

ALSO: Advanced 3R



Longest Day



AvalonCon

GENERAL

★ AVALON HILL

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★ ★ The AVALON HILL GENERAL

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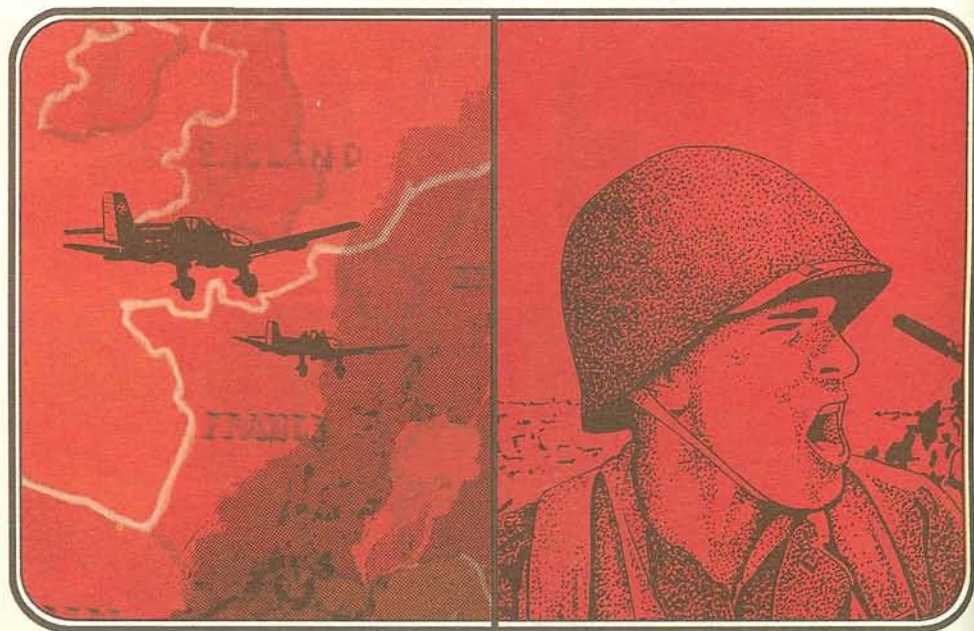
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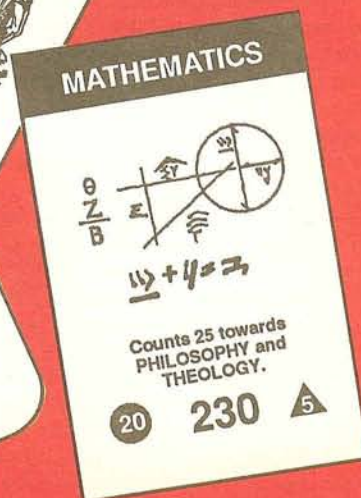
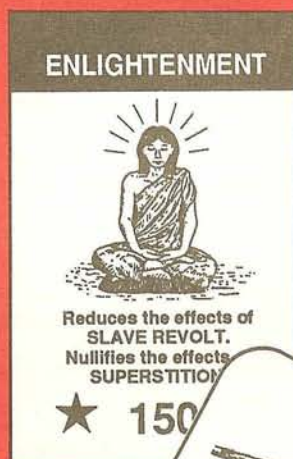
By Randy Heller

ADVANCED CIVILIZATION

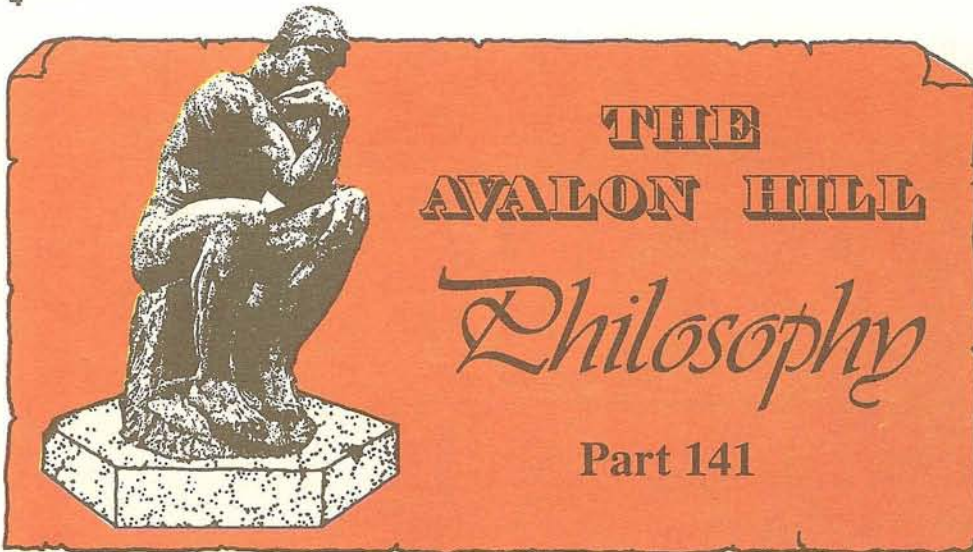
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Five decades ago this year, two events occurred which changed the world we live in beyond recognition. In June 1941, German forces crossed the western borders of Soviet Russia. Six months later, Japanese pilots attacked American bases in Hawaii. The little European tiff referred to as "World War II" was now truly a "world" war, and was destined to become the greatest conflict in the long, troubled history of Mankind. By the time it drew to a close, citizens of every nation of the globe - without regard for creed, color, politics, education, or other supposed differences - had died as a result. It is estimated that as many as 58 million people lost their lives in the Second World War.

Virtually every wargamer can claim a grandfather, father, uncle, brother or cousin who served in that conflict, who knew firsthand the fear and elation of combat. And our grandmothers, mothers, aunts and sisters labored long hours in the factories and fields to insure that their men had the wherewithal to butcher each other in unparalleled numbers. Nor were civilians immune in this war; they stood on the frontlines as surely as any soldier. They died by the millions in merchant ships, concentration camps, besieged cities, and under tons of bombs of every sort. World War II was a very egalitarian sort of insanity.

The new global realities, political and economic and scientific and social, have affected every living person since. World War II is, thus far, the pivotal point of the 20th century. For most of us, everything before that is sepia-toned history; everything since stands out in crystal clarity by contrast. Only now are the last of the political and military questions that arose from the ashes of the great war beginning to be resolved. And no one can see the end to the rapid-fire pattern of scientific and social changes begun in 1941, fueled by the wartime economy which lifted the world out of its Depression. Whether you believe it to have been the *most* important event in history, there is no denying that WW2 - "The Big One" - has affected you every day of your life, no matter that it ended on 2 September 1945.

For three decades, since 1961 when the original *D-DAY* saw print, World War II has been the mainstay of the board wargaming hobby. Indeed, I would venture to say that there have been as many individual wargames based on the 1939-45 conflict as on all the other wars combined. On every level imaginable, from grand strategic to man-to-man tactical. In the current Avalon Hill catalogue, there are 43 distinct titles (games and modules) devoted to WW2 action; another 14 are available under the VG logo. Of the 11 titles from the top 20 "All-Time Best Sellers" (see page 55 in Vol. 27, No. 2) which I would consider wargames, nine highlight this war. Virtually every major wargame company has one or more "best sellers" which cover some facet of the fighting then. Any conflict can be simulated with paper, metal and microchip; but this war has occupied the talents of the best designers for 30 years. In the hearts and minds of the "old guard", WW2 is the premier topic.

Why? Why, despite all the fads that have swept through our hobby, do we find the Second World War so engaging? Why, despite its undeniable horrors, do we find it so endlessly fascinating?

Some of the reason can be traced to the very things I mentioned in the opening paragraphs. World War II *has* affected every one of us directly. Our families, and the families of everyone we know, played some role - great or small - in that conflict. Most of us have heard their tales, in some form or the other, since childhood. Family photo-albums are full of pictures of family members in uniform. Many's the gamer who thrills at the chance to command the unit with which his father (or father-in-law, or grandfather, or uncle) saw service. I remember well the veterans' parades in which my uncles marched. And, as a boy, I read everything I could in an attempt to understand why they took such pride in those displays. It was natural, I suppose, that I gravitated to wargaming as my interest in military history grew. But it was the fact that I knew at least some of the participants that drew me to WW2. It's hard for a

ten-year-old to grasp what it was like to march with Alexander, Napoleon or Lee. On the other hand, it was very easy to listen to the late-night war stories of the "old" men reminiscing in the kitchen over their beer. And want to be a part of it. In lieu of another world war, we grew up to refigt the last one on the kitchen tables where our fathers and uncles once sat. Now we tell our own "war stories" over a glass or two at the end of the day whenever we gather.

Further, we have been inundated with print and film, both fact and fiction, about the war. Admit it, every one of you has devoured the tall tales of the "daring few" who "went in harm's way" to "change the course of the war". Despite the romantic improbabilities, we reveled in those novels and Saturday matinees. If, like me, that only whet your appetite and you went on to read the historical accounts and discover what "really" happened, you were on your way to becoming a wargamer. From Sgt. Rock and Easy Company, through the TV series "Combat", to *The Dirty Dozen* and the movie *Guns of the Navarone*, our generation grew up with the war as entertainment. Wargaming is only an interactive form of that, with much the same romantic appeal when you come down to the basics ("Now YOU Can Change History").

Nor can I deny the fact that the Second World War, in toto, had a great impact on the course of recent history. That fact alone might serve to make it the most popular "period" among board wargamers. But there are others, as well.

There is an appeal in the sheer variety of the warfare. Units ranging from the acknowledged elite to rag-tag bands of heroes clashed around the globe. Fighting took place on four continents, and on every sea and ocean. Under every condition of climate and terrain. Sweeping advances, gallant last-stands, lengthy sieges, sudden disasters, careful withdrawals, parachute drops, seaborne assaults; examples of all can be found in the annals of the Second World War, on the land, sea and in the air. Yes, the war offers something for any wargamer. Situations arose in the conflict, on operational and tactical levels, that never had before and likely never will again. The chance to pit your skills against another gamer under differing conditions each weekend is, for instance, part of the attraction that ASL (which now has nearly 200 "official" scenarios) holds for so many of your fellows. No matter what your interests in the "art of war", you can probably find a game based on WW2 that caters to one or more of them.

Linked to this, tenuously perhaps, is the fact that - despite disclaimers - there is among some wargamers a "cult" following for certain personalities and/or a fascination with certain hardware. The history of the war has lots of examples for these fellows to latch onto. Just look at the cover art

Continued on Page 10, Column 3

Computer Wargaming like you've never seen it!

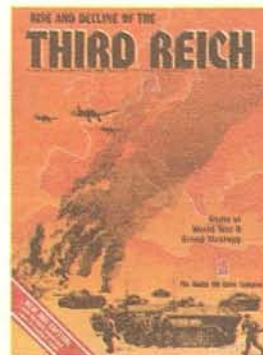
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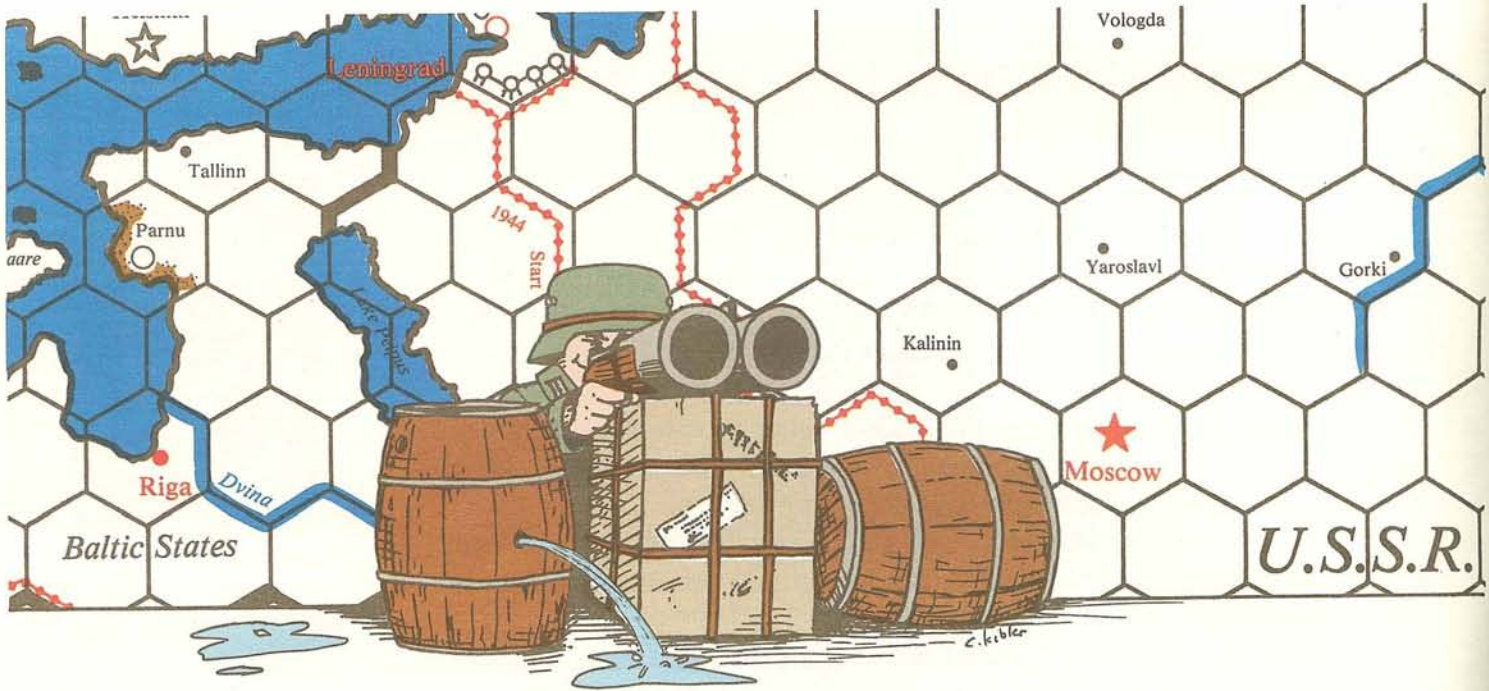
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DOUBLE-TURN SHOTGUN

A Med Power Play Axis Option

By Mark C. Nixon

Enough has been written about *THIRD REICH* and that most unique of design idiosyncrasies - the Double-Turn (or "DT") - that all students of the game should be well aware of the importance and danger of a DT enacted. The threat alone is enough to generate pages of analysis and hours upon hours of contemplation, worry and fear. It is probably fortunate for our mental well-being that skillful play can usually control game economics to such a degree that few are ever actually carried out (beyond that one "built into" the system over Spring/Summer 1942). Certainly, there will be those Allied players who try one in 1939; and occasional "freak" DTs can bring the play to its most exciting level - at least for one combatant at a time. But generally, that's about it for DTs. So when was the last time you players were subjected to an automatic exchange of DTs in Fall 1941, one not completed until three consecutive turns later in Summer 1942? Read on.

Say What?

If Germany waits to declare war on Russia until Fall 1941, it can do so with enough precision to force an immediate Allied DT, followed by an Axis DT in retaliation over Winter 1941/Spring 1942. Barring immediate victory for someone at that point, the Allies would then take their customary DT over the Spring/Summer. With this in mind, the Axis players must examine whether they can actually achieve this Exchange, and whether they truly want to do so. The bottom line: Can this improve their chance to win?

In order to bring the initial DT upon the Allies, the German player is faced with the rather awkward task of ensuring that the enemy

retain enough BRPs to force the matter. Britain maintains a free hand throughout the year of 1941 and cannot be expected to spend as her enemies desire; so the ball is actually in an eastern lap, as Russia's massive paws are tied until the Axis DoW is visited upon her. The Russian BRP level at this stage of a "standard game" in which she has not invaded Turkey ought to be 147 - or maybe 133 if Foreign Aid has already been granted for 1941. Her BRP level could be as low as 113 with two turns of Intelligence/Counter-Intelligence efforts. For purists, it might even be as low as 103 if Russia has purchased IEs at 10 BRPs each following earlier poor results. In addition to all that, Russia could "spend-down" to anywhere from 40 to 74 BRPs to avoid the DT (depending on prior FA and IEs). This also assumes that 73 BRPs of Russian forces are destroyed on the first turn of *Barbarossa* in Fall 1941 to allow construction to consume Russia's full 50% of YSS total. But all that is an extravagant estimate. Any German player capable of such destruction should have attacked Russia immediately after the fall of France in 1940; he doesn't need any additional advantage in the game. (And, I'd like to be introduced to him.)

Since Germany wants to "force" a DT, she might opt not to destroy many Russians; might opt for only an Attrition in the East; and might go so far as to then decline the Attrition combat. It all depends on the relative economic status of the various powers. This provides a nice range of selections for the Axis to ensure the Allied DT.

Such a delayed attack by Germany offers six distinct advantages. For one, it fits in well with "Southern Yearnings" (see issue 24-6 of *The*

GENERAL) in either its full version (including the conquest of Gibraltar), or in truncated form directly following the conquest of Turkey (and maybe Egypt) along with some of the balance of North Africa by those who fear defeat at "The Rock" or who simply run out of time, BRPs and/or troops to take that fortress. Hitting Russia in this manner might be considered the Axis "outlet" plan when British resistance in the Med proves tougher than anticipated, or when a "46" or two forces unexpected losses on the blitz across North Africa.

Second, how many times has Germany wrecked her army trying to take Paris with risky attacks in Summer or Fall 1940 in your games? If only Germany were freed of that terrible time constraint which dictates the earliest possible victory in France, you might often use a more skillful game plan by proceeding in a deliberate manner with low-risk attacks in the West. Even if the timetable were upset by an initial "46" in Poland, you need not feel undue pressure so long as a Fall 1941 DoW versus Russia could be anticipated to return you to the driver's seat in the East by Spring of 1942.

Third, since Winter 1940 is often a poor time to attack Russia, due to the wear and tear on both the Wehrmacht and the German economy by the campaign in France (indeed, against a skillful French player, Germany may not even have the BRPs left to declare war on Russia that year), postponing the invasion allows timely breathing space to acquire additional BRPs in Turkey and other Mediterranean locales. These can be tackled at a cost much less taxing than any adventure in Russia.

Fourth, those first two seasons of 1941 - which all too often consume most of Ger-

many's resources only to leave her army overextended and panting on the steppes and before the gates of Moscow and Leningrad - instead are spent annihilating some combination of Greek, Turk, British and maybe even Spanish forces while maintaining the mighty Wehrmacht at full strength. The year 1941 might even see the Kriegsmarine sail in force as Germany spends-down to force a late-year DT. Rather than an exhausted Germany, 1941 ends with that nation at its military zenith, poised to deal Russia or Britain a crippling blow over the Winter/Spring DT.

Next, because the Allies will take a Spring/Summer 1942 DT, what better way to prepare for it than with one of your own immediately preceding? A DT against Russia should leave the Red Army no options in their Spring turn. They should only be able to engineer an Attrition option and build, unwilling to go on the offensive (other than to possibly kill off some of their troops for re-building) until the Summer. The British must fear for his very life against a DT at this hour of the war. England stands to lose one or more of London, Gibraltar, Egypt and/or Malta. Something will fall somewhere, if only Germany turns her attention from Russia for an instant or two to concentrate on the West.

Sixth, the very fact that this is yet another direction Germany might deviate from the "standard game" heaps additional mental duress upon her enemies. Once you demonstrate a willingness to chance that Allied DT in 1941 in order to follow it with one of your own, what manner of foolhardy undertaking might the opposition risk in an attempt to upset that plan?

But weighed against these six advantages is the double-edged hazard of trying a "Shotgun", which happens to embody the most feared event for the Axis in *THIRD REICH*: What will prevent Russia from breaking through Poland with her Fall/Winter 1941 DT? Barring that event, can Germany truly better (or at least equal) her "standard" eastward progress by employing this delayed attack? Such questions demand solid answers, and are addressed in detail through the ensuing portion.

Why a DT?

The best reason to try a Double-Turn Shotgun is the same reason I spent so much effort refining a "Southern Yearnings" strategy in the first place. Simply put, there are some Russian players out there in the gaming world who are very good and tough. They won't win every game of 3R, maybe not even half; but they'll win more than I'm willing so long as other avenues to victory are available. If someone has perfected the sort of conservative, fall-back defense and grinding counterattack strategy which the Soviet side seems to require for victory, what can be done to take him out of his preferred game plan? I don't have to play 3R in this "boring" fashion; that's why I choose to play the Axis side - so I can run the game *my* way (at least until those American GIs show up).

Two initial questions must be explored to determine whether Axis efforts to force an enemy DT are worthwhile: 1) Can Russia and

Britain knock out Germany or Italy with a DT? 2) Can Germany and Italy knock out Russia or Britain with a DT?

If any one of these four countries falls, it should be the end of the game. A plethora of other events might occur, such as the capture of Leningrad-Moscow-Vologda, Russian conquest of Poland, or a British revitalization in the Med; but these are of concern only after the larger issue of major power conquest has been addressed. For that matter, the whole operation might occur a year earlier (in Fall 1940), if only France could be knocked out with minimal Axis losses. But the slim chance of that, plus the fact that Germany can only partially mobilize in 1940, plus that fact that Turkey and those Minor German allies would not yet be available, make such a campaign at this date unlikely. (However, should the chance ever present itself, it could provide the ultimate demonstration of *blitzkrieg* warfare in a game.)

A "Shotgun", however, is not a strategy that one must only "Hope" for; it is one which can be planned. It is one which might be chosen when the Axis pursue either a "Southern Yearnings" or a "standard game", modified slightly to include the conquest of Turkey and any combination of Greece, Spain, Portugal, Egypt, etc. which might be crammed in between the victory in France and the Fall of 1941. This course of play leaves debatable the question of whether we are considering a truncated "Southern Yearnings" or an expanded "standard game". Actually, either title fits well enough. One of the major advantages of the "DT Shotgun" is that it can be entered from either of these two strategic plans - making any debate over which of those two it derives from mere semantics. (And such an attack on Russia without employing the double-turn aspect might be called simply "Russia via Turkey".)

When this strategy hits the Russian with a DT, the title "Shotgun" certainly applies. This is more than just a catchy phrase. Beyond conjuring the image of the German player riding roughshod through a host of smaller countries throughout early 1941 while keeping his high-power offense fully loaded, cocked and aimed at the Soviet Union, the word also evokes the double-barrelled effect of an Allied DT followed by an Axis DT. One barrel of DT-mania is fired at the Axis, who immediately grab the weapon and let loose the second barrel at the Allies. In true Old West fashion, the U.S. Cavalry arrives in the the nick of time (from overseas in this case) to hand out ammunition (BRPs) to Britain and Russia for yet another DT exchange over Spring/Summer '42. It makes for quite a shoot-out.

The most likely Axis reaction in this situation might be to throw up their collective hands, declare their inability to do anything in the face of two Allied DTs, and forget the whole matter. It is, after all, a confusing, complicated, dangerous and often unwise course. It would be far more comfortable to select the familiar path of hitting Russia immediately after the fall of France, and anyone embracing such preconceptions will likely rue his decision to try, in spite of his sentiments, the "Shotgun". But I prefer to put all this in a different perspective and view this strategy as an opportunity instead of a

problem. This is certainly the mark of an optimist, yet what other approach will allow us to harness the energy to closely examine our resources and employ them to their utmost limits?

Lest this line of thought prompt someone to recall some bumper-sticker philosophy regarding eagles and turkeys, allow me to qualify this. Provided this optimism is tempered with those cold, hard facts which define the limits of our capabilities, we can be assured of some legitimate analysis. This writer might err, or fail by oversight, but hopefully will never be guilty of presenting fantasy as analysis.

Loading the Shotgun.

The first thing to check before jumping willy-nilly into any exchange of DTs is whether the Axis can withstand that initial Allied attack. Key features to consider are: 1) the posture of the Axis Minor Allies; 2) Turkey; 3) Russian Defense and Winter possibilities; 4) the Strategic Situation in the West and the Med; and last, 5) Economics.

Axis Minor Allies:

Beyond the obvious impact of an early Axis attack on Spain, the stance of Rumania, Hungary, Finland and Bulgaria in the Fall 1941 is a function of only one consideration really - Foreign Aid. Any players who flinch at the very thought of FA considerations might imagine their quandary were these nations not restricted to 10% of their YSS BRPs (a limitation not included in the original playtest package back in 1980)! That can lead to some bizarre situations, and so the 10% ceiling was imposed. We have at least been spared the wild excesses which might have generated a FA "bidding war" to consume the energy of entire games.

Foreign Aid is such an intriguing element of strategy because a player might ignore it completely, or might spend to the maximum, and be equally right or wrong doing so. Early-war spending to the maximum seems mandatory for only one nation - Russia. And even that is no certain thing since her BRPs can be sent to more than one country. Hungary seems the obvious choice; it is certainly the most common in this writer's experience. But how about sending a few to Bulgaria in order to hold open the FA route into Hungary and Rumania via a neutral Turkey; or, maybe best of all, leave Bessarabia with Rumania and send that minor country economic aid in lieu of an invasion force? Would yielding that hexrow "36" and the BRPs of conquest prove worth keeping Rumania out of the war? Could Russia then finagle some advantage from the normally early-war stalemate in the East? Though such matters deserve investigation, it won't be found here due to limitations of space and time.

But, FA expenditures must be viewed in proper perspective. Casual thought after a few playings might lead one to a premature conclusion that the Axis are at a disadvantage due to their need to mobilize in '39 while Russia and Britain are free to stuff 21 BRPs into these Minors and suffer no ill effects. But this assessment is accurate only for Russia, whose 1939 FA expenditure of 9 BRPs would otherwise be practically worthless by 1941 (9 times .3 times

.3 = .81 growth). Britain, on the other hand, must forego Force Pool construction in 1939 in order to purchase FA, and might be inconvenienced by using fleets and SRs to deliver it. British mobilization requirements might not be as demanding as those of Germany, but are real enough.

From the German perspective, I find it improper to look upon Minor Allied activation as something the 3rd Edition changed for the "worse". Such comparison to the "old game" belongs to another era, and is after all incorrect. Since those Minors will enter on the Axis side if no one spends anything on FA, it seems that the German has the same advantage here as before. The twist, however, is that the Allies might try to halt the activation; they could spend six BRPs to preclude one activation, or 12 to make them all just a 50% proposition, or even 24 to prevent them all from entering. The beauty of this ploy, for Germany, is that all she need do to guarantee use of her Minor Allies is match BRPs with her enemies. I identify that as yet another method of waging economic warfare. If you, as the German player, knew you could drain your opponents' BRPs in an even trade, wouldn't you take advantage of it? This is a much more efficient method of war than investing in Offensive options, panzers and air power. The Allies might be justified in purchasing FA for other reasons, but economically they are on the losing end of this exchange. Russia cannot "win" this financial war alone; Britain will surely be inconvenienced. So the Allies much play diplomatic "catch-up".

This is where a "Southern Yearnings" attack might give Germany a boost, as that strategy can push the British to the edge of bankruptcy in 1941. Facing SW losses, as well as the loss of Suez and Gibraltar, will the British spend their BRPs on FA? With such losses evident beforehand, a Briton spending 10% on Strategic Warfare construction and 10% on Foreign Aid is left with practically no operation funds for 1941: 125 (Base) - 12 (SW) - 12 (FA) - 25 (loss of Suez) - 25 (loss of Gibraltar) - 45 (SW resolution reserve) = 6 BRPs remaining for builds and options.

In these circumstances, Britain cannot even fight back in 1941 without foregoing FA and/or accepting some amount of Base BRP Reduction in the 1942 YSS. Should this seem more appealing to the reader, the Axis should forget the "DT Shotgun" and stick to the basic "Med Power Play". This is why applying such a strategy against a weak British player can be so devastating. Should he not foresee his financial dilemma early in 1941 and unwisely spend BRPs on builds and Offensive options, his BRP Base might be crushed come the 1942 YSS, when the losses of Gibraltar, Suez and to SW combine to maul his economy.

From this consideration of the British economy, the ideal Axis move for Spring '41 seems to be to commit maximum FA allowances in an attempt to either bring all four Minor Allies into the war in the summer or, perhaps better still, to entice British FA expenditures to prevent this. Should the British spend those BRPs and your Spring turn finds you progressing in the Med, temptation to continue the southern attack may make it difficult to turn aside to attack Russia,

as Britain has now bitten the bullet - and may soon bite the dust. In this case, Axis demonstrations may actually accomplish as much as any actual progress, insofar as convincing the British to retain their FA BRPs. Smart British play at this early point of 1941 dictates hanging onto those BRPs, for economic catastrophe lurks should the Axis opt to take their admittedly decent shots at Suez and Gibraltar. Suez is sure to fall; and Gibraltar will "usually" fall to concerted Axis action.

Compare this to a "standard game" strategy, in which Germany turns immediately upon Russia following the fall of France. In that situation, only minimal pressure can be applied on Britain. Her arena of power - the Med - is treated by the German player as a mere periphery of the "real" war in the East. And, with Germany committed thus against Russia, this is as it should be. Very historical, and very easy then for the British to send that FA immediately, thereby denying activation of more than one German Minor ally. In this case, Foreign Aid becomes a means for Britain to exceed that 50% yearly maximum aid to Russia (as we might view such expenditure as a good-will package benefitting Russia more than Britain).

The result of all this verbiage is that the status of the Minor Axis allies will usually have been decided by the 1939 German and 1941 British FA spending. Germany has good reasons to spend some '39 BRPs on builds; and we have seen where Britains '41 BRPs are needed. The British player may yet elect to send that FA eastwards, but any German drive through the Med ought to give him pause, lest he suffer some painful consequences.

Turkey:

Oddly enough, a DT invasion of Russia might actually work better if it were attempted without the prior conquest of Turkey. This is because without the Russian dispersal to defend the Caucasuses from a simultaneous invasion launched from Turkish soil, Wehrmacht forces breaking through western Soviet defenses are more likely to enjoy the benefits of facing a concentrated enemy, thus making it easier to isolate large portions of the Red Army. That you will face a stronger Russian defense in this situation is hardly of consequence; an Axis DT will crush any Russian line it can reach.

The biggest advantage of threatening the Caucasuses via Turkey is that the resultant Russian dispersal limits his ability to launch spoiling attacks in his Fall/Winter 1941 DT. This is true especially if some of the Russian armor has moved to the east, for his ability to upset the German plan then becomes practically nil. And the problem with *not* invading Turkey is one of what Germany should be doing with her "free time" (Winter 1940 - Summer 1941) if not conquering that country. If she hits Spain this early, her efforts to activate her Minor allies are drastically hampered. Greece, Sweden and Norway can be taken with such minimal effort that if nothing else is accomplished during the period, the Axis players are just wasting BRPs and time. This because these three are short campaigns of economics and logistics, as paying for the DoW and Offensive options and moving your forces to and from these battlefields is far

tougher than the actual battles fought in these fringe regions. As such, the invasions are a poor choice since such consume BRPs for low return, and much of the Axis SR capability for several turns. Mobility is already one of the weakest links of the Axis arsenal; the imposition of waging these diminutive campaigns in hard-to-reach locations exemplifies how precarious the Axis situation can be.

Of course, any invasion of Britain during this period would maintain, as its goal, the fall of that country and, therefore, total victory in the game. This would qualify it as a "campaign alternative", one which requires special planning in order to function well with an East Front "Shotgun" (due mainly to requirements on the Luftwaffe). However, the specifics are so detailed that I will not clutter the scene here. [Instead, readers should see article "Shoot-Out in the West" following.]

Another potential target is Africa, but success there is uncertain despite your substantial investment without first overrunning Turkey to solve the riddle of Axis supply for troops attacking Egypt. This matter of supply happens to be at least the second-most important reason for invading Turkey in the first place. Once supply is made available for an unlimited number of German troops, nothing the British can do will save Egypt (unless the German player slips up and leaves the enemy an opening somewhere).

So, my plans make Turkey an excellent arena for Germany to exercise her military dominance at the turn of the new year. Control of this country puts so much heat on both Russia and Britain, it is surprising that more Axis players don't attack it. Those 30 BRPs are nothing to sneeze at, and with Egypt and Stalingrad threatened, Allied offensive capabilities elsewhere are severely restricted by virtue of these defensive requirements. In addition, this opportunity to entice the British army onto the Anatolian peninsula in the Summer of 1941 is often too attractive to ignore. This can prove devastating for any "Gung-Ho" British players you may face, for a strong reaction to your attack on Turkey might actually see powerful British formations mired on the peninsula in an attempt to save the country. Such is not really possible with extraordinary extenuating circumstances and, instead, it will be your Wehrmacht isolating the British and exploiting the gaping holes his move left elsewhere in the defenses of the British Empire. To set the stage for the "DT Shotgun", I think taking Turkey is a vital campaign.

Russian Defense and Winter:

Alignment of the Russian defenses will depend on what Germany has done with Turkey, of course; but to keep this article manageable I will assume that Turkey has fallen to the Axis - for the real issue here is how Germany intends to cope with the Russian DT, aided by the Russian Winter rules. Make no mistake, the inconvenience of the Russian Winter rule occurring at this critical juncture is a major problem with the whole "Shotgun" strategy. If not careful, the German player could insert important elements of his forces in Mother Russia, only to then find them trapped

and pounded at basic defense values during the Winter turn. Since the German will not be able to take an Offensive option in the East during this winter, it may seem to some that the whole purpose of forcing the DT is lost. Why offer the Russian a DT when your own in retaliation will have to consist of but an Attrition, followed by a belated Offensive?

A very good question, and one which must be considered at length by each player. The answer should be found when you ponder the question, "Do you think Germany can break through and encircle the Russian army with an Attrition option followed by an Offensive option?" My answer is a resounding, "Yes!" Probably the *entire* Russian army will be isolated and destroyed by this DT; it requires only such basic application of 3R game mechanics that I don't think the details need be explained here. (Should a great cry go out from readers that I am "dodging the issue", I will gladly answer all skepticism with yet another article on the basics of Attrition, SR, Breakthrough and Exploitation.)

But the real matter to resolve here is how to stop any pre-emptive Russian attacks, or such devious Soviet defenses as pulling back so far you can't even hit them. In the first case, I'll ask that you visualize an Axis attack on 1941 Russian forces defending not only the Polish front, but also the Turkish front. Any who have a copy of *THE GENERAL 24/6* handy might consider the Figure #4 in my article therein, with the rest of the panzer and air formations thrown in. [Given that this issue is out-of-stock, the illustration is reproduced on this page for our newer readers.] To be blunt, your Fall 1941 shot at Russia must hammer her army. As much as possible, it should be isolated so that it can't be rebuilt in time to participate in the Russian DT counterattack. If you can knock out enough Russian armor in this manner (and maybe even draw some of the Red Air Force into battle), there will be only a Russian Attrition option thrown at you in the Fall. More likely though, the Russian player will take an Offensive option and execute some suicide attacks across the front with his isolated troops to cause what damage he can and then be free to rebuild his losses. After all, he will have plenty of BRPs to burn at this point, since Russia has lain idle for so long. You can take solace in the fact that, at least in the Fall, your forces are still doubled on defense.

But the real danger lies in the Russian 1941 Winter turn. At this point, you have been hit in the Fall already, which just might have pried an opening here or there; and the Russian has been able to build and SR units to take advantage of a defense you cannot mend. Things could get nasty - but that is why you have the Luftwaffe in range, have defended Warsaw and Bucharest and Ankara above all else, and have most of your panzers in supply no matter what (since they exploited in your Fall turn). It certainly doesn't hurt to use the Luftwaffe on defense, since the Russian Winter precludes its use in your own turn.

In my opinion, the smart Russian is actually going to be more concerned with what you will do to him in your coming DT than what he might do to you. After all, you threaten to win

the game, whereas he but threatens to take Warsaw, his only worthwhile target protected by the Winter offensive option ban. That is, if he takes Warsaw, he keeps it since you cannot retake it with an Attrition option, while any Med or West front locations you could reclaim.

A Russian player who sees the "Shotgun" looming might try to set up deep enough in his territory that you cannot hit him with your infantry and air in the Fall 1941. In such a case, the wise move might be to forget the "Shotgun" altogether and march straight into Russia while retaining enough BRPs to keep the initiative. Making limited strikes while preserving the integrity of your advancing army is another option, for the Russian must yield four precious hexes all along the front to make this ploy work for himself. One advantage gained already, in such a case, is the security of Warsaw and Bucharest; Russian forces will not be able to penetrate to hit these objectives, even with two turns to do so. An attractive variation for the Russian is to adopt this strategy of withdrawal with her DT moves. Indeed, this is a very likely Russian response, as it leaves them free to hit the enemy in choice spots in both Fall and Winter, while also establishing a defensive posture four hexes away from your coming DT Attrition/Offensive. His strategy will help hamper your Attrition attack but, unfortunately for the Red Army, will not do much to impede your Spring '42 offensive.

The Strategic Situation:

The Axis players must also consider what to do in the absence of outstanding successes in the West and Med theaters. What should they do to prevent major British gains on these fronts once that initial DT of the "Shotgun" is handed over? There seem to be three different ways to suppress British aggression: 1) knock them out of the war; 2) launch a pre-emptive strike; 3) establish a preventive defense.

It is unlikely that the Axis will take Britain out of the war with a bare-faced DT. Not impossible, but since Britain would have a DT of her own to prepare (which would, above all else, allow her to optimally place the RAF and Royal Navy), there would be precious little that the Axis might do to force that issue without benefit of some prior work to prepare. I have already written about what the Axis could do offensively in the Med (Vol. 24, No. 6), and continued success with that approach might eclipse any desire to veer off into a "Shotgun" strategy. Too, pursuit of a "Spanish Gambit" might preclude the need of any attack on Russia whatsoever.

But the worst of all circumstances for the British might well be a combination of the "Spanish Gambit" and the "Shotgun", featuring a German victory at Gibraltar followed by a DoW in the East in Fall '41. This may seem like a pipe-dream, but can actually be planned by the Axis and executed with frightening preci-



sion. It could turn into a British nightmare, as that country is faced with a DT from combined Axis navies and air forces at the end of 1941, a year in which British forces might have already lost big in the Med and ended in arrears economically, without sufficient forces or BRPs to take full advantage of their own DT. The British player might not be able to prepare for the coming Axis KO! In any case, to analyze this Anglo end of the "Shotgun", I defer to the article "Shoot-Out in the West".

A German pre-emptive strike to hamstring the British DT might take many forms. The common denominator is to wreck British potential for attack by the Fall. If the British can accomplish nothing outstanding that turn, defending against their Winter turn becomes quite easy actually. Of course, the best strike you can engineer may already be in progress if you are still driving on or through Egypt. British forces in Africa might be able to force you back or mangle your troops with a DT, but if the British want to seriously harm you they must move out of Africa. There is nothing critical to your war effort there, and everything there is vulnerable to your own upcoming DT. If, however, there is no active arena where you can mix it up with the British, a pre-emptive strike is not an option for you - so look to the next paragraph.

A preventive defense seems quite straightforward to me for the Axis. Protect everywhere the British might hit you with enough troops and fleets to stop a DT. If the enemy is short of troops and BRPs, this is easy; and if they are flush with power, it may be impossible. In this latter case, perhaps your "Shotgun" would be better left untried this outing. More likely, the situation you face will be somewhere between these extremes, forcing you to guard the most vital targets (Berlin, Rome, Paris and so on) while surrendering to the enemy some of the minor locations on the map. As in Russia, the ace up your sleeve is that coming DT, which you will be able to throw back at the British. How far will he move his forces away from his own vital points? Will he risk losing Gibraltar, or even London, in order to try for Rome or Berlin? The excitement in such decisions is reason alone to employ the "Shotgun" strategy once in awhile.

Economics:

Spending down to force a DT should never be a problem for the Axis. Deciding how many BRPs to retain after Summer 1941 can be a poser though. Some expenses are evident; but others are less obvious and will, after all, vary according to each specific game situation. As you enter your Summer 1941 Unit Construction Phase, consider the following list:

- 35 BRPs for DoW on Russia
- 30 BRPs for Fall Offensive
- 15 BRPs for Winter Offensive (West or Med)
- ?? BRPs for Fall builds
- ?? BRPs for Winter builds
- ?? BRPs for SW losses
- ?? BRPs for FA, IE, Growth, etc.

Notice that I have given the Axis enough sense to have the Italians situated such that they are not spending BRPs on Offensive options,

but have loaned their troops to Germany and have the balance of their military in effective static positions. If circumstances in the game in progress have not allowed this optimal use, additional BRPs for Italian Offensive options may have to be allowed. It surprises me how many BRPs are the "minimum" required, but the figures do not lie. The Axis look to need around 170 BRPs in their coffers as they end their Summer 1941 turn. Even more would probably be wise.

Conclusion.

I believe that this exposition touches upon all the crucial matters one must ponder before unleashing a "Shotgun" attack. It should be evident that the attack does not necessarily offer the total defeat of Russia, for she will be able to bring in her '42 forces and utilize the standard 1942 DT to re-establish order on the Eastern Front. But the fall of Berlin or Rome are not threatened either. Ultimately, it is the Axis players who initiate the "Shotgun", and they won't do so unless Axis defenses are sound. Thus, the "Shotgun" strategy becomes yet another option the Axis can use, or threaten to use. The point of departure for it is in the Fall of 1941. The advantage of it is that Turkey has fallen and the British have been engaged strongly, possibly to the point that they provide a more attractive target than Soviet Russia. The options now are to either continue the pressure on Britain, or attack Russia via Turkey without the DT. Or, of course, to cock the "Shotgun".



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AH Philosophy . . . Cont'd from Page 4

on a rack of wargames in any hobby store. Millions of words have been printed on the generals and leaders of the wartime powers, and millions more on the guns, tanks, ships, planes. If there was no interest, a lot of publishers (book and magazine, as well as wargame) would be out of business. Go to any wargame convention and eavesdrop on the participants while they "relax" after the day is done; if they aren't describing, in vivid detail, their latest cardboard exploits, they're debating the merits of some officer long dead or some tank/ship/plane. To this extent, they are kin with the RPGers (who can be overheard arguing the value of elves-with-longbows versus orcs-with-axes), albeit with a bit more factual information to support their pronouncements. And, as the RPG publishers do, wargame designers - being no fools - foster this. World War II, due to its proximity and scope, seems to abound with "cults". Who among us doesn't want to "play" the Tiger tank, or take on Rommel's role, or count the British commandos among our forces, when given the chance? And WW2 wargames offer lots of opportunity for such harmless fantasy.

Yet another reason for the proliferation of World War II boardgames can be said to be due to the scope of the research materials available, even to the average person. No conflict in the history of mankind has been so fully documented. Libraries are full of good books about the war. Thousands of personal accounts have been published in journals and larger works; thousands more remain in private depositories and public archives. Every nation involved has printed its own official history (or histories) of the period. Photographs, film footage and technical specs are readily accessible. Such material is the historical genesis for any wargame; otherwise, one might as well play "alternate history" games. It can be tough finding the material to design a sound historical simulation of the Battle of Helorus in 492, but not of the raid on St. Nazaire in 1942.

The strong appeal of the subject also has something to do, I think, with the fact that this was such a "simple", straightforward war. There were clear-cut objectives, on every level of the struggle. One can't make such a statement for any of the wars that preceded WW2, nor for the many regional conflicts since. It was, in essence (and I doubt that anyone in our day would debate the assertion), "good" versus "evil". World War II evolved into an epic conflict between the most powerful totalitarian, militaristic societies and everybody else. There were some anomalies in the structure of the two alliances, surely (and these make for fascinating study); but it was a "black-'n-white" issue for the people who died, with few "grey" areas. And, so I've been taught, the "good guys" did win. After much sacrifice, a

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SHOOT-OUT IN THE WEST

Further Considerations for the "Shotgun"

By Mark C. Nixon

I doubt that any who play *THIRD REICH*, or who possess even a slight understanding of British history, would require a detailed analysis of the threat to Britain should Gibraltar fall and the Channel ports bristle with Axis fleets poised to invade. The game system would be doing us an injustice if it did not allow this eventuality to pose a major threat to Britain. This brief article is an examination of how Germany and Italy can combine to force the issue of European dominance in the West, before those "outsiders" Russia and the United States have the opportunity to lock a death grip around the Axis jugular. Past articles in these pages have discussed at length the "Spanish Gambit", "Southern Yearnings" and Double-Turn Shotgun". Herein, these three Axis strategies will be shuffled together to examine how German and Italy might deal Britain a losing hand. I call this new brand of aggression, "Shoot-Out in the West".

A very insightful David Hablanian alluded to an Axis DT attack on England way back in his article in *The GENERAL* nine years ago (Vol. 18, No. 5), and I have briefly reiterated his thoughts in the previous article in this issue. The plan calls for Germany to take out France in the normal manner, followed by attacks in Spain and Turkey, with Gibraltar and Egypt as the primary and secondary objectives in early 1941. There may not be time for Egypt to fall; but Gibraltar must be taken for the plan to work, so the best of the Wehrmacht goes through Spain. This two-pronged attack places tremendous military and economic pressure on England, as I have mentioned over and over again in several articles. Here, that line of thinking is extended to demonstrate how targeting these far-flung outposts of the Empire is the best way to prepare for the "Shotgun" DoW against Russia in the Fall of 1941 as a means of forcing the DT exchange and then assaulting England herself. Outright conquest of Britain is the ultimate goal.

The path to London leads through the Mediterranean, for only after victory at Gibraltar is the Italian navy freed or redeployment into the Atlantic where it can provide the conveyance (if not the muscle) to render *SeaLion* tenable. Here, I am assuming the British player will display the foresight to block the Suez Canal should Egypt fall while Gibraltar holds (47.3). The intrinsic difference between this plan and the basic "Southern Yearnings" strategy is that here Germany goes straight towards Gibraltar after Paris falls. Germany is not concerned about the ramifications of a pre-Fall '41 attack on Spain. You can violate Spanish neutrality without fear of consequence to Minor Axis activation, because you will not be needing those allies - or at least, that is the plan. The important goal is to get to Gibraltar and take it out before Fall 1941. In a pinch, the fortress itself could actually be taken out *on* the Fall

turn; but it would be much more practical, SR-wise, to occupy it by summer in order to allow time to deploy for the Fall offensives on Britain and Russia.

The added pressure on Britain due to your simultaneous attacks on Gibraltar and Egypt should have the net effect of making one or the other, or possibly even both, weaker - a fortunate balance to weigh against the tough Axis requirements of attacking both at once. Probably the smartest British play is to defend Gibraltar at all costs, and hold Egypt only with what can be spared after seeing to the security of the Home Island itself. Therefore, I believe the Axis players must anticipate the stiffest resistance taking Gibraltar.

The difference between the "Western Shoot-Out" and Hablanian's "Spanish Gambit" is that DT forced by employing the "Shotgun" strategy. Sure, Britain gets to take a double-turn preceding the Axis DT, but this occurs after Gibraltar has fallen, maybe even after Egypt is gone, and certainly after a tough three seasons of fighting in the Med. Britain most likely is hard-pressed, and on the verge of potential bankruptcy, lacking forces and funds to deter the Axis even with a DT. If Britain is not in this sorry state, well the Axis can still back off and turn on Russia with some form of the "DT Shotgun" or "Russia via Turkey" assault.

Truely, Axis options at this junction offer some exciting possibilities. This is because the inconvenience imposed by the loss of Gibraltar is tough for Britain to contend with as major elements of her desert army may still be in Egypt (and suddenly find they have difficulty returning for home defense). If the Suez canal is blocked and a large contingent of the Royal Army is trapped in the desert, the British Isles may be doomed. Forced to defend against two turns of combined Axis naval operation, with panzers already loaded aboard ships in West Front ports, overwhelming air power as well as the Fallschirmjaegers poised to drop, the British player may find himself out of this war in a hurry. The Royal Navy may be all that remains to deny enemy invasion; and for once, that powerful fleet is outgunned at sea. How much of the Royal Navy was destroyed in the Med? How much of it was caught napping there when the Rock and Suez fell? Great Britain may find itself out of breathing room and facing as many as nine Axis fleets, which enjoy the luxury of consecutive turns to land ground troops and storm London.

Crossing the Channel

As I have done in past articles, this examination relies heavily upon points made in Hablanian's excellent article, "The Spanish Gambit". As such, I make no attempt to restate what Mr. Hablanian already covered so well years ago; his invasion plan for Spain is well conceived, and was followed with equivalent precision in his analysis of the operation at Gibraltar. Since

that issue is still available, fans of the game are advised to obtain a copy from Avalon Hill. Background reading on this phase of the "Shoot-Out" is complete once you've briefly reviewed the section on Spain and Gibraltar from my own "Axis Southern Yearnings" (*The GENERAL* 24/6), which expounds upon a few variations which might be applied at Gibraltar.

The only new twist to be added in the "Shoot-Out" consideration of Spain is that there may actually be less need to hurry with the subjugation of that country. Unlike during a "Spanish Gambit", Germany can use two turns to take Madrid, provided the first turn is no later than Winter '40 - although it would be economically sound strategy to try or Madrid at that moment in order to gain the Spanish BRPs for the 1941 YSS. But if that is not possible, a two-turn campaign offers the advantage that Spain might be conquered with high concentrations of infantry, fewer Luftwaffe formations, and without the paratroops. All this would be fortunate since the strength saved may be needed to put heat on Egypt, perhaps to finish off a lingering French campaign, and to maintain a threat to cross the Channel in force. Paying for one extra Med front Offensive option is not a liability, since one must be taken for operations against Egypt anyway. And here's the kicker - if such a cautious attack on Spain entices the British to fight for the Iberian peninsula, all the better as Axis forces destroy them there (similar to what would happen were the British to fight for Anatolia in the "DT Shotgun"). If fact, if you as the Axis can entice the British to fight anywhere on the continent, your chance of game victory will be much improved as very often the only viable strategy which saves Britain is one of careful withdrawal. That most British players of *THIRD REICH* tend to resist such an Axis enticement as best they can is a tribute to their fortitude, for they truly do want to stay on the field of battle to deal the Axis a crushing blow.

Despite this, the act of invading Spain (or Turkey, for that matter) in Winter 1940 will likely prompt Britain into intervening as a means of acquiring the BRPs at next YSS. The British go into such places, even though everyone knows they cannot hold them, just so she can grab those BRPs for temporary use. Using the example of intervention in both Spain and Turkey, Britain might begin 1941 with 60 "extra" BRPs which, come the 1942 YSS, threaten to generate a Base Growth of 24. In addition, this would mean a total of 60 added BRPs available for use in the 1941 YSS, which could be used directly to build an additional six BRPs worth of SW. This, despite the fact that those 60 BRPs will certainly be deducted as soon as the Axis takes its first turn in 1941. But at that point, the damage has been done, as the extra SW will be most welcome in the British Isles come 1942.

However, keep one point in mind. If Britain does elect to spend those extra BRPs on SW,

and also perhaps throws in the extra six she would be allowed in FA, these are 12 BRPs she would not have spent had she not intervened in Turkey and Spain. So the loss of those two countries to the Axis would leave, in the final analysis, Britain with a deficit of 12 BRPs in 1941 due to these added expenditures, plus - of course - any benefit of those SW and FA efforts. Certainly those benefits might prove valuable later on, but in a strictly economic sense (as they impact Britain's immediate needs), it should be crystal clear that the gains in Spain and Turkey are pure illusion. Therefore, the British player should not escalate her risk during these interventions by sending in more than the bare minimum of force - only a single factor per country might be best. Otherwise, in an over-commitment of force, the losses in British armed forces in these minor countries could see the marginal strategic gains smothered under the huge economic losses.

Britain's Dilemma

The loss of Gibraltar and Egypt is a catastrophe of the first magnitude for the British war effort. Subtracting 50 BRPs from her war economy will greatly inhibit British ability to wage war for that year. Even more pronounced, the territorial losses (particularly Gibraltar) place the player in a very awkward strategic position. These are hard losses, and any Axis player has good reason to be pleased when he secures them. Indeed, thanks to the severe restrictions these losses place on Britain's Mediterranean effort, the Axis players are assured of long-term benefits. And beyond the immediate danger this situation presents to Britain lurks the long-term problems of how the Western Allies are to carry the war to the enemy without the Mediterranean theater available to them. But that matter is not of immediate concern, where conquest of Britain is to be examined.

If the Axis players never consider any further action against Britain beyond this, they may be guilty of failing to see the forest for the trees. What if the capture of Gibraltar and Egypt are viewed not as an end unto itself, or merely a hurdle to be cleared on the road to London, but as two major weapons which might be used against England? What if the Axis can coordinate victories at these British outposts within the contrived time frame of a single "BRP Year" to force an economic crisis upon Britain. I have mentioned before such a strategy in this issue, but only as a casual reference to the fact that a 50-BRP deduction coupled with other British requirements might put a strait-jacket upon British spending.

But since this "Shoot-Out" is formulated to knock Britain out of the war, the conquest of Gibraltar and Egypt evolve from something "convenient" to something of consummate importance. Imagine yourself on the British end of five seasons of unrelenting attack (Spring '41 through Spring '42), with a loss of 50 BRPs, SW depletion of about 39, and then an enemy DT. The 1941 British economy might look something like this: 155 BRPs (1941 YSS, including 30 for Turkey) - 15 (SW builds) - 30 (loss of Turkey) - 25 (loss of Egypt) - 25 (loss of Gibraltar) - 15 (Foreign Aid) - 40 (SW reserve for '42) = 5 BRP balance for all else.

Of course, it is ludicrous to expect Britain to fight for her life with only five BRPs available. Foreign Aid will likely never be sent out, and some of the expenses will come out of the 1942 Base, as the SW reserve is frittered away as the British player is forced to replace losses and, even though there appears to be no allowance for it, take the occasional Offensive option. If Britain fights for Gibraltar and Egypt, RAF losses alone might equal 60 BRPs.

While Britain might temporarily stave off complete disaster by spending into the red, such a reduction in its Base would be a major blow, even though it might also happen to embody a smart choice - considering the alternative. But imagine the dilemma such a massive BRP loss creates for the British player, and his allies as well. If we suppose the Axis is successful in their attacks, taking Gibraltar and Egypt by Fall '41, and Britain is forced to consume her SW reserve BRPs to safeguard London, England actually faces BRP losses *four* times that which is deducted from her 1942 YSS, as that loss will not be rectified in future years. Thus a 30-BRP Base reduction amounts to 120 lost BRPs during the war; a 45-BRP loss means 180 out of the Allied coffers. London may, or may not, be saved by this deficit spending; but coupled with Britain's combat losses, her wartime economy is wrecked for at least the next two game-years. The Axis players have successfully negotiated a transient reduction of 50 BRPs into one of lasting effect, so that Britain will forever be paying off her debt.

Too Many Fronts

It is the overriding irony of the "Spanish Gambit-Shotgun" that the very deed which places London in such peril, the DoW on Russia, also happens to herald the opening of hostilities with the only country that can save Europe. Make no mistake, even the United States could not save London were Germany freed of any need to defend her eastern frontier from the Red Army. It is only the threat from the east which enables the survival of the west, although a number of problems must still be overcome to preclude an outright Axis victory at London. Nevertheless, war with Russia is inevitable unless the Axis players succeed with a pure "Spanish Gambit" strategy, face a rookie player who allows a para-blitz of London, or can win the "Shoot-Out" quickly. Otherwise, Russia must be dealt with. So if your strategic situation on the eve of *SeaLion* does not look favorable, by all means turn and deal with Russia.

You have not the strength to make the full effort for London without yielding some in the East. As you sit in the western ports riding out the Allied DT over Fall/Winter '41, the Russians will be hurting you. With major portions of your panzer force and all of the Luftwaffe aimed at England, it is too late to switch. Remember, the "Shoot-Out" is a *gambit* (not quite the same as the "Shotgun", which lacks the "do-or-die" fervor). You, as the German, have ensured the British cannot hit back hard with their DT; you have ready a superior fleet, at least four panzer units loaded aboard, twice as much airpower (by a conservative estimate) as well as the Fallschirmjaegers, all poised to

invade England. True, the Royal Navy must be overcome, and that is no guarantee; but the RAF is nullified, and the British army will sit in place for two consecutive turns, little more than a target.

If you land on the first turn of your invasion, you should be able to shut off enough British ports that even supply from the US will not get through to anyone attempting to retake London. Should you not land until the second turn, you will be doing well if you only manage to take London itself. Since you have counter-aired the RAF and made intelligent use of your paratroops, a British liberation of London is a highly unlikely eventuality. I'd estimate that Axis chances, once their DT kicks off, are about 66% of knocking England out of the war - although it must be stressed that this is contingent upon conditions being favorable, as detailed in the preceding pages, for the attempt to be made in the first place. This is my "gut feeling", as I deem the astounding load of potential variables far too overwhelming to even suggest some formula capable of yielding an accurate probability of Axis success for *SeaLion*.

But, try the "Shoot-Out" once or twice, and you will notice your opponents perk up the next time you draw the Axis side in a game of *THIRD REICH!*



SO THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING

Titles Listed: 120

Total Responses: 410

Rank:	Title	Pub	Rank		Times	Freq.
			Last	On		
		Time	List	Ratio		
1.	Advanced SL	AH	1	29	5.1	
	Russian Campaign	AH	4	3	3.2	
3.	Up Front	AH	3	16	2.5	
4.	Diplomacy	AH	2	30	1.9	
5.	Third Reich	AH	9	9	1.9	
6.	FlatTop	AH	--	1	1.8	
7.	Attack Sub	AH	--	1	1.7	
8.	Gettysburg '88	AH	10	3	1.7	
9.	TP: Stalingrad	AH	15	2	1.7	
10.	Bulge '81	AH	--	1	1.6	
11.	Blackbeard	AH	--	1	1.5	
12.	Civilization	AH	17	2	1.5	
13.	Squad Leader	AH	14	58	1.5	
14.	B-17	AH	5	3	1.4	
15.	Robin Hood	AH	--	1	1.3	
16.	VITP	AH	16	2	1.2	
17.	Empires in Arms	AH	18	4	1.1	
18.	Republic of Rome	AH	13	3	1.1	
19.	PanzerBlitz	AH	--	1	1.0	
20.	Tac Air	AH	--	1	1.0	

As the summer comes to a close, it is gratifying to see the new releases getting some playing time on tabletops across the country. *ATTACK SUB*, *BLACKBEARD* and *LEGENDS OF ROBIN HOOD* have drawn praise from both reviewers and gamers, but the true test is whether each is good enough to overtake long-established designs and remain on this regular listing. Only time - and the tastes of your peers - will tell. No doubt, the new "Advanced" versions of *CIVILIZATION* and *THIRD REICH* will soon make an appearance as well, as many fans rush to see what the shouting is about. And I fully expect to see *BULGE '91* edge out its predecessor (which is to be dropped from the line).



MAKING THE TRANSITION

Advanced THIRD REICH

By Joseph J. Brophy

Few wargames have commanded so loyal a following for so many years as *THIRD REICH*. The game has its own extensive literature, and a hard core of players with strongly-held opinions about every aspect of the strategy. I had played *THIRD REICH* for only a couple of years, so I was far from an expert when I first stumbled upon an early draft of the *Advanced THIRD REICH* rules. I knew just enough about the game to play and enjoy it, but the fact that I did not have much to "unlearn" was to be a great advantage in testing the new rules. I was able to enjoy the task of helping develop what is probably the most exhaustively researched and tested strategy game ever, without the pain of surrendering many fixed ideas or tried-and-true strategies. *Advanced THIRD REICH* is not only a more historically authentic design than its predecessors, but is even more fun to play. And if we hadn't enjoyed playing *THIRD REICH* so much in the first place, we would not have invested the thousands of hours that went into the development of *Advanced THIRD REICH*.

The first thing players will notice upon picking up the *Advanced THIRD REICH* rules is that they are longer than those of previous editions. Certainly *Advanced 3R* is not for those who like games that can be learned in a few minutes and mastered in a few hours. But *Advanced 3R* is much easier to play than the length of the rulebook would suggest. For those who already know how to play *THIRD REICH*, the transition is not very hard. The rules of the new version are well-organized, logical and, for history buffs, actually fun to read. For those new to *THIRD REICH*, perhaps the best way to

learn *Advanced 3R* is to skim the rules, play a *Barbarossa* scenario or two, then work up to playing a 1940 scenario, and finally try a full-board scenario or a Campaign Game. The scenarios have been carefully designed to introduce new players to the rules gradually and relatively painlessly. It is unnecessary to wade through every page of the rulebook just to enjoy the game; at least half of the space therein is devoted to examples and clarifications that need be consulted only when and if such problems arise.

The basic mechanics of *Advanced THIRD REICH* are, if not simpler than the original, certainly more consistent and rational. The diplomatic appendices are the most involved portion of the rulebook, but in my opinion are the crowning achievement of the design and the new game cannot be fully appreciated without understanding and using them. (However, I hope to discuss the intricacies of the diplomatic game in another article.) This summary that follows is intended to introduce the changes in the basic rules of *Advanced THIRD REICH* to those who have played previous editions of the game. I do not claim to have covered every alteration in this piece, but as an overview it is as accurate as I can make it. I have tried to include at least a brief description of each significant change, and some opinions (not necessarily correct) concerning the effects of the most important changes on strategy.

For experienced *THIRD REICH* players, probably the most difficult hurdle about learning the new rules is unlearning the old, reliable strategies that no longer work. The game sys-

tem is still *THIRD REICH*, the game mechanics are still *THIRD REICH* - but *Advanced THIRD REICH* is designed to play differently in many ways. Some veteran players have said that *Advanced 3R* is too forgiving of poor play, perhaps even "idiot-proof". It isn't; but it is harder to blow the whole game plan instantly with just one minor blunder. Major blunders in strategy reliably result in utter defeat still, but this article will not deprive you new players of the fun of uncovering those blunders yourselves. I will only hint that the most serious ones that an *Advanced THIRD REICH* player can commit are diplomatic, not military.

The *Advanced THIRD REICH* rules are "advanced" in several senses of the word. Many of the arbitrary and difficult rules in earlier editions have been eliminated. It is no longer necessary, for example, to count up how many Axis combat factors may be supplied through the eastern Mediterranean ports before Malta falls. The combat rules have been refined, particularly in regard to the interaction of air and naval power. There are now 25 variants for each side, many of them new. More important are the changes in the deeper structure of the game. The economic game has been revamped drastically and strategic warfare, almost an afterthought in the original, has come into its own. Most importantly, the diplomatic rules have been fully integrated into the game system, giving the players the capability to control political events (such as the entry of the United States and Russia into the war, the activation of minor neutrals, and the terms of a peace treaty with a conquered Britain). *THIRD REICH* was

always a very good wargame. *Advanced THIRD REICH* is an even better wargame; but more importantly, it is a strategic simulation of a high order, melding economic, political and military conflict in the time-tested framework of a classic game system. Few, if any, fans of the game who have tried *Advanced THIRD REICH* seem willing to go back to the original.

What Hasn't Changed

The basic game system of *Advanced THIRD REICH* is unmistakably still *THIRD REICH*. The layout of the mapboard (now a painted map, ala *RUSSIAN FRONT*, by Charlie Kibler), basic sequence of play, ground and air combat systems, BRP economic system, and force pools are little changed (although the timing of force pool additions and rates of economic growth have altered significantly in some instances). The relative economic strengths of the major powers at start remains the same, but design developments have the potential of altering the absolute and relative economic power of the players in numerous ways. The Foreign Aid rules, Vichy activation rules, and the Eastern Front garrison rules, among others, have been replaced with diplomatic rules that are fully integrated with every aspect of the game system, and force players to carefully weigh the consequences of their various strategies. The Intelligence Table is gone as well. Naval combat, strategic warfare, and supply systems are far more sophisticated and play a larger role in the game. Although the "tactical" game has been refined and improved, *Advanced THIRD REICH* is first and foremost a game of grand strategy.

It is not too difficult to design a wargame using a hex-grid mapboard, counters incorporating combat and movement factors, and a combat results table. It is more difficult to design playable rules that convincingly simulate not only military abilities and possibilities, but also the economic and political developments of a pivotal era of history. The earlier editions of *THIRD REICH* reflected the economic capabilities of the various powers by assigning each BRP bases and growth rates and allowing each the capability of augmenting their economic clout by conquering other countries. The system was a very good one, but it had its limitations in terms of the flow of the play as well as historical accuracy.

The most important innovation in *Advanced THIRD REICH* are those new rules that replace such previously arbitrary parameters of the game with a whole series of options that, while historically accurate, permit the gamers great flexibility in developing long-range military, economic and political strategies. The most important example is that the timing of the entry of the United States and Russia into the world war can now vary widely. The US may grant BRPs to Britain before its entry into the war, but if the American player does so it enters the war with far fewer BRPs than in prior editions. Thus, the change in initiative from the Axis to the Allies, previously guaranteed to take the form of a spring-summer 1942 double-turn for the Allies, might now occur almost any time from early 1942 to early 1944 (unless, of course, there is an early and decisive Axis vic-

tory). The timing of this shift in initiative, like the timing of the entry of America and Russia, may be influenced significantly by the players' actions. But the players also have greater control over other double-turns as well, since *Advanced 3R* permits players to voluntarily "destroy" BRPs to avoid unwanted double-turns. The demise of the arbitrary spring-summer 1942 Allied double-turn is only one example of the flexibility that has been purposely designed into the *Advanced THIRD REICH* game system.

The new variants are so numerous that no attempt will be made here to summarize them all. Many will be mentioned in passing below. Suffice to say that between the 50 variant and the capability to affect approximately 20 different countries in various ways through diplomatic efforts, stereotyped strategies will be a virtual impossibility. There is no substitute for a thorough command of the mechanics of the play; but the key to victory in *Advanced THIRD REICH* is not so much tactical brilliance as the ability to devise a winning strategy from myriad possibilities combined with the flexibility to cope with, and benefit from, unanticipated developments.

The Reorganized Rulebook

While much that is in the *Advanced 3R* rulebook is familiar (indeed, has been taken unchanged from the 4th edition rules), this new offering has been completely reorganized. The most welcome innovation is a table of contents, which was unaccountably absent from the 4th Edition. This table is divided into major sections on "components and concepts", "mechanics of play", "unit counters", "logistics", "economics", "politics" and "miscellaneous rules". A separate volume is devoted to "diplomacy", "variants" and "scenario". The Russian and British surrender rules are collected at the end of the rulebook. The various tables and charts used during play have been reprinted on several sheets for quick reference. Let's look through the new rulebook(s) step-by-step:

Components & Concepts

Most of the Game Terms (rules section 2.) will be familiar to *THIRD REICH* players, but this section will serve as a handy glossary for novices. The new Game Components (3.) consists of the rules and appendices, an additional sheet of unit counters, and updated mapboard (now more eye-appealing, as noted above, and more accurate with new borders for Vichy France, the Ukraine, Poland, etc.), scenario cards, counters and player aids.

There are some important changes in Terrain & the Mapboard (4.). Units defending on capitals are not subject to a negative DM ("defense multiplier") when defending against exploiting armor, for instance. Terrain effects on land combat (4.8) are printed on a separate Terrain Effects Chart. Terrain effects are now cumulative. This means that a unit defending on a mountain behind a river is quadrupled - not tripled. A fortress defended against invasion is quintupled, not quadrupled.

While on the subject of fortresses, certain variants add fortresses where none existed before. Allied variant #3 makes Sedan (O24) a

fortress; Allied variant #13 makes Moscow and Stalingrad fortresses; Axis variant #25 makes Berchtesgaden both a fortress and an unlimited supply source that must be captured in order for the Allies to conquer Germany. Allied variant #1, on the other hand, removes the Maginot Line fortresses but gives France a larger force pool.

Mapboard changes (5.), other than variants, are few but significant. All of Iraq and much of Persia now appear on the mapboard; Baghdad is the capital of Iraq, and replaces Mosul as an objective hex. Basra is a port and an unlimited Axis supply source. Helsinki and Lisbon are now ports as well as capitals. Suda Bay in Greece (GG26) and Famagusta in Cyprus (GG34) are both ports. Tripoli and Algiers are the capitals of Libya and French North Africa respectively. The Nazi-Soviet Pact line includes the three hexes on the Finnish side of the border and the two Polish hexes adjacent to the Hungarian border. All of these changes can have important effects upon play, as will be seen shortly. But surely the most notable change will be in the art itself; the colorless (though highly functional) map has been transformed. *Advanced THIRD REICH* is state of the art (excuse the pun), in both design and graphics.

Mechanics of Play

The combat rules are familiar in many ways, and some of the rules are adopted almost verbatim from prior editions of *THIRD REICH*. Stacking (10.), hex control (11.), zones of control (12.) and option selections (13.) are all recognizable. Rules regarding air staging, naval movement and ground movement are little changed.

Overruns (14.8) are permitted when a hex is entered during movement at 6-1 odds or greater by units (including at least one armor) entering from a single hex. Overrunning units expend one extra movement factor (MF) to overrun, then continue their movement normally. Multiple overruns are permitted. The tactical implications of this rule are profound, and it merits careful study by others in future articles. The overrun rule, combined with the reduced defense, strengthens breakthrough and exploitation attacks against weak positions, and can play a major role in the German assault on France and Russia, as well as the final Allied drive in the late turns of a Campaign Game or 1944 scenario.

Ground combat (15.) has been altered with the concept of defense multipliers, discussed at length in the details of ground combat (15.22). Terrain values, as noted above, are cumulative; these are positive defense multipliers (15.23). On the other hand, negative defense multipliers can reduce units' defense values as low as their face value (15.24). Infantry, replacement units and partially-supplied armored units defend at less than normal values under certain circumstances: 1) Infantry and Replacement units attacked by exploiting armor (unless on capitals, ICs or objective hexes); 2) minor country units outside their homeland; or 3) units subject to certain variants or diplomatic results.

Just as terrain effects are cumulative, so too are adverse effects on defense. Thus, a Russian

infantry unit on a swamp hex normally defends at three times its face value, but will defend at only twice face value if attacked by German infantry on the first turn of the war if a Russian diplomatic result of "3-5" or greater were in effect (+2 DM for terrain, -1 DM for the diplomatic result). If the same unit were attacked by exploiting German armor on the same turn, there would be an additional -1 DM and it would defend at face value. Units never defend at less than face value, regardless of how many adverse defense conditions apply.

Combat Result table outcomes have been changed in only one respect, but it is an important one. Counterattacks arising out of the 2-1 attacks have been modified (15.44) so that the attacker no longer risks losing his entire force on a D-Elim result of a 1-1 counterattack. The best that the defender can do now on such a result is to eliminate as many attacking factors as the defender's terrain-modified total. This softens occasional nasty tactical surprises; *Advanced THIRD REICH* is a game of strategy, after all.

Breakthrough and exploitation (15.6) have been clarified as well, but the rules remain essentially the same. However, these actions are not permitted against vacant hexes now, except for beaches (15.8). This is one of the more controversial innovations in the combat rules, and it counterbalances the power of the new overrun capabilities of armored units.

The Attrition option (16.) plays exactly the same as in previous editions, except that the concept of "limited" offensives has been introduced (17.). This innovation permit players taking an attrition option to pay BRPs for individual attacks and missions, while the remaining ground units on that front are counted normally for attrition combat. This limited offensive rule has become one of the most popular changes put forth by *Advanced THIRD REICH*, and makes for much livelier play. Invasions are permitted during limited offensives, so raids against undefended beaches may be launched at modest expense to the attacker. In the Mediterranean theater, where small forces and limited Italian and British treasures often resulted in stereotyped attrition in the original game, we have found the Western Desert campaign to be much more intriguing now. Airborne drops, breakthroughs and exploitation are not permitted during limited offensives, which limits the application of this on the Eastern Front; but the Russian player still welcomes the opportunity to attack a single key hex while taking an attrition at the same time. The Pass option (19.) remains the same in concept, but since there are many more possible defensive naval and air missions the player taking a pass option is not entirely sidelined for the turn.

Unit construction rules (19.) have been revised in a few important respects. Submarines cost only one BRP per factor; ASW and SAC, two BRPs per factor. Britain may build up to three BRPs' worth of infantry or replacement factors per turn in Suez or Iraq. During unit construction, a player may voluntarily destroy BRPs to avoid an unwanted double-turn (19.4)

Strategic Redeployment (20.) also is the same in concept as before, although it is different in practice. The SR rules have been revised

in so many ways that they must be read carefully before long-time players attempt to play *Advanced THIRD REICH*. Most powers' SR levels are the same as previously, but the United States' is now tied to its BRP base (one SR per 20 BRPs - 20.16). SRs by sea are now subject to naval and air interception (20.8) and must therefore be announced before they are attempted. American initial deployments are also subject to interception (20.84). In practice, attempts to intercept SRs by sea are common (although attempts to intercept US deployments are rare because all American fleets in the "SW Box" may defend initial deployments). Further, the rate of American deployment is determined by the current US SR level, which may be reduced by German submarine warfare. At the end of the SR Phase, players have a second chance to voluntarily eliminate units (20.9).

Unit Counters

Infantry counters (21.) have the same capabilities as before, except that 3-4 units have their MF reduced to three when in limited supply. Infantry counters are also subject to a -1 DM if attacked by exploiting armor. Replacements (22.) are likewise subject to such a penalty, as are armor (23.) in limited supply. Moreover, armor units which are only in limited supply lose their ZOC and have their MF reduced to three.

Airborne units (24.) have altered capabilities, and are thus somewhat less powerful. The range is still six hexes for a drop, but they may only drop on hexes over which their side has air superiority (24.5). If the side attempting the airborne attack does not have at least as many uninverted air factors in range of the target hex as the defender, the airdrop is prohibited. Airborne units may only attack the hex on which they actually drop (24.2). These limitations are compensated for by the fact that airborne units are not subject to permanent elimination. They may always be rebuilt after a one-turn delay (24.4).

Partisans (25.) may now be constructed every turn in a given country, but only one per game turn. Each partisan-controlled hex eliminates one enemy BRP per turn (25.6) - a seemingly minor change which nevertheless can have serious consequences for the Axis if allowed to mount. A successful diplomatic die roll gives the Axis the right to construct partisans in Egypt. Allied variant #14 increases the partisan activity in Russia (two partisans constructed per turn). Allied variant #17 increases partisan activity throughout occupied Europe.

The capabilities of air units (26.) remain essentially unchanged. The mix of airbases (26.12) has been altered. Germany now has four available, Italy and France only two. One airbase may be placed each turn throughout the game; after all are in play, one may be "recycled" each turn by being moved elsewhere. Staging and mission ranges remain the same. Ground support, defensive air support, counterair and interception rules are similar, except that all air-to-air combat involving more than five air factors on both sides must be resolved as two or more battles (26.66).

The destructiveness of air units attacking naval units in port (26.452) or at sea (26.453) is

much greater than in previous editions, and the mechanics of such attacks are entirely new. An air defense die roll precedes the air units' attack on the naval units. For purposes of air defense, naval units in a port enjoy a favorable DRM. This air defense roll may result in some air factors being destroyed, while other air factors abort the mission for that round of combat. The attacker completes his air attack against the enemy fleet(s) with his surviving factors by rolling two dice and consulting the Air Attack Table (26.4543). Aborted air factors may return for further sorties against the naval units. Units in ports may be repeatedly attacked so long as the attacker has surviving air units and some damage was inflicted on the target during the previous sortie. Naval units at sea may be attacked in each hex they traverse in range of enemy air units or, if engaged in fleet combat they may be attacked by air units at the beginning of each fleet combat round (26.4534).

To defend their naval units from air attack, players may assign air factors to air cover missions (26.42, 26.52). Air units providing air cover may attack some or all of the attacking enemy air units. Only the air factors that survive the combat with the friendly air cover may then attack the naval target. However, covering air units may not attack enemy fleets themselves, nor engage in any other air mission that turn.

[These innovations in the interplay between naval and air power are possibly the most important modifications to the combat rules, and are one of the most popular with our playtesters.]

Naval combat (27.) features more exciting changes in the combat systems. Stacking (27.1), basing (27.2) and movement (27.3) are essentially unchanged from previous editions. The fun begins with the wider variety of ways in which naval units may be employed (27.3). These new missions make naval combat possible at a number of points each turn, including supply determination, SR and strategic warfare phases. Almost all of the naval rules have been modified in some degree. Shore bombardment is handled similarly, with the important exception that naval factors may be lost on an "A" result (but only one naval factor eliminated per three employed). Sea transport is almost unchanged. Invasions (27.43) are handled in similar fashion as before, except that invasions from more than seven hexes by sea from a friendly, supplied port require six (rather than three) naval factors per ground factor. A 9-factor fleet in a port still prevents invasion, but air attacks on ports precede invasion resolution. Axis variant #12 allows a surprise Italian attack on any one British Mediterranean port, which may make an invasion-proof port suddenly vulnerable - another example of the sort of rule which allows *Advanced 3R* to so realistically simulate the uncertainties of the war.

The basics of naval interception are also similar - but fleet factors in the same port may separate to attempt interception against different enemy forces. The Interception tables have been revised to make interception automatic within four hexes (air range), and each uninverted friendly air factor within range of the interception point gives the player a favorable

negative, bonus DRM for interception attempts (27.565).

On the other hand, the fleet combat rules (27.54) have been modified drastically. Combat tables have been altered so that naval factors may be damaged or destroyed, just as in air attacks. Each side rolls two dice and consults the Fleet Combat table to determine the losses inflicted on the enemy. Nationality modifiers have more dramatic effects on combat resolution. Fleets escorting ground units or sea supply receive an adverse DRM to their fleet combat dice rolls. Fleet factors damaged in combat must abort their missions and automatically return to their port of origin, while the undamaged portion of the naval force may continue to its destination only if it wins the fleet battle (27.5714), which may involve several rounds of combat. The US, Britain and Germany may elect to fight a second round of fleet combat even if defeated in the first, but all other nations must withdraw after losing one round of combat.

The changes in air and naval rules result in more frequent naval clashes in *Advanced THIRD REICH*. However, many fleets are only damaged rather than eliminated, so play balance is preserved since naval battles generally see fewer factors eliminated per engagement. Naval strategy is affected profoundly by the fact that naval units, especially at sea, are far more vulnerable to air attack than under the prior rules. Even five hostile air factors can pose a major threat to fleets operating without air cover. Thus, naval basing and mission decisions must be made with an eye on enemy air deployments.

Strategic redeployment at sea (27.6) requires only two naval factors per ground or air factor being escorted, but SR by sea may also be intercepted by enemy naval and/or air units. Moreover, as noted above, fleets providing sea escort for units or supply are subject to a -1 DRM in fleet combat. Thus, Axis reinforcements to the Afrika Korps and British reinforcements to Malta and Egypt can present serious problems - another historically accurate result.

Naval counters may be broken down into partial fleets at any time, and recombined without restriction (27.71); partial fleets may now be constructed as well. Destroyed naval factors may be reconstructed without a waiting period, at a cost of three BRPs per factor, but each major power is limited in the number of naval factors that it may rebuild per turn. Italy, Russia and France may only rebuild one factor per turn, Germany two, and Britain and the US three (rising to four for America in 1943). Axis variant #2 (the Z-Plan) permits Germany to rebuild three; Allied variant #10 (Dominion commitments) permits Britain to rebuild four. Minor power fleets may never be rebuilt (27.85). This rule reduces record-keeping considerably and puts emphasis on planning, so that your shipyards produce a steady flow of fleet factors. For example, if Britain has suffered serious naval losses early in the game, it may do well to calmly invest BRPs in naval reconstruction to have the necessary tonnage for offensive operations later in the game rather than attempt immediate attacks on the Axis during the mid-game stage. Damaged naval factors

are repaired automatically, at no BRP cost, upon their return to port, but are inverted for the rest of the game turn (27.84).

Bridgehead counters may now be placed on friendly hexes invaded from the sea, to improve the supply status of units that are unsupplied or in limited supply (28.112). Moreover, bridgeheads are unlimited supply sources in the turn they are placed, so that it is now unnecessary to trace a sea supply line to a beach before exploiting from it. But if bridgeheads are not kept in unlimited supply, they must be removed.

Logistics

As with so many other rules in *Advanced THIRD REICH*, supply (29.) is familiar in general but with many important variations in detail. The new supply rules add an intermediate category of "limited supply", which affects units' movement and combat capabilities. This adds a new element of strategy to the play.

Unlimited supply (29.21) is drawn primarily from unconquered major power capitals, the eastern edge of the mapboard (Russia only), Suez and Iraq (Western Allies only). Axis variant #1 makes Cyprus an unlimited supply source for Axis units. Minor country forces draw unlimited supply from their own capitals. And, as mentioned above, bridgeheads placed by invasion are an unlimited supply source for that turn. Russian Industrial Centers (IC) and Gibraltar supply the Russian and Western Allied units actually in them only. All units able to trace supply to an unlimited supply source at the beginning of their turn have full combat and movement capabilities.

Limited supply sources (29.22) supply only infantry and replacement units. All others in limited supply have their abilities curtailed. Limited supply may be drawn from minor country capitals (including the capitals of colonies), captured major power capitals (except Moscow and Berlin), Maginot hexes (French units only), West Wall hexes (German units only), Malta (Allied ground and submarine units only) and the Greek and Spanish islands (for those nationalities only). As in prior editions, the Western Allies may not trace supply to Russian supply sources, (nor vice versa), nor may Axis units trace supply to captured Russian ICs (29.262).

Supply lines are traced through friendly-controlled hexes as in prior editions (29.3). Fleets are no longer required for sea supply, which eliminates a tedious aspect of the original design, but sea supply is subject to interception. Thus, fleet protection or air cover for sea supply lines is often necessary. This disruption of a sea supply line may result in units being reduced to limited supply, as is often the case for Axis units operating in North Africa. If no limited supply source is available, the isolated units are eliminated. Players must be sure that invading forces can not only get ashore, but can be supplied afterwards.

Supply determination (29.4) takes place twice each turn - before ground movement and again after combat (in the case of previously unsupplied units). Units and hexes that were supplied at the end of either phase remain in supply until that player's next supply determination phase.

Units able to trace supply only from a limited supply source are "partially" supplied (29.52). Units other than infantry and replacements in such a state are not eliminated, but their capabilities are curtailed. In brief, armor and airborne units which are not fully supplied move and fight as infantry; air and naval units may move or stage, but may not engage in combat or missions from unsupplied bases. Unsupplied ground units, bridgeheads and airbases are removed at the end of the post-combat supply determination phase. Units eliminated due to lack of supply may not be rebuilt until the next turn. As in prior editions, exploiting armor and airborne units are automatically in supply for the turn after they exploit or airdrop. Partisans are always in supply.

Oil (30.) is a special category of logistics that has major implications for the strategy of all players of the game. Ploesti is the source for oil supply for the Axis. Loss of oil supplies has dire consequences for the Axis. For each turn the Axis is unable to trace a supply line from Ploesti to any objective hex in Germany, Germany and Italy suffer the following consequences, one per turn, cumulatively until all are implemented:

1. Ability to intercept Allied SAC decreases;
2. Effectiveness of German submarines decreases;
3. Axis fleets are inverted;
4. Axis air units are inverted, except on fronts on which an Axis offensive is in effect;
5. Axis armor units are treated as infantry, unless an Axis offensive is in effect.

In addition to the foregoing, for each turn oil supplies are interrupted, German and Italian SR capacity drops by one, without limit. These effects are determined at the beginning of each Axis player turn, and are reversed only if oil supplies are restored at the beginning of the next Axis turn.

Each turn that oil supplies are interrupted, the Axis player(s) must choose which of the effects will be implemented that turn, in addition to all previous effects. The choice is irrevocable until oil supplies are restored. Then, the Axis may select one effect to be reversed each turn; and Axis SRs increase, one per turn. As a practical matter, once oil supplies have been interrupted, the fall of the Axis has usually begun.

Every strategic decision in *Advanced 3R* must therefore consider the importance of oil, as was the case in the historical campaigns. A Russian conquest of Rumania has obviously ominous implications for the Axis, even before Russia is at war with Germany. A neutral Russia cannot interrupt German oil supplies, but Ploesti makes a dandy hostage against early German attack. Because Ploesti is crucial to the Axis war effort, the Russian steamroller also is aimed at either Warsaw or Rumania (or both) late in the war.

Weather effects (31.), including a prohibition on breakthroughs and exploitation on the Eastern Front in spring turns, gives the fighting a very interesting rhythm. The Russian Winter effects, which may vary from little to very severe, are determined by a die roll each winter, with the Axis receiving an increasingly favor-

able modifier each year. Invasions involving seaborne movement on the Eastern or Western fronts are prohibited on Winter turns.

Economics

The Year Start Sequence (32.) is handled as in prior editions. However, colonies are now treated like conquests for BRP purposes (33.5) so that a player losing a colony loses the BRPs for that colony immediately - and in each subsequent YSS in which that colony is not retaken. Moreover, BRPs may be voluntarily eliminated at the YSS to avoid unwanted double-turns.

The United States' economy is handled very differently (33.8). The US begins the Campaign Game with a base of only 150 BRPs, but the American base grows by 10 BRPs each turn prior to US entry into the war (subject to reduction for BRPs granted to Britain). After the United States enters the war, its economy grows by 20 BRPs each turn without limit. In addition, starting in the 1943 YSS (or later, in rare instances when the US enters the war after 1942), the United States also compounds leftover BRPs at 50%. The BRPs which are added to the American BRP base each turn are also added to the US BRP total and may be spent immediately. The impact of American entry upon the initiative is thus gradual, and may be delayed for several turns after the US enters the war, but its economy usually reaches enormous proportions by 1944.

The Russian economy is simulated in an even more unique fashion. Russian BRPs are produced by Industrial Centers (34.). Russia starts the game with nine ICs producing ten BRPs per year each. A tenth IC is added in 1940, and production rises to 15 BRPs each in 1942 and 20 BRPs in 1943. In addition, 30% of unused Russian BRPs are saved each YSS, and begin to build a separate Russian BRP base in 1941 YSS (34.3). The Russian player may move many of his ICs by SR after Germany attacks, although the ICs in Moscow, Leningrad and Grozny are fixed. ICs captured by the Axis yield half their BRP value to Germany. Either player controlling an IC may elect to destroy it. It does not take much arithmetic to realize that Russia generally has more BRPs in 1941 than in the prior editions of *THIRD REICH*, although many of these are generated by ICs vulnerable to attack. If Germany delays attacking Russia very long, the Soviet economy grows enormously. In a very real sense now, a German attack on Russia can be a defensive maneuver.

BRP spending limits (35.) and BRP grants (36.) are as before, with the important exception that Italy may never grant BRPs to Germany. Murmansk convoys (37.) are a study in the interaction between naval power, air power and submarine warfare. While the Murmansk rules constitute one of the more complex sections in the new rulebook, they are fun to play. BRPs may also be given Russia through Persia (38.) or a friendly Turkey (39.).

Certain areas on the map have been designated as "key" economic centers (40.). The loss of London, Manchester/Birmingham, Paris, Berlin or Bonn/Essen results in an immediate 25 BRP loss to their respective major power

players, and a further 25 BRP penalty each YSS they remain under enemy control. Moreover, London and Manchester/Birmingham are each worth 12 BRPs to the Axis player at each YSS they are Axis-controlled (40.3). This may sound strange to a *THIRD REICH* player - who would assume that once London is captured Germany would conquer Britain and therefore obtain half Britain's BRPs each YSS - but in *Advanced THIRD REICH*, the Axis player must do more than take London to force a British surrender.

Economic warfare (41.) is a whole new dimension of *Advanced 3R*. In addition to greatly enhanced submarine warfare capabilities, the Axis player may eliminate Allied BRPs by bombing Britain or sending out surface raiders to attack Allied shipping.

In *Advanced THIRD REICH*, Strategic Warfare (42.) is usually crucial to the outcome. The simplest innovation is that SW now costs less to wage, so more SW factors can be built and more enemy BRPs eliminated. Submarines now cost but one BRP per factor; ASW, SAC and interceptors cost two BRPs per factor. Strategic warfare is resolved each turn, so SW forces constructed at the YSS are allocated to the succeeding turns during that YSS. SW factors may be deployed each turn, or left unused, at each player's option. Allied fleets and German air factors may be assigned to ASW and interceptor duty, respectively. SW is resolved at the end of each turn, based on a die roll modified according to the ratio of attacking to defending forces. The attacker eliminates a percentage of the maximum BRP losses his forces could possibly inflict. If Germany controls no French ports, each submarine factor can eliminate two Allied BRPs. If any of Brest, St. Nazaire, La Rochelle, Vigo or Lisbon are Axis-controlled, three BRPs per factor are eliminated; and if Germany also controls Gibraltar, each sub factor can remove up to four BRPs. Such BRP losses have an immediate effect upon the defender's SR capacity in the following turn as well. Every three BRPs lost to SW results in a loss of one German or Western Allies SR in the next turn.

To illustrate, assume that in Summer 1941 Germany controls Brest and has six submarine factors in the Atlantic, while Britain has two ASW factors and one fleet (which counts as a third ASW factor) assigned to ASW for that turn. The maximum potential BRPs that six sub factors could eliminate is 18. Germany gets a +3 DRM for its 2:1 advantage, and a -1 DRM for the date (which increases to -2 in 1942 and so forth). The German player rolls a "5", modified to "7". The Strategic Warfare Effects table is consulted, and Germany may eliminate 50% of the potential maximum - or nine British BRPs. Germany itself loses three submarine factors. As a result of Britain's SW losses, its SRs are reduced from nine to six for Fall 1941.

This may seem a bit complicated at first reading, but it actually plays very smoothly. The great advantage of this system is that SW calculations can no longer be made mechanically but instead affect the flow of the game from turn to turn. A little simple math will demonstrate that during the first years of the conflict, both sides should make a maximum commitment to sub-

marine and ASW warfare. Submarines are the cheapest way the German player can hurt Britain and the United States. Conversely, every fleet the British player can scrape up for ASW in 1940 and 1941 saves desperately needed BRPs, not only in the year they are used but in every subsequent year.

Axis air factors within range of the British objective hexes may bomb Britain during any German combat phase (43.). Available British air factors intercept these Axis forces on a one-to-one basis, and combat is resolved normally - except that the British have a favorable +1 DRM. Any surplus Axis air factors eliminate one British BRP each. Like the historic Battle of Britain, this is generally a bad bargain for the Axis, although German bombing can force the British to commit their paltry air force to combat or, if the British BRP situation is quite desperate (and it often is), German bombing can contribute to a crushing British BRP deficit.

At the start of any SW Phase, the Germans may also send fleets to sea as "raiders" (44.). The British may attempt to intercept them with air and naval forces as the raiders move to the Atlantic (44.3), or intercept them once they arrive in the SW Box. The larger the raiding force, the easier it is to detect and intercept. Unsuccessful raiding factors are destroyed or return to their bases without damaging British shipping. Successful raiders destroy British BRPs and then return to port to fight another day. Raiding forces that reach the SW Box, even if defeated in fleet combat, may reduce the Allied capability to use their fleets against German submarines by reducing them below nine factors - reflecting the ability of the raiders to dislocate Allied convoy patterns. Raiders can be a costly way for Germany to destroy British BRPs (the *Bismarck* and the *Graf Spee* were both failures as raiders), but the threat may force the British player to leave some of his fleets uncommitted at the end of the Allied turn. This in itself is important because the Royal Navy is overextended even in the best of circumstances, another historically accurate aspect of the design. In combination, the German submarines, surface raiders and bombing can sometimes force a British surrender without a single German ground unit landing in Britain. (British surrender rules are discussed in greater detail below.)

The last, and most deadly, addition to the economic warfare arsenal is the "atomic bomb" (45.)! Allied variant #25 gives the United States one A-bomb each turn starting in Spring 1945. A successful atomic attack not only destroys all forces in the hex and renders it impassable but, if the hex is a key economic area, destroys its BRPs as well. German objectives which are destroyed by atomic attack are considered Allied-controlled for purposes of victory determination. It should be stressed, however, that German air defenses may well prevent successful use of "the bomb".

Politics

Rules regarding Declarations of War (46.) engendered controversy among the design team and playtesters of *Advanced THIRD REICH* unlike any others. One view was that DoW costs were unrealistic and excessive, and some

wanted to reduce or eliminate these. Others felt that these DoW costs reflected the unquantifiable impact on economics and society and world opinion aggression entails, and injected another element in the planning demanded of players. After much discussion and playtesting, it was decided to leave them essentially unchanged.

Rules concerning the surrender of major powers (47.) have, however, been changed considerably. Germany surrenders when Berlin and two other German objective hexes are under Allied control at the end of a German player-turn. Axis variant #25 requires the Allies to control Berchtesgaden as well. Italian surrender conditions differ little from prior editions, except that a diplomatic die roll follows Italy's surrender. This may result in portions of the Italian force pool changing sides to aid the Allies.

British surrender (47.5) is determined at the end of each game turn by reference to the British Resistance tables. In short, Britain "offers" to surrender when a combination of territorial losses, BRP shortages, diplomatic alignments and a preponderance of Axis over Allied forces pushes the result below "0". Britain can now be forced out of the game without a German invasion of Britain, or even after the United States has entered the war - although both these eventualities are unlikely. Germany need not accept a British surrender, but may continue attacking Britain in an effort to impose more severe terms. When Germany does accept a British surrender, British forces are automatically reduced, Canada becomes a US minor ally, and Germany is allowed to negotiate other surrender terms from a menu of British concessions. It is all such great fun that the Axis players in our playtest groups have attacked Britain in a disproportionate number of games just to get the chance to try out these tables. But the British player sometimes gets the last laugh, since the tables continue in effect after Britain surrenders; if the result goes back above "0", Britain re-enters the war at no BRP cost! Thus, an Axis player who takes too long subduing Britain, or fails to crush that indomitable nation sufficiently, may find himself worse off than if he had stuck to historical lines and attacked Russia.

Russian surrender (47.7) is determined at the end of each Russian player-turn by reference to the Russian Resistance table. The factors considered for this are surviving Russian forces, ICs in Russian control, key cities under Russian or Axis control, and the Russian BRP situation. Suffice to say that Russia is now very difficult to conquer, but very dangerous for the German player to leave alone. Russia may also re-enter the war after it has surrendered if it revives sufficiently, which gives the Axis player a strong incentive to reject Russian offers which amount to only a temporary truce.

France, as before, falls when Paris is Axis-controlled at the end of any Allied combat phase. As with Italy, a diplomatic die roll follows the fall of France, and these results may vary considerably. Generally, the British receive at least two Free French 1-3 infantry units; French forces are halved, with the remainder going Vichy. Restrictions on French

forces (48.) complicate the defense of France. French ground forces may not attack at less than 1:1 odds, and may never be voluntarily eliminated. Restrictions on Anglo-French Cooperation (49.) are similar to those in old *THIRD REICH*, except that all restrictions are lifted at the beginning of the second Allied player-turn following a German offensive or DoW on a minor on the Western Front (or an Italian DoW). This rule makes a German attack on just the Low Countries in Winter 1939 far from automatic.

Restrictions on Russian-Allied Co-operation (50.) are also similar to those familiar from earlier editions with the addition that Western units may not enter Russia *at all*. German and Italian units, on the other hand, may generally stack together and cooperate fully (51.), except following an Italian diplomatic result of "-1". Rules on lent Italian forces have been refined and simplified, so that units are now lent without SR cost. The Italian airborne units may drop only if lent to Germany.

Rules regarding the minor countries (52.-57.) have been modified considerably. Setup of minor country forces after a DoW on them and independent turns for minor powers prior to intervention are essentially the same. Minor countries may rebuild one infantry unit per turn prior to intervention. Prior to activation as minor allies (which may be achieved only through diplomacy), minor country units must remain in or adjacent to their home countries (53.7), a small but sometimes significant change. Rules regarding hex control and conquest of minors remain mostly as before, with the important exception that players can lose minor and colony BRPs with which they start scenarios. This can impact Britain heavily in the early turns of the Campaign Game, and always causes serious economic - and historically accurate - problems for the Axis in 1944.

Intervention in a minor country (55.), or certain diplomatic outcomes, result in minor countries becoming an "associated" minor power - a new status short of that of "active" minor ally. The intervening power receives the minor's BRPs at the next YSS and controls the minor's units, but geographic restrictions on the minor's forces continue to apply. Minor countries (including the Axis minors) may become minor allies only as a result of diplomatic die rolls (56.). Whenever a minor country activates as a ally, the major power receives the minor's BRPs immediately. The list of potential minors is very long indeed, and activation of minor allies is one of the principal objectives of the diplomatic planning in *Advanced THIRD REICH*. Short of outright activation of the Balkan minors, Germany may obtain some or all of their BRPs by diplomatic means (57.), although such economic penetration greatly complicates German-Russian relations and may be postponed by the Axis player for diplomatic reasons.

Special rules apply to Poland and eastern Europe to reflect the effect of the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Poland's BRPs are split after partition (20 to Germany, 10 to Russia). The size of Germany's eastern garrison may vary greatly, depending upon the current diplomatic result in effect for Russia (58.2). The Baltic States are

worth 15 BRPs; Bessarabia worth five, although at the option of the German player Rumania may resist Russian occupation of Bessarabia. Similarly, the Finnish border hexes are worth five BRPs; Finland may fight for these or back down, again at the German player's option. The decisions of the Russian and German players on whether to adopt a passive or aggressive policy in eastern Europe has far-reaching implications for the shape of the entire game. As with so many other aspects of *Advanced THIRD REICH*, seemingly simple rules changes conceal subtle ramifications.

The diplomatic rules (59.) have replaced the old Foreign Aid rules, the Vichy activation rules, and several variants. These diplomatic rules are unquestionably the most important innovation in the new game. They add little time to the play, but take considerable effort to master - partly because of the complexity of the diplomatic tables.

Each major power has a basic allotment of diplomatic points (DPs). More may be purchased at the YSS, and military developments in the game may add or take away from the basic DP allotment. At each YSS, the players secretly allocate their DPs (59.2). A diplomatic phase takes place at the beginning of each game turn, at which time the players may, if they wish, make attempts to influence the policies of other major and minor powers. Virtually all the powers on the board can be the target of various kinds of effort, opening a broad new spectrum of strategic options. Certain political and military events (such as DoWs on certain countries, or the surrender of France or Italy) automatically trigger diplomatic die rolls. Various German actions may trigger a Russian reaction die roll at the beginning of any Russian player-turn. The United States' entry into the war and pre-war American assistance to France and Britain are determined by the US-Axis tension table (Appendix III in the rules). DPs may even be allocated to the United States by either the Axis or the Western Allies to reduce or increase US-Axis tensions. The diplomatic rules interact with all other aspects of the game, and are a study in themselves. The diplomatic rules have been omitted from the introductory scenarios, and could even be ignored in all the scenarios until new players are comfortable with the basic system.

Miscellaneous

The end of the new rulebook contains a mix of clarifications and changes that are no less important for being difficult to classify. Only the most of important of these will be summarized here.

The BRP penalty for Axis conquest of Gibraltar is gone (61.). Instead, Axis control of Gibraltar results in German SW having the potential to eliminate four British BRPs per submarine factor. In effect, Axis control of the straits increases the effectiveness of Axis SW by one-third, as well as having some important military and diplomatic consequences.

Iraq (62.) is now a key area of the mapboard. For openers, it begins as a British colony worth ten BRPs. Basra serves as an unlimited supply source for Western Allied units. Britain may SR by sea from the British Isles to Iraq, with a one-

turn delay. Such SRs from Suez or the Far East incur no delay. Lastly, the Axis player may activate Iraq as a minor ally by a successful diplomatic die roll.

Malta (64.) is, more than ever, a key objective hex. Since both SR and sea supply may be intercepted, Malta's geographic position at the intersection of the Mediterranean sea routes means that the player controlling it can harass enemy naval traffic throughout the area. Malta is also a limited supply source for Western Allied units, and even serves as the base for five British submarine factors that may operate as fleets regardless of Malta's supply status. Thus, in *Advanced THIRD REICH*, Malta is just as much a nuisance for the Axis as it was historically. It remains just as difficult for the Axis to capture as well, since a fortress is quintupled against seaborne invasion. On the other hand, Axis air and naval forces may cut the supply routes to Malta, thereby reducing its effect on Axis supply to North Africa.

Siberian transfer (65.) is somewhat similar to prior editions, with two important differences. The timing of the transfer is not fixed. It generally takes place beginning on the third Russian player turn following the outbreak of war between Russia and Germany, but may be accelerated, delayed or even prohibited altogether (depending on the result of the Japanese diplomatic die roll). More importantly, the transferred units are placed on the map at the start of the Russian movement phase, which means they may participate in a sudden counterattack against a possibly overextended German army.

The Suez Canal and Egypt (66.) are treated as before, again with two exceptions. There is no BRP penalty to Britain for Axis conquest of Egypt, other than the normal BRP cost for losing a colony - although as with Gibraltar, there are serious military and diplomatic ramifications for the Allies if Egypt falls. However, Axis fleets may never use the Suez Canal.

Vichy France (70.) is an inactive German minor ally and, like any other minor power, may be activated or deactivated diplomatically. Any Axis violation of Vichy territory, or a Western Allied DoW on Vichy, will modify the diplomatic die roll. Diplomatic results for Vichy may allow Germany to receive the BRPs for the Vichy colonies as well, or, at the other extreme, may result in Vichy changing sides and all its forces becoming Free French.

Optional rules (72.) provide simplified play for those who do not wish to use the diplomatic tables and surrender tables, easing the transition from *3R* to *Advanced 3R*. But I expect that most players will use the optional rules for only a few first games, if any at all.

Scenarios/Variants

The scenarios of *Advanced THIRD REICH* contain some additional important changes not set forth in the rules themselves. In the Campaign Game (Appendix VI) the deployment order has been changed. Poland, Germany, Italy, France, Britain and then Russia set up. This has provoked groans from 4th Edition experts who were always on the lookout for a 1939 knockout of France; but this precisely what the change was meant to prevent. Signifi-

cant alterations in force pools and variants affecting them are summarized below. The variants themselves (appendices IV and V) are so numerous that no effort has been made here to cover all of them.

Germany's force pool and BRP base for the Campaign Game remain essentially the same, but Axis minors' BRPs can be available to the German player as early as 1939, depending upon diplomatic results. Germany receives a third 5-6 armor unit in 1944, rather than another 4-6. The fourth 9-factor fleet is delayed until 1942. Axis variant #2 (Naval Z-Plan) adds another 9-factor fleet, at the cost of a 4-6 armor and two 3-3 infantry units removed from the German force pool. Axis variant #4 (flexible combat groupings) breaks up one 4-6 armor and two 3-3 infantry into smaller units. Axis variant #17 (varied occupation policies) permits construction of "Free Russian" forces as part of the German force pool once the two powers are at war. Axis variant #20 (heavy tanks) gives Germany its 5-6 armor units in 1942 and 1943, and allows conversion of one 4-6 into a 5-6 in 1944 and 1945. Axis variant #21 (expanded airborne) adds an extra airborne unit to the German force pool in 1942. In addition, various diplomatic results may permit numerous minor powers besides the usual to activate as Axis allies.

The Italian force pool is reduced by one 9-factor fleet, and the second 5-4 airwing and fifth Italian fleet are not available until Spring 1941. Italy's BRP base remains the same, but Italian BRPs may no longer be given to Germany. Diplomatic results may even prohibit Italy from lending forces to Germany. The weaker Italian force pool does not doom Italy by any means, for Italy's arch-enemy Britain now has many more demands upon its own forces. Axis variant #13 permits the Italian airborne unit to be built in Spring 1941 (rather than 1942). Axis variant #3 (armament program), #10 (Ethiopian offensive) and #14 (modernization) increase Italy's force pool under various conditions. Axis variant #9 (new officers) improves her air and naval DRM by one.

The British force pool is usually increased by two 1-3 Free French infantry units (depending upon the result of diplomatic efforts during the fall of France). Britain's fourth airwing is not available until Spring 1940, which makes France that much more difficult to defend. Britain BRP base remains unchanged, but is now vulnerable to loss of colonies and key economic areas (not to mention German SW). America may grant BRPs to Britain prior to entry into the war, a necessity for English survival in most of our playtest games. Allied variant #10 (Dominion commitments) adds a 2-5 armor and a 3-4 infantry to the British OB. Allied variant #12 (rapid expansion) accelerates all Summer 1942 allowable builds by a year. A favorable Japanese diplomatic die roll may add a 9-factor fleet and 3-4 infantry unit as well. The British SR level is increased to nine, but may be (and very often is) reduced by Axis strategic warfare.

The French see their own force pool increased by three 1-3 infantry units, which represent the colonial formations. Of the 16 French 2-3 infantry units, 14 are available at the start of

the game. The net result of all this is four more 2-3s available to deploy in France during the opening setup. This almost guarantees that France will not fall on the first game turn because of carelessness, although there is no real effect on French survival in the long run. The French BRP base is reduced to "80". The second French airwing is not available until Summer 1940. Allied variant #1 (no Maginot Line) expands French armored forces by one unit and permits construction of that second airwing in Fall 1939. Variant #3 (pre-war preparation) makes all French infantry and replacements available at the start of the game and increases allowable builds by four more 2-3 infantry. Allied variant #2 (extended Maginot Line) makes hex O24 a fortress.

Russia now has but two 9-factor fleets. A fourth 5-4 airwing may be built in 1944. A seventh 3-5 armor unit is available as a free Siberian transfer. Russia does mobilize slower than in the 4th Edition, however. The five 4-5 armor units enter the Russian force pool at the rate of one per turn, starting in Spring 1942. The 3-3 infantry units enter starting with three via the free Siberian transfer in Winter 1941, and three per turn thereafter until all 15 are available. Diplomatic results may accelerate or delay the free Siberian transfer, as well as construction of the larger Russian armor units. Allied variant #4 (Stalin purged) substitutes five 3-3s for five of the at-start 1-3 infantry units, and gives Russia a favorable modifier on Russian diplomatic die rolls as well. Allied variant #11 (new tanks) starts adding the 4-5s to the Soviet force pool in Spring 1941. Allied variant #13 (defensive preparations) makes both Moscow and Stalingrad fortresses. And Allied variant #14 increases the number of partisans allowed in Russia concurrently to six, which should plague the Axis players no end.

The Russian BRP level begins the game the same as in the previous edition, but has the potential to grow enormously if unchecked. Hitler's nightmare of a Russian colossus may easily come to pass in *Advanced THIRD REICH*. If Germany delays its attack in the east, Russia usually boasts about 250 BRPs at the 1942 YSS, and around 350 at the 1943 YSS. Russia's bankroll directly affects its political options (I refer the readers to the Russian diplomatic table to explore how).

The United States' force pool remains the same as in previous editions, but allowable builds are added gradually after the US enters the war. The American player may not even build his entire force pool until eight turns after entry into the fighting. The changes in the United States economy have been discussed at length above. As a result of these, the impact of the US entry on the game is gradual. An Allied double-turn in the Spring-Summer of 1942 is the exception and not the rule.

The US-Axis Tension table determines the timing of the United States' entry into the war. The military actions of the players, as well as their diplomatic efforts, control the level of tension and therefore the timing of Lend-Lease, US assistance in ASW, the American DoW itself. In past playtest games, the United States generally enters the war in Winter 1941 or Spring 1942 if the Axis players follow the his-

torical strategy, but wide variations are not uncommon.

Allied variant #19 adds a 9-factor fleet to the America force pool in Spring 1943 at no BRP cost. A successful Allied diplomatic effort in Japan may also add another 9-factor fleet, while reducing US-Axis tensions and thereby delaying her entry into the war. (The diplomatic tables are full of such "mixed blessings".)

American SRs and initial deployments are not pre-determined either. The United States has one SR for every 20 BRPs in its base, subject to SW losses, and one initial unit deployment is allowed for every two SRs. Allied variant #18 (flexible deployment) permits the US initial deployments to any Western Front port or Suez. Minor powers' force pools have been changed in a couple of instances (notably, for Yugoslavia). Moreover, Persia and Iraq have their own force pools of rebel units.

In addition to all the familiar scenarios, *Advanced THIRD REICH* contains a 1941 scenario, which rivals the Campaign Game for interest I think. And there are two "Introductory" scenarios, either one of which may be played in a few hours. The *Barbarossa* scenario uses only the eastern half of the mapboard to play the Russian campaign. The 1940 scenario utilizes only the western half to recreate the German blitzkrieg in the West.

What It All Means

The big question for most will be what effect all these changes have on play balance. I think it safe to say that the Axis enjoys a bigger edge in the game before the United States enters the war, but now has more problems resisting the Allied onslaught after mid-1944 when effects of oil shortages begin to take their toll. Certainly, the 1944 scenario is heavily weighted in favor of the Allies as a result of these oil rules (and the fact that the Axis loses BRPs as its conquests are "liberated"). But nobody really knows how, or whether all the changes in *Advanced THIRD REICH* taken together have affected overall play balance one way or another. Our many playtest sessions have not come close to answering this question. All that the playtesters seem to agree on is that, while our objective has been to design an even play-balance into the Campaign game, whether we have succeeded is very much an open question. The flexibility of *Advanced 3R* permits so many new and different strategies that it has been impossible to test them all. It is useful, however, to analyze the more obvious effects of the rule changes on each major power.

With 20% of the Axis variants producing fundamental changes in the German force pool, and the option of drawing more than one variant counter, a whole range of possibilities are created for Germany. Variants #2, #4 and #21 make *SeaLion* more feasible, and any two of them make an invasion of Britain positively attractive (particularly because elimination of airborne units is no longer permanent). Axis variants #17, #18 and #20, on the other hand, give Germany an advantage against Russia. The delayed construction of the fourth German fleet may seem at first glance to squelch any chance of a successful invasion of Britain, but such is not the case. Germany does not need

that fourth fleet to invade England. First, a 9-factor fleet need not escort supply in order to permit breakthrough and exploitation from the invasion beach. More importantly, the power of 30 or more Axis air factors over the Channel is so tremendous that it is extremely difficult for the British player to successfully oppose an invasion by a determined German opponent.

The invasion of Britain is a tempting strategy for the German player, but its disadvantage lies in the fact that it gives Russia time to build a formidable economy and makes Russia even harder to conquer. Thus, neglecting Russia to KO Britain is very dangerous, and may cause the German player to opt for a historical *Barbarossa* in 1941, while Russia is still relatively manageable. The additional power of overruns and negative defense multipliers means that Germany can do a great deal of damage to Russia, even in the two-turn Eastern Front campaigning season.

As in previous editions, Germany is fun to play - but is very hard to play well. Besides the basic strategies of attacking England or Russia after France has fallen, there are a multitude of other possibilities. The rules of *Advanced 3R* have been carefully designed to permit a very wide range of German strategies. We here have tried many in our playtests; some have failed and some have succeeded. But none are "sure-fire" winners.

Advanced THIRD REICH reduces the Italian naval force to a more historically realistic level. At first glance, new players often wonder why anybody would want to play Italy at all. They soon learn that the smaller Italian force pool does not reduce Italian offensive capability substantially, because the new SW rules virtually compel the British player to station at least two 9-factor fleets in the SW box, and often keep a third in reserve to combat German raiders. Thus, Britain rarely has enough fleets available to enjoy anything close to numerical parity with the Italian fleets in the Mediterranean. The Italian player's real problem is the weakness of his fleets in combat against the higher-rated British. A British naval force is usually a fair match for an Italian sortie twice its size.

Italy's force pool can also be significantly upgraded by Axis variants. Moreover, the capability of taking limited offensives helps Italy. For example, Yugoslavia can usually be conquered affordably with two turns of limited offensive attacks. The wisdom of an Italian attack on Yugoslavia is debatable, however, because of its repercussions on the Russian diplomatic die roll. Such interactions between the economic, diplomatic and military aspects of the game make *Advanced 3R* an enjoyable challenge even when playing "hapless" Italy. Our playtesting has shown that, in a multi-player game, an Axis strategy targeting Britain and the Med can result in the Italians losing battle after battle to the Brits, but achieving a "marginal" victory by surviving until Summer 1944 - to the chagrin of the German player who spends most of the BRPs and does most of the work but finds the Russians on his doorstep by early 1944.

The beefed-up Allied variant #10 and the new variant #12 are little consolation for the

whole host of new threats to Britain posed by the amended SW rules, the great potential of Axis air power against British fleets and the variety of potent new Axis variant counters. The five British submarine factors based in Malta and the ability to attack sea supply make it more crucial than ever for the British player to defend that island to the limit of his ability - no easy task given the fact that the German airborne unit is now rebuildable and that air attacks on fleets are resolved before invasion attempts. Germany's capability of activating Spain as a minor ally by diplomacy makes Gibraltar far less secure as well. And it gets worse for Britain before it gets better. Russia may not be tougher to conquer than Britain, but many of the innovations make it more fun, if not easier, for the Axis players to concentrate on England.

Britain's "darkest hour" in *Advanced THIRD REICH* is often longer and darker than it has been since the first edition of the game. British surrenders have not been unusual in our playings of *Advanced 3R*, even though the German must do more than capture London to force a British capitulation. Even then, the terms of British surrender may vary from light to devastating, and Britain may even re-enter the war after surrendering. If Germany does not utterly crush Britain, the Axis may well lose the war. Moreover, unless Germany is quick in the victory, Russia's growth will make the German player wonder if it was such a good idea to devote so much attention to Britain in the first place. I suspect that, after the novelty of KOing Britain wears off, we will see few all-out assaults on England than we have in our playtest games.

In any event, Britain may be subjected to great pressure without breaking. What frequently saves England is economic and SW aid from the United States prior to American entry into the war. An Axis invasion of Britain significantly increases US-Axis tensions, speeding up direct American involvement. Russia may also react adversely to German success in the West. The wisdom of this Axis strategy of attacking Britain will likely be debated for many years to come.

The delayed construction of French and British air units intentionally makes France easier to conquer by Summer 1940, but the Anglo-French cooperation rules are lifted the second turn after the German attack; so if Germany blows its chance for a quick victory against France, it is a whole new game. A few additional 1-3 infantry units are poor compensation for the delayed build of the second French airwing, not to mention the German capability to overrun and the reduced defensive ability of exploiting enemy armor. The new Allied variants #1 and #2 are no more consolation to the beleaguered French than the trusty old #3. The relaxed Anglo-French cooperation rule helps only if France survives long enough to benefit from it. In our very first playtest game, Allied variant #7 combined with a few bad breaks for Germany led to the result that France was so strong after Fall 1940 that the German player conceded, but I don't expect to see this situation occur very often. In most games, by design, France falls in Summer 1940. Devoting enough

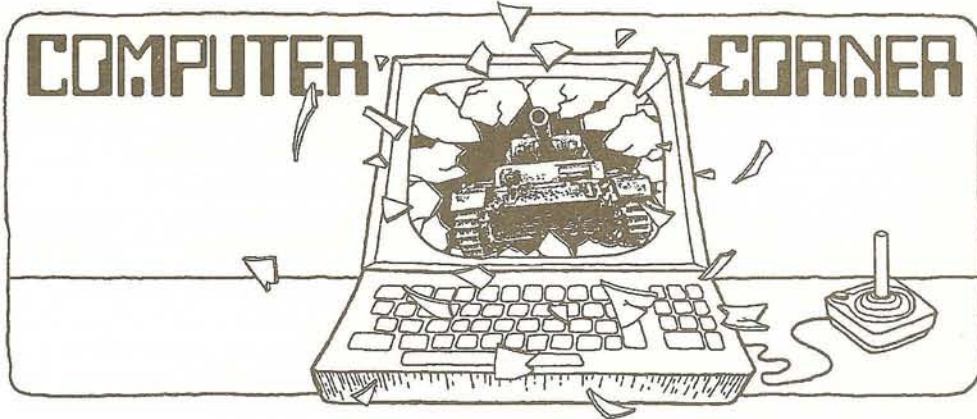
resources to the defense of France to delay its collapse can be so costly that the British player may wish he had just let France go.

Russia's biggest advantage in *Advanced THIRD REICH* is the strength of its own economy. The threat of Russia's economic potential in 1942 is intended to force the German player to attack it in 1941 (or undertake the equally formidable task of crushing Britain before the United States is aroused to war). The raw power of the German onslaught in 1941 against Russia is great, but overrun, breakthrough and exploitation are only permitted in Summer and Fall turns. If the Russian player makes preservation of his ICs the highest priority and relies upon "General Winter" and the expanse of Russia to check the Wehrmacht's momentum, Russia will usually pull through. The Russian Resistance table permits Russia to take a tremendous amount of punishment without capitulating. But the slower expansion of the Russian force pool and the fact that Allied double-turns usually come late in 1942 does mean that the spectre of defeat continues into 1942. If Russia can survive into 1943 with its economy relatively intact, the tide turns. The extra Russian airwing in 1944 is invaluable in carrying the war to German soil, and the oil rule hastens Germany's collapse once Russia takes Ploesti. If Germany delays its attack on Russia (or does not attack at all), a maximum German diplomatic effort may delay the Russian DoW until 1943 (sometimes even 1944). But the later Russia enters the conflict, the more the Germans risk a late double-turn of devastating proportions.

The United States is a presence in the game long before it enters the war, and much maneuvering can go on to get her in or keep her out. But all this is far more interesting for the other players than for the US player, who can only sit back and wait for tensions to mount. Once the United States does come into the war, the agonizingly slow American mobilization rate makes the US Britain's understudy for most of the Campaign Game, should the play follow historical lines. On the other hand, the powerful American economy makes it the Allied paymaster, and BRPs are as important as ever. The combat system in *Advanced THIRD REICH* is so dynamic that even a few turns of pressure from the United States' force pool, once it is fully built, can decide the campaign in Western Europe - just as it did historically. *Advanced THIRD REICH* games also may go down many different paths, and if Britain is invaded (or conquered) the American player may have his hands full trying to get he English back into the war and deploy a few US units to Europe's hostile shores against stiff Axis resistance.

Conclusion

Helping to design and playtest *Advanced THIRD REICH* has been an enjoyable, if exhausting, project. Part of the reward is our pride in the product itself. The greater reward will be to meet the new players who will enjoy playing *Advanced 3R* for years to come, as they teach us some new lessons about this endlessly fascinating simulation.



Computer THIRD REICH

By John Huff

AvalonCon was a huge success, for everyone involved I think. I was very pleased to be allowed to set up a couple of computers in the ballroom, site of most of the activity, and let attendees get a sneak preview of *Computer ACQUIRE* and *Computer THIRD REICH*. Their reaction vindicated the new policies of MicroComputer Games, and gives me great hope for the future.

Computer THIRD REICH showed that there are times when state-of-the-art graphics and interface are required to make the game work. Here we knocked their socks off! This was a boardgame conversion that *looked* like its progenitor. Many people played the game, and the oft repeated comment was, "This is what we've been waiting for; what took you so long?". Frankly, it's taken the computer industry this long to provide the games programmers with the hardware and development software needed for such a project. And here we are . . .

Computer THIRD REICH is a reasonably faithful rendering of the classic boardgame (3rd Edition) to the home computer. It can be played by two human players (one Axis, one Allied), by a human against the computer (either side), or by the computer against itself if you prefer to just observe. There are, however, a few differences with the boardgame that will have to be taken into account when playing the game (whether the opponent is human or electronic) if you are a long-time fan.

The biggest difference between the two lies with the "Sea Transport" function. In *Computer THIRD REICH*, units can *only* be moved overseas during the SR (Strategic Redeployment) or when conducting an invasion (during the Combat Phase). There are a variety of technical reasons why this change was made, but the important fact is that it sometimes allows fewer units to be moved overseas during a given turn. On the positive side, however, naval units can be put into play immediately when built and there is no delay between the allocation of the BRPs and the deployment of the fleets you've created. Again, the "why" is not important, but the change in this mechanism is very important to bear in mind when playing the game (if used to the original boardgame). There a few other minor differences between the boardgame and its computer cousin. One is that beachheads

have the same stacking limitation as regular hexes. Another is that the computer player will track air movement through Swiss air space. But there are many, many more similarities than differences.

So, what's it like playing the game? Well, it is much like playing the boardgame - except that you don't have to memorize a huge number of rules. You do need a set of printed instructions to get started, but these are quickly assimilated and the game can be begun and enjoyed in a short span of time.

Game set-up is a matter of grabbing the units from your Force Pool display, dragging them to their starting location and going on to the next unit. If you are playing with enforced Deployment Limits, these are posted on the screen; the computer will not let you advance to the next country until they have been satisfied.

Movement is a matter of also grabbing the unit, laying out the course it will follow and clicking when you are at the destination. A word of caution. Once you have completed a move, it's permanent. Don't click the right-hand button *until* you are sure of your unit's move. Clicking the left button negates the move, but only if you haven't clicked the right button.

When you attack a unit, a chart pops up which shows what you have and what they have. As you add units to the attack, their markers appear in the chart. When you have selected all attackers and air support, the attack commences. At this time air units for DAS and interception can be selected. Finally, a CRT appears on screen and you see the die roll and its outcome.

The game is designed to get the buyer into play as quickly as possible, and to learn the fine points of the mechanics while playing the game. Control is easily converted between human and computer players to . . . ahem . . . give the computer a helping hand. And it might need some. Objectively speaking, the computer is hell on wheels defensively, but not as bright when on the attack. This is no condemnation, as it still gives me a hard time and I have been playing against it for more than two years now! Still, any experienced 3R fanatic will find most

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ADVANCED GAME DESIGN

Dropkicking Hitler Back to the Stone Age

By Bruce Harper

The following article addresses, in general terms, the design of three games: *WRASSLIN'*, *Advanced CIVILIZATION* and *Advanced THIRD REICH*. I was prompted to draft this piece by Don Greenwood's public expression of incredulity that the same person could design both *WRASSLIN'* and *Advanced THIRD REICH* (see "Coming Attractions", Vol. 27-1). For the record, it should be pointed out that many people contributed to the design of all three - especially *Advanced THIRD REICH*. It occurred to me that some readers might wish to learn a bit about the thinking that goes into game design.

The Challenge

"Why play games?" This question was discussed at length in "Bringing Us All Together", an article by Patrick Carroll in *The GENERAL* some time back (Vol. 25-5). The simplest answer is that we play games because we want to. But one can go further than this. Some players enjoy the "fantasy" of the simulation; some, the challenge of the strategy; others, the social aspect. Most look for all three, and others besides.

I think his view of the hobby has replaced the older "realism" versus "playability" debate, which assumed that one precluded the other. This assumption may no longer be valid (especially in computer games, where the machine can handle the tedious tasks a detailed simulation might require). Even in board or card games, the need for "realism" too often has been used as an excuse for poorly designed or written rules.

In some games, such as chess, the simulation aspect has all but disappeared. Only the most romantic players will think of knights as cavalry charging an enemy stronghold. There does remain a strong social aspect to chess (although one wonders at times, given the personalities of some chess masters). But the true appeal of chess lies in the intellectual challenge generated by the strategy and tactics of the game itself.

Other games, such as those involving military miniatures, rely heavily on the simulation and fantasy aspect of gaming. The possession of a beautifully crafted company of hand-painted Imperial Guardsmen is enough - it doesn't really matter what rules are used or who wins.

Between lies the historical boardgame, often termed the "wargame", although this describes the category too narrowly. Gamers of this sort really would like all three elements mentioned by Mr. Carroll to be present. Their ideal is a realistic simulation which is challenging and enjoyable to play. Such a game then becomes a vehicle to meet others with the same interests and abilities.

So much for theory. How can one achieve the elusive goal of designing a realistic game which is easy and fun to play?

The starting point is to choose an appropriate topic. If one wishes to design a wargame, it is important to pick a battle, campaign or war which either side could have won. This raises philosophical questions about the "nature" of history, since it can be argued that only the victorious side could possibly have won. But gamers tend to have open minds. The Avalon Hill game *FRANCE 1940* suffered because it was too realistic. The Allies had to lose. It will be difficult to design an enjoyable game based on Desert Storm for the same reason (except as a satire), because events proved that Iraq had no real chance to win.

AFRIKA KORPS, for all its faults, is a good game because the campaign upon which it is based was one which either side could have won. There are many such campaigns, some almost forgotten by wargamers. When it comes to wars, however, it gets more difficult to be objective. In my view, the Napoleonic Wars, World War I and World War II were all toss-ups, and thus are eminently suitable subjects for a strategic game.

Turning to the subjects of the three games dealt with in this article, they would all appear to meet this first test. *Advanced THIRD REICH* is based on World War II in Europe. Only the most fervent historical determinist would argue that the Axis were doomed to lose that war. Aircraft and production figures for the Allies are impressive; but in 1940 and 1941 there were very few knowledgeable observers convinced that the Allies would eventually win (perhaps just the opposite). It is easy to now recount the mistakes made by Germany which might have cost it the war (halting the armor before Dunkirk, not invading Britain, invading Russia instead, not driving on to Moscow in September 1941, not pressing forward with jet propulsion and atomic research, to name a few). But the Allies also "played badly", and players may repeat the Allied mistakes (or even make new ones). In *Advanced THIRD REICH* just about anything can happen.

Advanced CIVILIZATION, which deals with the rise of civilization in the ancient world, is sufficiently abstract that any player can win the game. This was surely the case historically, and the game adopts this view by having every nation start more or less equally.

WRASSLIN' is based on professional wrestling, and is unique in that in this game any wrestler can win any match, whereas (dare it be put in print) in "reality" the result is not quite so uncertain. The temptation to put "more real than the real thing" on the box was resisted, but not easily. This is not to say that some wrestlers are not better than others; but if a completely unbalanced match is sanctioned by the players, no complaint can be made when the mismatched wrestler loses. Besides, some of the challenge in any strategy game is that of overcoming adversity. I can think of none better than playing "Flying Phil"!

Realism

A good simulation must contain the essential elements of the reality being simulated. This does not mean *every* element. It is not only impractical to simulate World War II in detail - it is unnecessary. If everything that matters is present, the players will get that feeling of "being there". If unimportant details are included, the game simply bogs down. The decision as to whether the increased complexity resulting from an additional rule is worth the trouble involves judgment and personal preference, and it is unlikely that everyone will agree with the final result.

No game is perfect. *GUNS OF AUGUST* is a good game which suffered from at least one notable drawback: it takes too long to play. This game would well benefit from an abstract "attrition" rule, such as that found in *THIRD REICH*. This omission seems to have doomed an essentially sound game system, even though the subject matter and some of the ideas found therein, such as national morale, had great promise.

CONQUISTADOR falls into a different failing. This idea of the game is wonderful, but it just never got off the ground (at least not for me). To a lesser extent, *SOURCE OF THE NILE* suffers from the same flaw. The detail in these games obscures, rather than enhances, the basic concept. *PAX BRITANNICA* comes perilously close to the same fate because of the extensive bookkeeping which is required, although the game is enjoyable and colorful enough that most gamers are willing to pay this price.

The designer is always on dangerous ground when deciding what rules to omit. Some rules add flavor, even when they are not strictly necessary for the play of the game. One difference between *THIRD REICH* and *Advanced THIRD REICH* is that the latter includes more rules with this goal in mind. Sure, *Advanced THIRD REICH* could be played without raiders, German air attacks on Britain or the atomic bomb. But the game just wouldn't be as much fun. The question is always whether the extra rules are worth the effort - for both designer and player.

A better example is *WRASSLIN'*. Having watched many hours of wrestling, both live and on television (purely for research purposes, I assure you), I cannot play the game now without visualizing the holds as they are applied. This is why there are separate hold cards for "ClothesLine", "Stomach Kick," "Arm Bar" and so on, even though they are all identical in effect. Does anyone play the game without saying "Time for the Bodyslam!" at the appropriate moment? A considerable part of the enjoyment derived from the game comes from this element of fantasy.

My fascination with calamities in *Advanced CIVILIZATION* may also relate to the flavor they add to the game. "Barbarian Hordes" are my current favorite (especially when they hap-

pen to someone else). The new Civilization cards, such as Roadbuilding and Monotheism, also give the simulation an added dimension of reality.

In all three games, my goal was to make it seem real, without needlessly bogging the players down in detail. Whether these efforts were successful is another question.

Decisions

There is more to a good game than the simulation aspect, of course. Otherwise the players would be better off reading a good book on the subject. A game involves strategy . . . and the game designer must enter this area with definite views on the subject.

My philosophy of game design in this regard is quite simple: the better player should win. If the game is to be a test of skill, the players must be forced to make decisions. The greater the number of decisions faced, the more the outcome reflects the relative skill of the players.

Many games fall short of this standard. I remember a game of *AFRIKA KORPS* played many years ago. It came down to a 2:1 attack on El Alamein. Under the old Avalon Hill combat table, a "6" (if memory serves) was fatal in such an attack; sure enough, that's what happened. Having invested several hours in the game, my opponent and I wondered why we didn't just make the die roll at the start and have done with it, since the game seemed likely to come down to such an attack in any event.

The relationship between luck and skill is important when one considers strategy and decision-making. Paradoxically, the more die rolls in a game, the less luck plays a role. In backgammon, the dice are rolled every turn; but no one familiar with the game would argue that the better player will not win the majority of games, and virtually every match. However, if there is only one die roll, it may determine the outcome of the game, rendering skill unimportant.

It is also very important to regulate the nature of the decisions required of the players, as well as the context in which they are made. Ideally, the game mechanisms will be simple, so that the players can devote their energies to decision-making. The information upon which these decisions are based should be readily available to the players. Questions of strategy must arise naturally from the cumulative effect of a series of simple decisions. This concept can be best illustrated by looking at the games in question.

WRASSLIN'

WRASSLIN' is a card game. Each player controls a single wrestler, who has various attributes (such as strength, agility and skill). These attributes, which can be reduced during play as a result of holds applied by the opponent, in turn determine which holds may be applied to the opponent's wrestler. The players are dealt a hand of seven cards. A player will typically have in his hand not only Hold cards (which can be used offensively) but also Reaction cards (which can be used to block or even reverse the opponent's holds) - and more esoteric cards which allow outside interference, cheating and so on. Play alternates each turn.

The decisions which the players must make involve which card or cards (some can be played in combination) to play each turn. Because of the many possibilities, players may sometimes have more than seven (the number of cards held) choices available to them - although in reality there are often several cards which cannot be used and are suitable only as discards, so the real options may be as few as one or two.

If the game sounds simple, it is; but the available strategies are not. There is no doubt that even the Champ can lose to Flying Phil if the Champ draws a bad hand at the start of the match (for instance, a hand with no defensive cards leaves a player open to any hold his opponent is able to inflict). While some might object that luck plays too large a role, as in most card games, this is but an excuse. Good players always seem to overcome such handicaps. The key question is timing.

For example, suppose you can apply a Piledriver to your opponent. If the hold registers, it will effectively end the match; but if your opponent holds a Reverse card, which turns the tables on the wrestler trying to inflict the hold, your own wrestler will be crippled. Should you take the chance? If you also hold a Recovery card, which allows a wrestler to eliminate the effects of a previous hold, even a Reverse will amount to no more than an inconvenience. But what if you don't? The immediate play of the Piledriver might win the match, while hesitation might allow your opponent to regroup and recover. Fortune is said to favor the bold, but oh, what of that Reverse . . .

This is the essence of strategy. You must make a decision, and if the decision is right you will win more often than you will lose. If you are attentive, you may have counted the Reverse cards and know that they have all been played (don't forget the Wild cards). Or, if you know your opponent well, you may conclude that he would have played his Reverse to counter the Dropkick you played on the previous turn. And if you are lucky, you might win anyway.

Some matches in *WRASSLIN'* are certainly decided by luck, but many come down to such key moments. It is always tense when you are sitting with a useless hand, while your opponent decides whether to take the gamble to finish you off. A poker face is a great asset in *WRASSLIN'*.

The better player will win the majority of *WRASSLIN'* matches, because he or she will use the cards in hand efficiently. One strategy which is often effective is to save up a variety of cards which work well together (such as a Combination and several Specialties, which cannot be reversed) and unleash them in a barrage in order to overwhelm the opponent. This is hardly foolproof, however, because a player can't hold enough cards to cover all offensive and defensive possibilities at the same time. So timing is everything.

While most *WRASSLIN'* matches can be played in less than ten minutes, there are many decisions to be made every turn. The number of decisions is thus comparable to other, more "difficult" games, and the abilities of the players usually decide the contest.

Advanced CIVILIZATION

A full game of *Advanced CIVILIZATION* takes about ten hours, although the game can now be played to a time limit without any loss of excitement. I'm not convinced that the decision-making process in *Advanced CIVILIZATION* is any more demanding than that found in *WRASSLIN'*, although perhaps players must live with the consequences of their decisions for a longer period of time.

In *Advanced CIVILIZATION*, each player controls an ancient nation, which begins as a tribe represented by a single token and can end up as a vast empire complete with cities and ships. The object of the game is not conquest, but rather the acquisition of Civilization cards which come in a variety of categories (Crafts, Sciences, Arts, Civics and Religion). These can only be purchased with sets of commodity cards, which in turn are obtained by the construction of cities and trade with other players. The frequent occurrence of calamities, which can devastate an unprepared nation, make the game a continuously fascinating exercise in diplomacy, strategy, management and self-control (not necessarily in that order).

The decisions in *Advanced CIVILIZATION* relate not so much to matters of war and peace (which can be decided as frivolously as they were historically), but rather of trading and the acquisition of Civilization cards. In the original *CIVILIZATION* game, there were sixteen Civilization cards, a set number of each type, and each nation was limited to eleven. There really was little choice as to which cards to buy. In *Advanced CIVILIZATION*, there are twenty-four cards, an unlimited number of each, and no limit to the number of cards which can be acquired by any nation. These changes vastly increase the range of choices available to the players, as well as increasing the realism of the game. These changes are in accord with my principle that the number of decisions left to the players should be maximized, important and frequent.

Rules in *Advanced CIVILIZATION* now provide that a successful attack on a city allows the victor to draw a trade card from the loser's hand and transfer tokens to treasury to reflect pillage of the destroyed city. These changes add color to the game, but were really instituted to make aggression a more viable strategy in the game so as to give the players more options. War may not be the most likely path to victory in *Advanced CIVILIZATION*, but it is now a reasonable possibility. Again, the idea was to give the players meaningful choices so that the adept will make the right decisions.

Another significant change from the original *CIVILIZATION* involves calamities, which are drawn in the same manner as commodity cards. Four new calamities have been added (Treachery, Superstition, Slave Revolt and Barbarian Hordes). In addition, the trading rules have been changed so that the eight tradable calamities may be traded more than once in a turn. This makes every trade dangerous, as there is always the possibility that a calamity will accompany the promised commodity cards. To my mind, this represents a significant improvement over the old rules in which calamities could only be traded once.

Advanced CIVILIZATION is no more difficult to play than *CIVILIZATION*, but the new rules make it more difficult to play well. There are many more opportunities to make strategic errors, as well to pursue different and innovative strategies to a successful conclusion. *Advanced CIVILIZATION* requires greater skill I think, and as a result is more enjoyable (and less susceptible to exact analysis).

Advanced THIRD REICH

Gamers who have not played *THIRD REICH* might well have the impression from published articles that the dominant feature of the game is technique, in that there are few viable strategies for Germany other than the historical pattern of attack on Poland-France-Russia. The player who can carry out the historical German "plan" most efficiently has the greatest chance of success.

Unfortunately, this impression is largely correct. *THIRD REICH* is a fine game, which suffers from the fatal flaw of being one-dimensional. As a result, technique has become dominant, and lengthy articles have legitimately discussed how this or that campaign can be carried out so that one less German unit is lost. It is understandable that non-playing readers should wonder why the entire war would rest on such questions.

Secondly, it is clear that Hitler had no "plan" for World War II, and was really only an opportunist. The lack of consistency in the German high command was as astounding their success. Articles on *THIRD REICH* which suggest strategic ideas spanning several years are interesting, but deal with a war which was never fought. Throughout most of the Second World War, especially in its early stages, the political and military situation was chaotic and the decision-makers of the time were forced to act in a very uncertain environment.

With this view as the starting point, it is easy to see that artificial rules such as allowing Russia to declare war on Germany in Fall 1941 or the United States to enter the war in Spring 1942 had to be revised. The most difficult part of designing *Advanced THIRD REICH* was to create a more realistic game environment in which the basic structure of the rules (which remain intact) could work efficiently.

The diplomatic rules in *Advanced THIRD REICH* have rightly been described as the most important change from the original *THIRD REICH*. They are sometimes termed a "variant"; but because the diplomatic rules fundamentally alter the playing environment and thereby emphasize the importance of strategic decisions, they are much more than just a variant. In fact, it might be appropriate to characterize *THIRD REICH* itself as the "historical scenario", whereas the diplomatic rules make *Advanced THIRD REICH* a complete game in which the players may explore the "what-ifs" which history books cannot answer.

Variants also play an important role in recreating the environment in which the actual strategies employed in World War II were formulated. In *Advanced THIRD REICH*, there are 25 variants for each side, as opposed to ten per side in *THIRD REICH*. Since many of the old variants involving minor countries have been

superseded by the diplomatic rules, there are really about 40 new variants. This proliferation of variants has already triggered great discussion as to their proper role in the strategy.

Leaving aside the proposition that variants should be used because they're fun (this directly relates to the fantasy aspect of the simulation), my view is that the use of variants makes the game more, not less, realistic. Players who dislike variants assert that the game is a greater test of skill when variants are not used. It is easy to see the two sides to this argument by using a concrete example.

Variants are kept secret until played. Both the Axis and the Allies may draw an Intelligence variant, which allows them to shift their reserves during the opposing turn. This movement of friendly forces may occur only once per game, and takes place after the opponent has moved but before he makes any attacks. The extent of the reaction is limited (only two units may be redeployed and they may not be placed on the front line) but the Intelligence variant can nevertheless thwart the strategic goals of a major enemy offensive. There is one catch; if both sides draw the Intelligence variant, one can be used to negate the other.

The Intelligence variant can hardly be termed "unrealistic" as it simulates the timely movement of reserves to a threatened area. In *Advanced THIRD REICH*, players planning an offensive must always consider that there might be a breach of security which will endanger the success of their attack. And a player who holds the variant must carefully consider when to use it. It may be a waste to employ it too soon, but pointless to employ it too late. The fact that the opponent may hold the variant as well makes things even more difficult. Is it better to defer play of your variant so that the opponent's can be countered? Or should you play yours in a non-critical situation, so that if it is countered by the enemy your position will not collapse? It will come as no surprise that there are no obvious answers to such questions.

Players who feel more comfortable with battles and campaigns which can be worked out with mathematical precision cannot be expected to endorse this approach to game design. For me, a game is a greater test of skill when imponderables must be considered. Other variants raise similar questions. Will the Germans be able to continue their offensive into the winter because they hold the better Winter Preparation variant? Is this encirclement foolproof, or does the enemy have air supply? What about commandos? Is Moscow a fortress? And, of course, is Hitler himself in danger? Historically, leaders of all the warring countries had to wrestle with these, and other, crucial questions. Why should *Advanced THIRD REICH* players have it any easier? The variants in the new design make decisions more difficult, without making the game more complex.

There is much more to *Advanced THIRD REICH* than diplomacy and variants, of course. Allied strategic bombing is now more effective, and other methods of economic warfare have been added. Once again, these changes were not made simply for added realism (much less for added complexity). Economic warfare, which existed in the original *THIRD REICH*, is

a major part of *Advanced THIRD REICH* and adds yet another fascinating dimension to the decision-making.

Advanced THIRD REICH is still a wargame, and the military aspects of the game are important. A superior general may overcome diplomatic and economic blunders, while a tactical mistake may bring an elegant grand strategy to ruin. Changes to the mechanics of the game are few, although they are sufficient in number and importance to force players to reassess their tried and true *THIRD REICH* game plans. *Advanced THIRD REICH* is a game of complex strategy, and a strategist will usually beat a tactician. There are so many strategic decisions in the game which involve diplomatic, technical, economic and logistical factors that a player with a firm grasp of these strategic concerns will almost always come out on top, military skill (and die rolls) notwithstanding.

The Best Game

Since this article supposedly involves a comparative analysis of *WRASSLIN'*, *Advanced CIVILIZATION* and *Advanced THIRD REICH*, it is permissible to ask which of the three is the best game. To a certain extent, however, this is like asking "which do you like better, coke or pizza?" It all depends.

We all own games which haven't found their way off the shelf for years, whereas other titles somehow keep getting played. If the three the games discussed in this article are played regularly, it will likely be for very different reasons.

Beginning with the simplest, *WRASSLIN'* bears repeated play because it's fast, addictive and because (I suspect) many players aren't totally sober when playing it. There's a lot to be said for such a game. There's is more to this deceptive game than one would think, and I'm still not bored with it, even though I've been playing it for three or four years now. I even had the pleasure of playing several AREA-rated matches at the recent AvalonCon.

Advanced CIVILIZATION is different. What keeps that game fresh is the fact that the personalities of the players are so important to the course of the game. Who sits next to you may be a significant factor in determining the course of the game. Because *Advanced CIVILIZATION* appeals to a wide variety of people, including "non-gamers", it is possible to play with different people every game. One of the hardest tasks in designing the game was to come up with a set of rules which worked for friendly, mutually supportive groups as well as for the crazed, bloodthirsty wargamers. Players can vary the parameters of the game with optional rules, which should keep everyone happy.

Advanced THIRD REICH is the most difficult and complex of the three games, although it is still very playable. Anyone with a basic knowledge of the Second World War should be able to read and appreciate an article on the game, and even play it after a quick reading of the rules. Playing it well is another story. Because the game involves military, diplomatic, economic, logistical and technical factors, it is a "deep" game. It is hard for me to visualize *Advanced THIRD REICH* being played out in the same way as *THIRD REICH*.

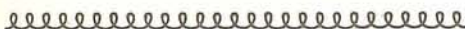
No two games of *Advanced THIRD REICH* are alike, so new challenges arise every time it is played.

The role of the players' personalities in *Advanced CIVILIZATION* limits the depth of analysis to which the game can be subjected. As for *WRASSLIN'*, the best one could do is publish a list of basic principles, together with a disclaimer that a good player will always know when to ignore them. For *Advanced THIRD REICH*, it's a different story. A "Gamer's Guide" is being prepared for that game even now, and the list of possible topics is immense. A comprehensive discussion of the Intelligence variant could easily fill a page, and an encompassing Gamer's Guide could be hundreds of pages long. There are few, if any, playtesters who feel they are really good at the game (and those who think they are, probably aren't). This is why *Advanced THIRD REICH* can be described as "deep". If players find the game as challenging and interesting in ten years as when they first play it, the effort involved in designing *Advanced THIRD REICH* will have been worthwhile.

Conclusion

Understanding the thinking that went into the design of a game does not always lead to a greater understanding of the best way to play that game. A key goal in game design, in fact, should be to ensure that there is no "perfect plan", which would make play of the game academic. The designer of a game is certainly not necessarily an expert at playing it, and may slip to second best in the world as soon as someone else learns to play.

In all three of these new offerings, an effort has been made to try to create a realistic and enjoyable simulation which will force the players to make a large number of simple, yet difficult, decisions. Things may not be any easier for you when you are trying to decide whether to invade Britain or Russia, but you make take comfort from the fact that your dilemma is not accidental. Besides, you can always leave the ring and trade for some Wine.



Computer Corner ... Cont'd from Page 21

of the attacks against him on the weak side. But the novice will find it a challenge; and the computer is the perfect tool to test out your theories, or learn how to play the boardgame.

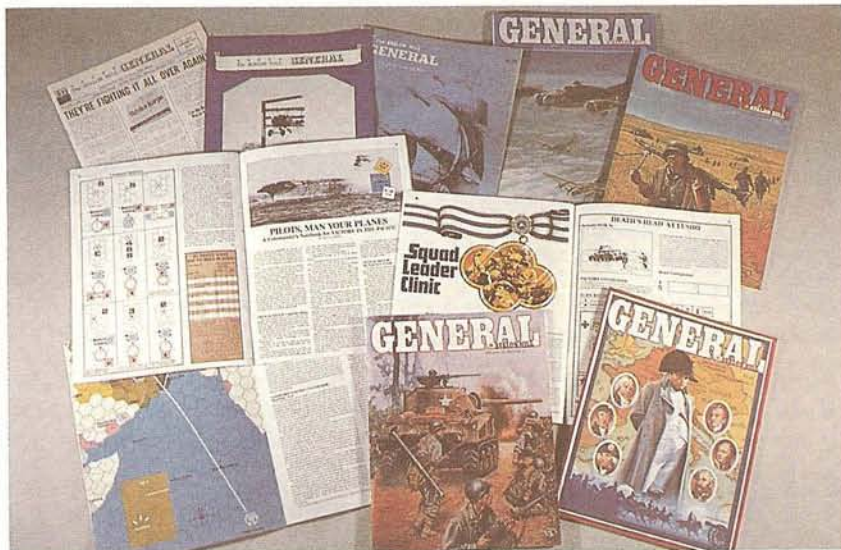
To combat this, we have provided the ability to save the game in progress at the conclusion of each phase. The resultant files will be compatible with all platforms (computers) so that you will be able to PBM or play through E-mail with any other owner of the game.

A final word on *Computer THIRD REICH*: it is being released initially for the Commodore Amiga and the Atari ST platforms. The IBM version is still in the early stages, but is planned for a late '92 release. It is planned that this version will have several improvements to the computer player, and even better graphics.



BACK ISSUES

Only the following back issues of *The GENERAL* remain in stock; price is \$4.00 per issue (plus the usual shipping and handling charges). Due to the low quantities of some back issues, if ordering, please specify alternative selections. Below is a listing of each in-stock back issue by subject matter; game abbreviations are italicized and standard (a partial listing may be found on the "Opponent's Wanted" form on the insert of this issue). Type of article is indicated by the following abbreviations: A - Analytical, DN - Designer's Notes, H - Historical, Q - Questions, P - PBM (postal), S - Strategy, Sc - Scenarios, SR - Series Replay, V - Variant. The featured game for each issue is always the first one listed. Those printed in red indicate one-color reprints of previously out-of-stock issues.



- 14-5: *SL* - H, A, DN, Q; *WS&IM* - A; *TRC* - S; *MD* - S; *SST* - S; *3R* - S
 17-4: *FE* - S, P, DN, V; *MD* - V, Q; *COI* - SR; *VITP* - S; 1776 - Sc; *WQ* - A; *SST* - V; *NAP* - S
 17-5: *CM* - S, V, Q; *RW* - V; *SL* - V; *STAL* - V; *PL* - S; *3R* - S, SR; *CAE* - V; *KM* - S; *MR* - S
 17-6: *STAL* - S; *WS&IM* - V, Sc; *WAS* - V; *3R* - SR; *SL* - S; *CL* - S; *VITP* - S; *TRC* - S
 18-1: *FITW* - A, Q; *BIS* - S; *SL* - S; *DUNE* - V; *DIP* - S; *AK* - A; *PB* - SR; *AL* - S; *W&P* - S
 18-2: *AF* - A, Sc, Q; *AK* - V; *3R* - DN; *TB* - V; *SL* - S; *AIW* - V; *VITP* - S; *DIP* - S; *DD* - S
 18-3: *GOA* - S, DN, V, Q; *AOC* - V, Sc; *AK* - S; *VITP* - V; *SL* - S; *WS&IM* - SR, P; *DIP* - S
 18-4: *GL* - H, V, A, Q; *SL* - A; *LW* - V; *W&P* - SR; *AOC* - S, P; *FE* - V; *WAS* - S; *AK* - S
 18-5: *3R* - S, A, V, DN, Q; *SL* - S, A; *TRC* - V; *TB* - V; *RW* - V; *CL* - A; *DUNE* - V
 18-6: *FT* - A, Sc, V, DN; *VITP* - V, Q; *MD* - S, Q; *SOTN* - A, Q; *SUB* - Sc; *BL* - V
 19-1: *SOA* - A, V, DN, SR, Q; *TLD* - A, Q; *3R* - S, Q; *DWTK* - DN; *TB* - A
 19-2: *BB'81* - H, Sc, S, DN; *TLD* - A, Q; *SL* - V; *3R* - S; *SOA* - SR
 19-3: *GSL* - A, Sc, V, SR, Q; *DIP* - A; *KW* - Sc; *GE* - V; 1776 - Sc; *LRT* - V, Q; *SL* - A
 19-5: *SON* - A, S, H, Q; *W&P* - S, Q; *DIP* - A; *WAT* - V; *WS&IM* - Sc; *SL* - A
 19-6: *VITP* - P, SR; *3R* - V, Q; *DIP* - A; *FT* - V; *BIS* - V; *NAV* - A; *SL* - A, Sc; *SUB* - V, Sc
 20-1: *GI* - S, A, DN, V, Q; *VITP* - SR
 20-2: *TT* - A, DN, S, Q; *MR* - V; *LRH* - A; *SL* - Sc; *W&P* - V; *GOA* - S, Q; *DIP* - A; *PL* - V
 20-3: *FRED* - S, V, Sc, Q; *PB* - A; 1776 - Sc; *DWTK* - S, V, Q; *DIP* - A; *CONQ* - V, S
 20-5: *BR* - SR, S, H, Q; *LRT* - A; *GSL* - Sc; *GE* - A; *WS&IM* - Sc
 20-6: *B-17* - A, V, SR, Q; *AF* - V; *LW* - S; *DL* - S; *FE* - S; *DIP* - A; *MD* - S; *BR* - SR; *GOA* - Sc; *SL* - A; *PL* - Q
 21-1: *UF* - S, A, SR, DN, Q; *SOA* - S; *GI* - H, S; *TRC* - S; *DD* - S
 21-2: *NAB* - S, DN; *W&P* - S, A, Q; *NAP* - S, Q; *DIP* - A; *FR* - S; *FE* - S; *3R* - S; *BFI* - S; 1776 - S; *SL* - A
 21-4: *PGG* - S; *SR*; *PB* - A; *3R* - S; *TRC* - S, V, Q; *DIP* - A; *STAL* - V, S; *SL* - Sc
 21-5: *HW* - S, V, A; *MR* - S, Q; *OR* - A; *DIP* - A; *3R* - A; *RB* - S; *CONQ* - V; *CIV* - S; *SL* - A
 21-6: *FP* - H, V, SR; *AIW* - S, Sc; *BL* - V; *TAC* - V, Q; *SL* - A
 22-1: *PAA* - A, S, Q; *TB* - A, V; *DWTK* - DN; *TR* - V; *GSL* - P; *DIP* - A; *AOC* - S; *WAS* - S, Q; *AK* - V; *CIV* - S; *3R* - S, Q
 22-2: *BANZ* - A, SR, Q; *FT* - A, S; *SUB* - Sc; *VITP* - S, Q
 22-3: *PB* - SR; *PL* - Sc, V, Q; *SOA* - S; *3R* - V; *DIP* - A; *CIV* - A; *UF* - Sc, Q; *AIW* - S; *GOA* - A, Q; *TLD* - A
 22-4: *RF* - A, V, S; *TRC* - V; *PK* - S, Q; *DIP* - A; *3R* - V; *SUB* - V; *PGG* - S
 22-5: *DEV* - S, A, Q; *GSL* - Sc; *BR* - S; *DIP* - P, A; *SC* - V; *FITG* - A; *ASL* - Sc, Q
 23-1: *FL* - A, V; *DL* - V, B-17 - V, DN; *HW* - S, Q; *VITP* - V; *3R* - S; *TT* - V; *LW* - V; *SST* - V; *RW* - V
 23-2: *ASL* - A, S, Sc, Q; *BV* - SR; *UF* - S; *DIP* - A; *PL* - A
 23-3: *SUB* - V, Sc; *ASL* - S; *BV* - SR; *HW* - V; *BL* - V, Q; *BB'81* - A
 23-4: *EIA* - S, DN; *W&P* - V, S; *WS&IM* - Sc; *SC* - V; *NAP* - S; *YS* - S; *3R* - S, Q
 23-5: *KOTA* - DN, Sc, Q; *WAT* - V, B-17 - V, Q; *3R* - S; *RW* - V; *ASL* - S; *VITP* - S
 23-6: 1830 - DN, S, V, Q; *FP* - Sc; *RB* - S; *DEV* - P; *CIV* - S; *MR* - S
 25-3: *PAT* - S, H, V, Sc; *TPS* - DN; *AK* - V; *3R* - Sc, Q; *ASL* - S; *PGG* - P; *PB* - A; *UF* - V; *SOA* - V; *PL* - S; *BB'81* - S
 25-4: *EIS* - S, H, V, Sc; *WS&IM* - V, P, Sc; *EIA* - V, Q; *VITP* - S; *NB* - DN; 1776 - V
 25-5: *GE'88* - SR, V, H, Q; 1776 - S; *ASL* - H; *FP* - Sc; *RB* - V; *OS* - V; *DEV* - S; *GOA* - DN, Q; *W&P* - S, Q; *BR* - DN
 25-6: *ASL* - H, S, V, A, Sc, Q; *PAA* - S; *RSN* - V; *UF* - S; *FP* - Sc
 26-1: *MOV* - S, DN, V, SR, Q; *DE* - V; *DUNE* - V; *DLW* - S; *KM* - S; *SC* - S; *ASL* - A, Q; *KR* - V, Q; *ROR* - DN; *CIV* - V
 26-2: *TPS* - S, DN, SR, Q; *PB* - Sc; *ASL* - H, A; *3R* - S, Q; *HW* - S, Q; *UF* - V; *RF* - S
 26-3: *MBT* - H, S, SR, Q; *FL* - V, Sc; *FP* - Sc; *ACQ* - S; *TA* - S
 26-4: *SOJ* - H, DN, S, Sc, Q; *KM* - V; *TT* - V; *CIV* - S; *DIP* - S; *MR* - A; *ASL* - A
 26-5: *UF* - S, V, SR; *AF* - V; *FT* - Sc; *B-17* - V; *FP* - V; *ASL* - H, Q
 26-6: *NB* - DN, S, H, Sc, Q; *EIA* - Sc, V; 1830 - S; *WS&IM* - Sc; *DEV* - S; *W&P* - Sc
 27-1: *TRC* - S, H, V; *ASL* - H, Q; *KR* - V, Q; *RF* - S; *TPS* - S
 27-2: *3F* - V, Sc, A; *6F* - S; *2F* - V; *EIA* - S, Q; *ASL* - S, D, Q; *WS&IM* - V; *FT* - V; *VITP* - S

I A M A T E D C E C V T O E I M U E R D A E K N I G H T S O F T H E A I R N C
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 D G H A F R L A C Y U I A R R L P N W A N D T T T E L T B U E M N F S I I E E
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 V H E L A C K N D G M R N F M A I C T C O N G T S C I S I C A H I I O K E U N
 M I U H Y E A S O R E E G R O H N I E E T T I L A P Y R N L R G L X R R Q M R
 A B C N H I D N S O I N W I R C T R R D H O E I O T A A N A H I I O R I F O A
 N O F T A C I E Y R T H P A F I S F L S E K R A T R I M N W Z S T G R N R R R
 T T I C O P A E N A O A T O O E T A O Q R Y H E K S A E A A I N I D I R A E E
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 E B I W A S C R N O H N T S B I N R Y L U P M P X N N I S I L E C O L D W A R
 G B F R D N P O A T N A R N U H G A P E B R R L T O I T T L M N F S O L A D O
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 U T H E U U O S Y D A E B O E L A E V D I S W C F A M E L G I E T R A A N R S
 E T F L M F S L E T F M P A R W D Z R E C S A N L N E R I T N E H L X V C S T
 T L L R F R S M A R A L E A T M P N E R O E R T E C R S O D I E I S T A Z E N
 P E E A C Q G C A O I U E R C T E A A N F R A W E Y K W D Z A U A M S L A I E
 L H E O E R T N L X R P E E I I L P R E R I T O T P A A A T N A R G S V E E L
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 E M E F C O E A R I E M O E N H A I S U M N E M O S B Y S R A I D E R S L E A
 L N E S C N O Z R D M A U N O L F C C A E E A A H M A R C H M A D N E S S N N
 R A I N N O C N O L A V A S C W A R A N D P E A C E I W E A N W S R R L Q R O
 E I R A N A A E G E P H P R K A O N E M N O R I D N A S P I H S N E D O O W A

CONTEST #156

Above is a word-search puzzle for your enjoyment, one with a unique twist. All the correct entries are drawn from the extensive list of Avalon Hill and Victory Game products, both past and present. To enter, simply locate and circle as many as possible in the letter grid. A daunting task? You bet! But taking pity on our readers, we offer three clues:

1. Entries may be multi-word, in which case the spaces have been deleted (thus, the entry for *SPICES OF THE WORLD* would appear as "SPICESOFTHEWORLD").

2. Likewise, all punctuation and other standard marks have been removed, ampersands have been spelled out (thus, *WIN, PLACE & SHOW* becomes "WINPLACE-ANDSHOW").

3. On a completely correct entry, there should be 76 AH/VG products listed. To get you started, we'll even give you the first one: "AVALONCON".

That's it. As in all word-search puzzles, entries may be horizontal or vertical, diagonal and/or backwards. Words may even overlap. But in all cases, the letters forming the name are in proper order and in a straight line. The

ten entries with the most correct will be declared the winners. So pull out your latest Avalon Hill catalogue, and grab that pencil. Good luck.

The answer to this contest must be entered on the official entry form (or a reasonable facsimile - a photocopy of this page will serve). Ten winning entries will receive a merchandise credit voucher from The Avalon Hill Game Company. To be valid, an entry must include a numerical rating for this issue as a whole and a listing of the three best articles in the judgement of the contestant. The solution to Contest #156 will appear in Vol. 27, No. 4 and the list of winners in Vol. 27, No. 5 of *The GENERAL*.

BATTLE LOG

Truely, THE LONGEST DAY

By Steve Piotrowski

THE LONGEST DAY is an true test of skill, nerves and stamina for any hard-core wargamer. It has been my pleasure to play in several Campaign Games of *TLD* over the years since its release, and I continue to regard it as the "classic" monster game, with simple systems and involved strategies. The following is a brief report of one such game; it is about as close as one can come to the "Series Replay" for a game of this size. This particular match was played in England in the April of 1988. There were four players involved:

British Commander: Steve Piotrowski

American Commander: John Clifford

German Commander (Caen Sector): Pat McCarthy

German Commander (St. Lo Sector): Keith Waltan

John, Pat and Keith are all British gamers I met while living in the United Kingdom; I originally made contact with them through the pages of *THE GENERAL*. I came to respect their abilities greatly.

PRE-GAME

British Commander:

As the British player in this Campaign Game, I want to set a number of objectives before beginning the June 6th turn. The major focus of events will probably be on the Orne bridgehead. I intend to take the necessary steps in this game to be the dominant force in that area at all times. However, I also wish to experiment (to a certain extent) with a form of mobile warfare. My opponent (Pat) in this game long ago ruled out the possible benefits of early British expansion. I hope to be able to prove to him that leaving a huge hole in the German line in order to crush the Orne bridgehead has the negative effect of exposing Caen to an encirclement by British forces from the southwest. In order to achieve this, I will need a reasonably good landing, and also good weather for the first ten turns of the game. I know that there will be a great temptation to retreat advanced elements of the 7th Armoured to the relative safety of a solid front line behind the Odon. But, I will attempt to continue the encirclement without regard to having a stable front line, until any possible benefits of the encirclement have been proven exhausted. If only the weather holds . . .

German Commander (Caen):

My objectives in this game of *THE LONGEST DAY* are several in number, and include the following: to determine if the game can realistically be played given the June 6th rules in the 1st Edition (as opposed to our "modifications"); to determine whether a strong British thrust through the central "gap" is feasible (and if so, with what costs and benefits); and thirdly, to attempt to analyze the relationship between defensive fire and ground combat in terms of efficiency. The final objectives are, as always, to have a good game, to enjoy myself, and hopefully to prevail.

It would be misleading to imply that I come to this game as a blank sheet with no prejudices.

It is a fact that I have played the full Campaign Game to completion many times and have pretty firm views upon it. The most likely outcome of the game will be that both views (mine and Steve's) will be seen to be partially correct, and will be amalgamated - and thus a new viewpoint will emerge.

Although my ultimate aim is to eradicate the Orne bridgehead, I know that the British (Steve) intend to push through the Caumont gap. This will be more difficult for him if he has less troops available, and so my plan is to allow him plenty of room in the Orne bridgehead early on. The battalion of paratroops at the ahistorical drop zone "K" really worry me, however, and they will have to be hit on Day #1.

The invasion (as per the original 1st Edition rules) is a very hit-and-miss affair; I don't like it at all. On the other hand, the only way that the Germans can win this game, given equal players with equal luck, is for the Allies to have a disastrous landing (and then they haven't had equal luck, have they?). In sum, these are my objectives, plans, and opinions; on with the game!

German Commander (St. Lo):

As the German western area commander, I have certainly drawn the short straw in this game. This is because I will not have any formations capable of mounting a large-scale counterattack until the arrival of the 1st or 2nd SS Panzer divisions. My forces are to be a mixture of good-quality defensive divisions (91st, 352nd, 3FS, 17SS, and Panzer Lehr) and low-quality static divisions (709th, 243rd, 265th, 275th, and 266th). The 77th and 353rd divisions may be under my command, depending upon the situation in the east. In addition, I will have the Cherbourg flak units, 1st Flak Brigade, a stack of corps artillery (including fortress nebelwerfers, and AOK 7). Finally, we are using the option incorporating the 319th Division, so they will be a welcome bonus.

My initial deployment of these forces should follow roughly these lines:

- 1) Concentrate the 709th and 243rd against the northern and western perimeter (respectively) of Utah beach.
- 2) Move the 91st to mask Carentan and link with 352nd.
- 3) Move the 352nd to defend Isigny and a southeastward line to the Foret des Blards.
- 4) 1st Flak Brigade used as "roadblocks" in the region extending to the eastern commander, until a more substantial line can be formed.

I intend to keep the U.S. beachheads split for as long as possible. To this end, I will deploy Panzer Lehr in the gap between Isigny and Carentan, and use my other reinforcements to extend my line towards a link-up with my partner's forces. Success in preventing a link-up will be dependent upon many factors, such as the condition of the Omaha and Utah landings,

road and rail interdiction of my reinforcements, and possible complications in the "Caumont gap".

THE GAME

JUNE 6: FAIR Weather

British Commander: All air bombardment fails, and naval bombardment also terrible. Accurate German coastal gunfire against my beaches causes more than slight concern. However, all follow-up stacks survive and the combat phase sees almost all coastal guns destroyed. The 7th Armoured and 51st Highland divisions land in the build-up phase in their entirety - thanks to the American seizure of MKB Long. Armored losses are very heavy, particularly amongst DD units. Overall, a reasonable landing. Prospects remain good for a quick move inland by 7th Armoured. Resistance in Orne bridgehead surprisingly light; most of the heavy German units kept busy eliminating a battalion of 6th Airborne at DZ "K" or holding in front of Caen. The 711th Division holds at Cabourg because of heavy Allied air interdiction.

German Commander (Caen): Heavy interdiction around Caen causes some problems for me, but nothing major. Gold Beach takes a pasting, my good rolls here mean that the landing is below the expected norm at this stage. The follow-up is much more successful for Steve. 6th Airborne HQ is eliminated by defensive fire, but the coastal defence guns take heavy losses, allowing 7th Armoured to storm ashore. I don't like the look of that at all. The 6th Airborne build-up is a bit of a disaster. This has been a good invasion for him from my point of view. I expect disasters, so anything more average is a blessing. British stacks on the beaches look very formidable.

American Commander: Heavy interdiction, two rail cuts achieved, and air bombardment scores a big zero. Naval bombardment hits Dog Green, Easy Green and Easy Red. Rockets hit Dog Green. On Utah, overall casualties are low, with only one stack hit on the way in. However, no air supply gets down and the 4th and 90th division HQs have not landed. U.S. forces hold Carentan and St. Mere Eglise. My assault wave suffers heavy casualties at Omaha, but the follow-up wave gets off lightly. Armor casualties are very high with all DD units reduced to remnant status. The Germans pull back to the south of the flooded terrain, holding Isigny in force.

German Commander (St. Lo): A reasonably average Allied landing. Omaha has three beachheads and John's artillery is intact. Only one stack of units at Utah is hit, but this contains some artillery. I form a line on the northern perimeter of Utah beach with 709th Division. The 243rd heads towards St. Saviour and the 91st screens Carentan. 352nd Division falls back on Isigny, leaving a rearguard in Bayeux. The 1st Flak Regiment moves onto roads, and into some roadblock positions.

JUNE 7: FAIR Weather

British Commander: All my beaches now safe from coastal guns. Naval bombardment extremely successful as a 100% rate is achieved. All British divisions attack, with his 716th and 21st Panzer taking the brunt of the casualties. Five enemy infantry battalions are destroyed in combat. The 7th Armoured is now three hexes south of Bayeux. The 50th Division only has four full-strength battalions. Germans destroy another para battalion in the flood.

German Commander (Caen): The Allied naval bombardment is most effective. Could this be an omen? Some British forces are removed from the beaches back to England for refit. My weaker units on the Caen front take heavy casualties, but I am otherwise in good condition. The 12SS arrive to bolster the defences. There are no immediate problems for the Germans. The "Desert Rats" advance on Bayeux.

American Commander: Lack of supply hinders expansion of beachheads at both Omaha and Utah. Extensive air bombardment is quite successful however and allows all HQs to land unmolested. German defensive fire opens a road through the flooded area west of Utah and destroys a tank remnant. My attacks kill a battalion of 91st infantry. The German line forms to pen in the Utah beachhead and his counterattacks eliminate two reduced battalions from 82nd AB, clearing the north-south route through the flooded area for German traffic.

German Commander (St. Lo): The 709th Division consolidates in front of MKB MARC (affectionately known as the "Führerbunker"). My 91st Division forms a ring around Carentan and eliminates two paratroop battalions east of St. Sauveur. Meanwhile, elements of 352nd retreat into Isigny, and abandon Bayeux, retreating into the bocage south of Omaha beach.

JUNE 8: OverCast-1

British Commander: The hill position south of Bayeux is disrupted and 30 Corps pours through to the south past Tilly to Villers-Bocage. The 50th Division is in vicinity of Balleroy. 51st and 3C consolidate gains and move up to the German frontline, which is now solid in front of Caen. British 3rd Division attacks a forest hex in the Orne bridgehead, successfully taking the hex but at a cost of one infantry battalion reduced. 12SS is now on front line in Orne bridgehead and in front of Caen! The stage is set for the encirclement. Panzer Lehr HQ enters this turn (which is a future concern but not a big factor at this point). The road south is clear to Auney-sur-Odon, which itself should fall next turn. A brief counterattack in the Orne bridgehead results in no British casualties and two panzer units from the 12th SS becoming reduced. The road is now clear to Thury-Harcourt. Elements of Lehr on rail near Vire.

German Commander (Caen): The British attack in the eastern area of the Bois de Bavent in the Orne bridgehead. My defensive fire is ineffectual and the area is captured (although they lose a step). A unit of the 3rd Division cannot be supported by armor because it is in the flooded region, so I attack it at "+1" (combined

arms) but am repulsed. The British thrust through the Caumont gap with 7th Armoured Division.

American Commander: The HQs of 2nd Infantry and 2nd Armored land at Omaha. My main thrust is towards Isigny. At Utah, I am trying to hold in the flooded hexes whilst attacking towards Isigny to link up the beachheads. The German mechanized move stymies advance from Utah, but defensive fire causes no casualties. Rangers from Omaha cross the Aure Inferiere. Flak units move south from Cherbourg and the pesky 91st infantry attacks again, advancing further into flooded terrain. Isigny garrison retreated by defensive fire from Omaha. I should advance into Isigny tomorrow (or day after, at latest).

German Commander (St. Lo): A lucky defensive fire shot by the American retreats the defending battalion from a hex of Isigny. I should have stacked two units in there! The 91st Division eliminates another paratroop battalion, and sidestep eastwards to link with 352nd at Isigny. My corps artillery is now available to fire.

JUNE 9: FAIR Weather

British Commander: The good weather is good news. 7th Armoured HQ now at Auney-sur-Odon. Advanced elements are flailing German corps artillery units that are out of supply at Thury-Harcourt. The 50th Division occupies two-thirds of the hill at Caumont. Important ground is also gained in the Orne bridgehead by 3rd Division as the 12th SS takes some casualties. 6th Airborne is holding the flank of 3rd Division against the 711th. The 346th is entering and seems to be heading towards the Orne bridgehead. Panzer Lehr is heading towards St. Lo - even though there is nothing to stop the 7th Armoured. I predict it will change course and head towards me in the very near future.

German Commander (Caen): I'm getting a bit fed up with my die rolling; that attack yesterday was a disaster. The British increase pressure on the Orne bridgehead by putting a couple of 17-pounders in the flooded area. 7th Armoured, plus some independent recon units, are threatening Thury-Harcourt. My defensive fire improves, with a couple of hits at 1-2 odds. I have decided to concentrate on the British armor, for better or for worse. I don't attack this turn. Enemy defensive fire is useless, so it has been another satisfactory turn.

American Commander: The 90th Division burns supply and launches two attacks. In the 5-1 attack of V corps versus Isigny, I roll a "1" - no retreat. This is a minor disaster! Clearing operations annihilate an isolated unit of 716th Infantry. The two U.S. beaches are now four hexes apart. Lead elements of Panzer Lehr arrive in the Carentan-Isigny sector and 932nd Flak moves to attack 82nd AB. Luckily, German attacks are broken up by U.S. defensive fire.

German Commander (St. Lo): A battlegroup of Panzer Lehr moved into the Isigny and the Carentan gap to bolster my defences. The flak units from Cherbourg safely reach this area, and are committed to the front line, as the U.S. player has fired the bulk of his artillery in ground combat this turn.

JUNE 10: OverCast-1

British Commander: As predicted, Lehr moves east to attack the 50th Division. The 7th Armoured and 50th Infantry are now blocking the majority of roads and rail lines leading to the German front all the way across the board. 7th Armoured is now holding Bretteville south of Caen, having advanced from Thury-Harcourt. In the Combat Phase, another wooded hex in the Orne bridgehead falls to the British 3rd Division with casualties exchanged on both sides. In the German turn, in an unprecedented move, elements of 21st Panzer and 12SS Panzer pull back from the Orne bridgehead and begin moving south to deal with 7th Armoured. The panzers are replaced with elements of his 346th Division. A good frontal assault all along the line would be pure pleasure now, but I don't have the resources. Units of both Panzer divisions plus the 4th flak brigade attack the 7th Armoured at Bretteville. One infantry battalion eliminated. Panzer Lehr attacks the 50th's line and eliminates one independent battalion.

German Commander (Caen): Is the luck changing? Yes! I hit three tank units with defensive fire. The British "bulge" through the center has now become a major threat. There are British units operating south of Caen and I lost some "sacrificial" corps artillery this turn. I can't afford to do that too often. On the other hand, these British units are thin on the ground and are in range of my front line formations at Caen. They are in danger of being "plucked" should I decide to strip my line and rush back to attack him. If I move too soon they may retire, though; and if I move too late, then I may be retired! In either event, a move will result in a British riposte on the weakened Caen front. What to do? The enemy captures yet another hex of the Bois de Bavent. The 7th Armoured is ascending my nostrils rapidly. I attack and give them a shafting, eliminating five steps. The British line on the Odon is pretty thin.

American Commander: My paratroops regroup in an effort to hold the bridge near St. Mere Eglise. V corps masses to try and break through Isigny before Lehr can arrive in strength. The British 50th Division is threatening German rear areas now, which makes my life a little easier. The 29th Division advanced to the south of the flooded terrain east of Isigny and threatens to push through south of the town. Fortunately, Panzer Lehr moves south to deal with the British threat, which considerably eases the American task. Again, an attack on Isigny results in a "1" and fails to dislodge the stubborn German defenders. U.S. beaches still four hexes apart.

German Commander (St. Lo): Panzer Lehr is forced to move south of St. Lo to make contact with the remainder of their division. This is because a bold British advance along the main road could do nasty things to my out-of-supply units. This advance, although a tactical nuisance, will not cause major rethinking of my strategic plans. However, I will not leave units of Panzer Lehr out of supply, and have them eliminated easily.

JUNE 11: OverCast-1

British Commander: Partial consolidation in order this turn after mild enemy counterat-

tacks blunted our spearhead last turn. The 7th Armoured retreats to Thury-Harcourt and 50th Division is southwest of Caumont. And 49th Division is ashore and concentrated in the Tilly area. So, the 11th Armoured begins landing. Attacks in the Orne bridgehead gain two more hexes this turn with poor-quality German infantry units taking the losses. It is tempting to retreat further with 7th Armoured but I must attempt to hold here, because the Odon line will be very difficult to crack otherwise. A German counterattack behind the Odon causes severe casualties to 51st Division. Another counterattack against the 3rd Division in the Orne bridgehead fails.

German Commander (Caen): German forces are building up - the situation is stable and favorable to the Boche. The "Desert Gerbils" retire from their rather exposed positions and my panzer troops return to the front line at Caen. I launch a heavy German counterattack in the Orne bridgehead. I send my flak into the front line because there will be little British defensive fire. The 2nd Panzer is assembling out of sight at Falaise with a view to a surprise strike at the British "bulge". The Orne attack flounders with a die roll of "1", but the British presence across the Odon is eliminated by some valiant German die rolls.

American Commander: No air supply gets down, but my 4th and 101st divisions look to attack anyway. The beachheads are still separated by three hexes. On the northern sector of the front, all remains quiet. The front line now runs four hexes south of Montebourg, then south along the river to Carentan. Massive ground attacks with artillery support capture Isigny and inflict some German casualties. Several inroads are made into German positions, but I am left almost devoid of defensive fire for the upcoming turn - and short of supply as well. However, the lead elements of V and VII corps are now only 2km apart and, weather permitting, link-up should be soon (tomorrow?). If we get a storm now, I am right up the creek. Lehr continues to be busy with the British, so only the flak units are any serious cause for concern.

German Commander (St. Lo): Those marauding British units pull back somewhat, but Panzer Lehr surrounds and eliminates a battalion of the 56th Brigade. U.S. pressure reduces the gap between Omaha and Utah to only one hex, but an instant counterattack by the 91st and corps artillery isolate a stack of U.S. units and increase the gap back to three hexes.

JUNE 12: FAIR Weather

British Commander: The 49th Division reaches the front line area, partially relieving the 7th Armoured in positions near Thury-Harcourt. But pressure on 50th from Lehr starts to become unbearable. 11th Armoured moving up from the beaches, now at Tilly, seems destined to relieve the situation in the 50th Division's sector. The 15th Division begins landing. German defensive fire near Carpiquet blows a small hole in the line in 51st Division's sector. Disaster!! For a massive German counterattack near Carpiquet results in three battalions of 51st Division being destroyed. Next turn, there will have to be a lot of re-organisation on my front.

German Commander (Caen): My defensive fire is increasing in intensity but not having the desired effect. However, I do manage to blow a hole near Carpiquet. Should it be exploited? Yes! A major infiltration of the British positions on the Odon is attempted. A lot depends on a few crucial defensive fire rolls. If they work, then I will hold my fire; if they fail, then I will send in the troops. The defensive fire is only partially successful so the attack goes in. A heartening success results..

American Commander: In the north and west, the front is now completely quiet. However, my 2nd Armored scythes through the German line in clear terrain south of Isigny, supported by (largely ineffective) aerial bombardment. Corps artillery is held back to try and force the Germans to retreat away from their positions blocking the link-up. Lehr is still away fighting the British (let's hear it for those boys) and my defensive fire clears a way through from Omaha to Utah. Unfortunately, a German attack closes the gap once more. Try again tomorrow.

German Commander (St. Lo): U.S. forces relieve the isolated troops, although they are reduced to two battalion remnants. The gap is reduced to one hex. The 77th Division rails into the area between Carentan and Isigny, but they are lacking their HQ. I will use them as 2nd-line troops until the HQ arrives. Panzer Lehr attacks the British at 7-1 (-1) and roll a "1". Luck? Don't talk to me about luck!!

JUNE 13: OverCast-1

British Commander: Consolidation is the order of the day. The 49th Division moves back to an area south and west of Tilly. 7th Armoured pulls back behind the Odon - reluctantly, I might add. 50th Division retreats to the hills at Caumont and south of the major road. 11th Armoured takes up positions near Carpiquet supporting what little is left of the 51st Division. Not having a double line was a real mistake and I paid for it quite heavily by losing much of the 51st Division. I thought that the German would be too busy dealing with the 7th Armoured to attempt an attack on my forces facing Caen from the north. I will definitely be more careful in the future. The 15th Division continues to come ashore. Armor shortage throughout the front line is felt but my off-board replacement procedure is well under way. Panzer Lehr moves back to the American sector and the 17th SS takes up positions opposite 50th Division. And the 2nd Panzer is sighted moving up through Thury-Harcourt en route to Auney-sur-Odon.

German Commander (Caen): The rail network is destroyed. The British riposte on the Odon front is not too devastating; he does get a couple of "freebies" (i.e., no supply cost). He holds his Allied artillery in hand for defensive fire. The British player will never be able to form a safe double line as long as he has a portion of his army over the Odon. That must come later.

American Commander: Joint operations by 4th Infantry and 2nd Armored finally link up the beachheads, but not without losses from German defensive fire against my armor. However, a corridor 4km wide is forged and the

corps artillery is still available to keep the link open in the face of any counterattacks. In the absence of any U.S. armor on the left of the V corps front, Panzer Lehr attacks and inflicts heavy casualties. To the south of Isigny, the German player concedes the link-up of the beaches and finally retreats south behind one of the river lines.

German Commander (St. Lo): The Panzer Lehr disengages from the British, who retreat to Caumont; then Lehr moves against the strung-out GIs in the Foret des Blards. The 17th SS arrives and relieves Lehr of the job of screening the British. The 3rd FS arrives at St. Lo - a welcome sight. Increasing U.S. pressure has achieved an Omaha/Utah link-up, but I still hold a hex of the main coastal road.

JUNE 14: OverCast-1

British Commander: Re-organisation again, in the area just south and east of Tilly. 11th Armoured just behind the line. The 15th Division moving up to support the 50th Division. 2nd Panzer moves up to Thury-Harcourt. Armored casualties begin to mount in my Orne bridgehead due to German defensive fire.

German Commander (Caen): I really love this cloudy weather. It means that my artillery doesn't get hit by enemy air bombardment. British ravagers finally withdraw from the whole of the Odon line. It is now time to attempt to shrink the enemy's Orne bridgehead. I hope its not too late. The British push in the center has certainly kept the pressure off the British left flank. There are two short-term objectives for me now: 1) eliminate the bridgehead, and 2) beat up the weak Allied center before too much Allied corps artillery arrives. My position is very good, and I also hit some more of his tanks in defensive fire.

American Commander: My supply situation is now desperate. That, and Panzer Lehr, combine to put severe pressure on the U.S. forces. I made a mistake in not withdrawing behind river lines in the Foret des Blards and this may cost me as many as three units. I am forced to put the 101st AB out of supply. At least I take no losses from German defensive fire. But I am unable to raise the combat strength to clear the Carentan-Isigny road in my Combat Phase. I may be able to do this in my next Defensive Fire Phase. My defensive fire duly clears the road as hoped and even less surprisingly, Panzer Lehr stomps the 2nd Infantry Division in the Foret des Blards. I will have to retreat to the river and hold with the units of the 29th Division coming forward. Fair weather now would work a minor miracle.

German Commander (St. Lo): U.S. forces have captured the whole of the coastal road, but his commitment of strength there has left him weak in the Foret des Blards. Panzer Lehr take advantage of this to surround and eliminate three battalions of U.S. infantry. The 3rd FS go into the line.

JUNE 15: OverCast-1

British Commander: Retreat again to shorten the line and join up with U.S. forces at Balleroy. Line now four hexes south of Tilly. Armored casualties continue in the Orne bridgehead. Now down to five independent armored units. My long-term armor situation

looks grim. Soon, I won't have full-strength battalions for the front line unless 7th or 11th moves to the Orne bridgehead.

German Commander (Caen): More gorgeous white and fluffy stuff in the sky - lovely. British continue to rationalise and consolidate (they are pulling back). Thank you, Panzer Lehr! He abandons the Caumont hills. The 1-2 defensive fire shots are not working for either side. All quiet on this sector, as we switch over to "defensive fire mode". The British running-dogs refuse to exploit a gap they blew in the Orne bridgehead because there are two full flak brigades waiting for him in the second line. Carpiquet continues to be my lynch pin - I love those forts. However, the stingy German commander on my left will not give me the supply that I demand and need (I must telex the Fuhrer about the swine).

American Commander: So much for fair weather. Still, we have not had a storm, so I cannot complain . . . really. I conduct a major retreat to La Drome river, relieving the 2nd Infantry with units from the 1st and 29th. The situation is still quite poor, but I remain in control of the road from Carentan to Isigny. I shall build some field fortifications next turn to try and hold the rampaging Panzer Lehr until I have more troops and more corps artillery. The heavy tank losses received in the assault wave are really causing me problems now. Germans continue their pressure and my defensive fire again scores zip.

German Commander (St. Lo): The U.S. player switches troops from the link-up area to form a line in front of Panzer Lehr. Their further advance towards Omaha is slowed. But the 319th Division is slowly arriving from Cherbourg.

JUNE 16: OverCast-1

British Commander: 11th Armoured moves in front of Panzer Lehr's axis of advance in the U.S. sector in the Foret des Blards. Lehr then moves away towards Isigny. No armor placed on the front line in Orne bridgehead this turn as an experiment. Lack of German supply could start affecting his ability to fire all of his artillery. I've double-stacked infantry battalions of the British 3rd Division in the Orne bridgehead, as I don't want to lose those hexes. Result - heavy casualties on 3rd Division, but at least we suffered no armor casualties this turn.

German Commander (Caen): My front line facing the Orne bridgehead continues to be hit by naval disruption; it is becoming a fact of life. British corps artillery reinforcements are due on tomorrow. Things will become much more hairy after that. I have got to watch out for complacency setting in over the next couple of turns, because these corps stacks can come in with a bang. Good grief! What is this? The British are stacking infantry battalions in the front line in the bridgehead. How can I make this hurt him? Probably by attacking him at 1-2, then hitting him the turn after I get a hit in ground combat when the stack is weaker (at 6-1 or 8-1). My defensive fire is a total failure. Not one "6" in 155,000,000 die rolls! A slight exaggeration, but I am going into the attack regardless. The British also have a battalion of the 49th Division isolated on the Odon front. British suffer some this turn.

American Commander: The 2nd Armored attacks elements of the 91st Division in the flooded terrain just to the west of Carentan and successfully expel the Boche! Unfortunately, this requires all of my corps artillery, and so the German moves his flak units into the front line

once again. The Germans are now trying again to cut the tenuous road link between Utah and Omaha just to the east of Carentan. Fortunately, Keith demonstrates that he too knows how to roll a "1" and fails to push my brave boys out (Congressional Medals of Honor all around). Lehr, in the meantime, disengages in the center and heads north from the St. Lo area.

German Commander (St. Lo): The weakening of U.S. forces in the link-up area allows the Germans to mount a 6-1 attack against a hex of the coast road. I roll a "1"; no further comment.

JUNE 17: FAIR Weather

British Commander: The armor goes back on the front line as there isn't that much German artillery available for defensive fire. First British corps artillery reinforcements arrive gloriously and immediately begin to fire in the Orne bridgehead. Two battalions of the British 3rd Infantry are eliminated in the German Combat Phase. No more double-stacking infantry in the Orne bridgehead in the near future for me.

German Commander (Caen): The Allies do not plan a carpet-bombing attack, and this pleases me because it would destroy my rhythm to have to pull my nebelwerfers and corps artillery back into safe(r) areas. No enemy attacks, but his defensive fire hits me again. I attack another double infantry stack and eliminate them both thanks to the +2 CAM die roll modifier.

American Commander: The 2nd Armored takes up positions to defend the road link. In VII corps sector, the front remains pretty quiet. The 29th Division is taken out of supply again so that the corps artillery can defensive fire. Air supply once more fails to reach the ground and the shortage of both supply and artillery precludes any attack. But the good weather allows Allied fighter-bombers to interdict the movement of Lehr and prevent any over-aggressive moves by the Germans. The 319th Division, evacuated from the Channel islands, makes its way down the Cotentin peninsula. My first 8-1 defensive fire attack is a glorious success, annihilating a battalion of the 91st Infantry with a roll of "5". No German attacks, but wait until tomorrow.

German Commander (St. Lo): The front line stabilizes. I am suffering steady casualties from U.S. defensive fire, and his naval power greatly hinders my counterattacks. However, the U.S. player is now short of full-strength tank battalions, and he is also suffering from supply shortages. If the SS arrived now, I could really go places.

JUNE 18: OverCast-1

British Commander: Pat just rolled six "6s" out of ten 1-2 shots. He cannot possibly complain about his luck any more for the rest of the game! I now only have two independent full-strength armored units on the board, nine in total if divisional assets are counted. I won't get any more armored replacements or reinforcements for at least five more turns. I just can't afford to put armor on the front line any more - but if I don't, I will lose hexes that I can't afford to lose. I'm not sure what is going to happen. I am very tempted to defensive fire some units of the 711th, exit three divisional HQs, and "win"

Table 1: Weather & Casualty Summary

Date	DR = Weather	Cumulative DR Average	Allied Losses		German Losses	
			US	UK	St.Lo	Caen
7 June	2 = Fair	2.00	6	4	9	16
8 June	6 = OV-1	4.00	1	1	3	8
9 June	2 = Fair	3.33	2	2	5	5
10 June	5 = OV-1	3.75	2	10	4	5
11 June	4 = OV-1	3.80	5	9	6	8
12 June	2 = Fair	3.50	3	13	6	6
13 June	6 = OV-1	3.86	11	3	8	8
14 June	3 = OV-1	3.75	7	4	2	5
15 June	3 = OV-1	3.67	3	2	0	2
16 June	3 = OV-1	3.60	3	10	3	4
17 June	1 = Fair	3.36	0	9	3	5
18 June	5 = OV-1	3.50	3	6	2	4
19 June	3 = OV-1	3.46	0	2	2	5
20 June	4 = OV-1	3.50	2	3	1	2
21 June	1 = Fair	3.33	3	2	1	2
22 June	2 = Fair	3.25	4	3	2	2
23 June	2 = Fair	3.18	2	5	4	4
24 June	5 = OV-1	3.28	5	7	7	3
25 June	3 = OV-1	3.26	1	7	11	3
26 June	4 = OV-1	3.30	2	8	7	5
27 June	1 = Fair	3.19	0	4	14	7
28 June	3 = Fair	3.18	3	3	10	13
29 June	1 = Fair	3.09	3	18	4	6

Note: Casualties are given in step-losses for the period 7-29 June only (total Allied - 206; total German - 241).
"Cumulative DR" refers to the total of the Weather DRs only.
OV-1 = OverCast 1

the game. I believe that it might be possible. However, Pat has sensed my intentions, and in his Movement Phase, begins to reinforce that sector with miscellaneous units.

German Commander (Caen): The Allied tactic of not planning for a carpet-bombing attack is working well, as even one turn of no heavy bombers on the strategic display would open the flood gates to German supply. No Allied attacks. My defensive fire was "mega-spawny" with six hits at 1-2, which nearly makes up for earlier efforts. (Steve has a right to feel aggrieved because I was considering a single 6:1). Oh no! See what I mean about complacency. Steve has started to look at the 711th positions around Cabourg. I must shift the 2nd Panzer there immediately.

American Commander: My supply difficulties continue and I make no attacks today. Two battalions of the 9th Division are reduced as they walk straight into a flak trap Keith laid. Lehr launches a massive attack with corps artillery support against the road again, and again rolls a "1" (Phew!). My defensive fire evaporates a panzer company from Lehr at 8-1.

German Commander (St. Lo): I mount another 6-1 attack on the coast road, and roll a "1". The Russian front cannot be as bad as this.

JUNE 19: OverCast-1

British Commander: There is activity in the Orne bridgehead. The British 3rd Division has now moved over to the 711th area, and 3rd Canadian is now fully deployed in the bridgehead. The 11th Armoured has moved in behind 3rd Canadian for support. Corps artillery still arriving - 30th Corps becomes activated. As another experiment, I have positioned the 6th Airborne in the "blast area" in the Orne bridgehead. The German has one nebelwerfer brigade, three corps of artillery plus plenty of divisional artillery in the area all focused on a few clear hexes. The 6th Airborne are now supplied again, and I can double-stack those infantry battalions while still being able to "mech" in a tank unit if needed for CAM. These are good units, and I hate to use them for this task; but something has to go there. Unless the Germans make a significant attempt to reinforce the 711th, it will disintegrate under the weight of British corps artillery. Defensive fire is becoming more and more effective as corps artillery keeps coming in. German defensive fire rather ineffective this turn for a change.

German Commander (Caen): The continuous shelling in the Orne bridgehead is taking a toll on both commanders. I am beginning to talk to my dice, and Steve says he is becoming demoralized. A quiet turn.

American Commander: After yesterday's heavy German attack, I can leave the front line a little weaker as there will be very little defensive fire. The lead elements of Lehr are disrupted by naval fire and the 9th Division is able to occupy a hex cleared by my defensive fire. Unprecedented success rate with the air supply allows me to put both 29th and 101st AB divisions back in supply. If the Omaha-Utah link is broken now, the 2nd Armored will be stuck in the VII corps area. This will make Carentan easier to hold as well as easing the job of re-establishing the link should I lose it. When my

corps artillery arrives, even Lehr will not be able to hold the gate closed. I shall have a full corps stack in a week. I make only a single supply-free attack and the German makes no attacks. My defensive fire clears another hex.

German Commander (St. Lo): 77th Division HQ finally arrives, and they begin moving eastwards to tighten the line with the eastern command. Continued disruption by naval gunfire, and solidification of the U.S. link-up means that I can see no further point in attempting to break the Omaha-Utah link. So will soon begin my retreat to the bocage.

JUNE 20: OverCast-1

British Commander: Corps artillery keeps landing. Now at two full corps. 2nd Panzer moves east, presumably to reach the 711th area. 711th is also reinforced by miscellaneous flak and independent units. Heavy defensive fire in Orne bridgehead retreats two battalions of the 3rd Canadian Infantry. We intend to re-take those hexes using our own defensive fire, and an attack by the 11th Armoured if necessary. In actuality, defensive fire proved enough as a German 9-10-6 is reduced and a 7-7-8 is retreated (both at 5-1).

German Commander (Caen): Another turn that sees no Allied attacks. I recapture two hexes of the bridgehead with defensive fire. 2nd Panzer arrives at Cabourg sector, so I feel secure once more - although my supply situation is critical as I have to put 346th Division back in supply. The two hexes are recaptured by British defensive fire.

American Commander: Two supply units land today and air supply comes down successfully again, so shortage is greatly eased. I do not attack at all this turn as I am still waiting for my

big artillery. The German defensive-fire capability has been reduced slightly by the transfer of two divisions to other sectors of the front; but I am still forced to retreat a unit in the Isigny-Carentan sector. The 932nd Flak Battalion advances through the western floodland towards St. Mere Eglise. Surprisingly, though, there is no attack. Watch out for next turn's defensive fire.

German Commander (St. Lo): A quiet turn. The 17th SS move east to link with my eastern troops. 265th and 275th still arriving very slowly. 91st Division has only four full-strength battalions.

JUNE 21: FAIR Weather

British Commander: Very little change in the general situation this turn. Pat was uncharacteristically unlucky in his Defensive Fire Phase which resulted in quite low casualties. I am now waiting for reinforcement divisions and more armor before I go on the offensive again. Unfortunately, I didn't retreat both battalions of 12th SS, which are in critical hexes in the Orne bridgehead. I may now have to attack the remaining battalion to remove it.

German Commander (Caen): The weather God smiles on the festering Allies again. They continue the useful tactic of throttling our supply rather than going for the flying carpet. 21st Panzer has an attack.

American Commander: Blue skies bring the Allied air forces to the battlefield once more and the German *festung* nebelwerfers are successfully bombarded. This subdues enemy defensive fire somewhat and my losses are light. The U.S. Mulberry comes on stream and the remainder of 30th Division is able to land, along with the leading elements of 83rd

Table 2: Casualty Record - Caen

Date (caused by:)	British Casualties:		German Casualties:	
	Ground Attack	Def Fire	Ground Attack	Def Fire
7 June	3 Inf	1 Arm	13 Inf; 2 Art	1 Inf
8 June	--	1 Inf	4 Inf; 1 Art	2 Arm; 1 Art
9 June	--	1 Arm; 1 Inf	1 Inf; 1 Arm; 2 Art	1 Art
10 June	4 Inf; 1 Arm	3 Arm; 2 Inf	1 Inf; 2 Art	2 Inf
11 June	7 Inf; 1 Arm	1 Inf	3 Inf; 2 Arm	1 Inf; 1 Flak
12 June	7 Inf; 2 Arm; 2 AT	1 Arm; 1 Inf	--	2 Arm; 2 Inf; 2 Flak
13 June	--	2 Inf; 1 AT	1 Inf; 4 Flak	2 Inf; 1 Flak
14 June	--	4 Arm	3 Inf	1 Inf; 1 Flak
15 June	--	2 Arm	--	1 Inf; 1 Flak
16 June	8 Inf; 1 AT	1 Inf	--	1 Arm; 1 Inf; 2 Flak
17 June	6 Inf	1 Arm; 2 Inf	1 Inf	2 Inf; 2 Flak
18 June	--	3 Arm; 3 Inf	--	2 Inf; 2 Flak
19 June	--	2 AT	--	1 Arm; 2 Inf; 2 Flak
20 June	--	3 Inf	--	2 Inf
21 June	1 Inf	1 Inf	--	2 Inf
22 June	--	2 Arm; 1 Inf	1 Inf	1 Flak
23 June	--	5 Inf	--	4 Inf
24 June	--	3 Arm; 4 Inf	--	3 Inf
25 June	--	7 Inf	--	2 Inf; 1 Flak
26 June	--	7 Arm; 1 Inf	--	4 Inf; 1 Flak
27 June	--	4 Inf	--	6 Inf; 1 Flak
28 June	2 Inf	1 Inf	3 Art; 1 Flak	6 Inf; 1 Art; 2 Flak
29 June	12 Inf; 2 Arm	4 Inf	--	4 Arm; 2 Inf

Note: Casualties are given in step losses for the period 7-29 June only.

British totals: by Ground Attack - 50 Inf, 6 Arm and 3 AT; by Defensive Fire - 45 Inf, 28 Arm, 3 AT

German totals: by Ground Attack - 28 Inf, 3 Arm, 10 Art, 5 Flak; by Defensive Fire - 48 Inf, 10 Arm, 2 Art, 21 Flak

Inf = Infantry; Arm = Armor; AT = AntiTank; Art = Artillery.

Infantry. The 82nd AB attacks flak in flooded terrain and retreats them, but is one spot shy of an advance (so no progress). Everything is pretty quiet during the German turn; losses on both sides are again quite light.

German Commander (St. Lo): The fortress nebelwerfers are disrupted by air bombardment, so my defensive fire is greatly reduced. The 243rd Division does have some success in a minor push towards St. Mere Eglise.

JUNE 22: FAIR Weather

British Commander: The attack was successful to take back the hex with relatively light casualties. Unfortunately, the armor had to go on the line, and as a result suffered as usual. I now only have one full-strength independent armored battalion, plus three each in 7th Armoured and 11th Armoured. The Orne bridgehead at the moment seems to be in a state of equilibrium, but I am expecting to face another nebelwerfer brigade in the near future. The good news is that starting next turn, full-strength units from off-board replacement points start returning. 12th SS is getting beat up in the Orne bridgehead and units from 2nd Panzer are beginning to get drawn into the fighting.

German Commander (Caen): Enemy air bombardment is notably unsuccessful as Douglas Bader takes the day off. My defensive fire will be heavy. Managed to roll two "1s" against the crucial targets. I wish that I had not got up this morning.

American Commander: No carpet bombing has been plotted for today because of the contents of the German strategic movement track: two nebelwerfer brigades and loads of supply. The 90th Division launches a counterattack against the German incursion through the flooded terrain in the west but another "1" is rolled . . . ho hum. German defensive fire is effective today and my losses continue to outstrip those of the bad guys. Once again, there is no sign of any German attacks however. He seems to have decided that the corps artillery and flak defensive fire is his best use of supply. My tanks continue to take hits, so who am I to argue with this view. For once, my die rolling is too good as I hit twice and get two retreats with my own defensive fire.

German Commander (St. Lo): The U.S. forces mount a 4-1 attack against the spearhead of the 243rd Division and roll a "1". So, Lady Luck is not completely against me. My defensive fire remnants a tank battalion of 2nd Armoured. Not a bad day.

JUNE 23: FAIR Weather

British Commander: Little change in the situation. Artillery duels continue in the Orne bridgehead with infantry from 12SS and 21st Panzer continuing to suffer on the German side. All of my divisions are suffering! Another attack coming up next turn in the bridgehead.

German Commander (Caen): New front line on the Odon nearly complete. Little attacking, but heavy defensive firing on both sides.

American Commander: The 90th Division renews its attack on the 709th Division with air support and makes up for yesterday. My corps artillery is now starting to build up; and in

recognition of this, Panzer Lehr pulls back slightly from the Carentan-Isigny road. For the first time in the game, I feel that my position is secure. I would like to get the 3rd Armored Division into action before the Germans can conduct an orderly retreat to the bocage.

German Commander (St. Lo): My push to St. Mere Eglise is blocked by U.S. reinforcements. I regard it as a successful diversion of forces from the crucial area of the link-up.

JUNE 24: OverCast-1

British Commander: Armor appears on the line for a possible attack on the bridgehead by the 11th Armoured. However, heavy - I repeat, heavy - defensive fire by 21st Panzer, 12th SS Panzer, 7th Nebelwerfer, 1st SS Panzer Corps, XLVII Panzer Corps, and III Flak Corps sends my armor back to England for rest and refit. My own artillery prepares to blast the German front line in the Defensive Fire Phase. The rest of the line is quiet. The 43rd Division begins landing at our newly constructed Mulberry at Item Green.

German Commander (Caen): I hope there is some poorer weather on the way (a six-day storm for example). The British are left with a tricky tactical situation in their bridgehead. Things could go very well for me this turn. Yes, my 6-1s against the British tanks are notably successful. The 9th Nebelwerfer goes into action for the first time next turn. German defensive fire on this sector is reaching epic proportions. But my first big battalion gets hit at 8-1 and it dies.

American Commander: The 3rd Armored starts to land today and 2nd Armored pulls out of the line for a little R&R. Supply situation is now excellent, and my preparations are in hand to strike for Cherbourg through the German 709th Division. My corps artillery masses for the big push. German defensive fire is heavy; but mine is even heavier, as AOK 7 gloriously disintegrates at 8-1(+1). Lehr, meanwhile, continues to cover the withdrawal to the bocage and moves out of range of my destroyers.

German Commander (St. Lo): My defensive fire eliminates a battalion of 30th Division, whilst U.S. defensive fire eliminates AOK 7. I regard this as the writing on the wall. Time to head for the bocage.

JUNE 25: OverCast-1

British Commander: The 43rd Division continues landing, and takes up positions near Carpiquet to partially relieve current infantry shortages. 6th Airborne and 51st Division take the casualties in the Orne bridgehead this turn. The 49th Division now holding in front of Caen. Right now, there are no full-strength infantry battalions on the board from the following divisions: 3rd British, 3rd Canadian, and 51st. The 7th Armoured has only two and the 50th has three. Most of the front line is being held by only the 49th, 15th and 43rd divisions. His 9th Nebelwerfer appears in the bridgehead. Artillery duels continue. It is now 152 to 100 in defensive fire factors for the Germans. It only costs me 2.5 supply each turn and the German burns about 6.5. However, it seems he can afford to burn that much. I need more artillery soon. Pathetically bad luck in my

Defensive Fire Phase as I roll two "2s" at 5-1 against two big German battalions.

German Commander (Caen): I've spotted a flaw in the British line near Cabourg but I can't exploit it this turn. I will move the 21st Panzer in case the chance is still there tomorrow. A new division appears in the bridgehead - the 51st. It is quickly ejected by accurate German artillery fire. The line on the Odon is completed at last. Steve has a bit of bad luck in high-odds defensive fire shots in the bridgehead.

American Commander: Breakout! Well, sort of. The 2nd Armored and 90th Infantry both burn supply and assault the positions of 709th infantry, inflicting heavy enemy casualties. Advances by 2nd Armored put MKB MARC coastal battery in the firing line at last. In response, the Germans have no choice but to start retreating away from Utah. Only his 709th heads for Cherbourg, all others making off to the south. My defensive fire now almost up to full-strength, though most of the German units pull out of range of my guns.

German Commander (St. Lo): A move north by the 2nd Armored and the U.S. corps artillery "bumps" into 709th Division, inflicting heavy casualties on it. So 709th retreats towards Cherbourg, whilst the rest of my troops peel away from the U.S. forces to form a defensive line in the bocage from Lessay to Caumont.

JUNE 26: OverCast-1

British Commander: Lack of any other available units means that the bulk of 11th Armoured Division had to go on the line in the Orne bridgehead. This, of course, led to horrendous casualties. We are now outnumbered in defensive fire artillery 178 to 115. In the next five turns my artillery strength will continue to grow while the German strength remains constant. At this point in time however, the situation is totally unacceptable. The arrival of the 53rd, 59th and the Guards Armoured will help a lot. I would love to begin offensive operations near Carpiquet when my reinforcements arrive, but I fear that it just won't be possible. In my opinion, the only available defence against the nebelwerfer menace is the threat of a carpet-bombing strike. Unfortunately, there are four SS panzer divisions on the entry track that must be slowed down. Later - after a conference with Air Vice Marshall J. Clifford - the British are given permission to attempt a carpet bombing mission when the weather clears.

German Commander (Caen): That weak point still exists, but British armour has appeared in the front line so my fire must be directed that way. I whacked it pretty severely. My two SS divisions are coming on soon. I want all four right now, but the Fuhrer does insist. In any event, they will give me the flexibility that I need.

American Commander: The 2nd Armored and 90th divisions continue attack against the retreating 709th Division, with support from the corps artillery. I choose to attack a combined-arms stack, which costs me a step loss but guarantees me positive CAM in the assault on Cherbourg. In the south, the advance is slowed by the need to maintain a reasonably coherent front line. The 3rd Armored cuts across the Cotentin peninsula to the coast.

German Commander (St. Lo): The 2nd Armored and 90th divisions continue hitting my boys of the 709th as they pull back. His 3rd Armored moves through flooded terrain and aims for the western end of my line.

JUNE 27: FAIR Weather

British Commander: Carpet bombing plotted for one hex north of Cagny. The 49th Division enters the Orne bridgehead and takes immediate casualties. Successful air bombardment on a stack of the 9th Nebelwerfer means that they die next turn if we get fair weather because they are in the blast zone and can only move one hex in their Movement Phase. Still holding positions in the Orne bridgehead. Praying for fair weather next turn.

German Commander (Caen): Oh no. The Allies plot an Axminster. I suspect it is plotted to land on the hill in the Orne meatgrinder. All formations adopt anti-carpet bombing positions (and we won't elaborate on what that entails).

American Commander: The 3rd Armored continues its race across the Cotentin and starts to head southwards in an attempt to stretch the German line. The 2nd Armored meanwhile picks off stragglers on the Cherbourg approaches. German defensive fire is light and ineffective, as 709th gets carved up in a big way (now down to below 50% strength in three-days fighting)! The 82nd and 101st are still trying to push their way south and west through difficult terrain. My corps artillery moves back to the St. Lo-Carentan road to force the German flak units out of the front line. Germans adopt anti-carpet bombing positions. No German attacks.

German Commander (St. Lo): The remnants of 709th Division hold up in Cherbourg. Their fate is sealed, but they will go down fighting and demolish the port. The rest of the line is quiet.

JUNE 28: FAIR Weather

British Commander: The weather is fair and the heavy bombers descend. However, bad luck meant that only three units from the 9th Nebelwerfer were destroyed instead of the five or six that were expected. We will need more carpet bombing in the future. Medium bombers also successful at disrupting the entire 8th Nebelwerfer for a turn. German defensive fire in the Orne bridgehead should be below 100 factors for the second turn in a row. The Germans are finally taking the kind of punishment they should be taking at this point in the game. Admittedly, Pat had bad luck with his defensive fire, rolling two "2s" at 5-1 odds, repeating my performance from a few turns ago. An actual attack by 12th SS takes back a hex in the forest in the Orne bridgehead. Fairly heavy casualties inflicted in my defensive fire phase, particularly on the 346th.

German Commander (Caen): Carpet bombing is two hexes from where it was anticipated, and it could be nasty. I don't believe how lucky I am, losing only one step of infantry and three nebelwerfer battalions. In my opinion, they should have gone for six full-strength panzer battalions on or near the front line. That would have been a disaster for me. My defensive fire fails due to two "2s". I recapture a crucial hex in the Bois de Bavent despite another roll of "1".

Post carpet bombing is a happy time for all the Boche.

American Commander: The carpet bombing comes down in the British sector, much to the relief of Panzer Lehr. The 2nd Armored continues to push for Cherbourg, but the priority now is not to waste supply. Even so, the division breaks into the outer Cherbourg defences. German defensive fire causes me three step losses, but my attacks hit nearly twice that number. The 3rd Armored masses to threaten the west of the German line. My units have nearly caught up with the retreating German forces and my corps artillery continues to pound away.

German Commander (St. Lo): The 266th Division reaches the front line. Welcome to Normandy! The 265th suffers most of the U.S. defensive fire, and is now reduced to about half-strength.

JUNE 29: FAIR Weather

British Commander: 1st SS moves into the Orne bridgehead to counterattack, along with elements of 12th SS and 2nd Panzer in the face of three British corps of artillery. Some success in defensive fire, but four infantry battalions are eliminated in the German combat phase. Five hexes of the Orne bridgehead are lost in the melee. He is now adjacent to Pegasus Bridge! I made the mistake of leaving nothing in a hex behind the line, since I was expecting some battalions to retreat. Unfortunately, a hole was blown in the line causing another mini-breakthrough. The 10th SS also enters and attacks elements of the 6th Airborne near Cabourg.

German Commander (Caen): The medium and light bombers strike again, disrupting another of my nebelwerfer stacks. My attacks in the Orne bridgehead are heavy and put me next to a key bridge. The light is visible at the end of the tunnel. Both SS divisions are involved around the bridgehead (1st and 10th SS).

American Commander: St. Vaast falls to units of the 90th Division. The 2nd Armored enlarges the gap in the Cherbourg defences. As the parachute divisions reach the main German line, they are met by a heavy defensive fire bombardment. My only attacks and supply consumption are at Cherbourg. Elsewhere, everything is pretty quiet. Another unit of Panzer Lehr is KIAed by my defensive fire.

German Commander (St. Lo): The recon unit of Panzer Lehr is eliminated by an 8-1 defensive fire attack. My own defensive fire reduces three battalions of U.S. infantry; but he can replace those losses. I cannot. The grinding battle leading to the eventual breakout has begun.

SUMMARY

British Commander:

I must say that this game was one of the most intense and difficult that I have ever played. The German player and I were both under a great deal of mental strain - although I probably showed it a bit more than Pat did. The format that we used to play the game was a "marathon session" consisting of a four-day weekend devoted to TLD. After Sunday's session, I think that we were all physically and mentally "drained" from the previous four days of gaming. I personally prefer a more paced time scale for playing the Campaign Game. However, this

was not possible due to the locations of the players in relation to one another. Even so, crunching the game together in a weekend is a bit much for me. I don't think that the format had any effect on the outcome of the game, but I do think that the turns would have proceeded quicker had there been some breaks between our playing sessions.

For the British in this game there were triumphs and tragedies; but I look back on it as an excellent learning experience. My hypothesis that Caen might be surrounded and taken by default turned out to be a very unrealistic proposition. On the other hand, the rapid expansion of the 7th Armoured and 50th divisions caused a lot of discomfort to the German players and offered several benefits. Panzer Lehr was forced, for two important turns, to move back to attack British units that were blocking supply and movement paths. These turns assisted the U.S. forces at Omaha and Utah to link up, which could have taken much longer. German panzer units also had to be withdrawn from the Orne bridgehead to counterattack the 7th Armoured Division at Bretteville. This move allowed some important ground to be gained in the Orne bridgehead. The ground was eventually back in German hands at the end of June, but only because of an obvious mistake on my part. Had the game been played in a more time-relaxed atmosphere, that mistake might not have occurred.

My pre-game comments regarding superiority in the Orne bridgehead never really developed fully. In the first ten turns of the game, the exploitation of the 7th Armoured and 50th divisions stretched my line too much, resulting in a less-than-satisfactory performance by the remaining British units in the Orne bridgehead and in front of Caen. By the time my line stabilized, I was facing a solid wall of panzers, flak and nebelwerfers in the Orne bridgehead that made any advances impossible at that time. In fact, I was lucky to be able to hold the ground that I had at the end.

I cannot blame the weather for my misfortune in this game. In fact, we had quite good weather, particularly in the last week or so of June. I believe that bad weather can hurt the allies in the first ten days, but I don't believe that prolonged "good" weather helps them all that much.

When facing a competent and aggressive German player, the British player must resort to some extreme "survival tactics" in order to have, on any given turn, more than a handful of full-strength armoured battalions. This assumes that the German will concentrate his defensive fire on the British armored units, a tactic that is frequently used. The rules allow for Allied units to be pulled off the beaches and to be built up by replacements currently in the pool. Using replacements in this manner is at least four times as efficient as the usual replacement procedure - except for the obvious detriment of having the replaced units out of circulation for 13 turns, instead of the usual three turns. As well, an excess in beach capacity is required to continually embark and debark refitting units. For the British, this procedure must become a way of life. Normally, remnants and independent units are the first to undergo this replace-

ment procedure; but later in the game it will become necessary to begin replacing divisional units in this manner also. The British player only begin to reap the benefits near the end of June when many of the replaced units will have returned to the board.

One "survival tactic" that is not recommended is double-stacking infantry battalions on the front line in the face of enemy armored formations. I used this tactic because I was desperate to reduce my own armored casualties. I did have some success with double-stacking paratroop battalions, and this tactic is highly recommended (although there never seem to be enough of them around). The British player should attempt to conserve units of the 6th Airborne in the early stages of the game even though they are usually unsupported and required to hold part of the front line.

My philosophy towards *TLD* entering this game had been that ground combat was the major tool for destroying enemy combat units for both sides. Defensive fire, I thought, was useful for breaking up enemy attacks, harassing fire and pre-attack bombardment, but not as a major means for destroying enemy combat units and winning the game. I now believe that defensive fire can be the major form of attack in the game in the long term and reflects the attritional style of the actual campaign extremely well.

Table 1 gives summary casualty information about the entire front, while Table 2 shows a detailed analysis of casualties in the Caen sector. These figures show that out of a total of 127 step losses inflicted on the Germans in the Caen sector in June, 64% of these were caused by defensive fire (despite the fact that I entered this game with an "attack" mentality for the British). A very important point here is that the vast majority of casualties to the Germans from ground combat occurred before June 12th. Of my 135 steps of casualties, 56% were caused by defensive fire. Of course, a different philosophy towards the game would shift these factors around considerably; but I do believe that the British must adopt a "defensive fire" mentality beginning about June 11th or 12th. If they do not, they will be unable to inflict any serious casualties on the strong German panzer units facing them until the arrival of their corps artillery. On the other hand, the German player could continue to attack throughout June and might inflict higher casualties to the British than he would using a defensive fire oriented strategy, but at a high cost to his own army in flak and armored losses. The German does have many powerful ground units with which he can increase the efficiency of a supply turn substantially. However, naval disruption will adversely affect his ability to sustain an offensive in the Orne bridgehead, which I hold to be the focal point of much of the activity in June.

My conclusion then must be that defensive fire is the most efficient use of supply for the British player, and the German player, throughout most of the game. I still believe that the most efficient means of destroying enemy combat units is a combination of defensive fire and ground attacks with positive combined-arms modifiers. This is applicable mostly to the U.S. player, and, to a certain extent, the German

player as well. The British player should find that the majority of German panzers will be drawn to his sector (as was the historical case). Positive combined-arms modifiers for the British will be few and far between unless the Germans are in range of naval guns.

It has taken me a long time to reach this "ultimate truth" about how the game system actually functions. I believe that it took an excellent group of players to teach me that there was a different way to look at the game. I was very impressed by the style of play of these three English gamers. It truly was a pleasure to have the opportunity to play *THE LONGEST DAY* against other experienced players of such a high calibre.

German Commander (Caen):

My conclusion will address the objectives outlined in the opening paragraphs, and some interesting tactical points that arose during play. I am grateful to my opponent, Steve Piotrowski, for providing me with tough and imaginative opposition. The sense of humor that pervaded the game added greatly to the enjoyment, and never diminished despite the hectic pace and long hours.

The invasion turn of *TLD* continues to bother me; I still don't like it. At least the game outlined above saw a reasonably "average" invasion that led to an "average" type game. The answer to this problem may be a whole set of modifications, or possibly a June 7th setup and start date.

The "thrust through the center" strategy adopted by Steve has several implications. The first is that, given equal players, an above-average invasion and excellent weather, there is no chance of an encirclement of Caen by the British. If things went even slightly worse than in this game, the chances are less than nil. On the other hand, his thrust did reap one or two benefits for the Allies. It reduced pressure on the Orne bridgehead; it wiped out the 1st Flak brigade; and it attracted the powerful Panzer Lehr away from Isigny.

The cost of the strategy was several Allied battalions that would not ordinarily be lost, and a thinning of the entire British line. This thin line was broken on a couple of occasions by German defensive fire, and this caused serious problems for the British. The absence of the armored division from the direct attack upon Caen may or may not be significant - this is open to debate.

The third objective was to try to work out the optimum way to play the game. Is it by attacking or by using defensive fire? Obviously, a player using defensive fire will still make ground attacks, and vice versa; but where should the emphasis lie? This can be analyzed only in the light of certain premises, and my own include the following.

The Germans cannot win, given equal players and equal luck. The timing of the breakout is determined by how quickly the Allies can reduce the Germans to a single line in one place, plus a certain amount of time to exit the map, plus any scrappy fighting that this entails. The time the Germans are reduced to a single line in one place is determined by two factors - the length of that line, and the number of units

they currently have on the board. It is very difficult for the Allies to increase the length of the enemy line to any great extent, so the operable factor becomes the number of enemy units eliminated. The factor that limits the Allied killing capacity is supply; they can't do everything they want all of the time because of supply restrictions. Therefore, the game is reduced to converting Allied supply into dead German units in the most efficient manner possible. It is my belief that Steve's analysis proves that defensive fire is the most effective and efficient method.

Finally, I would like to thank Steve and the "Canadian school" for pointing out the obvious to me. Yes, it is good tactical play to use strong armored units in the front line rather than weak infantry, and then to "mech recce" under the tanks. Thanks again to all concerned (except *mein Fuhrer*) and I hope that we can meet again someday for Round 2.

American Commander:

We stopped the game at the end of June because we simply ran out of time. The SS Panzer counterattack did not have a chance to occur. There are several points worthy of comment about this game, but I shall restrict myself to just two:

The weather was remarkable in that there was no storm through the whole of June. This is obviously a bonus for the Allied side, although not as much as might be expected. It can be crippling for the Allies to have a storm early on; but after the first ten days or so this becomes of less importance. Although the average weather die roll was only just over "3", it was only towards the end that the average fell much below "3.5".

One thing which was revealed is how difficult it can be for the two U.S. beaches to link with each other. In fact, were it not for the activities of the British drawing the units of Panzer Lehr away from the Carentan-Isigny sector, Utah might still have been a single isolated beachhead at the end of June. I have even experienced the complete destruction of all forces in VII Corps! The separation of the U.S. forces is something which the German player should try to maintain for as long as possible. For the U.S. player, it is imperative that the 1st and 29th divisions landing at Omaha should strike for Isigny immediately and not waste time forming a line with the British. This link will occur by default. The troops landing at Utah must also be sure to occupy Carentan on D-Day. If forces from Omaha and Utah have not formed a front to the south of the Carentan-Isigny road by the time Lehr arrives, then they may never do so. Their best chance is in the first three or four days. The German for his part should defend with absolutely anything he can lay hands on to prevent a link. AOK7 should proceed immediately to Isigny to defend the city. If the Germans are successful in keeping the U.S. forces split for the first week, then about the only way through is with massive barges from the corps artillery or carpet bombing (or both)!

In summary, the U.S. player must "go for it" from the start, while the German must forget about defending absolutely everything -

instead, defend Isigny! It is unfortunate that we did not have the time to continue the game; who knows what other unpolished gems of strategy may have been uncovered.

German Commander (St. Lo):

Although the game only progressed to the end of June, it is possible to extrapolate the future course of events. Having played numerous Campaign Games before and since, the following comments are an amalgam of them as applied to the 30th June positions in this game.

1st-8th July: The SS panzer divisions are committed against the Allied line at points where tank and artillery support are lacking. They make significant local gains, and force the tanks of 2nd and 3rd Armored to be used as fire brigades. Cherbourg finally falls. The second U.S. corps stack arrives. Twelve brigades using defensive fire really hurt.

9th-16th July: The 5th FS Division and the divisions from South France allow a reasonable German defensive line to be maintained; but massed Allied artillery wears down the Germans at an increasing rate. A third U.S. corps stack arrives, and can soon support ground attacks.

17th-25th July: The U.S. armor can now be committed to battle, and makes significant incursions as the German player must commit reduced battalions to his front-line defenses.

26th-31st July: The German line finally reaches breaking point. The arrival of the 15th Army reinforcements merely ensures that the U.S. Army will have the honor of exiting the map instead of the British.



AVALONCON T-SHIRTS



AvalonCon T-Shirts, the most visible symbol of attendance at the historic first Avalon Hill National Championships, were a sellout at the show. The unofficial uniform of the first AvalonCon appears to be taking on collector status as many who couldn't attend (as well as many who did) have requested the opportunity to purchase them. So we've re-ordered them. Here is your chance to claim attendance at the inaugural AvalonCon - whether you were there or not.

The blue shirts with white lettering are available in S, M, L, and XL for \$8.00 each. Larger sizes XXL, XXXL, and XXXXL are available for \$12.00 each in white with blue lettering. Normal shipping charges apply. Hurry! Offer good only while the supply lasts. Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.

THE LONGEST DAY at Avaloncon

During the festivities at *Avaloncon* in Camp Hill, a demonstration game of *THE LONGEST DAY* was played. A van-load of Canadians - consisting of myself, Assistant GMs Dan Thompson and Paul Sommers, and Jim Wentzlaff - arrived in Camp Hill on August 22nd ready to fill our weekend with the *TLD* demo. After setting up the game with the help of some curious onlookers (which took about an hour), we were ready to begin. We decided to implement a few rules modifications to smooth out some perceived rough spots in the rules and to add some special flavor to the event. The following "house rules" were used:

1) *German Coastal Artillery Fire*. Coastal guns fire at units in landing boxes individually, instead of by stack. If an HQ unit is hit, it is not destroyed and placed in the "10" box on the Allied Entry Track. Instead, it lands with double-disruption status, and units of that division cannot fire nor attack for the next two turns. This rule tended to eliminate the wild possibilities of either a very successful landing for the Allies or an absolutely pathetic one. Since this was to be a demonstration game to showcase *LONGEST DAY* for the uninitiated, we wanted to achieve a reasonably average landing which would likely lead to an average game. We would highly recommend that players use this rule on June 6th and on all subsequent turns of invasion, especially if wishing a balanced game unaffected by extreme luck in the early turns.

2) *U.S. Corps Artillery Restrictions*. A U.S. corps HQ can supply a maximum of three "groups" per supply turn. Too, U.S. divisional groups may fire as one unit in combat or in defensive fire at a strength of "3" (since each group actually represents three units). If a divisional artillery battalion or group is destroyed by German coastal artillery fire, a corps unit of equal quality (or worse) can be assigned on a permanent basis to that division and thereafter functions as a divisional unit. Allowing U.S. corps to fire six groups per supply turn is a tremendous advantage and isn't particularly realistic. These rules worked very well in our demo game, and seemed more "realistic" given the historically campaign.

3) *Allied Follow-up*. The Allies may place units on the Strategic Entry Track (boxes 1-10) at the beginning of the game at the rate of one unit per turn (or one group every two turns). The single U.S. artillery group which starts on the track may be removed, or it remains and counts for two units. Corps units must be split evenly between U.S. and British forces. This rule allowed British and U.S. corps artillery to land earlier than usual in the game which is historical and does not significantly alter play balance.

4) *319th Division*. The German player may use the 319th Division as per the optional rules. Since the game favors the Allies in the long term (i.e., there is no chance of long-term German victory), the 319th division helps shift playbalance back towards the Germans a bit. There is no doubt, however, given players of equal skill and equal luck, that the Allies will eventually break out.

5) *Corps Rules*. We used the corps rules as per Jim Burnett's article in Volume 19, No. 2 of *THE GENERAL*. These significantly impacted the play of the game; and most players this weekend felt that the change was not positive. Allied supply usage was less efficient and there were fewer heavy artillery concentrations. The rule also affected the Germans and many defensive-fire possibilities were lost because of corps restrictions. If this rule is to be used, the entry date of corps HQ's must be altered to ensure that there are an adequate number of them on the board for the number of divisions at any given time. The corps rules left our players with a continual feeling of frustration which detracted from the otherwise smooth game system in *THE LONGEST DAY*. We will probably not be using the Corps Rules in the future - but I'd urge other *TLD* players to try them to see what they think.

The invasion turn at *AvalonCon* went quite smoothly, and we were able to play through the end of the June 8th turn on Thursday night. We continued throughout the day on Friday and Saturday, completing eight turns each day - so that by Sunday morning we were up to the June 25th turn. Between turns, idle players fielded questions from curious passers-by who wandered into Parlor B to actually see that the game had been set up! Common questions from inquiring spectators were:

"Are you guys actually playing this?"

"How long will the game take?"

"What is the unit size?"

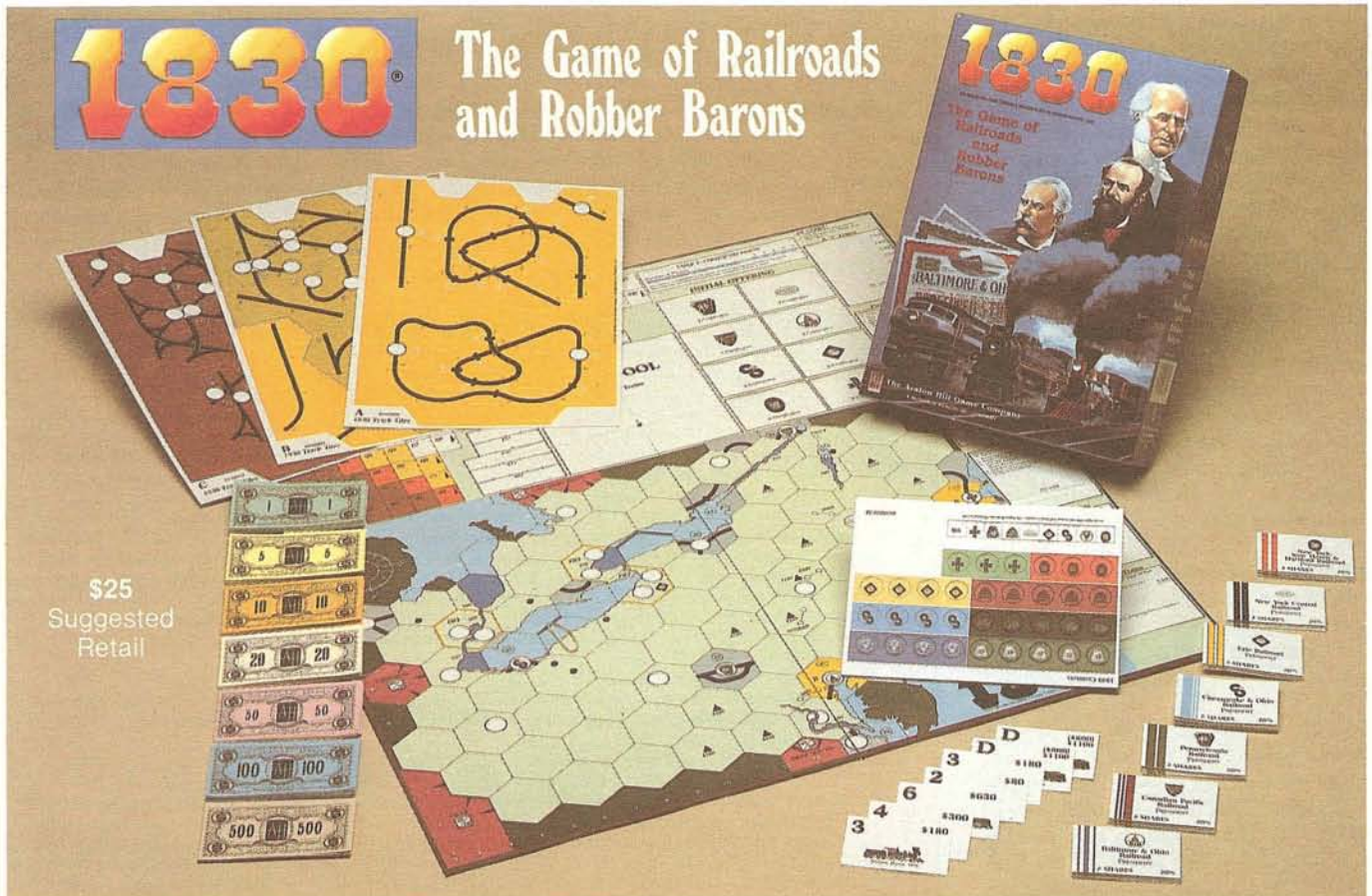
"Why does the line look the same as it did yesterday???"

Even Don Greenwood ventured into the game room a couple of times and politely pointed out that we must all be truly "sick" to want to play this game at a convention! Many who stopped by (a point of some pride it seems, and encouragement to us) said that they had purchased the game, but did not have the time - or the courage - to punch out the counters and actually play it. I was complimented several times regarding the fact that my game counters were cut and trimmed properly. Yes, it was a painstakingly long process; but did you see those fellows in the *ASL* room?

Many of our participants (who could play as long, or as little, as they desired through the three days of the convention) complained that they could not find local opponents willing to try *TLD* with them, so the only experience they had with the game was solitaire. While chatting with one of the original playtesters of the game, Bob Coggins, I was interested to hear the methodology that Randall Reed used for placing towns on the map (darts, anyone?). We were a little disappointed that there weren't more active participants. Because of the number of players we had, the CinCs had to also control part of the front line. It would have been nice if the supreme commanders could have concentrated solely on strategic matters.

At the end of play on Sunday morning, the unit positions on the map and on the strategic tracks were recorded. This took about two-and-a-half hours to accomplish. It is hoped that the game will be continued - either by electronic mail on GENie, or better yet face-to-face at a future *Avaloncon*. (For those interested in contacting me to play in the game by electronic mail, my GENie mail address is S.PIOTROWSKI. If you have access to a modem, a copy of the game, and a great deal of spare time, feel free to contact me.)

I would like to thank Avalon Hill for reserving one of the Parlors in the PennHarris Convention centre for the *TLD* demo. The facilities were excellent and absolutely ideal for the event. Thanks also to everyone else involved in running the convention; it made the drive from Canada well worth the trip. *AvalonCon* is the perfect venue for "monster games" such as *THE LONGEST DAY*, *EMPIRES IN ARMS*, *SIEGE OF JERUSALEM*, and others. The ample space, presence of accomplished and interested wargamers, and freedom from time constraints imposed by "real life" made for a wonderful opportunity to indulge ourselves. Hopefully, it will become a yearly happening.



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On May 24, 1830 the first regularly-scheduled railroad service in America was inaugurated by the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Although the first trains traveling out from Baltimore to Ellicott Mills were horse-drawn, this was the dawning of North America's railway era. Within a few years the horses were replaced by small steam locomotives.

The early railroads were the first great industrial corporations, and the profits, power, romance, and glory of running them attracted the best and the worst of the era's bright businessmen.

1830 is a multiplayer railroad game that captures the drama and excitement of this period.

Set in the northeast U.S. and Canada, **1830** re-creates the development of the railroad system from its horse-drawn beginnings to the ascendancy of the diesel locomotives. Players take the part of the early financiers attempting to be the wealthiest player at the finish.



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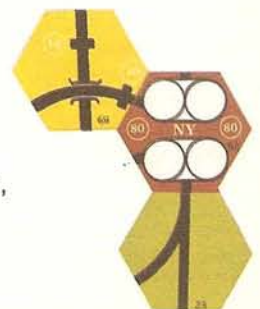
Depending upon the best strategy to employ in any given turn, players may become an empire builder carefully managing their companies for the long term, or loot companies for quick profits and hope to leave an opponent with the wreckage. In a sense, this re-creates the exploits of the rough hewn but shrewd Commodore Vanderbilt and his son of the New York Central; the devious and greedy partners Jay Gould and Jim Fisk of the Erie; the brilliant builder of the mighty Pennsylvania RR, J. Edgar Thompson; and J.P. Morgan, the tough financial wizard and ruthless manipulator of men, money, and the New Haven Railroad.

Unlike play in **RAIL BARON**, players actually build the routes, using track tiles they lay on the game board. The routes may follow their railroad's historical paths, or create completely different routes if it is deemed more profitable to do so in the strategic mind of the player.

But play of **1830** is more, much more, than just laying track. Players buy and sell stock, build bridges and tunnels, buy and sell trains, decide whether to pay dividends to stockholders or re-invest. A railroad's stock rises or falls depending on the payment of dividends, as well as the buying and selling of shares.

Once each player's starting positions are determined, there are no random events or elements of luck in the game. Each player's success depends on his or her own skill and decisions.

Easy to learn but difficult to master, **1830** is an enthralling re-creation of what railroad building must have been like in the days of "railroads and robber barons."



BEHIND THE HIGH-WATER MARK

More Realism for THE LONGEST DAY

By Charles E. Duke

Avalon Hill's first monster game (I refer to its size, since *ASL* is a "monster" of another sort) is a real gem because of a characteristic rare among its kind - playability. However, I do feel that more realism can be added without detracting from that cardinal virtue. Specifically, I refer to the matter of "beach assault", a matter of crucial importance. The root of my desire to revise the rules lies in Omaha.

On the average, the Americans will lose 1.67 beachheads on Omaha Beach to coastal artillery alone (Table 1 illustrates the probability of losing any given number of beach sectors there) in *TLD*. The percentages don't seem to be too bad, until you consider that there is about a one-fifth chance of losing three or more sectors - and more than 50% of losing two or more. Then the situation takes on another perspective for the prospective Allied player. Further, the table does not show all the truth, since it assumes that should a given group of invaders survive coastal artillery it will automatically take its beach sector (which is far from a sure bet). Although there are a lot of variables to be taken into account, I calculate that if there were no adverse enemy coastal artillery fire results, still only about 80% of the beachheads will be taken (that is, four). If we combine both factors, the average beachhead loss on Omaha will rise to about 2.33! The reader might disagree with me, but I consider the loss of more than two beachheads a complete disaster for the Allies, perhaps spelling utter defeat. It should simply not happen so; the Americans, who did in fact have bad luck on Omaha Beach on June 6th, took all their assigned beachheads (reread the footnote for the 352 Infanterie Division in the rulebook).

Of course, the possibility of losing one or more beachheads should exist in the game system. But this should only be a possibility - not a certainty! The design problem is how to duplicate the terrible losses suffered by the Americans on Omaha, yet not unbalance the game in favor of the defender. Note that I am not complaining about the heavy casualties the "super-killer" coastal guns might cause, but of the fact that a simple hit with a single die roll will stop the invasion of a sector dead in the water. The German player usually has a straight 33% probability of hitting each sector. Rommel would have *loved* any weapon capable of doing that.

It is true that a coastal gun can fire a lot of rounds at a lot of targets in a day - but not simultaneously. And if it was dispersing its fire along a 30-kilometer front, what would that do to its effect? It was early dawn and the invasion force was large, but the best of gunners could not hit them all as they surged ashore. American losses at Omaha were heavy, but not such as to stop the invasion.

Another crippling aspect of this quirk is the exceedingly frequent loss of Allied headquarters units. It is not unusual for the Americans to lose one, sometimes even two, HQ units at either Utah or Omaha. In this case, it is proba-

bly best for the Allied player to simply concede the game; that way you can begin another without too much difficulty and time wasted. Airborne HQ also get killed off with distressing frequency; the British 6th Airborne HQ buys the farm virtually every game. But historically, no Allied HQ was lost on D-Day (at least, not to the extent implied by an HQ-loss in *TLD*). Again, this should imply that they couldn't be destroyed, but it does leave me with the impression that such should not occur so often.

TABLE 1: Beachhead Loss on Omaha

Lost	Probability
5	0.39%
4	3.97%
3	16.13%
2	32.75%
1	33.25%
0	13.50%

There are other historical aspects that can be incorporated into the game readily enough to satisfy the simulation freaks among us.

First is the fact that naval gunfire could, and did upon occasion, destroy bunkered coastal guns. It could also decimate enemy tank and infantry units moving up to the coast, as many references to various amphibious landings demonstrate. Naval fire in *THE LONGEST DAY* should be capable of inflicting step losses.

The unlimited use of carpet bombing by the Allies is certainly not historical. In fact, it is a quite objectionable "what-if" incorporated into the game system, as footnote #21 admits. The Allies used carpet bombing precisely four times within the period covered by the game. The first use was quite unimportant; it occurred on D-Day and was intended to fall upon Omaha Beach to destroy obstacles and suppress the defenders. Because of the bad weather, the planes dropped their loads further inland in order not to hit their own troops by mistake. In fact, the attack fell upon units of the German 1st Flak Brigade, destroying a goodly portion of their transport and weaponry. But in the game, the use of the heavy bombers in this mission, regardless of what they might destroy, means no interdiction of enemy reinforcements (and probable doom for Allied plans). No intelligent player would ever use the carpet bombing even if allowed.

The heavies were not used again in the battlefields of Normandy until 8 July. On that day 460 planes dropped 2300 tons on top of the 12th SS Panzer in Caen. The Germans retreated and the British finally took the city, but were slowed by the rubble created by the bombing; when they arrived at the Orne bridges, they found all of them blown. Ten days later, another carpet attack was launched as support for Operation Goodwood; 2100 bombers dropped 8000 tons south of Caen. Results were

nominal, but Montgomery advanced ten kilometers towards Falaise.

The last carpet bombing of the campaign took place a week later, during Operation Cobra. Originally slated for the 24th, bad weather forced the cancellation of mission. However, 350 bomber crews did not get the message and so dropped their bomb loads, some of which fell on American lines. The next day, the real attack took place with 2500 planes and 4000 tons of explosives. This time the Allies elected to use napalm and light explosives to avoid rubble and craters. The bombing was successful and destroyed the remnants of Panzer Lehr, paving the way for the breakthrough.

As can be seen, strategic bombers were diverted from their usual chore of deep interdiction only four times, and three of these instances fell within an 18-day period. It is obvious that such use should be limited.

Finally, imagine any general, his staff, a few clerks and second-rate HQ troops making a dashing penetration alone into Brittany. Any Wehrmacht battalion could have dealt with them quite easily. Would you consider this a breakthrough? I would not. But the rules as they stand require the exiting of only HQ units from the map edge - no matter what the condition of the division. Experienced players tend to leave the HQ of some burnt-out Allied unit laying around near the front lines to use it just for this purpose. Let's curtail this "cheesy" strategy and get back to what the Allied invasion intended to accomplish.

The following variant rules pretend to make the beach assault more realistic and exciting, and seek to simulate to an extent the other matters mentioned above. While these variant rules do tend to favor the Allies, the new Victory Condition proposed should balance this. Players of *THE LONGEST DAY* are urged to try some or all of the variant rules below to find the mix that best suits their own version of balance.

1. All of the units of the beach-assault wave must be placed in the corresponding Landing Box and participate in the attack. They must land or die in the attempt; such units may *not* remain at sea nor return to the display cards in this phase.

2. Assault-wave units may overstack in beach hexes during the Beach Assault Phase, but this situation *must* be corrected in the following Movement Phase. By the end of movement, no overstacking is allowed.

3. Assault-wave units may ignore "Retreat" results in the Beach Assault Phase.

4. Assault-wave units that, for any reason, fail to take their beach must be placed in the sea hex located between the Landing Box and the beach itself; this represents them clinging to the sand behind the high-water mark. Such units

are said to be "Pinned". Pinned units cannot move; but if they are not disrupted, they may attack the beach hex (only) alone or in conjunction with other Allied units from other hexes. They may be evacuated back to the display cards in the Follow-up Phase or later, but they would receive coastal gun fire in doing so. No follow-up or build-up units may reinforce a pinned unit.

5. Pinned units may be attacked from the beach hex they confront. Artillery ranges are counted to the Beach hex - not the sea hex the counters physically occupy.

6. If, at the moment that the Allies finally take the beach hex, at least one of the original assault-wave units remains there (pinned), a beachhead is created; otherwise, it is lost.

7. Coastal gun fire is modified. A given battery may only fire at boxes of a single beach (i.e., Omaha, Utah, Gold, etc.). Within that beach, it may fire at each and every box.

8. All coastal guns firing at a given hex must join and their attack factors are added together; however, each separate unit within the box must be attacked separately using the attack factor. Example: A box is attacked by five coastal gun factors and it contains three units; the German player will roll three times under column "4-9", once for each unit. A hit is still "L1" and disrupts the target, but it affects only the unit being fired upon at that moment.

9. Disrupted units cannot attack, but other disrupted units in the stack may do so (possibly taking the beach). Disrupted units "going along" in an attack share any adverse results rolled for the attackers. If all of the units in a sector are hit and disrupted, no attack can occur; instead all units suffer an additional "L1" and are pinned.

10. Headquarters units must be hit twice in order to be destroyed by coastal artillery. The first hit entitles the German player to a second roll. A miss on the second roll means that the HQ is disrupted; a hit on this second roll eliminates the HQ.

11. Allied HQ may not be attacked by coastal artillery in the German Defensive Fire Phase of 6 June.

12. Craft chits numbered "4", "5", "6" and "7". The Allied player must draw one secretly at the start of the game, the number upon the chit indicating the number of carpet bombing missions he will be allowed in the game. The player retains the chit to show to the German player at game's end. In addition, no more than three carpet bombing missions are allowed in a single month. The Allied player may, however, "feint" carpet bombing missions by moving the heavy bombers to the Holding Box even if he has no attacks left.

13. On the Bombardment Table, a result of "6" under the 23-30 column is now "LS" in addition to disruption; a result of "5" or "6" under the 31+ column has the same effect. If a coastal gun is in the attacked hex, it has priority over all other units in the hex to suffer the step loss (this to prevent a tactic once used in *PANZER LEADER* - placing a unit on top of a bunker to "defend" it from naval gunfire).

14. Allow tank destroyer and self-propelled gun units (which are AFVs after all) to take armored type replacements.

15. The German player may declare a German division "disbanded" at any time. The HQ is removed from play and all surviving units under its command become independent thereafter. A division must, however, have lost two-thirds of its total steps to be disbanded.

16. **VICTORY CONDITIONS:** The Allied player must exit three divisions (one of which must be "tank") through three different lettered hexes off the mapboard. To be eligible, a division must exit all of its surviving elements (which must represent at least two-thirds of the steps of the division at full strength) plus a supplied HQ. Further, the units must exit within five days from one another; that is, for example, if the first unit is exited on 15 July, the last must exit by 20 July for the division to be counted towards the Allied victory conditions.

German victory conditions for failure by the Allies to take certain cities by certain times remains unchanged, and is considered decisive. Otherwise, the level of victory depends upon the date the last unit of the three required divisions exits, as shown below:

TABLE 2: Variant Victory Conditions

Date	Victory Level
Prior to 16 July	Allied Decisive
16-31 July	Allied Marginal
1-15 August	Draw
16-31 August	German Marginal
After 31 August	German Decisive

In summary, these simple variant rules make for a more realistic game. Those players interested in *THE LONGEST DAY* as a historical study might find them especially interesting. They do change the play balance slightly, but this is easily countered by adding some of the optional rules that favor the German player if you think it necessary. I, personally, feel that the original design favors the Germans anyway, so the above variant rules merely bring the game back into line. ☆

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**AH Philosophy . . . Cont'd from Page 10**

definitive end. The Allies were "right" and the Axis "wrong", in both their goals and in their conduct of the war. (I'll leave the debate as to whether the West then squandered that sacrifice by falling back into the old pattern of appeasement afterwards until another column.) With 50 years now distancing us from the pain and bloodshed, we can all at least agree that "justice" was served. Even the citizens of the defeated nations have, I suspect, a grudging approval for the outcome - if not the methods used to reach it in all cases. Germany was a nation of brilliant people, led by madmen into the terror of total war. That's why its defeat was made the priority, first at the "Arcadia" conference in late 1941 and later reaffirmed at Casablanca. Although we can certainly admire the professionalism and heroism of the enemy, no one questioned (or questions) *why* the war was fought.

This "purity of purpose" carries over to the individual campaigns and battles in a different sense. One nice thing about the actions in WW2 were that the goals were relatively well-defined. No Korea or Vietnam this. Even on a strategic scale, there was a definite "victory" that was aimed for (whether it was reasonable or not). Capture or defense of a city, destruction of a factory, the sinking of a fleet, success or defeat were identified and what remained was merely implementation. This makes designing, and playing, a wargame based on the action much simpler. At the very least, it makes the wording of Victory Conditions easier, and every player will be aware (and likely agree with the precepts) of what is expected of him to "win the game". In sum, it was a very "logical" war. And wargamers thrive on logic.

So the personalities and hardware seem larger-than-life (with all the romantic baggage that phrase conjures), the research material is readily available to anyone with an interest, the action is varied and can involve nigh anything, and there can be clearly defined goals set forth in the rules. All this lends itself to the designing and selling of our wargames.

Now, one can argue the "chicken-and-egg" conundrum for each of the points made above. Are WW2 wargames popular because they are the most numerous; or the most numerous because they are popular? Are there so many on store shelves because the designers (who are notoriously lazy researchers) have ready access to the information necessary to design them, or vice versa? Does the subject truly lend itself well to simulation in cardboard, or only seem that way because other conflicts have not been explored as thoroughly? Does the world of wargaming really need a dozen innovative interpretations of the Battle of the Bulge; or are there a dozen because the topic is so vast that a couple of sound designs can't cover it adequately to the satisfaction of the fans? There is, however, one reason for commercial wargaming's devotion to World War II that overrides all else I believe.

I think in our study of the war, through the medium of our paper pastime, we acknowledge the debt we owe our fathers. They fought in an honorable cause. They lived "The Great Crusade". Whether they took up arms for *volk*, the Emperor, the Motherland or democracy, they sacrificed everything they knew to back what they believed. I doubt if many, or any, of us feel that we will ever embark upon such a historic endeavor. Or have the passion to make that kind of commitment. Our lives are more prosaic; the critical issues facing our societies are more complicated and, for the moment, less immediate. It's hard to say what's "right" and what's "wrong".

But our fathers could. And through our wargames we seek, in some small way, to recapture that spirit. ☆



# Coming Attractions

## FAMILY FAVORITES

The preview this time will be a potpourri of family games of the recent past, present, and future. Avalon Hill has made a decided effort to move the majority of our production into a simpler vein featuring shorter playing times, expanded reliance on graphic components to retain sophistication of play, and a lessened reliance on lengthy rules. For the most part, this translates into the use of cards as the principle design element. Not that we will be abandoning the sophisticated wargamer - but any company whose principle game system is *ASL* has got to sell a lot of *Candylands* to reduce its "average" complexity rating to a level the normal person can understand.

One of the nice things about doing simple games is that they don't take as long to design or develop. In fact, two of them have already been released before we could preview them here. Consequently, I'll start this report with a behind-the-scenes look at some products you may have already seen advertised.

*LEGENDS OF ROBIN HOOD* was a high-priority "rush" job intended to hit the market at the same time as the summer movie season, and for once we made a deadline. Initially, we were going to settle for a revamped version of our earlier *ROBIN HOOD* design (which has been long discontinued). However, management wanted a game aimed specifically at children and not a typical wargame. So my favorite designer Courtney Allen was enlisted to do another of his card-game specialties. The result is simplicity itself. There is only one major rule to remember: you can only play one card of each suit per turn. The cards are largely self-explanatory. *Voila!* Instant game! The two pages of rules are usually digested by the time one manages to get the cellophane off the cards. Of course, I couldn't resist adding a touch more sophistication, so a fourth suit was created to add more color and player interaction.

Although the game is aimed at children and emphasizes simplicity, it is not the simplistic fare of your typical roll-the-die-and-move genre (sure to bore a "real" gamer). The underlying principles of the game use sound simulation techniques to portray the subject in a painless manner. For example, the astute player will soon enough discover that he is indeed safer in the forests than in the towns because there are fewer forest Ambush cards. With a playing time of one hour, *LEGENDS OF ROBIN HOOD* is the perfect start for the little wargamer in your family, and I heartily endorse it as such.

*ADEL VERFLICHTET* was almost as simple, but any attempt to dismiss it as a "child's game" would be taken as a grievous insult by a number of 40-ish gamers of my acquaintance. They

would prefer to describe it as a game of pure strategy. The "1990 German Game of The Year" is an outgrowth of the old rock-paper-scissors game everyone played as a kid. The theme is that of a sophisticated scavenger hunt between English lords, who have hired detectives to protect their collections and thieves to pillage those of their fellows. The game is for two to five players but is best played with the full complement and suffers considerably at the lower end of that scale, for it is the interaction of the players which make the game work. Playing the two-player version is like playing *FOOTBALL STRATEGY* with only half the plays.

My duties with *ADEL VERFLICHTET* were confined to translation, as any change at all from the original would have bought me instant martyrdom among my circle of gaming acquaintances (referred to elsewhere in this issue as "Team Doily") who have unanimously proclaimed it their favorite game of all time. This from guys I've spent whole weekends with besieging Jerusalem or contesting patrol after patrol of *UP FRONT*. I prefer *TP: STALIN-GRAD* myself, but if you're into simple, multi-player games of pure skill, it's hard to go wrong with *ADEL VERFLICHTET*. And at 90 minutes, the playing time is just about perfect for an evening's fare.

Which brings us to the future. My next project is *CANDIDATE*. This is a game of presidential politics by Richard Winter, the designer of *MARCH MADNESS*. I must have looked at a dozen different election games this past year (they come out of the woodwork every four years), and *CANDIDATE* was by far the simplest - and to me, at least, the most enjoyable.

*CANDIDATE* is a two-to-six player game in which you try to win your party's nomination. The emphasis is very much on ease of play. It is a simulation of presidential "politics" only in the loosest sense of the word. Players are each dealt cards which represent their current assets for the campaign in the form of money and endorsements, as well as an assortment of dirty tricks such as rumors that can be used to attack opponents. Each player in turn selects a state or block of states whose primary will be resolved, and all players secretly play their resources on the various states they wish to win, or forego participation in that primary to make a greater effort in a later primary. As each block of primaries is resolved, the winner of the most votes gathers momentum in the form of a "Bandwagon Effect" which allows him to draw extra cards. Dirty trick cards can wipe out even the strongest position, however, so a certain

amount of bluff and guesswork is essential.

Ultimately all the primaries are resolved and play proceeds to the convention, where players are eliminated one at a time by being forced to throw their support to the winner of another round of votes. The net effect is that the action builds to a crescendo at the finish, and although position is rewarded, no lead is ever completely safe. All the players remain involved up to the convention endgame - and the underdog at that point can still win. At two hours playing time, this game is just about the perfect length for a social game, and certainly shorter and more interesting than the real thing.

Speaking of politics brings me naturally to the subject of my next project: *GANGSTERS*. This is a two-to-five player game set in the era of Prohibition with four rival gangs battling each other and the police for control of a fictional city. Players win by being the first gang to amass \$X or monopolize all of a given type of illegal action.

Players alternate movement around a map-board with three Gang pieces - a Racketeer, a Vamp, and a Thug. The Racketeer buys property, which in turn produces illicit revenue. He also controls the amount of movement the player can take in his turn. The Vamp extorts money and "recruits" opposing Gang members by getting them to betray their own Gang and come over to her mob. The Thug, as the name implies, is the muscle that knocks off other players' property and "solves problems". In addition, each player can direct one Cop towards his opponents every turn or "buy" him outright. Lastly, players can move Public pieces into their properties for big payoffs. This is where the number of moves a player is entitled to becomes crucial - a player with a limited number of moves may have to forego moving his own pieces just to move the Public out of his opponent's rackets (or by not doing so, increase the pressure on the next player to do so).

Moves are limited to two minutes apiece and the time limit makes for some tense tongue-biting as players wonder whether the mover will see the route that could lead to their own downfall. *GANGSTERS* is another of those games that doesn't resemble any that have gone heretofore - although there is a dash of *RAIL BARON* involved in the decision of whether to hoard cash or buy upgrades of equipment for a competitive edge. At three hours, *GANGSTERS* is a tad long for a family game, but as in *RAIL BARON* you'll find the time goes fast.

My last ongoing project is *BREAKAWAY HOCKEY*. Originally scheduled for an autumn release, it was set back in playtest when we switched the format to (what else?) cards. We decided to give it the *BLACKBEARD/Stat-Pro* Fast Action card treatment by changing almost all the charts and tables to a deck of Action cards. The format change has made the game much faster and allowed us to double the size of the rink which, in turn, eliminates both-ersome stacking.

*BREAKAWAY HOCKEY* is again more of a game than a simulation as we've opted for simplicity over mind-numbing statistics. Although it will rate and use actual NHL player stats and



# AVALONCON

## A Fresh Start for an Old Hobby

By Don Greenwood

Who says you can't ever go back? On August 22nd, 1991, a year of hope and preparation culminated in the reality of the here-and-now as nearly 1000 gamers and their families flocked to the Penn Harris Convention Center for the first-ever Avalon Hill Championships. This gathering of the faithful was billed as a national event, and a survey of the hotel parking lot quickly showed why. It seemed as though every state of the Union was represented. But even more impressive than the license plate comparison was the spirit that filled the air. This was not a gathering of mourners come to bury their hobby and accept the status-quo of a pastime widely rumored to be in wholesale retreat. This was a group of enthusiasts, some old and some new, who were breathing in the rarified atmosphere bred only of enthusiasm. Not since the halcyon days of ORIGINS IV, a dozen years ago, have I seen a gathering of gamers any happier to be plying their trade with their fellows.

Why? Judging from the comments I heard, I'd say it was a combination of things. The emphasis placed on gaming and competition - sort of a "back to basics" movement - certainly was a factor, as was the general mood of the wargamers that someone was finally fighting back to defend *their* hobby, rather than catering to the computer and FRP crowd (which seem to draw the lion's share of the attention these days). But there were other factors as well. The "official" drappings of the convention - the *AvalonCon* logo on plaques and T-shirts, and the game area markers decked out in full color box art, and the rated-AREA play everywhere you turned - lent an image of justification to the proceedings that seemed to say: "We're doing more than just playing games . . . we're competing for the national title." Moreover, we all had similar interests and talked the same language once more. We were boardgamers reveling in our hobby, and damned if we didn't have fun again in the process.

While it may be true that we were "preaching to the converted" (as those most likely to miss the trappings of an ORIGINS-style convention had stayed away), I was amazed at how many expressed being pleasantly surprised by their experiences there. As one such, Roger Eastep, has since posted on the GEnie bulletin board:

"I was not particularly interested in attending AvalonCon, but was talked into it. As it turned out, I haven't had that much gaming fun since the first two ORIGINS. I thoroughly enjoyed every tournament game I played, and even though I didn't win any prizes, I played some good games against some great players, met some postal opponents for the first time, and made several new friends. As for the way things were run by AH, if there were any hitches I sure didn't see them. A first class job all the way."

Blowing our own horn? I suppose so, but I don't know how else to relate the general sense of well-being I experienced at this convention to those who missed it. The mood was electric, and as close to universal as I've ever seen at a gaming convention. There wasn't any of the bemoaning of the state of the hobby that has become all too common fare recently. The enthusiasm was contagious; so much so, that it even got an old pessimist like me charged up again. Trite as it sounds, a good time was had by all.

The events were narrowed down to a manageable number and most drew reasonable, if not overwhelming, participation. The GameMasters were volunteers who, for the most part, did an outstanding job. The competition was good, the comradery better, and the *esprit de corps* fantastic. Damn! Let's do it again. And so we shall - next July 30th to August 2nd - again at the Penn Harris in Camp Hill. Don't make the same mistake twice. This time, be there!

### THURSDAY

The Registration desk opened for business at noon Thursday, even though nothing was scheduled until 6PM that evening. If I learned anything from running ORIGINS I, it was to get badges on every gamer you can grab as soon as you can. Visions of the two-hour line I generated at JHU 15 years ago spurred me on well into the night as we remained open well past midnight to accommodate the late arrivals. This time around our longest registration line demanded a wait of about two minutes. And there were no lines at all for rooms or events because the hotel handled the bookings, and the

events were free to all comers. Life was good . . . except for those few who had neglected to make reservations. The hotel was a sellout weeks before, and nearby hotels were likewise booked solid. A word to the wise: make your reservations early next year.

My biggest "problem" in the words of teammate Ray Pfeifer was how to avoid looking like we fixed the Team Tournament. Ray, the eternal optimist (and no small admirer of his own gaming skills), was convinced that we had amassed the greatest assemblage of gaming talent to ever exist under one label. I was less confident, but nonetheless pleased with our team.

Although Open Gaming had become increasingly evident for the past six hours, the hostilities opened officially at 6PM Thursday for the early arrivals with *Lee vs Grant*, *NEW WORLD*, *FORTRESS EUROPA*, and *SPEED CIRCUIT* all getting underway. All except *SPEED CIRCUIT* were late additions to our lineup which did not make the Pre-Reg form. Nevertheless, pick-up games commenced and some official championships were even decided that night.

Randy Heller, the Californian GameMaster who flew in especially for this event, was the first "Top Gun" to fall in his specialty - losing to Roger Eastep in the first round of *FORTRESS EUROPA*. Randy Schilb was the eventual winner in three rounds behind an Allied juggernaut. The *NEW WORLD* tournament was decided in two rounds of six-player games, with David Terry dubbed the best colonizer. Joe Bellas walked off with a plaque for winning both rounds of the *Lee vs Grant* event. *SPEED CIRCUIT* used four qualifying six-

The staff at the Registration Desk were real "sweethearts."







Let the games begin! The Grand Ballroom on the first day.

driver heats to qualify for the Sunday finals (which saw Scott Goehring edge GM Russ Gifford with a come-from-behind drive to take the title; Jason Robert, Ned Conklin, Stephen Rugh, and Keith Tracton rounded out the finalists).

At 7PM, *THE LONGEST DAY* started to earn its name as Steve Piotowski and the first of an intrepid group of nine corps commanders set the monster up for a marathon playing session that would span the entire weekend and reach the June 23rd turn before running out of time. Set up in their own parlor complete with couch and other accoutrements, this band barely set foot off the beaches for three days.

*CIRCUS MAXIMUS* also ran the first of its four qualifying races which would eventually draw 54 charioteers. GM Winston Forrest had even acquired a set of miniature chariots and an enlarged track for the finals - which were eschewed by the finalists in favor of the official cardboard counters and printed map. Ah, Purists! Ain't it grand! Obviously, Tim Flanagan deserved to win this event for showing such good taste.

Demonstrations filled the rest of the evening's official slate with playtest copies of *Candidate* and *Advanced THIRD REICH* being played before enthusiastic players. The latter had its own parlor and kept three boards going throughout - one of which was an enlarged, plasticized version which was truly a sight to behold for any enthusiast.

## FRIDAY

At 9AM Friday, the shooting started in earnest when the "glamour" events got underway. A blind visitor to the Keystone room would have thought he had walked into a casino as 91 *ASL* players kept the dice churning throughout the weekend in a gruelling, seven-round, swiss-style tournament in which none were ejected. Three days later, Mike McGrath

emerged as the top *ASL* player in the land - unbeaten and sporting a bulging new *ASL* specific AREA rating. The clash with GM "Fish" Connor, who will hand the GameMaster chores over to Ron Berger next year and come out of retirement to challenge the young Turk, is already much anticipated.

The action in the *VITP* room was no less spirited as 36 admirals duked it out in a seven-round, swiss tournament won by Dave Targonski over a distinguished field. Dave won five of seven matches by wide margins, and eked out narrow wins in two other games to end the week unbeaten. GM Glenn Petroski finished second overall - but may have finished even higher in terms of GM excellence. Glenn put together a fine package of *VITP* clarifications for his players which he'll be glad to send you in exchange for a SASE bearing 52 cents postage. (Write him at 210 West Hunt, Twin Lakes, WI 53181.)

The '91 edition of *BATTLE OF THE BULGE* was won by Paul Soper over Michael Uhrich in five rounds. GM Craig Taylor used a novel format to reduce his uneven tournament field of 14 entrants into SE brackets by playing two rounds of non-elimination competition - playing once with each side - and then advancing the top eight scorers into a normal Single Elimination bracket for Rounds #3 to the finish. This is an excellent format for future GMs to consider in dealing with our "sky is the limit" philosophy on event entrants.

The *SQUAD LEADER* tournament brought back visions of 1975 with a "back to basics" approach (won by Scott Romanowski) that limited play to the original first three published scenarios. It also stood out as one of the few events on which I received a complaint. At least one competitor thought it too restrictive - having studied his manuals all the way through *G.I.* - but the tougher fare was down the hall in the *ASL* room. Although the event description in *THE GENERAL* had described the event fully, not everyone - including our complainant

apparently - subscribes. A word of warning to those planning to attend in future years - the *AvalonCon* Bulletin Board is your best source of information about our convention and it appears only on the protective wrapper of subscription copies. Store-bought copies will not contain it. If interested in *AvalonCon*, it may be worth your while to subscribe. The *SQUAD LEADER* GM Craig Good, my teammate in the Team Tournament, finished third. [Only third? Maybe I was too harsh on him for switching his Team Tournament entry from *SQUAD LEADER* to *ADEL VERFLICHTET* after all.]

Another event which drew some criticism was the *THIRD REICH* tournament which got off to a bad start when GM Roger Cox had to withdraw due to illness. Assistant GM Jeremiah Ingersoll took up the reins and brought 25 competitors to the finish. Well, almost. Plagued by slow moves, the games fell behind schedule (one round ended at 4AM). The two exhausted finalists, Brian Sutton and Michael Pustilnik, agreed to settle it with a quick tie-breaker game of *TITAN* (lost by the Californian). Brian reached the final by crushing the Axis decisively in three straight rounds and taking Berlin in 1944 each time. Michael displayed more diversity by winning twice with each side, Allies and Axis.

*PANZERBLITZ* was the only pure Double Elimination event at *AvalonCon*, but it needn't have been for Bart Rigg who won in six rounds without losing a game. *D-DAY* was one of the few events that failed to draw enough entrants to qualify as a tournament next year. Nevertheless, heavy favorite Don Burdick lost in the opening round to Phil Evans. *KINGMAKER* was decided in two rounds with seven players advancing to the final based on Parliament vote totals. Heikki Thoen became the first of two Canadian *AvalonCon* winners by winning the seven-player final.

*AFRIKA KORPS* was not one of the bigger tournaments, but the old classic was certainly among the most-contested. AREA postal champ Joe Beard came in from Arizona to GM the event - only to be beaten in his first game by Greg Smith after an opening round bye. Smith, in turn, fell to eventual champion John Poniske, who went the route without benefit of a bye by defeating Mark Gutfreund in the final. Joe took his GM duties seriously despite his early exit and could be seen hovering over his contestants to the end. Joe even donated a "premium appliance" as a consolation prize. His dedication was typical of the fine effort that *AvalonCon* GMs displayed throughout the convention.

10AM saw the start of our Juniors-only tournaments when *WIZARD'S QUEST* got underway under the direction of GM William Navolis, who split his six youngsters into a pair of three-player games and then paired the winners in a two-player game for the championship. Marcus Foster of Fort Worth (TX) won over six-year old Joshua Johnson. Although small, the Juniors-only events are the future of our hobby and we're determined to improve them. With the help of dedicated GMs like William Navolis, we shall.

*UP FRONT* was the fourth largest tournament and among the most hotly contested in its five-round, swiss format. Mark Cohen won on



points by not losing a single soldier throughout the competition. GM Andrew Maly also finished undefeated, but could only manage third on points. The lone female competitor, Kimberly Trout, finished second. [But Ray Pfeifer - he of the confident bearing - was the first member of Team Greenwood to go into action, and scored 0 points.]

Richard S. Curtin II won the *BRITANNIA* event with a tournament score of 148.5. Players were required to play in at least two of three preliminary rounds, with only the top four scorers advancing to the final. Meanwhile, Jim Truitt proved the best of the *WS&IM* competitors by winning both the preliminary team version and the final rounds of head-to-head play.

Surprisingly, the old classic which fared the best in terms of tournament entrants was *WATERLOO*. The French won ten of 14 games played; and one of the PAA wins was achieved by a single 2-6 PAA cavalry unit which was the sole surviving unit on the map. In the final round, Eric Kirchner's French repeatedly outflanked PAA positions until they were defeated in a battle of attrition at Mont St Jean by Kevin McCarthy - one of only two AREA postal champs who successfully defended their title in FTF play.

The 11AM start time signalled the beginning of another of our fledgling Juniors events as *WRASSLIN'* for half-pints got underway. My 13-year old daughter upheld the family honor by besting Ray Stakenas II in the finals of a spirited three-wrestler elimination format (and thereby set the scene for much hilarity yet to come). A more seriously-contested event was *RUSSIAN FRONT*, which was won by Jim Falling in four rounds with successful command of both sides.

Noon starts were limited to a couple of demonstration games. The *GUNS OF AUGUST* game drew scant attention and soon folded, but three *EMPIRES IN ARMS* games got underway and went at it hammer-and-tong throughout the

Greenwood goes down to defeat in *TP: STALINGRAD*.

weekend to the immense enjoyment of all involved. The first of three demonstrations of *NAPOLEON'S BATTLES* had to be canceled due to GM failure, but Bob Coggins eventually arrived and got off the next two rounds of his miniatures game on time - to the delight of many boardgamers who enjoyed the panoramic splendor of his finely painted troops.

At 1PM a dark cloud descended over the Volga as I met my personal Waterloo in *TP: STALINGRAD*; my Russian defense was ground down in the opening round. Byron Stingley took top honors over Marty Ward by commanding the Germans to victory in all four rounds. He weathered his toughest match in the second round as he had to extricate most of his Army from isolated status at the 11th hour when Tom Oleson's counterattacks proved effective. The Victory Point Bid system was used to determine sides with bids ranging from "0" to "2" points, although German wins were in the clear majority. [And I scored 0 points for Team Greenwood - which was now 50% down the drain with zilch to show for our efforts.]

Several participants in *THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* tournament thought it the strongest field that anyone could remember. Seven of the 12 seeds were upset in the opening or second round. GM Rob Beyma and AREA postal champ Pat Flory met in the finals on Sunday. With time running out, Pat concluded that he was unlikely to win if the game was played into 1943. With "Clear Weather" in Mar/Apr 42, the Germans went all out to win by Sudden Death. Using every Axis factor in the center, Pat used two AVs and one Stuka to knife through three Russian lines and capture Kalinin. The Russians then scrapped together every available factor for a 1-1 counterattack on the first impulse, which resulted in a Contact; however, three more Guard units were brought up for a second-impulse 2-1 attack which netted an Exchange, which in turn eliminated two 8-7 panzer corps and saved the game for the Russians. The two finalists both survived narrow escapes in the early going. Pat's Germans

needed to survive a 2-1 attack on Kharkov at 2AM the previous night by Phil Evans to reach the final game. Pierre Menard's Germans almost upset Rob in the second round when he took Leningrad and Moscow, but a lucky Snow roll in Mar/Apr gave the Russians time to recover their strength and win with an offensive in the south.

*AvalonCon* was also the site of probably the largest *Civil War* tournament ever held, with George Seary triumphant in four rounds of the three-turn scenario format. Meanwhile, the juniors swung back into action as Megan McBride won the *ENEMY IN SIGHT* contest with 13 youngsters vying for championship gold.

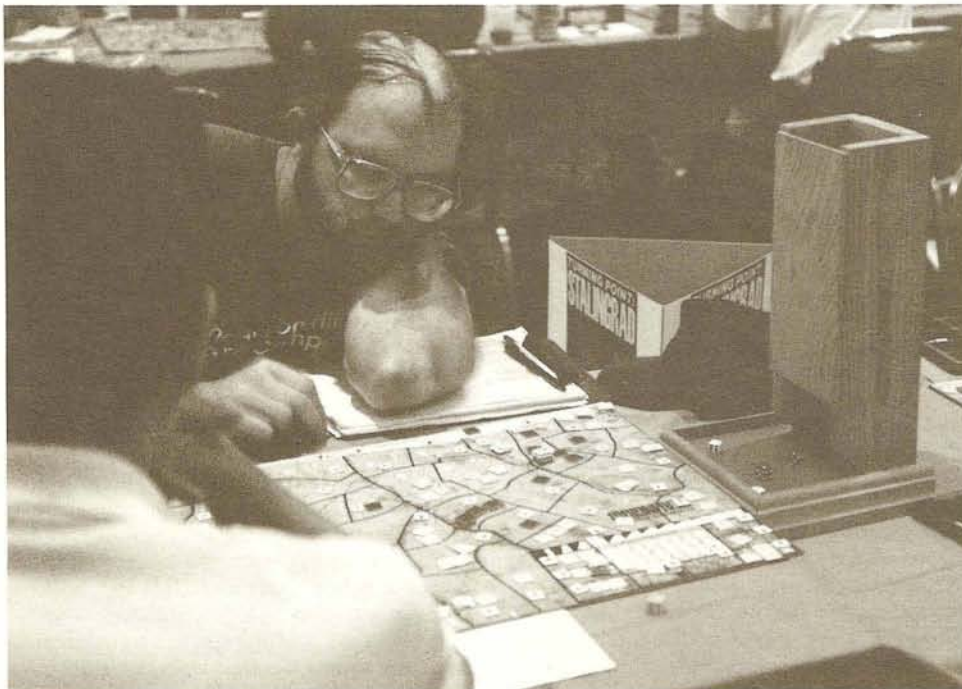
*CIVILIZATION* proved a bit more gruelling in true never-ending *CIV* style as 32 night-owls battled for the right to advance to a final eight-player game (eventually won by James Endres). The matter of advancement in another time-intensive game - *1830* - was made easier by the eventual bankruptcy of three first-round games. Mark Gidings won the second and final round.

Michael Fitzgerald's eight-man league in Norwalk (CT) was well represented by his eventual win in *FOOTBALL STRATEGY* over two-time AHFSL champ Bill Cleary in a field-goal kicking contest (12-3). Michael rose from the loser's bracket (made possible by the odd-numbered field) to win in true Olympic style fashion; proving once again it's not how many you win - it's which ones you win. He also trounced Tom Shaw, the game's designer, 32-27 in the semi-finals - leading Tom to nominate himself for the Sportsmanship award for not bursting into tears following the two consecutive 17-1 calls that led to his downfall.

*DIPLOMACY* survived a rocky start when the scheduled GM was a no-show, but Rex Martin stepped in to admirably administer a revised format, four-round tournament that proved to be the second biggest event with 56 players. Bruce Reiff took top honors with 26.5 points (out of a maximum of 28), followed by Karl Vogt with 25.5, Richard Brochma with 24, Steve Chilcote with 21, Tim Gallagher and Jeff Jaffe with 20.5, and Frank Luberti with 20. It is expected that more members of the postal *DIP* hobby will make an appearance in future years based on this strong initial showing.

*PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* was another "oldie-but-goodie" which drew a full complement of players, assuring its rightful place in future *AvalonCons*. Phil Rennett won the four-round Single Elimination event. A newcomer that got off to an even more popular start was *BLACKBEARD*, which had to use three rounds of four-player games to crown Gregg Harper the top seadog. Gregg had 1200 in Net Worth when Jim Bouffard's second Pirate met a watery death.

*TITAN* finished the Friday night starts, and with 43 players was one of the more popular events at *AvalonCon*. Three players from Charlottesville - a real hotbed of *TITAN* play, I hear - dominated the event by finishing 1-2-3. Steve Raeshide eked out a narrow win with 46.9 points based on two wins and a draw. Steve Koleszar finished second with 46.2 points based on three wins, while Justin Thompson brought up the rear of the Charlottesville trio





with 46.0 points and the highest single-game score.

## SATURDAY

Saturday proved no less entertaining for us with three new tournaments starting at 9AM. Charles Foster proved to be the top railroad empire builder with two wins in a twelve-hour, two-round *RAIL BARON* event.

The discontinued '81 edition of *BULGE* proved just as popular as the newly released version in terms of number of entrants. Pierre Menard, fresh from his defeat in *THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN*, switched fronts just in time to reign supreme in the west. His win was paved with some impressive scalps - taking out Paul Siragusa in the opening round, Bryan Eshleman in the third, and Barry Conley in the final, tense match of this "classic".

Mark Herman's *Peloponnesian War* got off to a rousing start with Sparta and Athens splitting eight games of the Declear scenario in the opening round; but Sparta appropriately enough swept the second round's "Fall of Athens" scenario. Frank Hamrick won the final round with 91 points as Sparta (over Lee Price with 60 points as Athens). This last round was played in Rocky Mount (NC) when the finalists, who fortunately were travelling together, had to leave Saturday night.

Saturday morning 10AM was the highpoint of frenzy at the convention, with eight new events getting underway. Two dozen people tried their hand at the brand new *Advanced CIVILIZATION* game released at the convention. Designer (and GM) Bruce Harper devised a way to finish the event in one round by awarding the overall victory to the player attaining the highest percentage of total points scored at his board. That person proved to be Alan Behrens. It will be interesting to see which is the more popular tournament next year - the parent *CIVILIZATION* or its offspring *Advanced CIVILIZATION*.

*DINOSAURS OF THE LOST WORLD* proved to be our most popular Juniors event with 17 youngsters duking it out with dinosaurs and each other on the lost plateau under the watchful eye of GM Ray Stakenas. Ryan Bouffard proved to be the top dinosaur-hunter, and we hope to see his name in the winner's list again as he moves on to more adult fare.

Keith Acton won *MBT* in an event that must have overrun designer and GM Jim Day's time, because his *IDF* demo scheduled for later that evening never got underway.

*MERCHANT OF VENUS* was won by Duane Wagner in only two rounds without resorting to an elimination format (based on total cash value). The winner of each game got a credit of 50 points and 10% of the total loser shortfall at his table. Leave it to the designer, Richard Hamblen, to come up with an equally clever tournament format for his game.

*REPUBLIC OF ROME* also had a unique format in that if the "game" won, no one from that table advanced! Sure enough, manpower shortages and Carthage did in half the field in the opening round. James Maysonett was able to force through a "Consul for Life" vote in one game, while James Doughan overcame the assassination of two of his Senators with a last-

turn unopposed Persuasion of a 17-influence Senator to win via the time limit. The second round, four-player game of the Middle Republic scenario was a dogfight to the end, with one player failing four "Consul for Life" votes before Doughan pulled out the win.

*ANZIO* barely made the cut for tournament preservation status with eight entrants, and that only with some severe arm twisting by GM Tom Oleson to enlist his top pigeon for a first round TKO. Although at one point I did manage to surround and eliminate two Allied divisions and two brigades in a single 1-1 attack, it was too little and too late and I tasted first-round defeat yet again. Despite the limited number of entrants, *ANZIO* was the last event to end with Tom Oleson and Mike Sincavage going at it as tables and chairs were being stacked around them. Who won? They don't call AREA postal champ Tom Oleson "Mr. *ANZIO*" for nothing.

*WAR AT SEA* players enjoyed a great weekend with a six-round swiss format, narrowly won by Bruce Monnin with a 5-1 record and 50 Victory points compared to the 48 VP and same 5-1 record amassed by Tim Hitchings.

In contrast, *GETTYSBURG '88* proved our least popular Juniors event with but one young'un reporting for combat. It appears the others were off chasing dinosaurs. So, we learned two valuable lessons: 1) the Juniors events should never be scheduled opposite each other and 2) should be limited to group games. It didn't really matter though. Joshua West would have beat 'em all anyway. Right, Josh?

*Carrier* never got out of drydock and was cancelled for lack of interest. The Victory Games offerings tended to be too long for tournament play, and were hindered by their omission from the Registration form. Length didn't stop a number of Romans and Judaeans from gathering around designer Fred Schacter's *SIEGE OF JERUSALEM* for a Campaign Game, though.

*FLIGHT LEADER* also failed to make the cut for a return engagement at *AvalonCon* with but four entries, but not before Luca Chiaffarino took some *AvalonCon* gold back to Italy with 11.5 kills (to beat Virgil Collins' 8.5 kills) in three rounds of high-level play.

*KREMLIN*, on the other hand, drew a first round field of five five-player games and was won handily in two rounds by Jim Fuqua (who won with three waves in four turns in both games). Ray Stakenas Jr., age 12, finished second.

The adult version of *ENEMY IN SIGHT* saw more sophisticated play and was decided in two rounds. In the final, Winston Forrest was tied for last, but made a dramatic come-from-behind win by four points when he captured the last ship taken in the final hand.

The Greenwood name appeared in the winner's column again Saturday afternoon, but unfortunately it was my 13-year old daughter and not me gaining the accolades. It seems young Tara had decided to move up in weight class and try her luck with the adults in the senior division of the *WRASSLIN'* tournament. If anything, she had an easier time of it. This, coupled with her high profile dad's dismal showing thus far, was proving embarrassing.

Perhaps even more so to designer Bruce Harper, who she beat in the semi-finals. What was worse - she was picking up steam - not losing one of her three wrestlers in the final round.

The non-wargamers continued to have their day as *ACQUIRE* got underway at 4PM with 28 players. Forrest Pafenberg won the two-round event which was otherwise most noteworthy for the 27th place finish of GM Bill Cleary - the third member of Team Greenwood - hereafter dubbed "Team Doily". [*Three down and 0 points scored. Winning the Team Tournament was no longer the embarrassment I was worried about. A shutout, on the other hand, loomed as a very likely prospect.*]

At 5PM Randy Cox got his chance to say his "I told you so's" when 21 baseball fanatics started a 12-hour, 66-game *SUPERSTAR BASEBALL* tournament. This was the event I had picked as the most likely not to draw the minimum eight entrants required for a repeat performance. Boy was I wrong! Eventually the field was reduced to a World Series pitting Mike Ryan's 1981 National League All Stars against Greg Meyer's 1990 AL All Stars. Ryan's superb pitching staff coupled with George Foster's three-homer series overwhelmed the Junior Circuit entry, four games to one in the first *AvalonCon* World Series. [*And in the process, Mike won ten points for his team in the Team Tournament, which put him ten ahead of Team Doily alone.*] Maybe next year we can arrange a draft Statis-Pro League. Any volunteers?

That ended the gaming starts for Saturday; but action was hot and heavy in the Presidential Suite where an SRO crowd met to discuss the future of *AvalonCon*. After a brief discussion of the relative merits of continuing the present format or switching to an *ORIGINS*-type convention for all boardgame companies, the group overwhelmingly opted for the former. They also selected 16 Advisory Panel members to aid in the planning and administration of the next *AvalonCon*, and left with a universal determination to make the next *AvalonCon* even better. It was a level of support that had gone beyond my wildest expectations.

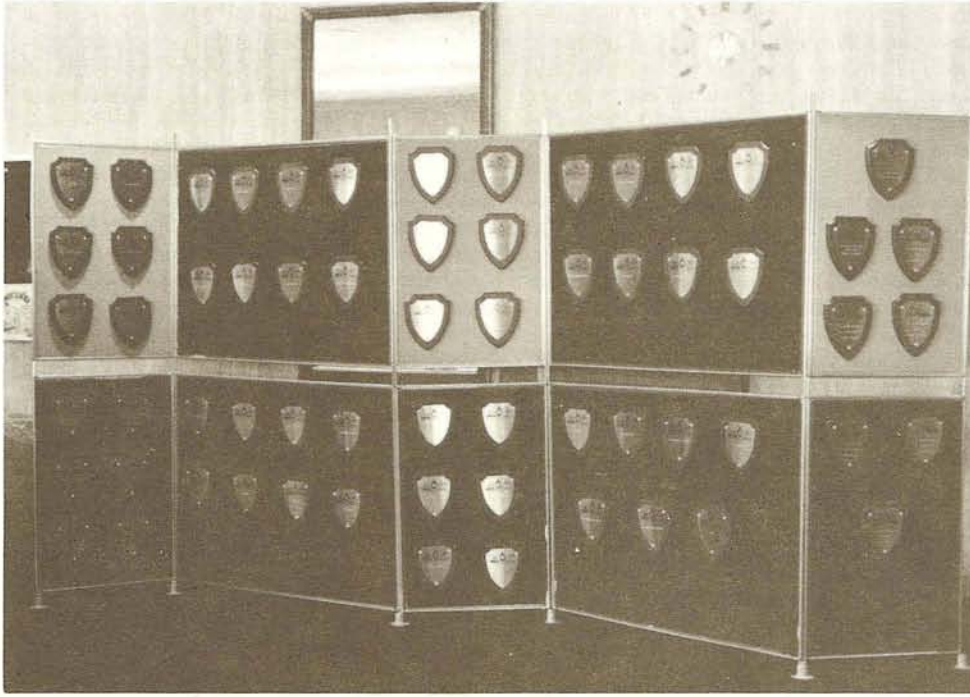
## SUNDAY

By Sunday, the crowd was starting to thin out as some began the long trek home. But many of those who had not stayed up through the night before rose for one final stab at glory.

The action led off at 9AM with our newest release *ADEL VERFLICHTET* and the last hope for "Team Doily" to avoid the total ignominy of a shutout. Our man, Craig Good stood poised among the field of 23, ready to be our hero in his favorite game, confident he would prove me wrong for criticizing his change of venue from *SQUAD LEADER* in the Team Tournament. Well, "Team Doily" won at *ADEL VERFLICHTET* all right - only it was won by Ray Pfeifer who hadn't entered it for the Team Tournament. [*Team Doily had been shut out and beaten by our own hand!*]

*ATTACK SUB* proved to be the most popular of the "last-chance" tournaments, with 33 entries. Jim Fuqua edged Stanley Buck by winning eight scenarios without a loss (and tying my daughter as the weekend's only double-





The first-place plaques on display.

winners). Steve Caler and William Wolf placed third; and Andrew Maly, Jim Vroom, Steve Davis and Dave Quirk tied for fifth and the last of the merchandise credits.

The *PLATOON* Junior tournament continued our series of disappointing two-player events for younger gamers as only three entrants appeared and our scheduled GM was forced to abandon them in order to continue to oversee his 56-player *DIPLOMACY* tournament. Scott Cornett was the winner, who deserved a chance for more acclaim than he got. *Fifth Fleet* action saw another European take honors as Austrian Heubert Gratz sunk the entire US OB in the second round - including the BB *Wisconsin*.

The tournaments drew to a close for the inaugural *AvalonCon* with a *WRASSLIN'* "Battle Royale" in which my daughter went for the hat trick. She never stood a chance. The story of how the 13-year-old had upstaged her dad was the talk of the convention. The few people who didn't already know of her double win were soon so informed by her crazed old man, who led the lynch mob that was only too eager to give her the first seat outside the ring. GM Charles Kibler did the deed and then was tossed himself when his own lifting hold was reversed. The field was soon narrowed to three; when Judy Kibler (Charlie's wife) finished off Bob Destro, it was just her and me. Why was I always being upstaged by a female? My last chance at glory . . . would I stoop to throwing a woman from the ring to save a pitiful handful of self-respect out of this weekend of losses? You betcha! She tried for a quick win over my weakened Big Daddy Warbucks. Sandbagger that I am, I had a Wild Card stashed for just such an emergency; out it came, reversing the hold, and giving me one pitiful claim to glory.

The Team Tournament ended with Team 16 scoring a clear victory with 22 points based on firsts in *RUSSIAN FRONT* (James Falling), *TP: STALINGRAD* (Byron Stingley), and a third in

*Civil War* (Joe Bellas). The closest competition came from Team 25 with 14 points based on a first in *SUPERSTAR BASEBALL* and a second in *BRITANNIA*. "Team Doily" finished in a 12-way tie for last place along with the other shutout victims. Although we actually did manage two firsts, a second, and a third (which would have been good for 24 points), they were not in the events we enrolled for the Team Tournament. Alas, "mulligans" are not allowed in team play.

Perhaps the most important award won at *AvalonCon* went to someone for not winning a game. With all the emphasis on winning, it is important to remember that the crucial thing in these competitions is the respect of your peers, and that such can only be truly gained by embracing the principles of good sportsmanship. At *AvalonCon* we tried to remember that by awarding a plaque in honor of the late Randy Szekely, an AH Production Manager killed in a tragic accident, to the gamer who best displays the comradeship and principles of fair play that make this hobby so enjoyable. We had a tough time choosing from among the many nominated by our GMs, but ultimately settled on Don Johnson who distinguished himself in the *Civil War* tournament by playing a novice, and then playing yet again in the first round to accommodate a late arrival. The list of honorable mentions includes (in no particular order): John B. Grant, Douglas Hopkins, Joshua Johnson, Bill Edwards, Jim McAden, Andrew Tuite, Ray Stakenas II, Martin Roecker, Marty Ward, Dan Barker, Winston Forrest, Luke Koleszar, Ned Conklin, Randy Heller, Jim Eliason, Jim Vroom, Wesley Letzin and Steven Pedlow. Often these nominations were based on continued interest in the tournament despite being eliminated, a willingness to assist inexperienced players, and general demeanor.

## POST-MORTEM

So, just who did *AvalonCon* appeal to? Our avowed intentions were to emphasize competi-

tion and return to the basics of playing the games with none of the attendant distractions that have been taken for granted at other conventions. Obviously, this format appealed to the hundreds who traveled great distances to attend the first Avalon Hill Championships. Some were at their first convention. Others at their first in years. But others stayed away, intimidated by the "championships" motif, and proclaiming it too "elitist" - but was it?

*AvalonCon* was many things to many people. To Allan Applebaum, whose sage advice on why *AvalonCon* would not help our bottom line has appeared previously in these pages, it was the place to be. He had played in tournaments of similar size at *ORIGINS*, but preferred the quality of play at *AvalonCon* and found the intensity of the event itself far superior. So much so, that he didn't even place in his beloved *VITP*; but the challenge is half the fun for folks like Allan. On the other side of the spectrum, my teammate on "Team Doily", Bill Cleary (who loves games but could never be mistaken for a wargamer) was afraid there would be little to interest him at *AvalonCon*. He too was pleasantly surprised and now numbers this first *AvalonCon* among his most pleasant gaming experiences.

Then there were letters such as this one from Scott Duncan of Princeton (NJ), a gamer of my own generation who has come and gone and only now resurfaced again at *AvalonCon*. He writes:

"I really enjoyed *AvalonCon* and want to see it continue. Though it is from a distance in most instances, the people I met early on when I got into boardgaming are some of the people I've known the longest in my life. These people, the hobby, and Avalon Hill represent a lot to me in terms of who I am and what I like. It took *AvalonCon* to make that very clear to me."

And if that speaks well of bringing back the old guard, the following from Sue Ellsworth of Morris (IL) addresses the opposite extreme:

"I recently returned home from attending *AvalonCon* and I wanted to tell you what an enjoyable time I had. I am the wife of a long-time gamer, and enjoy playing games myself. I was kept busy in the *TITAN*, *SUPERSTAR BASEBALL*, and *RAIL BARON* tournaments. The GMs did an outstanding job and the competition was great. We also took along our 11-year old son. We didn't sign him up for tournament play, but he had a great time in open gaming and in the *Platoon Juniors* tournament. I was impressed by the number of gamers who were willing to play in the open games with him."

My thanks to all who worked so hard to make *AvalonCon* the memorable success that it was, and to all who came great distances to partake in the fun. We're hard at work to make the second *AvalonCon* bigger and better. We know we have some improving to do - especially in the area of Juniors events to ensure a steady progression of new gamers for the generations to come - but with the help of dedicated GMs such as those who performed so admirably at the first *AvalonCon*, there may yet be salvation from



video brain drain. The choices won't be easy. They include my colleague Rex Martin's suggestion to reduce the events to the top 20 drawing tournaments - sort of a "kill 'em all and let God sort it out" approach that would create an even greater degree of "focus" on the National Championships theme. At the other extreme are those who would like to see even more diversity in the area of family games and different skill levels. Fortunately, we now have an Advisory Panel of your peers to make those decisions for us. But one thing is certain - nothing will be done without volunteers to do it. Remember our theme; "No one cares more about your hobby than you do". If you want it done, step forward and do it. If you'd like to be part of this continuing resurgence and help your hobby, write us now for details on what it takes to be an *AvalonCon* GameMaster. Don't delay. We will be finalizing our schedule for the next *AvalonCon* before the new year.

Meanwhile, I'm pleased to report that the Penn Harris has begun a near-total renovation that will be completed before our next convention. They will also be working with us on spousal-support programs for side excursions to Hershey Park and outlet malls to entertain our wargame widows. Those contemplating attendance from great distances may also be interested to know that the HMGS miniatures convention will be held in Lancaster (PA) the preceding week (July 20-23), which means a layover of but three days will enable you to enjoy both conventions in one fell swoop. Three days - just enough time to tour the local Civil War battlefields between a double-dip of wargaming. See you there.



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Coming Attractions . . . *Cont'd from Page 39*

be updated annually, *gaming* aspects were stressed. The coach's decisions will be more important than in most statistic-based games (such as the *Statis-Pro* line). Outguessing your opponent is as important as having Wayne Gretzky loose on the wing.

To capture the speed of the sport, no attempt is made to trace every pass of the puck *ad infinitum*. Instead, the action is abstracted into glimpses representative of only the best scoring opportunities. Consequently, the actual "Shots on Goal" are considerably less than in a real NHL game, but the scores are not. Skaters move individually in each player's turn according to the whim of the cards and the player's desires and thereby change their relation to each other, but shifts from one end of the ice to another are done uniformly via a template that moves all skaters an identical distance in one smooth motion. The result is a fast-paced game.

BREAKAWAY HOCKEY is the easiest stat-based sports game I've seen - and certainly the simplest hockey game. The solitaire version is also quite good for a game whose two-player version is essentially a guessing game. If they don't demand the action be wrapped up in statistics and tracing the path of every pass, hockey fans should enjoy it. Unlike most hockey games, it can even be played in less time than the sport it portrays.



The Latest News
In
Competitive
Gaming

Area News

For Today...
and Tomorrow

BY RUSS GIFFORD

The AREA has taken a dramatic step into the future with the advent of the first major AREA-sanctioned, face-to-face event: *AvalonCon*. In one swift move, AREA has been proven to be a force to encourage face-to-face wargaming, something it had never actively mentioned before. The four-day event brought over a thousand people together to play in a multitude of AREA-rated tournaments. Looking through the listings, many of these tournaments topped 20 players entered, and a few even cracked the 50-player mark! (ASL fell just short of drawing 100 entrants.) Everyone was so busy having fun, they forgot they were actually part of a revolution in wargaming.

From my vantage point at the convention, the competition was intense, exciting and top-notch. These are the very qualities the AREA has offered PBM members for years; so what other benefits might an AREA affiliation offer FTF tourney players? Why, the same it has provided to the PBMs - quality opponents, which lead to quality matches and quality tournaments. Look what AREA has achieved in PBM:

1) National Championship ladders are in place to constantly supply players with challenging opponents.

2) This leads to balanced and exciting matches, which develop the skills of both players and improves the quality of the strategy and the hobby; constant AREA promotion of these matches and events draws ever more skilled players, and promotes interest in those game titles.

3) This creates a growing pool of players for AREA matches, which provides all of us with potential opponents and, hopefully, lifelong friends.

4) Such competitions also provide "ratings points" for the players which allows them and others to judge their progress and skill, and can be used to qualify for tournament seedings.

5) Most importantly, the AREA affiliation provides support for the organizers of these tournaments, and gives their event legitimacy for claiming championships.

Bottom line: the AREA brings boardgame players together for competition; and through such competition, we learn to play our favorites better. While winning may reward our ego or morale, losing can point out our weaknesses. All of this sharpens our skills, which is both the draw and value of FTF competition. AREA can now be a support for any tournament organizer, providing factual ratings for seeding and fair and uniform pairings. Better yet, as FTF AREA becomes more widespread, players will be able to compete within tournament structures for "best of class" prizes which can be presented to recognize and reward excellent play at various levels, from novice through old pro. The possible uses by convention organizers seem wide.

AREA also provides some promotional help, since the AREA acts as a "spotlight" for the tournament with the broadcast of the results. (Why do you think this column is titled "AREA News"?) All of this can only serve to

improve the quality of local tournaments, and of the players who participate in them.

Now take this one step further. Consider the situation if everyone who played your favorite wargame was part of a national rating system. If you were seeking for an able opponent at your level, you could consult the "membership directory" and locate the nearest. Admit it; it sounds like a pipe-dream. But in PBM circles, this already is the case. Now, if all the FTF players of Avalon Hill games were to join, consider how useful this database could be! This may be the most powerful argument for membership in AREA I can present.

Why is all of this true only now, when the AREA has been in existence for many years? Several reasons. The addition of "game-specific" membership ratings for AREA in 1989 has made the biggest difference. The appeal of registering for competition in a favorite game appears to have struck a chord for many skilled players. Even if some of these games are not particularly suited or PBM, the members soon started using their memberships in FTF matches, to go "on record" with their favorite game. A quick look at the pre-Avalon-Con victory chits highlight this. Of the AREA chits submitted since the last installment of this column, 51% of the total were using their "game specific" numbers. Even more impressive, 42% were for FTF games - which is quite a change!

The best news is with the AREA's unique rating system. It has been shown that it can serve both segments of the hobby (FTF and PBM) without diminishing either. Looking for a PBM opponent? Check the third alpha-qualifier (which lists the member's PBM activity to date). More interested in a good FTF opponent? Compare the first two qualifiers against the third. The US Chess Federation could learn a few pointers from this simple system.

At \$8.00 for a lifetime membership, or an additional \$8.00 for a game-specific rating, the AREA is a bargain. By using your AREA mem-

bership, you'll be promoting your favorite hobby as well, just by playing games. Your games will be "rated", and you'll have a recognized sound ranking for use in future tournaments (and to judge your growing skill by). It's small price for such a package.

We are standing on the threshold of great things as the AREA moves into the '90s and face-to-face gaming. Elsewhere in this issue, readers will find the in-depth report of AvalonCon from Don Greenwood. The convention was just the first step to take AREA into the realm of high-level FTF play, and to garner the same respect that AREA PBM has already earned. All you need to do to be part of this future is join.

This brings me to the end of my first installment of the "AREA News". Don Burdick, who charted the course for this column for the first two years, has decided to retire from HQ work in favor of the frontlines of competition once again. And he nominated me to stand in for him in his absence. Don't worry though; he'll be keeping an eye on me. As Don and I have been co-authoring the "Electronic Edition of the AREA News" for GENIE users for almost a year, we have become accustomed to exchanging ideas and information frequently, which will certainly continue. I'd like to wish Don the best in his endeavors, and extend a special thanks to him for all his efforts in behalf of our hobby. As Don often stated, this column will remain a voice for the competitive gamers of AREA. If you want something positive to come of it, then step up and use this column as the forum for that effort. Send your thoughts and letters to me, care of The GENERAL. Then stay tuned. The AREA is on the move!



CONVENTION CALENDAR

The *GENERAL* will list any gaming convention in this column free of charge on a space available basis, provided that we are notified at least six months in advance of the event date. Each listing must include the name, date, site and contact address for the convention. Additional information of interest to our readership, such as tournaments utilizing Avalon Hill games, is solicited and will be printed if made available. The Avalon Hill Game Company does not necessarily attend nor endorse these gatherings, nor do we guarantee that events using our titles will be held. Readers are urged to contact the listed source for further information before making plans to attend.

NOVEMBER 8-10

GAME FAIR XIV, Peoria, Illinois

Contact: Paul Kerby, Illinois Central College Game Club, P.O. Box 308, Groveland, IL 61535.

NOVEMBER 9

LAGACON-12, Lebanon, Pennsylvania

Contact: Scott Gettle, Lebanon Area Gamers, 806 Cumberland Street, Lebanon, PA 17042. (717) 274-8706.

Note: Tournaments in *ASL*, *CM* and *HW* among others.

NOVEMBER 10-11

PROVOCATION '91, Montreal, Quebec

Contact: Pierre DeNomme, C.P. 63, succ. M, Montreal, Quebec, H1V 3L6. (514) 596-0115.

Note: 33 hours of non-stop gaming.

NOVEMBER 15-17

COWBOY CON II, Stillwater, Oklahoma

Contact: Michael Lyons, The Cowboy Campaigners Club, O40 Student Union, Box 110, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078. (405) 372-9448.

NOVEMBER 15-17

U-CON, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Contact: John Schippers, U-Con, P.O. Box 4491, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. (313) 971-7517.

Note: One of the oldest of the university-based wargame conventions, with a broad mix of events.

NOVEMBER 16-17

PENTACON VII, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Contact: Steve Smith, P.O. Box 11176, Fort Wayne, IN 46856. (219) 356-4209.

DECEMBER 27-29

COCOA-CON, Grantville, Pennsylvania

Contact: Fantasy Fortress Gaming Club, 210 South Grant Street, Palmyra, PA 17078. (717) 838-9784.

Note: Among other events, competition in *ASL*, *CM* and *KM*.

FEBRUARY 21-23

TOTAL CONFUSION VI, Marlborough, Massachusetts

Contact: Mark Dowdy, P.O. Box 1463, Worcester, MA 01607. (508) 987-1530.

Note: Events include competition in *CM*, *CIV*, *DIP*, *KREMLIN*, *MOV*, *RB*, *TRC*, *SL* and *TITAN*.

Letters to the Editor . . .

Dear Mr. Greenwood;

I recently returned home from attending AvalonCon and I wanted to tell you what an enjoyable time I had. I am the wife of a long-time gamer, and enjoy playing games myself. I was kept quit busy in the *TITAN*, *SUPERSTAR BASEBALL* and *RAIL BARON* tournaments. The GamesMasters did an outstanding job of running the game, and the competition was great.

We also took along our 11-year-old son. We didn't sign him up for (adult) tournament play, but he had a great time in open gaming and in the *PLATOON* Juniors tournament. I was impressed by the number of gamers who were willing to play the games with him.

But I was disappointed in some of the Junior tournaments, though. I think it was a real shame that the GamesMasters for some of these competitions didn't show up. The first Juniors event he went to was *ENEMY IN SIGHT*. It was very nice of the girl who was running it to try, but such events need to have someone with a little more experience in charge. This is particularly true as several of the youngsters were playing for the first time and the GamesMaster was not able to answer some of their questions. This experience made him not want to try other Junior events.

We did talk him into trying *GETTYSBURG '88*. He couldn't find it in the Night Club, which is where it was scheduled. Was it cancelled? His last attempt was *PLATOON*. After waiting until ten minutes past the starting time, the GamesMaster came by to say that he was involved in running *DIPLOMACY* and would be unable to stay. The kids could move their games to the Grand Ballroom, but he probably wouldn't have a lot of time to help them there, either. Fortunately, the father of one of the other boys and myself were able to read the rules and get them started in a game. The three boys who showed up had a great time.

Next year I think the Juniors competition would work out much better if: 1) All of the Junior games are held in the main building so it's easier for parents to watch them. 2) Make two age groups (such as under-11 and 11-15); this way, they will be playing with children of their own skill level. 3) Have the wargames (which will probably appeal to the older age group) at the end of the table where the comparable adult tournament is held. This way, the GamesMaster of the adult tournament can help oversee the Junior tournament. (Example: a Juniors *WATERLOO* tournament would have worked well next to the regular *WATERLOO* tournament.) This could be done mainly for the 11-15 age group, who need less supervision than the younger children.

Some suggestions for the various age group might be: a) under 11 - *WRASSLIN'*, *DINOSAURS OF THE LOST WORLD*, *TWIXT*, *NAVAL WAR*, *ROBIN HOOD* and *ADEL VERFLICHTET*; b) ages 11-15 - *FOOTBALL STRATEGY*, *BASEBALL STRATEGY*, *PLATOON*, *GETTYSBURG '88*, *D-DAY*, *WAR AT SEA*, *TITAN*, *NAVAL WAR*, *ENEMY IN SIGHT*, *TACTICS II* and *WATERLOO*. For the adults too, I think some short, less complicated games might help gamers recover from the more grueling sessions of the regular wargames; these could be scattered throughout the schedule and might include *TWIXT*, *HEXAGON*, *SHOWBIZ* and *TUFABET*.

Overall, I think AvalonCon was a great success for the whole family. I hope to return next year. Thank you for your efforts in putting it together.

Sue Ellsworth
Morris, Illinois

The children's events are one area where we definitely need improvement. Part of the problem, however, lay in our having to cover for GMs who cancelled on us at the last minute and thereby left us in the lurch.

Thus, we were faced with the prospect of running a 56-player DIPLOMACY event or a three-player PLATOON event with the same person. Fortunately, this initial AvalonCon has succeeded in drawing out many other volunteers as GMs, so in the future we can hold back our limited number of employees to deal with such last-minute cancellations.

★★★★★

Dear Mr. Martin,

I just finished reading the *ASL Annual '91*. Once again, you people have done an excellent job. I hope you decide to keep the basic layout of the *Annual* the same in the future, especially the mix of scenarios. I really like the Market-Garden campaign idea. I would think a tournament-level campaign each *Annual* would be an excellent feature.

I have one request I would like to make. That is that the "Incremental IFT" not be made official. Like playing the Japanese or a Night scenario, it is a fine option for those who want to try it; but not something that should be forced on every "true ASL diehard". By the way, how many letters like Mr. Lohre's (in the '91 *Annual*'s "Signals" column) do you get?

One last thing. Please give the phone order and mail service departments there at Avalon Hill a pat on the back. I ordered the *ASL Annual '91* on a Monday, was told two weeks for delivery, and received the *Annual* on the next Saturday. Five days is a short two weeks! Thanks.

Lee Conner
Auburn, Nebraska

Never fear. So long as I edit the ASL Annual, the format and mix of material offered will remain fairly stable. I'm too lazy to change what has taken three years to refine. As for the IIFT, it will always be but an option for players, used if all involved agree. We have no intention of supplanting the regular IFT with it, if for no other reason than that the requisite re-write of the bulk of the rulebook would keep us from further expansion of the system for some time.

★★★★★

Dear Sirs:

TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD is, in my mind, the finest game published on the Eastern Front by any game company. The only other that might equal it in my opinion would be *Drive on Stalingrad* (by the old SPI company). But, of course, the two are very different. *TPS* is only concerned with the obsessive battle for the city itself. The game system is almost flawless. I also have *SOA* and *CASSINO*, but *TPS* exceeds both. I would indeed encourage your company to explore the possibilities of further games utilizing the same system. Several topics come to mind. I believe the game system of *TP: STALINGRAD* would be excellent in a game exploring the siege of Sevastopol in July of 1942. And also the final battle for Berlin would lend itself to this treatment. And, of course, on the Western Front the battle for Caen in Normandy. It is an extremely flexible design. Having spent years with hex games, I am very impressed with your area-movement games.

It is very refreshing to see your company publish games like this. In this day of the Sci-Fi games and fantasy genre, there is an

increasing lack of good games concerning pure historical subjects. As a lifetime military buff, I find it deplorable to see a game such as *TPS* on the same shelf as "Raiders of the Death Lagoon". (I use that title only as an exaggeration, but it is not very far from truth.) The explosion of fantasy and science fiction games is beginning to draw attention from solid historical simulations. Because of that, publication of games such as *TPS* is important to those like myself.

I realize that a company must concern itself with the popular demand; but I truly hope that Avalon Hill will always keep a small corner of its efforts devoted to that group of gamers who are historians. The *SQUAD LEADER/ASL* system has overrun all of its original intentions and become, in my mind, a "monster". Almost nobody with a normal life has the time to get into the entire game system. This is not by any means to belittle the game or the game system; for those of the persuasion to delve into it - great.

As a final note, I appreciate your time in reading this note. And I wish your company many more years of success in the field.

Gordon F. Petersen
Appleton, Wisconsin

★★★★★

Dear Sirs,

Just wanted to tell you how much several of my non-wargaming friends and I have enjoyed your "introductory" games, *GETTYSBURG '88* and *BATTLE OF THE BULGE '91*. The sales copy on the game boxes reminds me of the good ol' pre-*PANZERBLITZ* days: "Easy to learn - hard to master!" "YOU are the general in this exciting historical battle game!" or words to that effect.

Looks like you're finally rediscovering your roots, and for the sake of our increasingly inbred hobby, I say it's about time. As I watch the progress of your *Beginners' Series* (and a few of the recent novice-level efforts by other companies), I'm excited to see that the hobby's powers-that-be want to put at least some historical games back in the hands of people who play games again.

For too long, would-be hobbyists have been intimidated by monsters like *Pacific War* and *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*. There's no denying that these games have impressive design mechanics and graphic presentation. But these expensive and cumbersome cardboard leviathans alienate potential historical gamers (like my non-wargaming friends) whose idea of a game is something with rules printed inside the box-top lid and playable to a finish within a couple of hours.

Please understand that I am not saying the entire hobby has to crawl back into the Stone Age of *Stratego* and *Battleship* in order to survive. What the hobby does have to recognize is that in order to entice two or more new gamers with normal lives (i.e., school or a job, and at least one or two other interests besides dice and rule 61.24a) to sit down and actually play a game face-to-face, they need something quick, easy and relatively inexpensive.

One of the reasons that solitaire games have become so popular is that, for many years now, even two or more experienced players have not been able to get together for a few hours and say, "I know what - Let's play a game!" Faced with 20-30 page rulebooks, bedsheet-size maps, and hordes of the tiny cardboard counters that more-or-less became an industry standard in the '80s,

games could no longer simply be pulled off the shelf and played by two or more in an evening.

It's hard enough finding a crusty veteran who has the time for even a short scenario of something as complicated as the *Civil War*, but you can rule out newcomers altogether. And rather than going on a futile search for another person willing to devote one day to reading the rulebook, another day to setting up the game, and a week to playing a scenario, gamers started to spend a lot more time alone. That's a definite danger signal for the future of a hobby that is intended to be a social activity.

Another danger signal - much more immediate - is the increasing costs. I don't know what the industry average is for a new boardgame right now, but I suspect it's in the \$30-\$35 range. I understand another gaming company recently came out with a \$60 version of the battle of Borodino! Now that's some real marketing genius for you. How many novices are going to shell out thirty bucks for a game (let alone sixty) that covers an isolated historical period, or for a game they're not at all sure they'll understand how to play? Fewer counters doesn't necessarily mean lower complexity, but they do mean lower cost. And, to attract new membership, you've got to make the "entry fee" a little less steep.

Companies also need to spend less money on that "high-fashion" industry - developing contemporary/near-future wargames (particularly those that focus on specific current events). Recent political surprises should be more than sufficient warning of the dangers of gambling limited design, development and production dollars on the latest international crisis. It's like trying to take a snapshot of a hurricane, and it results in gaming situations that border on the surreal by the time the game hits the stores. Historical-based games may not have the glamour of "Operation Kidnap Sadaam", but at least they don't risk becoming unplayable curiosities in six months.

Finally, it would be great if Avalon Hill could provide a starter set of play-by-mail materials with each set of games, along with instructions on how to enter AREA tournaments. While I haven't tried PBM, I'm considering it with a friend of mine who recently moved to the East Coast. PBM isn't face-to-face, but it's not solitaire either; there's still some social interaction going on. Just another way to show a newcomer (who's probably never seen an issue of *The GENERAL*) all of the options available. I hear there's a lot of home-grown PBM systems out there for games that don't have PBM kits yet; why don't you guys devote more time to developing what could be the next big thing in our hobby? With the advent of computer networks, FAX, and voicemail, it's got to be the perfect solution to the solitaire blues. People like me just need to know a little more about it.

Through your *Beginner's Series* and your recent tournament (*AvalonCon*), you seem to be making some real strides to correct these problems . . . and I hope it continues. Designing a playable, exciting, and reasonably accurate introductory game is a real challenge (I know, because I tried once and failed miserably), and many of the wizened oldtimers may growl that games aren't supposed to be fun. But the greybeards should understand that with *BULGE '91* and *GETTYSBURG '88* to sell to the curious onlookers, there won't be any money to produce an Arctic module for *ASL* or that 10-map simulation of the Crimean War.

And when the curious onlookers of today become the wargamers of tomorrow, we can be assured that our hobby - playable at introductory, moderate and high complexity - will survive.

Ed-Bricknell
Dallas, Texas

ASL ANNUAL 1991



You've played the game;
now read about it!

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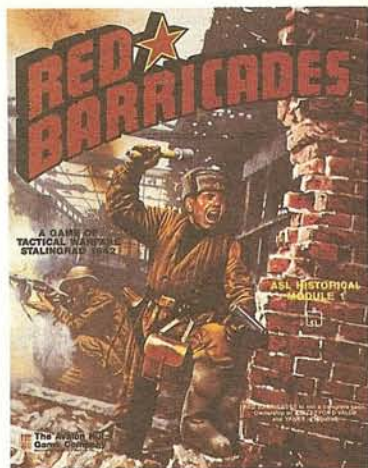
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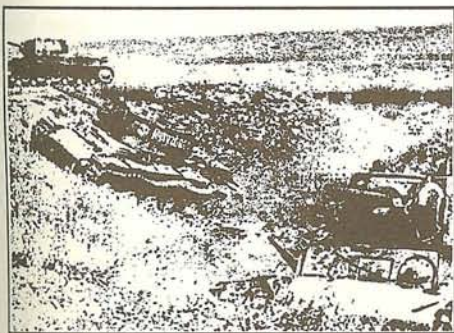


PULLING OLD CHESTNUTS FROM THE FIRE

The AtlantiCon ASL Tournament Scenarios, Part II

By Jim Stahler

In the last issue, Mr. Stahler reviewed his efforts at updating "Poupeville Exit" and "The Dead of Winter" for the AtlantiCon '90 ASL tournament he hosted. The following looks at the other two scenarios he modified to ASL standards and used in the final two rounds.



HILL 253.5 - Update

This is the longest of the four scenarios that I used in the tournament. I could accept this because I knew that the one previous and after were each extremely short. My third tournament scenario was originally published in the *GENERAL* as Scenario B. It has just about everything in it: infantry, ordnance, tanks, fortifications, offboard artillery and aircraft. The Germans are ordered to smash through prepared Russian positions, capture a hill, and then fend off a Russian counterattack.

The board configuration, game length and turn of Russian reinforcements remain unchanged. The Victory Conditions are essentially the same as before. I put them in terms of ASL control (A26.11). The Germans must still control three of the ridgetop hexes and keep the Russians off the other four. But converting this scenario to ASL format has made it a distinctive action, one that is a true test for any fan of this game system.

I used the standard ELR of "4" for the Germans and of "3" for the Russians for this period. SAN are low because this is a rural area; the defending Russians have a SAN of "4" because they are on the defense. The Russian balance provision permits HIP for one squad-equivalent; the German makes the 8-3-8 squads "Sappers" to make it easier to clear the Russian mines and wire.

Playtesting found that the Russians were winning too readily, so I weakened their force a bit. I reduced the 9-2 leader to a 9-1, removed their concealment counters, and replaced the four 2-3-7 HS with three crews to man the three guns. Instead of entrenchments, all Russians are now allowed to set up in foxholes if in suitable terrain. The remainder are the same as before. Note that the guns and crews can now use HIP when set up; but the mines are now limited to six, eight and 12-factors per hex (or they can be exchanged for AT mines). With the Russian reinforcements, I translated the original KV IA and KV IC to an ASL KV1 M41 and a KV1

M42. The Russian halftrack is replaced with a GAZ truck. The Molotov Cocktail counters are replaced with MOL capability.

On the other hand, I made only a few changes to the German forces. I removed the Psk from the OB since they were not used until September 1943. And I added a 7-0 leader.

Aircraft are more deadly in ASL than in the earlier system since planes can now remain in play and strafe enemy units. This is especially useful against moving infantry. The Russian planes have an additional advantage in the reduced dogfighting ability of the German Stukas. To partly compensate for this I eliminated the bombs from the Russian Sturmoviks and added a +1 drm to their arrival chances. The Stukas should arrive first and have a chance to drop their bombs before the Sturmoviks arrive to drive them off.

An important aspect of this scenario is the ability of the Russians to deal with the German armor, and later the ability of the Germans to deal with the Soviet KVs. The halftracks have an armor factor of only "1" and are vulnerable to almost anything. The Panther has a frontal armor of "18" hull and "14" turret, and it is vulnerable to almost nothing. It can be taken out from the side or rear, however, with an AF of only "6". The PzJg Tiger has frontal armor of "18" on both hull and turret. Its side and rear armor is "8" on the hull and "11" on the turret. These are impressive beasts, almost impervious to frontal attack. The Russian AT capability consists of their 76L guns (both emplaced and mounted on the KVs), their 45L AT gun, their MOL capability and their aircraft.

The 76L guns have an AP To Kill number of "13" (which goes up to "14" against an adjacent target). Short of a critical hit, this cannot affect the frontal armor of these German tanks. However, a flank or rear hit has a good chance of KOing a Panther, and a slim chance of knocking out an Elephant. The 76L guns can also fire APCR which makes it somewhat more deadly. The To Kill number goes up to "14" then, with a value of "17" at a range of one hex. It still can't penetrate the front of either tank, but it does become more deadly against the flank or rear. The 45L AT gun is weaker. Its To Kill value is "10", deadly against the halftracks but not too threatening against the tanks. It can also use APCR, with a To Kill number running from "12" to "15" depending on range. This is enough to make a flank or rear shot effective against the big guys.

The flamethrower and Molotov Cocktails can ignore the massive armor factors, making these metal monsters as vulnerable as a PzII. The To Kill of a FT is "8" versus an adjacent tank, and "4" against a tank two hexes away. A tank wants to stay at least three hexes away from an enemy flamethrower. Any Russian infantry in an adjacent hex can possibly hurl a MOL against a vehicle (with a TK# of "6").

This is downright dangerous to the panzers; they'd better give the Russian squads a wide berth.

There are several other ways the Russians can destroy or immobilize the Panthers and Elephant. The Sturmoviks have a small chance of knocking out an AFV. Their To Kill number is "5", modified to "7" by Rear Target Facing and Elevation Advantage. More importantly, this is applied against the Aerial AF, which is "3" for a Panther and "4" for the PzJg Tiger. This yields a small but real chance of hurting the enemy AFVs, although the Soviet planes are more likely to be employed strafing the infantry and dogfighting the Stukas.

The Demo Charge also has a chance of harming an AFV, but it has to be placed or thrown from an adjacent hex, which is not easy. The AFVs are also vulnerable to close combat by the Russian squads, who will need a "5" or less to stop the Panthers. The Elephant is more vulnerable since it has no machineguns. This is yet another reason for the German AFVs to keep their distance from the Russian infantry.

There are a few more hazards for the Panthers on this battlefield. They can bog in the wire, or have a tread blown off by a mine. Their biggest danger lies within, however. Every time they try to start up, there is a risk of stalling, immobilization, or even burning. These AFVs are certainly powerful assets, but they must be used carefully.

This scenario takes place before the PF and Psk were available. The German infantry cannot harm the Russian tanks unless they get in close. Their flamethrowers are deadly up to two hexes, and the DC can be effective against an adjacent tank, but their real threat to the Russian AFVs lies in close combat (especially with a leader helping). Normally, they won't get within a hex or two of the Russian tanks. So, at a distance, the main German AT weapons are the guns on their Panthers and Elephant, and the Stukas.

The Russian tanks have armor factors of "8", "11" and "14". The side/rear hull of the KV1 M41 has an AF of only "8"; the front turret of the KV1 M42 has an AF of "14". All other hits face an AF of "11". Note that these Russians are designed for all-around defense, and the differences between front and flank armor are not as pronounced as on the German AFVs. Against this, the 75LL gun of the Panther has a TK# of "23", and the 88LL gun of the Elephant a TK# of "27". Either can dispatch either Russian tank easily from any facing, in any aspect. These are clearly the German's best AT weapons in this scenario.

But don't forget the Stukas. Their MGs are not likely to harm a tank, but their bombs can be quite effective. If a bomb gets a direct hit, its To Kill number is "16" against the tank's Aerial AF ("4"). Including the Rear Target Facing and Elevation Advantage modifiers, the Final To

Kill is "18" - bad news for the tank. A near miss is more likely, and starts with half of the To Kill ("8"); this is still dangerous for the tank unlikely enough to be nearby.

One final AT weapon few consider is the off-board mortar support that each side receives. OBA is much more effective in ASL than in the earlier system because a spotting round is two levels high and much easier to see, and each FFE lasts an entire game turn (typically attacking twice). With OBA, a KIA result destroys an AFV, and a result of K or one greater results in shock or immobilization. The 80mm+ OBA attacks on the "12" column, so a DR of "3" or less destroys a Panther. Since the Elefant and KVs have AF of all "8" or greater, they are destroyed on a DR of "2". So, the moral is that the tanks should avoid FFE is possible, but that an FFE is far from certain death.

I have discussed the vulnerability of the AFV in some depth because they are the key to this scenario. One Russian tank can win the game by itself simply by lumbering onto a hilltop and staying there. However, it takes only one Panther or Elefant to counter this action. And, with their large main guns and MGs, these AFV are potent against infantry too.

Analysis

The Russian strategy revolves around ending the game with at least one Good Order unit on a hilltop hex since it is almost impossible to stop the German from gaining three Level 3 hexes. If all German AFVs are out of the way, and if a KV can survive the Stukas, the Russian will be king of the hill and win the game. Otherwise, plan to have a squad on a Level 2 hex adjacent to one of the hilltop hexes at the end of Turn 8, at which time it can advance onto the Level 3 hill and give the Russians a victory. Good positions for this are M4, K4, J5, I5 and I4.

The first Russian line of defense consists of the obstacles, the wire and the mines. Both are effective against the enemy infantry and nearly useless against their armor. Incorporating the cliffs into the defense, a solid line can be established across the board. For example, put either mines or wire or both in hexes Q1, Q2, R3, S4, S5, S6, S8, S9 and S10.

Russian infantry must be placed to cover the wire and mine hexes, but also initially out of sight of the Germans so that they won't be broken before the game even properly starts. Good places to hide are N3, L2, Q4, R6 and R9. Another excellent position is P6, which the Germans cannot see without getting very close. This is a good place for the flamethrower team. I like to place a Russian squad in a foxhole in K5 too, and have it move to J4 to dig another to be occupied by the reinforcements when they enter. The ordnance should be placed in concealed locations from which they can expect to get flank or rear shots on the German armor. Don't forget to use APCR, which gives you a second chance to get a hit.

One problem for the Russians is where to put the radio, and where to call in the mortar fire. The obvious spot for the observer is on one of the Level 3 hill hexes to get maximum LOS. The danger is that the Germans can then observe the observer and suppress him with

their own fire. This makes Q6, P5 and O5 poor locations because they are too exposed. N5 is a good spot, since from it you can observe east of the cliffs as well as some of the terrain west of the ridge. In case the enemy does push west of the cliff, the observer can advance to M5 with a good view. Both N5 and M5 have covered retreat routes, which can be very important if the observer breaks. FFEs can be dropped in front of the German advance or on top of it if you are fortunate. This is one case in which harassing fire would be handy to slow down the German pace. It attacks with only 4FP instead of 16, but it covers a much wider area and isn't likely to affect your own troops if they are in foxholes.

The Russian infantry must fire at the Germans when given the opportunity, but should forego Prep Fire if they can assault move to hide from the defensive fire (and then advance back into their previous positions). The Russian player must be alert for Molotov Cocktail and CC possibilities to nail any German AFV that wanders too close. Expect to take some losses and for the enemy to gain ground, but hope to slow him enough so that the Russian reinforcements can enter unopposed and grab a position from which they can then approach a hilltop hex.

The Germans should be able to take four Level 3 hexes without too much difficulty - generally four of the five hexes from O6 to M5. The hard part is keeping the Russians off the two remaining hill hexes (J4 and K5). This means making sure that no Good Order, unpinned, Russian infantry are in any of the hexes adjacent to these as well (K4, I4, I5 and J5), from which they can advance onto the summit in the Russian half of Turn 8. Also, you want to make sure no Russians are in M4 and/or N6; these woods might contain hidden crews which can also advance onto the Level 3 hexes.

The initial German set-up depends much on the Russian set-up. If there are Russian units that are in LOS of hexes in the German set-up area, put out strong fire groups to attack them, led by your 10-2 or 9-2. The tanks and Elefant start in W5, Y6 and Y4 where they can add their firepower to that of the infantry and can interdict Level 2 hill hexes.

The halftracks can be used to discover minefields; they are affected by A-P mines only on a "12". Too, they can be used to transport the infantry across the mines and wire quickly. Be cautious since these lightly armored vehicles are vulnerable to all the Russian guns, the artillery, the mortars and even to their MGs. Another option for the halftracks is to convert an open ground hex to a non-open ground hex so that concealed infantry can assault move or advance there without losing their concealment. For example, if there is a Russian unit in the woods at P6 and concealed Germans in Q8 or R7, a halftrack can move to Q7, allowing the Germans to advance there while retaining concealment and even getting a +1 TEM for the vehicle. This tactic works even if the halftrack becomes a wreck.

The German has three keys to victory: his flamethrowers, his armor and his planes. The FT are tricky to use effectively since they are

only effective at close range, and their very possession makes the operator vulnerable. They can certainly be used as a threat, keeping them nearby but able to move while other units rush the defender. If the Russian fires at the first units, the squad with the FT can move into range and fry the enemy in the AFPh; the Russian holds his fire, the closer Germans should be able to get him. Yet another trick with the FT is to keep the operator concealed, preferably with the 10-2 leader, and assault move into concealment terrain within range of the target. If they can weather the defensive fire, they can do their damage.

The Panthers and Elefant start the game by firing from their initial positions at any visible Russians; but before long they will have to advance into the fray. These are the German's best weapons here; the player must protect them but still use them to full advantage. Keep them at least two hexes away from any Russian infantry, and they shouldn't have unsearched concealment terrain to their flanks or rear since they are vulnerable to the hidden Russian guns. Their own guns should be used to convince the Russians to abandon their positions by getting an Acquisition or two. Remember those powerful MGs of the Panthers. Do not use the AFVs to charge ahead to encircle the onboard Russians, or to prevent routs, or to overrun the enemy infantry. This only invites trouble from a hidden AT gun. Once the Russian AFVs enter the board, they must be the primary targets for the 75LL and 88LL guns. At a minimum, position them so that they cover the Level 3 hilltop hexes. Preferably, get them hull-down on Level 3 hexes themselves.

You don't know when you will get the Stukas, nor how many. If the Sturmoviks are already on board when your planes arrive, they have just one turn to attack before they are pounced on by the Russian fighters. Drop their bombs immediately on the choicest target(s) available. Otherwise, the bombs can be saved for use against the Soviet armor or dropped on Russian infantry in exposed positions. The Stuka's MGs can be very effective when used to strafe Russians in motion, either the ones retreating from your advancing troops or heading north to reinforce the front.

The Germans are faced with a heap of obstacles and a long way to go in eight turns; but they also have a lot of excellent tools with which to overcome those obstacles. Victory depends on how well the German player integrates those tools in his plan.



AACHEN'S PALL - Update

This is a very small, quick-playing scenario ideal for a tournament. I figured that by the end

of Saturday, the gamers in my tournament would be a bit shell-shocked and would appreciate a simple fight to end things. This scenario fits the bill perfectly. It has a total of 14 squads and a couple of vehicles, uses less than half a mapboard (ol' familiar Board 1), and lasts only four turns. The update should be playable in an hour or so at the most. (One game ended in much less than that - the American player won in the Prep Fire Phase of his first turn.)

The original scenario, published in *The GENERAL* as Scenario P, pitted seven US squads against five German squads. In the playtesting, we found that the Americans not only failed to take the hotel, they were driven back by the Germans as well. Part of the problem is the added vulnerability of the attackers in the *ASL* rules due to the various defensive first fire options: multiple MG ROF, Defensive First Fire, Subsequent First Fire, Final Protective Fire. After some experimenting, I found that adding a couple of squads to the American OB and promoting the German corporal (7-0) to a colonel (6+1) resulted in a fairly balanced game.

I gave both sides the standard ELR for this period. Snipers tend to be more active in urban settings, so I gave the U.S. a SAN of "3" and the Germans a SAN of "5" (because they are on the defense). To tip the game towards the Americans, I upgraded the 9-1 to a 9-2 leader - significantly helping their attack and steadiness as well as their rally capabilities. The German balance provision gives them one concealment counter. Essentially, this will halve the first American attack against any one hex. It allows the German, for example, to mass force in H5 with a good chance of survival.

Analysis

The German set-up should make it difficult for the Americans to cross the street to approach the hotel (building G6), and at the same time keep enough force in being so that when the enemy does manage to enter the hotel it will take them a while to clear it. Also, bear in mind that the U.S. player has the first fire, and he has a lot of firepower to play with. It is tempting to put a lot of strength with the 10-2 to get the benefit of his leadership, but the Germans must disperse to protect against that massive American hammerblow.

I like to start a squad with the HMG in H5. This is the most vulnerable position, but it is necessary to deny the Americans quick access to the hotel. The main German position is in G6 with the 10-2, two squads and the other HMG. From here they can cover I6 and I3. One squad is deployed into F5 and F6 (with the colonel in F6). This gives some additional fire into hexes I4 from F5 and J6 from F6. The last squad goes into G4 to prevent a flanking maneuver to encircle the defenders. It also nicely covers the road hexes I4 and I5.

The German strategy is to avoid American fire if possible, try to gain concealment, and then attack the exposed enemy with maximum firepower. When the GIs gain a toehold in the hotel, retreat to the upper levels. Note that point-blank fire does not apply if the target is two or more levels above the attacker. If Germans are on the 2nd level of G6, they can on

Americans in the street at G5, G7 and H6 using point-blank fire, but the Americans do not get the same benefit firing back.

The U.S. player has a lot of force, but his squads are fragile (with morale of only "6"). They do much better firing than being fired at. So they should get as much mileage out of their 1st Turn Prep Fire as they can. For example, they can put six squads in J5, on levels 0 and 1, massing 36 FP on either H5 or G4. This still leaves three squads, the MMG and the 9-1 leader, for 22 more FP which can start in J4.

One of the most interesting aspects of this little scenario is the self-propelled 155mm, the M12. These were usually used as indirect mobile artillery in the rear. This battle is one of the few times they served in a direct fire role. It has the capability to do a lot of damage when it gets a hit, but unlike an assault gun it is very vulnerable. It must be crew-exposed to fire, and the crew receives only a +1 TEM. It is a prime target of the Germans if they are not distracted by a more immediate threat from the American infantry.

The scenario is too short for the big gun to do a lot of moving about, so its initial position is critical. Hex J8 allows it to attack three of the four hexes of the hotel, and J7 is a relatively safe location for its ammo vehicle. However, this position for the M12 is risky because it can likewise be attacked from the three hexes of the hotel. In K6 it can be fired at (and receive fire from) only hex G6. This reduces both its usefulness and its vulnerability. Similarly, in M6 it has LOS only to G6 - but it is now six hexes away and the inherent German firepower is halved due to the long range. Other good locations for the gun are J1 (where it has LOS to G6) and K3 (where it can see F5).

Even though it isn't as mobile as an assault gun, it can move to a new location by using one DPH to limber, its next turn to move, and the following DPH to unlimber - allowing it to fire in the next turn again. And don't forget that it can fire White Phosphorus. This causes a MC in the target hex as well as greatly reducing the effectiveness of outgoing fire due to the hindrance. Since WP is fired using the Area Target Type, it affects all levels of the target hex it hits.

An easily forgotten weapon is the bazooka. Although there is not any German armor in this scenario, the Baz can be used against infantry in a building, and can be fired from the ground level of a building by accepting a +2 To Hit DRM (with a morale of "6", the Americans do not ever want to risk the backblast penalties). At a range of two hexes, the To Hit number is "8", but there will be a net +5 DRM; this doesn't leave much of a chance to hit. However, if the Baz is moved up one hex, and fires from the street at an adjacent hex, the TH# is "9" with a DRM of +3, which gives a fair chance to hit and do damage.

Likewise, there is the German Panzerfaust for them, which is an inherent part of every squad, HS and SMC in their OB. Possible targets for the PFs are the enemy infantry in buildings and the M12. Since this scenario takes place in 1944, the range is only two hexes - a good reason for the American to park the M12 at least three hexes away from the Germans.

Against infantry, it is less likely that the German unit attempting to fire even has a PF (a +1 for firing at infantry); and the chance of getting a hit against infantry in a stone building is very low. However, a leader can help, and if the PF hits it attacks with an unmodified 16 firepower factors.

Remember that the Americans don't actually have to take the hotel building to win, just break all the German MMC in it. In fact, the U.S. player can win by voluntarily breaking all his own squads, routing away, and then having the German abandon the hotel to chase them. Don't count on it though.

The American player should begin the game with Prep Fire attacks to soften up the German positions; but he can't afford to spend more than one turn on this. Squads must be advanced in I5 and I6 on Turn 1, or use Turn 2 to assault move into these hexes, covered by smoke. WP placed in H5 is particularly effective. If H5 is abandoned by the Germans, they can dash there, but only if they can safely rout away if broken. It may be necessary to send a squad or two to building G4 via H2 or H3 to reduce any irritating Germans in that building, to possibly get encirclement on Germans in H5 and G6, and to threaten more hexes of the hotel to further spread out the German defense. Another flanking force, perhaps a squad deployed into HS, can start in J8 and move to I7 to help encircle the enemy in H5, or to G9 to help encircle G6.

With careful use of smoke and firepower, the Americans should be able to gain the hotel in the first two turns, and use the last two turns to secure it. The US troops must not be shy about advancing into close combat; they have the advantage of numbers and CC firepower. The later turns should find the American firing at the upper levels of the building from the street and using infantry overrun to get past the 6+1 if he is being used to block the stairs. If possible, let a squad become concealed once in the hotel to enable it to assault move and advance adjacent to the Germans with relative safety (but it is very hard to be too safe with a 10-2 leader facing you down).

"Aachen's Pall", even though short, is a demanding contest for both sides. With sound play from each player, this scenario will often come down to the last dice roll.

CONCLUSION

Again, congratulations to the team of Coker/Goetz for their impressive win in the AtlantiCon tournament. In four rounds of some of the toughest competition, their abilities (honed by long hours playtesting with the boys from Avalon Hill at the Baltimore offices) proved out. Watching them play was a most enjoyable way to spend a summer weekend. But the best part of the tournament, for me, was my chance to polish some of my old favorites from the days of *SQUAD LEADER*. I would hope to continue to have the opportunity to revise more of these "old chestnuts" in the future and re-introduce them in the high-energy environment of tournament play. Meanwhile, I think fans of *ASL* will enjoy these four.



TO SPRING A TRAP

Rommel's Plan in FORTRESS EUROPA

By Randy Heller

FORTRESS EUROPA is one of the few wargames available today that continuously provides non-stereotypic play that is both tense and exciting. This can be attributed primarily to the use of hidden units in the German set-up. No longer do we have a game where the same "perfect plan" can be used over and over for the disposition of initial Allied forces. The psychological factor alone plays a big part in preparing a German defense against the coming Allied invasion. Is this a player that you have played before; can you anticipate where he might put his German units? Is he an experienced *FE* player? Is he prone to taking risks, or is he conservative in his set-up? Answers to all these questions must be taken into account when you plan your invasion.

The immense popularity of its sister game (*THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN*) has resulted in a dearth of *FE* articles in *The GENERAL* it seems. This may be due in part to the time it takes to play the full campaign game of *FE*. But the scenarios should not be overlooked. Both the seven-turn long "Invasion" scenario and the 12-turn long "To the West Wall" scenario can be played in an evening's sitting. Each one encompasses the most exciting part of the game - the initial invasion. In fact, the "Invasion" scenario has been a popular tournament game at West Coast conventions for years, and has been used in the *FE* tournaments at ORIGINS in 1983, '86, '88 and '89. The purpose of this short article is to examine the German defense of the two most popular invasion sites on the mapboard - the 7th Military District and the 15th Military District - for those looking to play in future tournaments.

Select members of the German High Command felt that the war could still be won if the inevitable Allied invasion could be promptly defeated, forcing a negotiated peace. The Allies would be unable, or unwilling, to try again in the near future after such losses. And this could result in significant forces (approximately 45 divisions) available for shipment to the Eastern Front to battle the Soviets. But how this defeat of the Allied invasion was to take place was never settled upon. Field Marshal von Rundstedt, C-in-C West, and General von Schweppenburg, Panzer Gruppe West, were of the opinion that it should certainly be made as difficult as possible for the enemy to land; they believed, however, that he could not be prevented from landing and forming a beachhead. They hoped, though, that when the enemy advanced inland they would be stopped by panzer divisions kept in readiness in the area around Paris and, in a swift counterattack, could be driven back to the beaches and thrown into the sea.

Field Marshal Rommel was under no such delusion, realizing that these fluid operations were imaginary under the pressure of the Allied air forces. Rommel believed that the invasion forces had to be defeated on the beaches. He was convinced, and as later events would

prove, that if Allied troops were allowed to get ashore and establish a lodgement, they would be able to build up military strength of such magnitude that it would be impossible to thwart the invasion. His plan was to integrate the armored formations with the infantry immediately behind the coastline into so-called "Rommel-belts" and to crush the invasion during the initial landings.

Hitler saw merit in both plans and arrived at a compromise between the two schools of thinking, which satisfied neither and merely exacerbated an already confused situation. The result was that three (and only three) panzer divisions were turned over to Rommel's direct command: 2nd Panzer, 21st Panzer and 116th Panzer. The remaining four panzer divisions were left far inland as a High Command reserve. And, as it turned out, the 21st Panzer's commander obeyed an order from Panzer Gruppe West positioning that division further back than Rommel had dictated. On top of this, Rommel's own chief-of-staff, Lt. General Speidel, delayed the movements of 2nd Panzer and 116th Panzer to Normandy on a pretext in order to use them for the plot against Hitler.

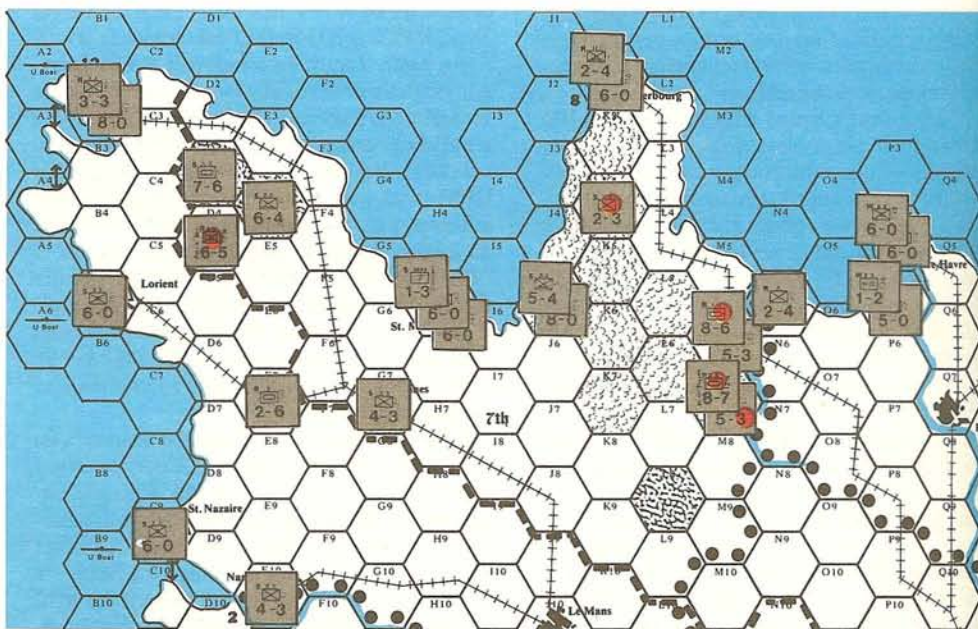
As the German player in *FORTRESS EUROPA*, you won't be handicapped by the political infighting of the German General Staff. You have the freedom to fully embrace the Rommel Plan and to, possibly, defeat the Allied invasion before it becomes established. Our "Rommel-belts" will be located in Normandy and the Pas de Calais, the two most likely invasion sites.

The first illustration (Figure 1) highlights the defense of the 7th Army District. An invasion between hex E4 and St. Malo, as championed in past issues of *The GENERAL*, is easily discour-

aged by the placement of strong forces in and adjacent to E4, plus some 26 defense factors in St. Malo itself. The positioning of the 77th Infantry in Rennes would probably put a damper on any plan to paratroop in support of an invasion in this area. But a paratroop directly behind the mountainous terrain on D3 and E4 should not be overlooked. If successful, an attack by Allied paratroops, assisted by Allied TAC and naval units, would quite likely eliminate or retreat the defending units. The following Allied second impulse movement would undoubtedly then secure the invasion area. Locating a hidden panzer unit behind this defensive position would surely be an unwelcome surprise for any enemy paratroops. Since ground support must be allocated prior to revealing the location of any hidden units, the paratroopers would find themselves battling the hidden panzers without support. The net result would be an Allied invasion, with back to the sea, fighting low-odds second impulse battles against units in mountainous terrain—not a very promising situation.

If an invasion occurs in the 7th Military District, it will probably take place between Cherbourg and Caen. Not only does this have the appeal of the historical invasion site behind it, but it is most enticing in terms of the game. This entire peninsula is bereft of units, save for the traditional three steps in Cherbourg and the lone infantry unit in Caen. A crafty Allied player may even recognize Caen as an inland port, and so possibly include it as one of the initial invasion hexes. The hidden 30th Infantry should put a stop to this, and force the invaders back onto N5. (Note, this does not free frozen units, since movement outside the military dis-

Figure 1: The 7th Military District; hidden units indicated by a red dot.



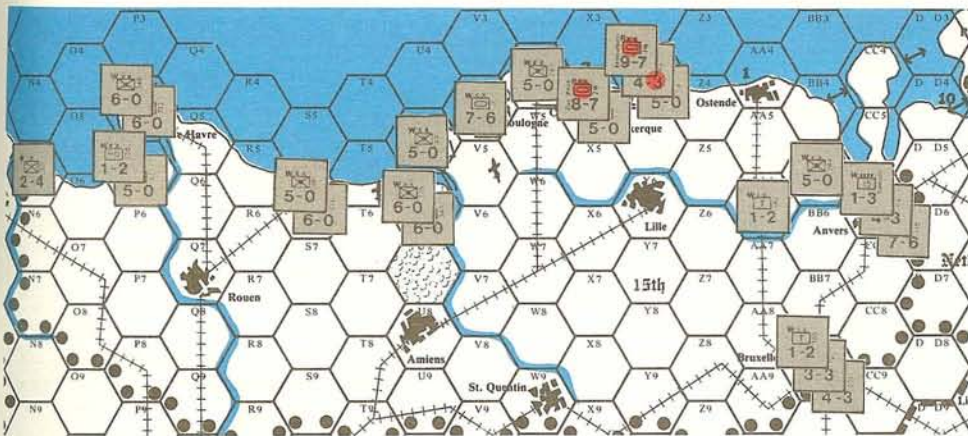


Figure 2: The 15th Military District; hidden units indicated by a red dot.

district was unintentional.) The positioning of the 275th Infantry as a hidden unit is paramount. Its location will prevent the Allies from moving off the beaches during the second impulse movement. An Allied paratroop will no doubt accompany the invasion; the hidden units set up on M7 will prevent a concerted effort on Caen and guarantee some freedom of maneuver for the German counterattack. Allied paratroopers can secure K7 and L8, but this will do little to hamper the Germans. The Allies will find themselves left on the beaches with a low-odds attack versus Caen during the second impulse, and a very exposed Mulberry.

For an immediate counterattack, the German player has available two panzer divisions, two potent infantry divisions, one paratroop division, and possibly two or three weaker ancillary units. This portends likely destruction of the Allied Mulberry. The allocation of at least three German TAC to ground support (four during PBM games) is strongly recommended. Both first impulse and second impulse attacks on the Allied Mulberry will be available. Of course, these should be taken. With reasonable results, the Allied invasion of the 7th District should be defeated handily.

For our defense of the 15th Military District see the next illustration (Figure 2). "Operation Fortitude" (Vol. 20, No. 6 of the *GENERAL*) presented a myriad of reasons as to why this district makes a viable invasion site. The author felt that the Ostende area offered more promise as the ideal place for build-up and breakout - and I agree with him. Our goal, as the German, is to be prepared for the invasion to land here and, at the same time, encourage the Allied player to do so. It is a subtle psychological gambit to employ.

Both Dieppe and Ostende are devoid of fortresses, which practically guarantees their loss should the enemy determinedly go after either one of them. The apparent abandonment of Ostende, 22 defense factors in Dieppe, strong coastal defenses in Le Havre and U6, plus the threat of hidden units in Rouen and Amiens, all make Ostende the more attractive of the two. Another factor for Allied consideration is that a bridge attack on the Schelde would discourage German counterattack. The clear terrain around Dieppe provides a much less secure beachhead.

The question now is how will the Allied player best utilize Ostende as an invasion site? Obviously, the ideal place for the Mulberry would be the city itself, since this would provide a double defensive position: As mentioned already, a bridge attack on the Schelde River will discourage German counterattack from the south. Will the Allied player attempt to secure his right flank by extending the invasion into the fortress hexes of Y4 and X4? I think so. It's at this point that the Allies will meet with a very nasty surprise, consisting of three hidden units (two of which are full-strength panzer divisions).

The fortress in Y4 has to be taken by the Allies; otherwise any invading units left in X4 will find themselves in a desperate situation. Minimum odds of 3-1 must be attained to secure Y4. This will require maximum effort in the Allied planning (i.e., three ground support, all naval units, and the British 79th armor to add +2 to the combat die roll). If the Allies fail to win this battle, the result will be a SS panzer corps within one-hex striking distance of the Mulberry. So far in our discussion, I have assumed that the Allied player has planned optimally for an attack on Y4 with, at best, a 3-1 attack (or 50/50 chance of taking the hex). In all likelihood, the Allied attack will not have anticipated such strong hidden units set up in the fortress hexes. Therefore, the German player should be able to start his turn with a powerful counterattack located dangerously close to the Allied Mulberry.

Should the German player decide against this aggressive counterattack, an alternative can be implemented that will seal off the beachhead until such time that a second invasion can relieve it. By this point, the Allied timetable may be irrevocably delayed.

By embracing Rommel's original strategy, we have given the German player his best opportunity at eliminating an Allied landing. "Rommel-belts" strategically positioned in the 7th and 15th districts are the key to victory. Without them, the German player lacks the counterattack strength necessary for a prompt response. The alternative to this strategy is a gradual delaying action across France to the West Wall (as detailed in Vol. 24, No. 4). I, for one, much prefer the immediate rewards of Rommel's plans.

AREA TOP 50 LIST

Rank	Name	Times On List	Rating	Previous Rank
1.	K. Combs	76	2577YOW	1
2.	D. Burdick	75	2315HHQ	2
3.	J. Kreuz	3	2197GR	3
4.	B. Sinigaglio	61	2179GIJ	4
5.	D. Barker	3	2119GHN	7
6.	P. Flory	52	2109EHL	5
7.	J. Beard	2	2088JIT	6
8.	E. O'Conner	35	2081GIP	14
9.	P. Siragusa	70	2079FIL	8
10.	L. Barlow	23	2057KLV	12
11.	P. Landry	50	2054IJO	10
12.	D. Matison	18	2050MKY	11
13.	T. Deane	28	2029GBB	15
14.	J. Noel	29	2018EEK	9
15.	C. Corn	25	2017FEB	16
16.	S. Sutton	42	2016GHO	17
17.	R. Beyrna	51	2014DDG	18
18.	D. Garbut	74	2006HJQ	19
19.	B. Remsburg	59	2005HIR	20
20.	J. Bjonum	10	2000EFK	13
21.	M. Sincavage	3	1984FFJ	21
22.	R. Berger	16	1984EFG	23
23.	J. Spontak	20	1963DCE	24
24.	J. Eliason	24	1960GIO	25
25.	R. Shurdut	21	1951GHM	26
26.	D. Greenwood	11	1942HHN	22
27.	J. Ingersoll	3	1940CEH	27
28.	D. Kopp	21	1932GJP	28
29.	H. Newby	41	1923VKQ	29
30.	F. Reese	56	1917JDI	30
31.	W. King	2	1907BDG	32
32.	T. Oleson	85	1906ZZZ	38
33.	P. DeVolpe	13	1892DFE	33
34.	B. Schoose	15	1891GIM	34
35.	M. Crowe	4	1890CCH	35
36.	M. Mitchell	13	1880GHN	37
37.	J. Campbell	13	1875FED	39
38.	E. Alexis	7	1872JMU	42
39.	M. Frisk	30	1866DFJ	31
40.	M. Gutfreund	7	1863EHM	41
41.	F. Preissle	73	1850MOZ	40
42.	T. Gregorio	2	1845CDH	43
43.	K. McCarthy	30	1842DFJ	36
44.	K. Kinsel	9	1819HHI	45
45.	E. Miller	23	1812HKR	44
46.	G. Smith	2	1810GHO	50
47.	J. Martin	1	1807DFI	--
48.	B. Sutton	1	1806DEE	--
49.	W. Scott	73	1793MKW	46
50.	J. Lutz	1	1791HGQ	--

FE RANKINGS

Replacing the "Meet the Fifty" section of our AREA report will be the AREA Specific listing for a select game each issue (in this instance, *FORTRESS EUROPA*). Shown is the member's name, his hometown, and his Specific rating (V = verified; P = provisional). Note that this does not match the general AREA rating, for Specific AREA reflects only the results of rated play of the title indicated.

Rank	Name	Hometown	Rating
1.	R. Heller	Lemon Grove, CA	V1970
2.	T. Pavy	Dayton, OH	P1660
3.	H. Lowood	San Bruno, CA	P1660
4.	J. Eliason	Metuchen, NJ	P1585
5.	R. Buchanan	Charlotte, NC	P1500
6.	R. Cule	Pearl Harbor, HI	P1500
7.	J. Estep	Potomac, MD	P1500
8.	J. Grant Jr.	Stamford, CT	P1500
9.	M. Newman	Greenfield, MA	P1500
10.	J. Rogers	Detroit, MI	P1500



NORMANDY'S BACK DOOR

Invading the 7th Military District

By Randy Heller

The initial turns of invasion in *FORTRESS EUROPA* rate high in excitement due to the use of hidden units by the German player and the wide range of landing sites available to the Allied player. Experienced gamers are quick to recognize the value of Allied air power, and the need for it to make significant advances against a relatively intact German army. If the Allies have been slow in their build-up and breakout, and if the Germans have succeeded in extricating themselves from the invasion area with minor losses, air power is no longer a luxury for the Allied player . . . but a pre-requisite for further victory.

The summer months offer the Allied player the most opportunities to utilize his air power. If an invasion site such as the 1st Military District or 19th Military District is chosen, the Allies will necessarily have to spend several turns in consolidation, build-up, and reduction/capture of the vital supply ports. Unfortunately, this expenditure of time can be forced upon the Allied player with only minimal commitment by the German army. By the time the Allied player is ready to exit his invasion district, the German player may have adequately fortified the Seine or Rhone river defense lines.

An aggressive Allied player will more often choose the 7th Military District as his invasion site. Along with the necessities of consolidation, build-up and capture of ports, the Allies will be given the chance to engage and destroy a significant portion of the German army. Here, in the 7th District, the German player will probably place at least half his free set-up units. With this commitment already made, the German player is often quick to strengthen the area with his Invasion Reaction Force in an attempt to counterattack or prevent a breakout. The German player is usually loath to abandon this district until significant losses have been incurred. This is the key advantage for the Allies in invading the 7th Military District. The Allies are presented with the opportunity to battle the cream of the German army, while the remainder are left frozen in their respective districts. The question is how best to exploit this opportunity by choosing the best site in the 7th District.

The first illustration (Figure 1) depicts a popular defensive set-up for the German 7th Military District. The two most popular invasion areas are the Cherbourg peninsula and the hexes around St. Malo. Of course, the Cherbourg peninsula was the site of the real "Overlord". It does offer the Allied player the advantage of defending his beachhead in rough terrain. This advantage can, of course, also be turned around and used against the Allies. It is the German who may very well be doing the defending in advantageous terrain. Ignoring the chance of any hidden units in Cherbourg, the Allies are still presented with the distinct possibility of a tedious "slugfest" through the

bocage. Once the Allied forces have reached the edge of the rough terrain and begin to break into the clear, they are often met with a strong and coordinated panzer attack. It is very common to see the German player lay a trap in or around St. Malo. The panzer divisions placed one hex back from the beaches force the Allies to attack at relatively unfavorable odds during their second impulse. And this can prepare the Allied forces for a successful German counter-attack and subsequent disaster. The risk of such a calamity should deter even the most aggressive player from landing in the vicinity of St. Malo.

Where, then, in the 7th Military District can the Allies land with the best chance of success? The western coast of Brittany tends to lure the German player into a false sense of security. Since the Allies can bring ashore only limited forces, and since the sector is outside TAC range, the German player feels comfortable in defending adequately only the ports. Experience dictates that the beaches between St. Nazaire and Lorient are virtually ignored. A less-than-well-planned and executed invasion of this area will leave the Allied Mulberry open to a German counterattack. On the other hand, if the Allied player can successfully protect his Mulberry for the first game turn, his second-turn reinforcements and the availability of air power can solidify his position and will wrest the tactical advantage away from the German.

The second illustration shows the Allied landing between St. Nazaire and Lorient, with the optimal utilization of available force. Com-

mandos and Rangers are performing a raid in conjunction with the invasion to avoid counting against the initial capacity. Air allocation should have been as follows: four TAC counter-air missions, two TAC ground support, one TAC and four SAC bridge attacks. Should the German player choose not to negate the two TAC, the Allied paradrop on E7 should be allocated to F7, the one on F7 to E7, and the one on I8 to H7. With average luck on the Paratroop Drop Table, the airborne units, supported by TAC, should be able to neutralize any hidden unit in Rennes. For the purposes of our discussion, we will assume that a conservative German player has negated our TAC and that the paratroops have landed as shown in Figure 2, with the average loss of one step. The allocation of five air factors to bridge attacks guarantees the availability of at least one air factor. This should be placed on the river running from hex R11 to hex U17 in order to slow down the Initial Reaction Force.

The Allies have come ashore uncontested. The next and most important step is to protect the Allied Mulberry from any German counter-attack. The last illustration shows the Allied player's second impulse moves. The US Glider 501st and British 43rd have come ashore to reinforce the invasion. An attempt has been made to expand the beachhead as far as possible from the Mulberry. The 3-1 attack against Lehr and the soak-off against the 12th SS give an

Figure 1: The 7th Military District

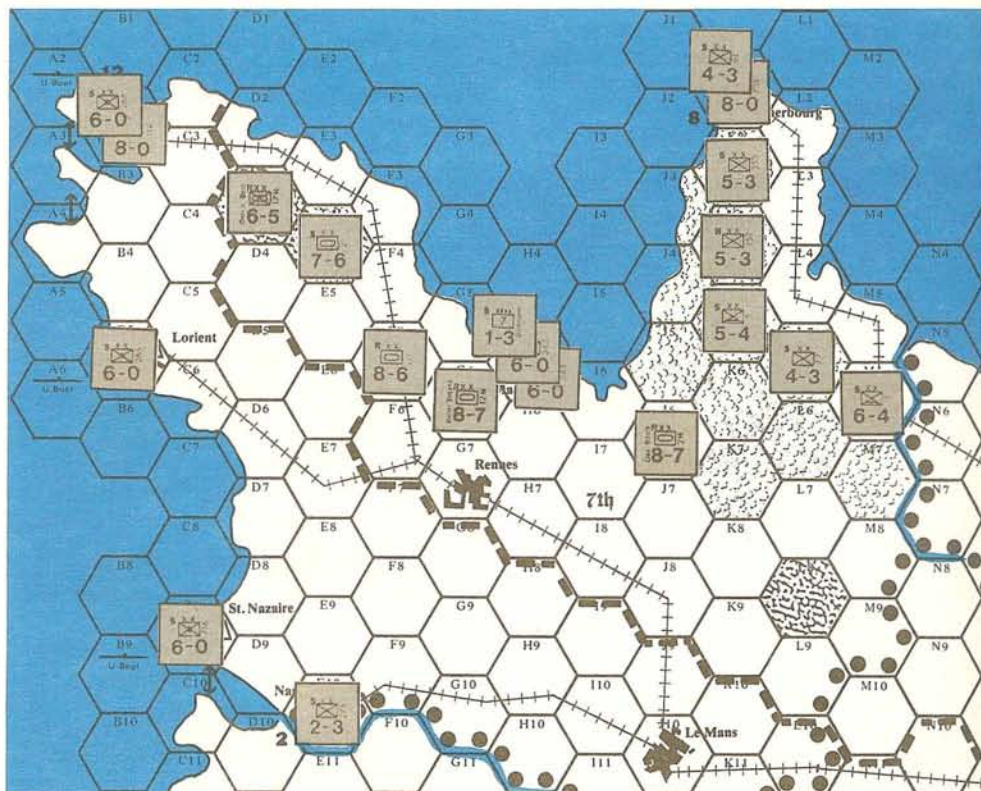




Figure 2: The Allied Invasion, First Impulse. Hex A contains the 79th Armored, 56th Infantry, Cdo 1, 3rd Ranger, and Nederland Royal Infantry. Hex B contains the 3rd Infantry, Cdo 4, 2nd Ranger, and 1st Belgie.

excellent chance of retaining the position shown. The British 6th Airborne will prevent a southerly run by the panzers from reaching the Mulberry.

What options are available to the German player? Without ground support, a direct "paradrop" on the Mulberry is impractical since only 1-2 odds can be attained. Hexes DS and D6, or I8 and F8, must be successfully attacked for the panzers to reach the Mulberry on their second impulse. At best, the German player will be able to achieve only 1-1 odds against hexes D6 and F8. The best response for an aggressive German player would be to make a paradrop against Dempsey and the British 79th Armour in order to attack in conjunction with the 275th Infantry at 1-1 odds. Then, he moves the 2nd SS and 12th SS to H7 and, along with infantry from the Cherbourg peninsula, attacks the 6th Airborne. On the opposite flank, the 17th SS and Coastal Defense 266 move to attack hex D6 at 1-1, while the 21st and Coastal Defense 265 attack Belgie. Should the panzers be lucky enough to be in position to attack the Mulberry on their second impulse, the best that can be hoped for is to remain adjacent to a vacant Mulberry. This will not preclude the second-turn Allied units from arriving as soon as the Mulberry is re-occupied, however. And if the German player is not successful in clearing a path to the Mulberry, he will be thrown off balance and be forced to use his second impulse to attain defensive positions with his armor. A less-than-aggressive German player may, instead, opt to retreat his armor out of the Brest peninsula and leave his coastal units in the ports. The conservative approach would see

reinforcing of St. Nazaire, Lorient and Cherbourg while moving the panzers outside the 7th Military District.

How might the Allied player reply to either the "conservative" or "aggressive" German responses? If the enemy abandons the district and defends only the ports, the Allies will, of course, consolidate, build-up, and reduce the necessary ports for supply. The greater reward for the Allies lies in response to an aggressive German. If the German player is not entirely

successful in his attempt to reach and attack the Mulberry, his forces should be left in a vulnerable position. If the Germans remain adjacent to the Mulberry, they can be pushed back from it with the application of air power. Second-turn Allied reinforcements come ashore if the Mulberry is occupied, in either impulse. These reinforcements should virtually guarantee the solidification of the Allied beachhead.

An invasion between St. Nazaire and Lorient provides the Allied player with an excellent opportunity to engage the strongest units in the German OB and defeat them before leaving the initial invasion site. An aggressive German player will find himself hard-pressed to defeat, or even contain, the Allied landing. After attempting some initial low-odds attacks, he will be forced to soon abandon the 7th Military District - or risk the destruction of his best units. And there is a long game ahead, when he might need them.

FORTRESS EUROPA is a true gamer's delight, based on the "classic" TRC system. As mentioned in the previous article in this issue, it is widely popular for tournament play, especially if using the seven-turn "Invasion" scenario. The play is always tense and exciting, and offers experienced players the opportunity to display their acumen. Unfortunately, *FE* is soon to be out-of-print, replaced by other games covering the topic of the "Great Crusade" (all of them fine designs I'm sure). Let these pair of articles, then, serve as a last tribute in these pages to one of the most elegant and enjoyable titles to have been produced by The Avalon Hill Game Company. ★

Figure 3: The Allied Invasion, Second Impulse. Hex A contains the 56th Infantry, Cdo 1, 3rd Ranger, and a Mulberry. Hex B contains Cdo 4, 2nd Ranger, and the 501st Glider Infantry.



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Wanted: FTF in or near Lafayette. Will play most historical games. Carl Schwamberger, 1212 North 18th Street, Lafayette, IN 47904. (317) 742-0998.

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Re-beginning adult gamer in Columbia area seeks FTF for BL, FRED, GOA, PB, PL. Am willing to learn others. Rick Parkhurst, 8238 Wellington Place, Jessup, MD 20794. (301) 604-9161.

SL (novice) and DIP players for Boston and Washington DC. FTF only. Leave message. Mike Nagle, 72 Montvale Street, Boston, MA 02131. (617) 327-4742.

FTF or PBM (AREA or non-AREA) TPS, RF, TRC, ASL, SL, 1776, PGG, PAA, DD, AK, 3R, WAT and others. Mark Andersen, 89 Highbank Road, Franklin, MA 02038. (508) 520-3295.

AREA-rated novice looking for PBM FE, 3R opponents. Also ASL if good system available. Nick Avtges Jr., 66 Townly Road, Watertown, MA 02172. (617) 484-3745.

Opponents wanted for FTF ASL, SL, SST. Also want PBM SL and SST. Scott Romanowski, 5 Sherburn Place, Wilmington, MA 01887. (508) 658-2875.

Looking for FTF opponents for BRIT, 3R, TRC, STAL, KREM, DIP, HW, VITP, 1776 from eastern and central Massachusetts. David Gage, 8 Massachusetts Avenue, Worcester, MA 01609. (508) 752-2077.

Experienced adult player seeks PBM rated games of WAT, AK. Looking for timely responses. Patrick McNevin, 12985 Raven Street NW, Coon Rapids, MN 55448. (612) 754-3917.

Would like to contact PB enthusiasts.

Object: more scenarios! Richard Gutenkunst, 1909 Park Avenue South #7, Minneapolis, MN 55404. (612) 872-4076.

Play ASL by electronic mail! Join the GENIE ASL players! Games RT, Cat 21, Section 2. (M805;1, Set 2, REA 2.) Russ Gifford, 320 East 27th, South Sioux City, NE 68776. (402) 494-8746.

ASL players in IA, NE and SD. Monthly meetings and FTF tournaments! Join the excitement. Call/write for details. Russ Gifford, 320 East 27th, South Sioux City, NE 68776. (402) 494-8746.

AREA 1500 (Prov) desparately looking for FTF opponents any game! PBM VITP, LW, W&P. Will travel to Rochester or Buffalo. Tom Fumia, 13401 West Lee Road, Albion, NY 14411. (716) 589-7103.

Seeking FTF or PBM wargaming for TRC. All interested please contact: Antonio Munoz, 44-65 Kissena Boulevard, Flushing, NY 11355.

Prov rated player seeks rated PBM game of BB'65. Tournament Game with optional rules. Reply to: W.C. Kirby, 61 Hudson View Terrace, Highland Falls, NY 10928.

Annual search for adult gamers in Wayne-Monroe County area. Small group welcomes new additions, Favor easy and moderate level gaming. Jack Morrell, A-197 Sakzburg Village, Palmyra, NY 14522. (315) 597-9560.

Novice player wanting FTF GE and AK. Any clubs in Westchester, Putnam, Rockland or vicinity? Please contact me. Willie Voll, 250 Underhill Avenue #31, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598. (914) 245-4636.

Adult average player, 13 years experience, seeks PBM TRC, FE, BB'81. FTF SL, ASL, PAA, others. AREA-rated. Any area clubs? Zeke Crater, 2977 Carolyn Drive, Durham, NC 27703. (919) 596-9759.

Beginning adult gamer in north central Ohio area willing to take his lumps seeks FTF opponents for BB, SOA, CASS, STAL. John Simatacolas, 25 Cedargate Court, Galion, OH 44833. (419) 462-5883.

Wanted wargamers around Toledo for EIA, NB, 3R, SOJ, ASL, 1776. Will learn/play anything. FTF preferred but PBM OK. Jim Sexton, 1935 Country Trail 9-G, Toledo, OH 43615. (419) 866-5732.

10 ASLers in OKC/Tulsa metro! More players in our state? For fun and future OK State Championship. Novices welcome. Call or write: John H. Farris, P.O. Box 547, Norman, OK 73070. Office: (405) 364-3300; Home: (405) 799-8691.

Does anyone else play this game? Seeking PBM for Korean War. Also BL, MD, FRED, FR-40, PL, 3rd Fleet and others. Mike Smelser, 10101 Casa Linda, Oklahoma City, OK 73139.

AREA 1500 (Prov), 10+ years. Solitaire driving me nuts. Novice to PBM. Desire opponents for PB/PL, AIW, GE'88, many more. May need systems for some. E. Miller, P.O. Box 8154, Lancaster, PA 17604.

Looking for adult FTF opponent in Charleston area. Will play PL, PB, SL, SOA, UF. Non-smokers only. Mark H. Walker, 105 Alwyn Blvd., Ladson, SC 29456. (803) 875-6114.

Seeking AREA and non-rated games of PK, TRC, PGG; PBM or FTF acceptable. Larry Earhart Jr., 104 Glenmore Court, Conroe, TX 77385.

The "Sports Page", 'zine devoted to the play of AH sports games. Need readers, writers. Contains variants, replays. For issue write: David Baumgardner, 6412 Locke, Fort Worth, TX 76116. (817) 763-0463.

The "Sports Page", an amateur 'zine, is seeking coaches for a ten-game PBM BOWL BOUND season. Playoff system. David Baumgardner, 3621 Wayland, Fort Worth, TX 76133. (817) 630-0463.

Games collecting dust. Would like to play FTF. Willing to learn new games. Have CM, KM, LW, PB, RW, SL, 3R. Daniel Hegarty, Circle Street, Williamstown, VT 05679. 433-1324.

AREA 1500 seeking rated PBM/FTF TRC, VITP, WS&IM. Also rated/non-rated FT, EIA, and many others. Open to suggestions. George Young, RR 1, Box 1372, Shelburne, VT 05482. (802) 482-2917.

The Washington Gamers meet twice monthly. Join and get our newsletter of article, notices and ads. Dennis Wang, 22022 Huntington Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22303. (703) 960-1259.

Seeking PBM opponent for TA, PB, PL, AIW, any Fleet series, Pacific War or FT. Will also gamemaster any of above. Mike Osborne, 825 South Ivy Street, Arlington, VA 22204. (703) 920-8916.

Dependable adult w/25 years gaming experience. Will travel to play any wargame FTF. Also interested in PBM systems. Mike Carter, 1 Red Mountain Drive, Ellensburg, WA 98926. (509) 925-1403.

Fox Valley gamers meet on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month. New members welcome! For information contact: William Jacobsen, 1309 Liberty Court, Neenah, WI 54956. (414) 722-6187.

GE, CW, BR, AK, SL, LW, FL, DD, NB, PL. David J. Holubec, 1865 Matringrove Road, #Ste 306, Rexdale, ONT, M9V 3S7. (416) 890-1439.

In order of preference: AF, DL, FT, 3R. Denis Rufiange, 92 Belanger, LaSalle, QUE, H8R 3K6. (514) 366-6672.

Attention Winnipeg area ASL gamers. ASL club forming. We're looking for interested ASLers, any level of experience. Contact: Bill Bird, 839 Strathcona Street, Winnipeg, MB, R3G 3G3. (204) 783-2186.

Any wargamers in area? Play RF, W&P, PAA. Willing to learn new games and travel in immediate area. Desperate! Ron Alderdice, 1109 Water Street, Prince Rupert, BC, V8J 1C1. 627-7095.

Any PB players still out there? AREA-rated 1500 player seeks PBM PB. All replies will be answered. Jeff Wolff, Box 343, Willow Bunch, SK, S0H 4K0. (306) 473-2222.

Hey Yankees! Experienced Brazilian player wants opponents to PBM. I bet you lose! Need system. All letters answered. EIA, FE, GOA, RF, W&P, WS&IM, 3R. Nedilson Jorge, Sqn 307, "B", ap 301, Brasilia, DF, 70.746. BRASIL. Phone: (0055) (61) 347-2532.

30-year old seeks PBM opponents for ASL, TLD, 6th Fleet, 7th Fleet, 2nd Fleet. Has anyone devised a good PBM system for ASL? Pascal Stadler, Rue Jean Lecomte 3, 1422 Grandson, SWITZERLAND. Phone: (024) 242165.

Any wargamers in Northern Germany? 22-year old seeks opponents for ASL, SOJ, 3R, EIA, RF, TA, SON. Will travel. Claas Beltage, Hessemannstrasse 16, Hannover, 3000, WEST GERMANY. Phone: 0511/5478948.

Any ASLers in northern Stockholm? Opponents wanted for FTF ASL. Olle Byberg, Norrbackav 45, 19543 Marsta, SWEDEN. Phone: 0760-23237.

THE QUESTION BOX

WRASSLIN'

9.42 If a penalized Wrestler chooses to ignore a Referee warning, must he state his intention to do so before he takes his turn or does he state this when he arrives again?
A. When he arrives again.

10. May a Wrestler who is subject to a Continuous Hold/Pin be attacked by a third Wrestler?
A. Yes.

11.4 If the "Champ" uses his specialty to remove damage while pinned and thereby increases his strength to that of the attacker, does he break the Pin even if he does not remove all the damage?
A. Yes.

11.4 May the "Grandmaster" use a specialty card as any blue card, including a blue/green (i.e., Interference) card?
A. Yes.

11.4 If the "Garbage Man" plays the Green Spew, may the defender fill his hand during the missed turns or must he wait until the end of the third missed turn?
A. The end of the third missed turn.

11.5 Is there any penalty for being caught playing a card illegally?
A. The ineligible card must be returned to the player's hand and his turn ended. He may neither play another card nor discard. In essence, he has lost the remainder of his turn. If he has already drawn a replacement card for the illegal play, he must return the replacement card to the middle of the deck.

12.1 May a Wrestler outside the ring play Interference cards and/or Distraction cards to affect the action in the ring?
A. Yes.

12.4 Although a Double Team cannot be voided by a red card, may it be voided by an Interference card (which is partly red)?
A. Yes.

12.41 If a Double-Teaming partner chooses to remain in the ring, are his subsequent

Holds subject to all of the same restrictions as the initial Double-Team Hold? May his subsequent Holds be stopped by red cards?
A. No. Yes.

12.41 If the Double-Teaming partner chooses to leave the ring on a subsequent turn, must he do so at the beginning of the turn?
A. Yes.

12.42 If the defending Wrestler's partner chooses to start a free-for-all, must he skip his turn to enter the ring?
A. No.

12.42 During a free-for-all, may the partner of a defender play an Interference card?
A. Yes.

13.4 Is a Wrestler eliminated from a free-for-all by an "Automatic Win" Hold?
A. Yes.

ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER

A10.531 Does an Infantry unit lose its "?" if it Assault-moves/advances into Open Ground (into a hex devoid of TEM and SMOKE, with no intervening Hindrance and no Height Advantage) in the LOS and within 16 hexes of a Good Order enemy ground unit, even if it is beyond the Normal Range of all such enemy units? Even if all those enemy units are CX? Even if out of the CA of all Guns/AFV manned by those enemy units?
A. Yes to all. The viewing unit's Normal Range, CX status and Gun CA are irrelevant to "?" loss/gain.

A10.531 May an Infantry unit in Open Ground (in a hex devoid of TEM and SMOKE, with no intervening Hindrance and no Height Advantage) three hexes away from a 6-2-8 declare a Dash across an ADJACENT road to another such Open Ground hex since, as per A10.531, those two hexes would be considered non-Open Ground due to their being beyond the 6-2-8's Normal Range?
A. No. The 6-2-8's Normal Range is irrelevant to the determination of whether or not those hexes are Open Ground.

READERS BUYER'S GUIDE

The following games are ranked by their reader-generated Overall Value. Further aspects of reader response to our titles are indicated by the ratings in other categories. By breaking down a game's ratings into these individual categories, the gamer is able to discern for himself where each title's strengths and weaknesses lie in the qualities he values highly. Readers are reminded that ratings take the form of a numerical value ranging from 1 to 9 (with "1" equalling "excellent" and "9" equalling "terrible"). However, the Game Length category is measured in multiples of ten minutes (thus, a rating of "18" equates to three hours). A "+" following the Year of release indicates that the game is continued or complemented by additional modules in successive years (for instance, the ratings for SL reflect the entire system - original game plus add-on modules). Game Type is broken down into three broad categories: SO = Solitaire; MP = Multi-Player; 2P = Two Player. Finally, it should be noted that a minimum requirement of 50 responses (see the Sample Base) was judged necessary for a valid representation; additional titles that garner such will be added to the RBG in the future.

Title	Overall Value	Components	Complexity	Completeness	Playability	Authenticity	Game Length	Year	Type	Sample Base
ADVANCED SL	1.80	1.77	9.25	2.11	3.44	2.04	33.02	'85+	2P	172
1830	1.85	2.00	3.88	2.72	2.04	3.20	24.52	'86	MP	50
CIVILIZATION	1.97	2.60	3.20	2.03	1.72	4.09	32.08	'82	MP	152
FLATTOP	2.00	2.47	3.61	3.12	3.56	1.76	43.96	'81	2P	95
EIA	2.08	2.45	8.08	2.94	3.84	2.11	156.86	'86	MP	71
TP STALINGRAD	2.10	2.14	3.42	3.56	2.23	2.94	30.00	'89	2P	61
UP FRONT	2.11	2.24	4.36	2.83	2.38	3.56	10.16	'83+	2P	126
RUSSIAN FRONT	2.12	2.33	5.32	2.88	2.67	2.40	40.16	'85	2P	113
KREMLIN	2.28	2.51	3.64	3.33	1.81	5.24	11.94	'88	MP	63
BRITANNIA	2.31	3.08	2.93	2.89	2.07	3.52	23.72	'87	MP	77
TAC AIR	2.38	2.39	5.02	2.91	2.77	2.72	33.65	'88	2P	88
GETTYSBURG	2.42	2.61	1.79	3.32	1.64	4.43	9.11	'88	2P	66
MOV	2.50	2.42	3.38	2.46	2.24	3.53	15.42	'88	MP	79
VITP	2.55	3.12	2.56	3.32	1.91	5.56	21.09	'77	2P	183
TRC	2.60	3.35	3.85	3.10	2.28	4.22	35.44	'76	2P	220
ENEMY IN SIGHT	2.61	2.88	2.30	2.63	1.87	5.76	7.73	'88	MP	68
7th Fleet	2.62	2.77	6.47	2.96	3.04	3.16	38.01	'87	2P	50
CASSINO	2.68	2.71	4.43	2.75	2.32	2.63	23.67	'88	2P	52
DIPLOMACY	2.71	3.36	3.00	2.69	2.92	5.16	33.26	'76	MP	169
ST. NAZAIRE	2.72	2.56	4.01	3.12	2.80	2.52	18.92	'87	SO	98
FIREPOWER	2.76	3.03	6.42	3.63	3.76	2.88	15.48	'85	2P	94
FLIGHT LEADER	2.79	2.20	4.62	3.00	2.77	3.20	10.18	'86	2P	76
MBT	2.80	2.68	5.37	3.16	3.36	2.57	15.08	'89	2P	51
DEVIL'S DEN	2.81	2.85	5.04	2.99	3.52	2.61	24.58	'85	2P	60
B-17	2.83	2.87	2.93	2.83	2.00	3.33	8.82	'83	SO	192
SQUAD LEADER	2.84	2.11	8.05	3.68	4.27	3.00	21.37	'77+	2P	231
2nd Fleet	2.89	3.35	5.27	3.44	3.28	3.55	32.23	'86	2P	55
WS&IM	2.92	3.24	5.64	3.00	3.04	2.60	20.07	'75	2P	172
THIRD REICH	2.95	3.56	8.83	3.70	4.00	3.51	45.83	'81	MP	227
PANZER LEADER	3.12	2.79	5.63	3.72	3.32	3.82	19.47	'74	2P	210
WAR & PEACE	3.13	3.44	4.55	3.68	2.95	3.15	36.80	'80	2P	138
TITAN	3.16	2.68	3.48	2.66	2.47	4.48	29.08	'82	MP	65
Civil War	3.20	3.69	6.95	3.92	4.17	3.58	46.96	'83	2P	112
MAGIC REALM	3.29	2.44	8.41	4.08	4.20	3.79	20.76	'79	MP	75
NAVAL WAR	3.35	4.20	1.12	3.40	1.60	6.72	6.00	'83	MP	81
KINGMAKER	3.39	3.21	5.65	4.48	3.49	4.63	27.98	'76	MP	141
PG GUDERIAN	3.40	3.24	5.44	3.20	3.28	3.32	22.87	'84	2P	90
PATTON'S BEST	3.43	3.22	4.16	4.23	3.25	3.87	14.13	'87	SO	109
GLADIATOR	3.44	3.36	3.89	3.32	2.56	3.20	8.69	'81	2P	56
CM	3.47	3.60	3.28	3.39	2.64	3.36	11.70	'80	2P	91
6th Fleet	3.48	3.04	5.64	3.73	3.88	3.64	47.67	'85	2P	59
AIR FORCE	3.48	4.27	5.36	3.64	3.61	3.12	12.90	'80+	2P	76
PANZERBLITZ	3.56	3.55	4.92	4.16	3.26	4.50	18.25	'70	2P	215
Pacific War	3.64	3.57	7.98	4.32	5.28	3.19	120.63	'86	2P	66
Pax Britannica	3.64	3.60	4.85	3.91	4.25	4.61	52.14	'85	MP	50
MIDWAY	3.65	4.48	2.80	3.16	2.43	4.52	21.10	'64	2P	130
Ambush	3.68	4.08	4.94	4.40	3.91	4.61	19.69	'83+	SO	121
AFRIKA KORPS	3.77	4.43	2.20	2.84	1.88	5.40	21.44	'64	2P	167
HITLER'S WAR	3.80	3.89	4.20	4.25	3.44	4.68	34.79	'84	2P	78
WIZARD'S QUEST	3.82	3.07	2.11	2.94	2.15	4.92	20.92	'79	MP	85
WAR AT SEA	4.04	3.94	1.40	3.40	1.87	6.72	12.80	'76	2P	155
BLITZKRIEG	4.19	4.36	5.84	3.87	3.60	5.57	33.76	'65	2P	136
1776	4.25	3.64	5.28	3.88	3.24	4.40	26.30	'74	2P	154
D-DAY	4.32	4.73	3.56	3.45	2.91	5.08	27.16	'77	2P	125
RICHTHOFEN'S	4.33	3.78	3.99	3.60	3.24	4.87	8.23	'83	2P	53
WATERLOO	4.44	4.48	2.24	3.08	2.21	5.55	17.99	'62	2P	104
LUFTWAFFE	4.80	4.27	4.16	4.08	3.91	5.33	20.08	'71	2P	170
TACTICS II	5.88	6.22	1.52	3.89	2.96	6.80	14.87	'61	2P	108

CARRIER

\$35.00

Solitaire Game of the Southwest Pacific Campaign, 1942-43

To say that Victory's latest solitaire design did not fair well compared to past efforts - at least in the views of the 13 who responded to our survey - is putting the matter bluntly. While the rulebook and components drew some praise, in every other category, *CARRIER* rated below the RBG-average. Perhaps because of the "fantasy" scenario, even the "Authenticity" rating compares unfavorably with most of Victory's other wargames.

On the other hand, even with such a limited sample base, the ratings do showcase a couple of strengths - given that this design is intended primarily for solitaire play. The "Game Length", whether taking up the shortest or longest scenario, seems perfect for the lonely gamer. *CARRIER* can provide an anything from an evening's entertainment to a weekend-long challenge. And the "Complexity" and "Excitement Level" are well within the norm for our solitaire games (just look back at those values for *B-17*, *PATTON'S BEST* and *AMBUSH* - all now considered innovative solitaire designs).

Below are listed all the ratings for this game, based upon the limited reader response to the survey:

Overall Value: 4.00

Components: 3.85

Map: 3.76

Counters: 4.07

Rulebook: 3.69

Complexity: 6.92

Completeness of Rules: 4.53

Playability: 4.30

Excitement Level: 3.94

Play Balance: 4.61

Authenticity: 4.92

Game Length (average): 25.96

Shortest: 1 hr., 50 mins.

Longest: 6 hrs., 49 mins.

Year: 1990

Type: SO

Sample Base: 13

On the strength of our coverage of one of the "classic" games, Vol. 27, No. 1 of *The GENERAL* pulled a fine Overall Rating of 3.13. Ironically, however, the article which rated the best in the individual polling did not concern *THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN*. Again, Mr. Swann's "Reference Notes for ASL" claimed the top spot (as a previous installment did for Vol. 26, No. 5). Based on a random sampling of 200 responses to Contest #154, the ratings for all the articles found in the issue is as follows:

ALPINE HUNTERS	265
THE OFFENSIVE APPROACH	191
STALINGRAD DEFENDED	166
TO THE GATES	154
BATTLES IN THE KREMLIN	101
DIVISIONS, CORPS & ARMIES	95
AH PHILOSOPHY	68
COMING ATTRACTIONS	64
ONWARD TO VOLOGDA	54
COMPUTER CORNER	20
SPORTS SPECIAL	17
AREA NEWS	5

Among the many activities at DIP-Con XXIV (held this summer past in Toronto), the hobby awards were presented. The "Don Miller Award" for hobby service went to David Hood as editor of *Diplomacy World* and serving as host of DIP-Con '90. The "John Koning Award" for best player was presented to Gary Behnen. And the "Rod Walker Literary Award" for best article on the game of *DIPLOMACY* published over the past year was given to Mark Berch for his piece entitled "The Power & The Glory" in *The GENERAL* (Vol. 26, No. 4). Our congratulations to all the winners. And to Gary Behnen, again, who also took top spot in the four-round tournament. Next year's DIP-Con will be held in Kansas City; for more information, contact Gary Behnen (13101 South Trenton, Olathe, KS 66062).

There are some hobbyists for whom "the game" truly "is the thing". For them now comes *The Wargame Collector's Journal*, a bi-monthly newsletter focused on the field of wargame collecting and the history of wargame publication. The initial eight-

Infiltrator's Report

page issue (with articles on the 1991 Origins auctions, John Mansfield, and various long-gone games) recently arrived. Regular features will include "Tidbits & Trivia" and - for the many who have lamented our decision to drop "For Sale" classified ads - "Hex Exchange". For more information, please contact Rick Pavak or Rich Erwin, Hexessential Publications, P.O. Box 610, Issaquah, WA 98027.

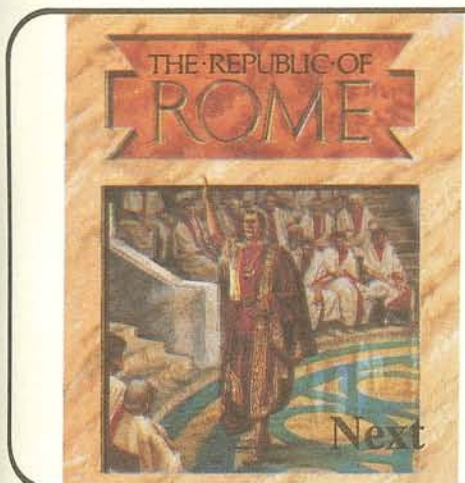
The *Rout Report* will never be accused of being a serious ASL publication, but is instead "mostly a quick and largely random shot of info for the happy fanatics of The Hill's best little marriage-breaker". As such, it is great fun. Having reached the fourth issue (containing, among other tidbits, a report on the tournament at MichiCon '91 and two new scenarios and even a brief article by Mark Nixon), it appears that this monthly foolishness may be around for quite some time. The *Rout Report* is an offshoot of DAGGER ("Detroit ASL Guys Gunning Eagerly with ROF"), defined in their own words as a kind of non-organization with a vagrant board of directors and inconsistent staffing. However, despite the irreverent tone, there is much excellent material on the system to be found in each issue. For more information, contact Kurt Martin (514 Gardenia Avenue, Royal Oak, MI 48067; 313-546-4281).

A Day of 1830. Actually, there are to be five days of competition in Avalon Hill's popular multi-player game of railroading, spread over the next several months. Each session will recognize the best player of the day, with an overall winner of the season based upon performance in all the sessions. The brainchild of Ken Whitesell (107 Nursery Road, North Linthicum, MD 21090), it is hoped that this might bring together a regular group for some friendly competition in the Baltimore area. For more information, contact Mr. Whitesell.

The response to Contest #154 was the largest in my decade of overseeing the task. Hundreds of readers "cracked the code"; after tossing out those considered in error (notably, those which did not catch the errant spelling of *Afrika* and the many who did not maintain the punctuation of the paragraph), we were left with some 200+ correct entries and so resorted to the infamous "random drawing". Among the winners, a tip-of-the-hat to Jim Sander, who noted that we had inadvertently used a seventh Avalon Hill game title: *tactics* in the last sentence. The lucky winners, each to receive a credit voucher good for Avalon Hill merchandise, were: James Boileau, Novi, MI; David Bowers, Santa Clara, CA; John Ellsworth, Morris, IL; Tom Huntington, Colorado Springs, CO; Henry Lin, Gainesville, FL; Bill Lindow; Kent, WA; Jim Sander, Buffalo Grove, IL; L.E. Schwertfeger, Kinsley, KS; Michael Watts, Edison, NJ; and George Young, Shelburne, VT.

Arriving at the solution for Contest #155 demanded some logic, and a lot of hard work. The most important clue we offered was that each word contained one letter which was a prime number greater than "13" - meaning each of the four words contained at least one "P", "R" and/or "V". Taking the lowest-valued word (36,480) and dividing by each would have given a manageable number to decipher. Given that each word in the English language has a vowel ("A" and "E" being the most common), further effort with pencil, paper and calculator (dividing by each vowel's numerical value) should have led the puzzler to discern the word "Caesar" (which in fact has three vowels), given that all four words were associated with Avalon Hill. Even though there are obviously other words in the English language that might provide the same product, this latter stipulation should have made the answer obvious for anyone with one of our catalogues in hand. For those who found Contest #155 too tough a task, the correct solution is:

36,480 = CAESAR (4x2x6x20x2x19)
 430,920 = ARNHEM (2x19x15x9x6x14)
 1,225,728 = WARGAME (24x2x19x8x2x14x6)
 5,056,128 = TOBRUK (21x16x3x19x22x12)



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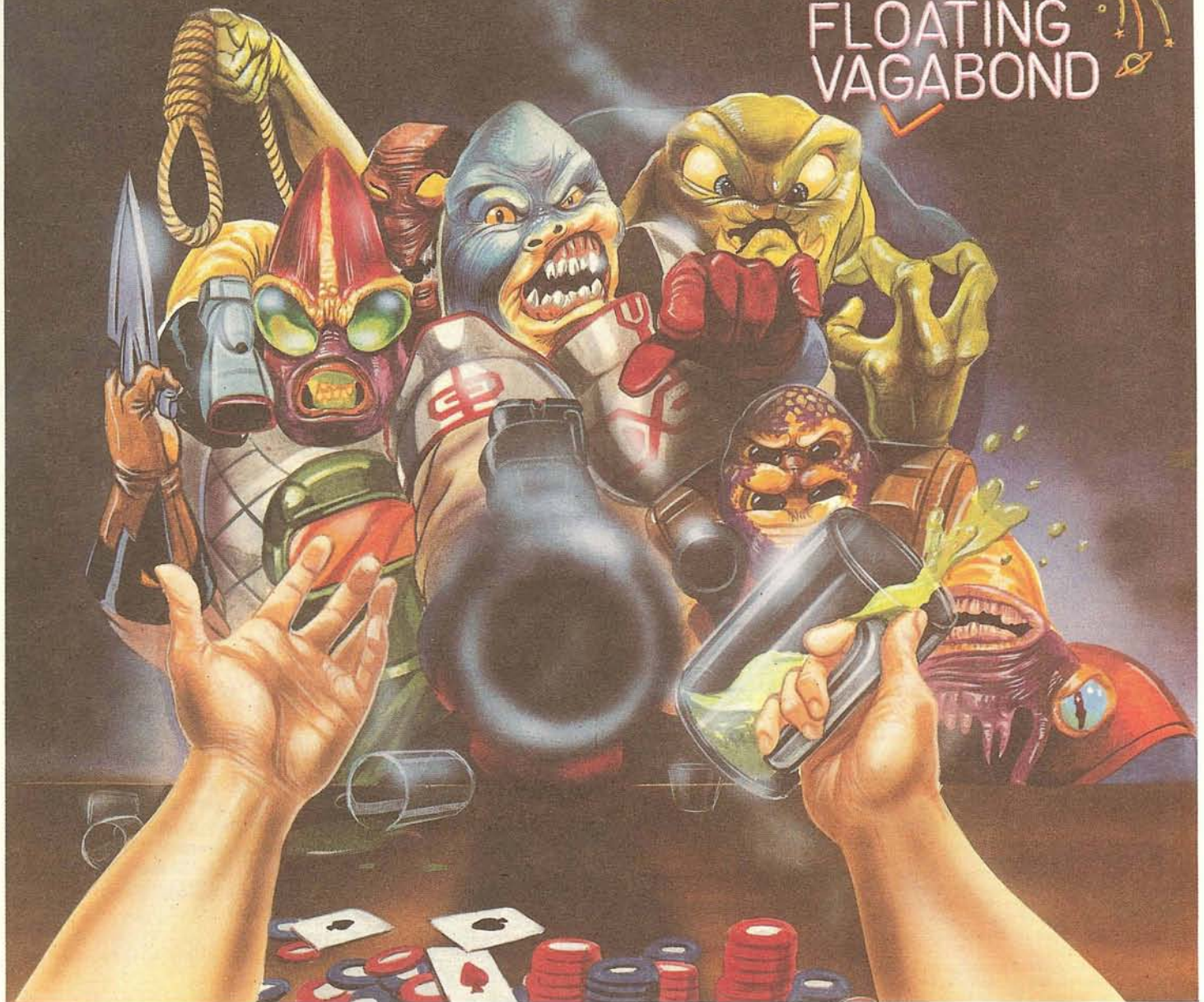


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WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN PLAYING?

Top ten lists are always in vogue—be the subject books, television, shows, movies or even games. The public seems never to tire of seeing how its favorite way of spending their leisure time stacks up against the competition. So, to cater further to your whims (and to satisfy our own curiosity), this is *The GENERAL's* version of the gamer's top ten. From the responses to this form the editors produce the regular column "So That's What You've Been Playing" found elsewhere in this issue.

We aren't asking you to subjectively rate any game. That sort of thing is already done in these pages and elsewhere. Instead, we ask that you merely list the three (or fewer) games which you've spent the most time playing since you received your last issue of *The GENERAL*. With the collation of these responses, we can generate a consensus list of what's being played by our readership. This list can serve both as a guide for us (for coverage in these pages) and others (convention organizers spring instantly to mind). The degree of correlation between this listing, the Best Sellers Lists, and the RBG should prove extremely interesting.

Feel free to list any game of any sort regardless of manufacturer. There will be, of course, a built-in bias to the survey since the readers all play Avalon Hill games to some extent; but it should be no more prevalent than similar projects undertaken by other periodicals with special-interest based circulation. The amount to which this bias affects the final outcome will be left to the individual's own evaluation.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Opponent Wanted

50¢

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

Advanced Squad Leader—ASL, Afrika Korps—AK, Air Force—AF, Anzio—AZ, Blitzkrieg—BL, Britannia—BRIT, Battle Of The Bulge—BB, Bull Run—BR, Circus Maximus—CM, Civilization—CIV, D-Day—DD, Devil's Den—DEV, Diplomacy—DIP, Empires In Arms—EIA, Enemy In Sight—EIS, Firepower—FP, Flat Top—FT, Flight Leader—FL, Gettysburg—GE, Gladiator—GL, Hitler's War—HW, Kremlin—KR, Kingmaker—KM, Knights of the Air—KOTA, The Longest Day—TLD, Luftwaffe—LW, Magic Realm—MR, Merchant of Venus—MOV, Midway—MD, Napoleon's Battles—NB, Naval War—NAV, New World—NW, PanzerArmee Afrika—PAA, Panzerblitz—PB, PanzerGruppe Guderian—PGG, Panzerkrieg—PK, Panzer Leader—PL, Rail Baron—RB, Republic of Rome—ROR, Richthofen's War—RW, The Russian Campaign—TRC, Russian Front—RF, Siege of Jerusalem—SOJ, Stellar Conquest—SC, Squad Leader—SL, Storm Over Arnhem—SOA, Tac Air—TA, Third Reich—3R, Thunder at Cassino—CASS, Titan—TT, Turning Point: Stalingrad—TPS, Up Front—UF, Victory In The Pacific—VITP, War and Peace—W&P, War At Sea—WAS, Waterloo—WAT, Wooden Ships & Iron Men—WSIM.

NAME _____ PHONE _____

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CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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Avalon Hill's Mammoth Game of the Battle for Normandy, 1944

INSTRUCTIONS:

Rate each category by placing a number ranging from 1 through 9 in the appropriate space to the right ("1" equating to excellent; "5", average; "9", terrible). EXCEPTION: Rate items 7a and 7b in terms of minutes necessary to play the game, in ten-minute increments. (Example: If you've found it takes two and a half hours to play the basic scenario of *HITLER'S WAR*, enter "15" for category 7a.) For an explanation of the categories, refer to the AH Philosophy of Vol. 24, No. 5. Enter ratings only for those categories relevant to the game in question. Note that AH's ratings for Complexity, Year of Publication and Type (2P=two player; MP=multi-player; SO=solitaire) have been provided for your information.

1. Overall Value	_____
2. Components	_____
2a. Mapboard	_____
2b. Counters	_____
2c. Rulebook	_____
3. Complexity	_____
3a. Avalon Hill Complexity	8
4. Completeness	_____
5. Playability	_____
5a. Excitement Level	_____
5b. Play Balance	_____
6. Authenticity	_____
7. Game Length	_____
7a. Shortest	_____
7b. Longest	_____
8. Year of Publication	1980
9. Type	2P

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This coupon is valid only for mail order purchases of complete games direct from The Avalon Hill Game Company. Each postage coupon entitles the sender to deduct up to \$1.00 from the postage charges of any order for a complete game, provided the amount deducted does not exceed the total postage charge for that order. Coupons are not valid for parts, magazines, or PBM kit orders. Shipping charges are computed according to instructions found on the current Parts List and pre-paid order forms. Any past GENERAL postage coupons previously offering different values may be used as the equal of this coupon.

Example: Customer A lives in the USA and orders a \$15 game. His postage charge is \$4, which he may pay by sending in four postage coupons and \$15, or two postage coupons and \$17. Customer B lives in Canada and orders the same game. He must pay \$20 in US funds plus three postage coupons, or \$23 if no postage coupons are enclosed with his order.

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\$1.00

CONTEST #156

On Page 26 of this issue, readers will find a word search. As explained there, to enter our 156th contest, simply return a copy of the letter grid with the 76 AH/VG products circled (the first, *AVALONCON*, should be easily found by the sharp-eyed). As in all word-search puzzles, entries may be horizontal or vertical, diagonal and/or backwards. Words may overlap, but in all cases the letters forming the word are in proper order and in a straight line. Entries may be multi-word, in which case the spaces have been omitted (e.g., *SPICESOF-THEWORLD*). Likewise, all punctuation and other standard marks have been omitted, and all ampersand have been spelled out (e.g., *WINPLACEANDSHOW*).

The answer to this contest must be entered on the official entry form (or a reasonable facsimile - a photocopy of Page 26 will serve). Ten winning entries will receive a merchandise credit voucher from The Avalon Hill game Company. To be valid, an entry must include a numerical rating for this issue as a whole and a listing of the three best articles in the judgement of the contestant. The solution to Contest #156 will appear in the next issue, and the list of winners in the following issue.

Issue as a whole _____ (Rate from 1 to 10, with "1" equating excellent and "10" terrible). To be valid for consideration, your contest entry must also include the three best articles, in your view:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

NAME _____

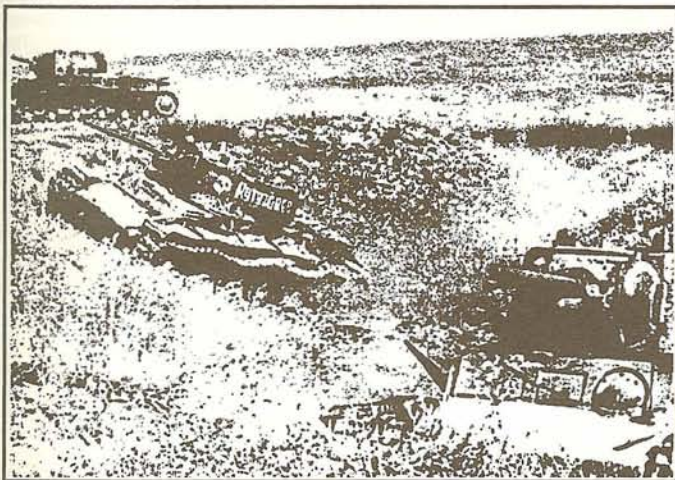
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HILL 253.5



ASL SCENARIO T7



Near PONYRI, RUSSIA, 9 July 1943: Operation *Citadel* had begun, but instead of the desired lightning breakthrough, fighting had taken on the characteristics of World War I trench warfare. In four days of grueling combat, the XLI Panzer Corps had managed to penetrate the defenses of the Soviet 13th Army to a depth of only about five miles. The German corps, now being slowly forced onto the defensive by increasing enemy pressure, needed to secure a strong position on which to anchor its left flank and to free the mobile elements. Such a spot was the commanding height of Hill 253.5 near the village of Ponyri, about 40 miles north of Kursk, where some of the most intense fighting of the campaign was taking place. On 9 July, the Germans stormed and captured Hill 239.8 and, to exploit this success, an assault on 253.5 was ordered.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:

BALANCE:

- ★ One squad (along with all SW/SMC that stack with it) may use HIP in suitable terrain.
- ⚡ All 8-3-8s are Sappers (B28.8).



2

VICTORY CONDITIONS: The Germans win if at game end they Control \geq four Level 3 hexes of Hill 621, provided that no Level 3 hex is occupied by any Good Order Russian MMC and/or Russian AFV with any functioning armament.

TURN RECORD CHART

★ RUSSIAN Sets Up First	1	⚡ 2	3★	4★	5	6	7	8	END
⚡ GERMAN Moves First									

Elements of 307th Rifle Division [ELR: 3] set up south of road Q1-Y10 (see SSR 2): {SAN: 4}

6-2-8	4-4-7	2-2-8	8-1	8-1	8-0	6-12	4-10	2-8	24-1	30-1	6/7/8
2	6	3				2	2				

76L	45L	dr = MF CC: +1/-1	40 factors
2		6	

Elements of Mechanized Brigade enter on Turn 4 along south edge:

6-2-8	8-1	2-8	76L 2/4 ²	76L 2/4 ²	21PP
3		3			25★

Elements of Panzer Division 18 and of Panzerjaeger Battalion 653 [ELR: 4] set up on north of road Q1-Y10: {SAN: 2}

8 ² -3-8	4 ¹ -6-7	10-2	9-2	9-1	8-0	7-0	3-8	24-1	30-1	8
4	8						4	2	2	

75LL 1/5	88LL 8	15PP AAMG 16
2		2

SPECIAL RULES:

1. EC are Moderate, with no wind at start.
2. Russian wire and mines may be placed on/south-of the road Q1-Y10. Russian units in suitable terrain may be set up in foxholes.
3. Russians have MOL capability.
4. Each side receives one module of 80+mm Battalion MTR OBA with Normal Ammunition.

5. Each side receives random Air Support (E7.). Russian aircraft will be 1942 FB (without bombs); German, 1942 Stukas (with bombs). The Russians have a +1 drm to their Air Support Arrival dr.

AFTERMATH: The German formations, decimated and exhausted by five days of incessant fighting, attacked doggedly but didn't have the strength to seize or hold the hill. Indeed, the panzergrenadiers were soon on the defensive as continuous counterattacks forced the commanders to employ their last reserves merely to hold their own positions.

AACHEN'S PALL



ASL SCENARIO T8



AACHEN, GERMANY, 15 October 1944: The American hand had closed about Aachen. But the city fell slowly. Street by street, then house by house, the GIs squeezed out the Germans. Finally, the Wehrmacht headquarters in the Hotel Quillenhof was in sight. The massive hotel structure proved impervious to direct 75mm fire from supporting Shermans. As the GIs launched their first assault, Colonel Corley called on a self-propelled 155 for direct fire support.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:



Only hexrows A-P are playable.

BALANCE:

- ☛ Add one ? counter to the German OB.
- ☆ Exchange the American 9-1 leader for a 9-2.

VICTORY CONDITIONS: The Americans win immediately whenever no *unbroken* German MMC occupies Building 1G6.

TURN RECORD CHART

☛ GERMAN Sets Up First	1	2	3	4	END
☆ AMERICAN Moves First					

Aachen HQ forces [ELR: 3] set up on/north-of hexrow H: {SAN: 5}

2 4-4-7	10-2	6+1	3 7-16
5			2

Elements of 3rd Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment [ELR: 4] set up on/south-of hexrow J (see SSR 2): {SAN: 3}

1 6-6-6	9-1	8-0	2 4-10	2 X11 8-4	1 AP6-CE-+1 155 No IF-CS 9	28 T5 20PP
9				2		

SPECIAL RULES:

1. EC are Moderate, with no wind at start.
2. The American truck serves as the Ammo Vehicle (E10.) for the M12. Neither U.S. vehicle may be set up in building, woods or in Bypass.

AFTERMATH: The GIs moved to the attack through a limited smoke screen. The Americans were almost in possession of the hotel when the Germans launched a final counterattack. The Americans fell back in the face of this new threat. It would be three more days before the hotel would be firmly in the GIs' grasp. The keystone of Aachen's bitter defense fell as smoke collected in the heated air above.