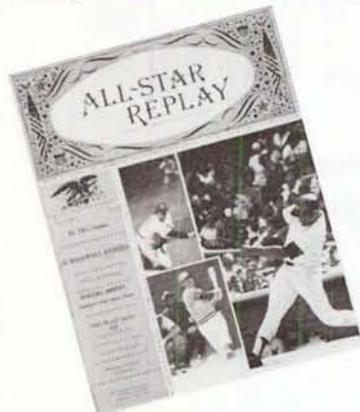
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in any fundamental way—it merely attempts to clarify the rules of the game and dispose of the few ambiguities that have plagued AK players for years. Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.

WAR AT SEA VARIANT KIT

Since so many *WAR AT SEA* variants have appeared in *THE GENERAL*, it seemed obvious that someone should, and would eventually, tie them all together. I (*ARM*) decided I was that someone. Unbeknownst to me, Paul Kaster had come to the same decision at about the same time. So, *WAR AT SEA 2* is a joint effort, and although I did the actual writing, almost all of the new ideas are Paul's, while the rest of the rules are a combination of the other variants.

WAR AT SEA 2 expands the basic game from six sea areas to nine, adding the Black Sea, the Cape of Good Hope, and the Caribbean. The number of ports is expanded from nine to seventeen, adding Sevastopol, Turkey, Greece, Alexandria, Oran, Toulon, Gibraltar, and Africa. In addition, some of the other ports in the game have been renamed. France is now Brest, for instance.

The revised OBs include seventeen French ships, two Greek ships, eight American ships, and seven Russian ships, as well as additional British and German ships. Land-based air units, that function somewhat like the air units in *VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC*, are substituted for each side's lone airstrike marker.

The rules change many of the basic *WAR AT SEA* rules and add much more to them. New rules cover three new Convoys, the Axis Afrika Korps and the Allied Tiger and Torch Convoys. Other rules cover German Surface Raiders, POC changes and additions, access to Neutral Ports, the British X-Craft, the Italian Frogmen, and restricted movement for ships of some nationalities.

Also included is a section of Optional Rules. These rules can be used as play balance rules or just to add even more variety to the game. Many of these increase or restrict the movement of ships of certain nationalities.

This variant package is both more and less than a regular game. Its parts can be used to play

any variant published to date and almost any that you might devise on your own. It is not more realistic than *WAR AT SEA*, just more involved. No attempt has been made to turn the basic game into a simulation. Quite the contrary, this kit is for those who like *WAR AT SEA* and just want more of a good thing. Players should note, however, that due to the nature of this variant (it being a conglomeration of many smaller variants and adding many variables to the rules), it may need some tinkering to establish play balance.

The Counter Sheet contains all the counters necessary to play any of the variants in *THE GENERAL* articles listed below. It is similar to the *WAR AT SEA* Variant Counter Sheet that was previously available. However, players should note that the new Variant Counter Sheet does not contain the *AIR ASSAULT ON CRETE* variant counters that were included on the original Variant Counter Sheet. The mapboard can also be used to play all of these variants.

1. Vol 13, No 3—"WAR AT SEA In The Mediterranean" (part of "Basic Probability In WAR AT SEA") by Richard Hamblen
2. Vol 14, No 3—"WAR AT SEA & The French Navy" by Dr. Joseph Connolly
3. Vol 14, No 4—"Victory At Sea" by Richard Hamblen
4. Vol 15, No 1—"Letter To The Editor" by John Lyman
5. Vol 15, No 3—"WAR AT SEA And The Russian Navy" by Sean Canfield

The *WAR AT SEA Variant Kit* which includes an unmounted 22" x 24" mapboard, three OB Charts (one Axis and two Allied), a six page rulebook, and the new *WAR AT SEA* Variant Counter Sheet, is available directly from The Avalon Hill Game Company, 4517 Harford Rd., Baltimore, Maryland 21214 for \$9.50 plus 10% postage and handling charges. Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.