

GENERAL

★ AVALON HILL

Volume 28, Number 2



GUNG HO!

The 9th ASL Module

Also: B-17, Queen of the Skies

AvalonCon '92 Report

Republic of Rome

★ ★ The AVALON HILL GENERAL

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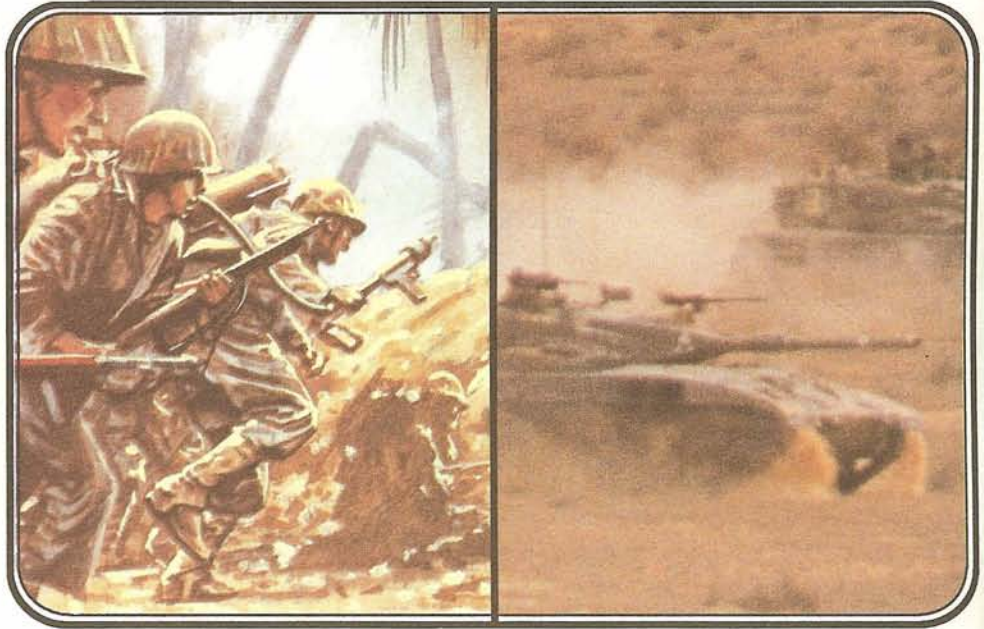
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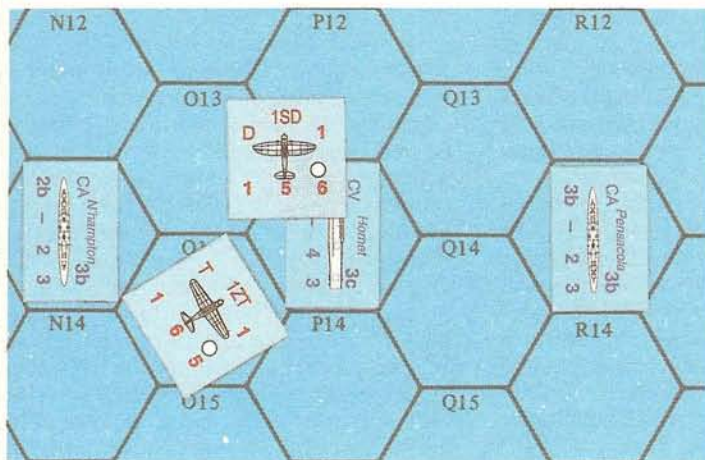
GUADALCANAL

August 7, 1942:

It is scarcely two months since the American victory at Midway, and "Operation Watchtower" begins with the landing of the United States' First Marine Division to seize the newly-constructed Japanese airstrip on the island of Guadalcanal. Upon its capture, the airfield was re-named "Henderson Field", and its flyers would win fame as the "Cactus Air Force".

But the Japanese command at Rabaul was not about to accept the American presence on Guadalcanal, and responded with a vigorous retaliatory strategy. The weeks to come would see the first full-on clash of arms between the great land, air and naval forces vying for domination of the eastern hemisphere.

The outcome of that struggle will determine the future course of the war in the Pacific, but this time there is a difference; this time *you* are in command!



On the Battleboard, Japanese "Val" dive-bombers and "Kate" torpedo-bombers go in to attack the American aircraft carriers.

For two players; recommended for ages 12 years and up. Expanding on the design used in our **MIDWAY** game, **GUADALCANAL** uses many of the same basic concepts. Ownership of the **MIDWAY** game is not required to play **GUADALCANAL**.

GUADALCANAL is available now for \$35.00 from The Avalon Hill Game Company (4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214). Please add \$5.00 for shipping and handling (Canadian/Mexican customers, \$10.00; overseas orders, \$15.00). Maryland residents add 5% state sales tax.

NOTE: This *all-new* 1992 edition of **GUADALCANAL** is the second version of this title published by the Avalon Hill Game Company since the first was introduced in 1966.



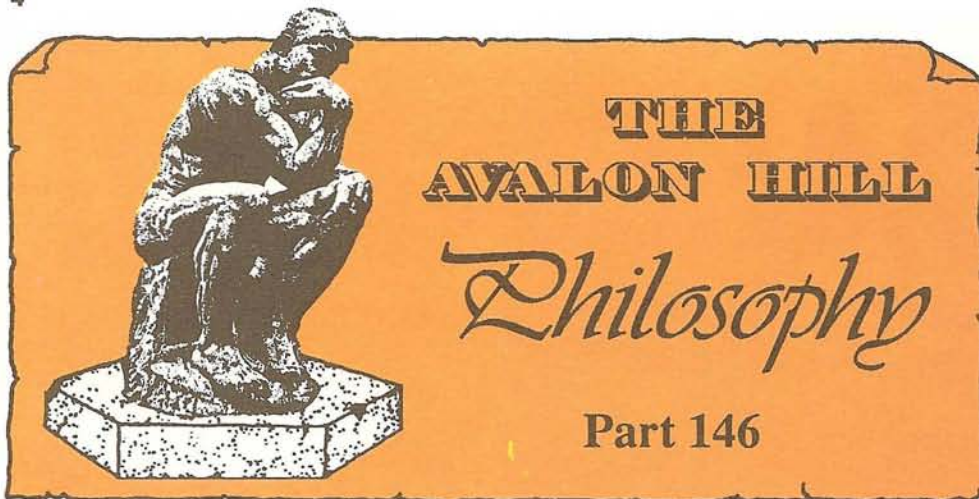
On the Allied Search Board, your Allied Task Force has incomplete information about two possible sightings. Which is the real Japanese Task Force? A wrong guess could send your air strike on a wild goose chase and leave you open to enemy attack.

The American History Series

Since 1958, The Avalon Hill Game Company has been producing strategy games for adults. Although we publish over 200 titles, the company is probably best known for its fine line of historical strategy games. Over the years, the popularity of these games, rising from their ability to take history from books and bring it vividly to life has brought about the formation of an entire hobby — "Wargaming". Although very popular with hobbyists, these types of games are known to others only for their often esoteric subjects, long playing times and lengthy and detailed rulebooks.

The purpose of the American History Series, approved and authenticated by the Smithsonian Institution, is to introduce newcomers to this fascinating hobby through strategy games which are smaller, simpler, fast-paced and yet still challenging, and which cover well-known episodes in United States' history. In addition to a colorful mapboard and playing pieces, each title in the series contains a short (two-page) "Basic Game" to allow non-hobbyists to quickly master the game system. A lengthy "Battle Manual" in each game provides a detailed, illustrated account of the historical action, plus additional rules for those players wishing a more detailed and complex version of the game.





Greetings, and welcome to this second issue for the 28th Volume Year of The *GENERAL*. Rex Martin has been writing this column so well for so long that it will no doubt seem strange to hear another voice coming from this soapbox. It will be no less strange to me, I assure you.

First, to all those fellow hobbyists whom I've had the good fortune to know for years as friends or only for an afternoon as opponents in a tournament, my sincere thanks for all that I have learned and the thousands of hours of entertainment we've enjoyed together. I'll try not to disappoint you. To those of you whose acquaintance I have not yet had the pleasure to make, the following is a brief run-down on my background in gaming before coming to the editorship of this magazine.

When I was sixteen I bought my very first wargame; *PANZERBLITZ*. (Well; not counting the old *Dogfight* game from Milton Bradley's *American Heritage Series*.) I've always been visually oriented, and the box art for *PANZERBLITZ* was and remains one of the best graphics ever put on a wargame. Besides, "*The World At War*" had just made it across the pond to American television, and I'd been building the old Bandai plastic kits of German AFV's like there was no tomorrow (sadly for those kits, that turned out to be true).

It took me three days to sort out the concepts presented in those rules, but I did finally learn *PANZERBLITZ*, and played it until the counters wore out, and couldn't wait for more. I have an uncle who was a Civil War buff at the time, so in a crafty attempt to recruit him as an opponent, my next purchase was *GETTYSBURG* (1964 edition, with a "friendly" square grid perfect for seducing folks who thought those funny little hexagons looked weird). I was on a roll. I'd figured out how to play *PANZERBLITZ*; how tough could this be?

I spent the next three days trying to figure out what the heck a "Zone of Control" was.

Well, I finally did figure it out; but imagine my surprise at learning that, not only was there a huge number of wargames out there (this was 1974, and yes, three dozen or so titles from a handful of publishers combined was, indeed, "huge"), but that almost all of them used those "Zone of

Control" thingies! The next shock was one which I'm pretty sure most of you have shared: There were all these terrific games out there, and nobody I knew cared!

In 1974 I moved to California, and my whole life changed. Part of that change came when, after class, I asked two new friends: "So; are you guys into wargames?" (It was the Seventies; we said things like "into" a lot.) The first guy said "No", but good old Kevin McCormack jumped up off the stage (we were theatre students) with a "Yeah, 'sure am; we play on a sand table!" Huh?

So, in addition to being ushered (read: "thrown bodily") into miniatures gaming, I found myself in weekly marathons of *AFRIKA KORPS*. But I wasn't complaining.

Anyway, through Kevin I met John, Ed and George Kettler, the three brothers who owned the sand table — and who, incidentally, have forgotten more about military history than most people ever learn. The Kettlers introduced me to Jim Murphy, who introduced me to... well, you know how it goes. At this point, your stories and mine are probably pretty much the same.

And that's basically the pattern my experience with gaming has followed; I've sort of come into this hobby and this industry through the back door. From an interest in comics I got into graphic arts; as a graphic artist I worked in financial printing for a while, then went on to do maps for several science fiction novels and anthologies; from doing maps I was invited to write for those anthologies; along with writing for those anthologies I put together a couple of expansion kits for various game companies (one of which, for *UP FRONT*, was actually published), which brought me into professional contact with Don Greenwood.

Then, last summer, my wife's company offered her a promotion and transfer to the East Coast; as a free-lance writer, I can live anywhere, and this was a position she'd been working toward for five years. The same day we decided that my wife would accept her transfer, I received in the mail Volume 27, Issue Number 2 of The *GENERAL* with its announcement that Avalon Hill was looking for a new editor. Maybe not fate, but certainly synchronicity.

Since Spring, I've been slowly but surely learning the ropes of producing The *GEN-*

ERAL here at the Hill. Maybe not all that surely, but for sure pretty slowly. I've asked Rex Martin and Don Greenwood some questions that would have brought tears to the eyes of less patient men, although they're both far too gracious to admit it.

One of my prime concerns has been what I would talk about in this first column. My new colleagues have suggested that, after introducing myself, the readership might want to know what my personal tastes are regarding the hobby in general, and what new directions I plan for this magazine, if any; fair enough.

As to my tastes, I like just about everything. The only games that don't much interest me are sports games, because frankly, I'd rather *play* baseball or football or tennis than watch them on television or game them on a board (although I very much enjoy *WIN, PLACE & SHOW*, because the real strategy in the game lies in the betting, not the racing). My game shelves at home contain almost an *embarás de richesse* of titles, roughly 90% of which have actually been opened, punched out and played. The shelves are sorted by genre or by historical period, by theatre, subject and scale, and there are a *lot* of shelves.

In fact, there are very few subjects with games on them which do *not* interest me, although I admit a preference for grand strategy and small unit tactics. The in-between operational-level stuff tends not to hold my interest, mainly because such conflicts are historically forgone conclusions. If, for instance, the Germans' Ardennes Offensive had succeeded, does anyone seriously believe the Allies would have withdrawn their demand for an unconditional surrender? In fact, the end of the war would simply have been delayed, with the Soviets having occupied that much more of western Germany. An interesting proposition to be sure, but outside the scope of games on the Battle of the Bulge, thus out of my control as a player of those games, and so not really of interest to me.

My prejudices? I could lie and say "None", but I am not about to insult the intelligence of people smart enough to be in this hobby. My greatest aggravation remains the witless elitism of small but vocal factions of the gaming hobby who, rather than getting more people from outside the hobby to join in the overall fun, prefer to rail against everybody else who's not playing *their* favorite type of game, as if those people with gaming interests different from their own are drawing off resources which could be better spent on their particular pet interest.

Whatever my personal favorite game may be, my opinion on the relative value of *types* of games is this: No one group in our hobby has a corner on the "best game", and thus nobody has a right to look down on other gamers because they don't play "real games".

In fact, the very phrase "real game" is a contradiction in terms. This is a *hobby*, folks.

Continued on Page 56

FLASHPOINT: GOLAN

The Middle East is home to some of the largest, most heavily-armed and politically influential military forces on the planet. It is also a seething mass of national, religious and ethnic animosities that have repeatedly set the nations that control those armed forces on collision courses. These factors make the region a likely site for military conflicts in the near future; military conflicts which can erupt with little or no warning, perhaps dragging allied nations into the conflict with them on a scale of cascading aggression not seen since the beginning of the First World War; in threat analysis terms, a "flashpoint".

FLASHPOINT: GOLAN allows you to simulate the course of the most likely of these hypothetical conflicts: A Fifth Arab-Israeli War in the area bounded by the strategic Golan Heights and the Jordan River Valley on Israel's northern and eastern borders. The parameters of the conflict are determined by a Scenario Generation System in a random yet logical fashion. Victory conditions, definition of the aggressor in a given conflict, the support of allied nations, the actions of the United Nations and the likelihood of superpower intervention are all variable from game to game. This system provides **FLASHPOINT: GOLAN** with a tremendous replay value, since a scenario will rarely start under the same conditions from one playing to the next.

Five Battle Scenarios (playable in one to three hours) serve as an introduction to the game system, while two conventional, set-piece Campaign Scenarios lay out the parameters of major conflicts between Israel, Syria and Jordan.

The Game System

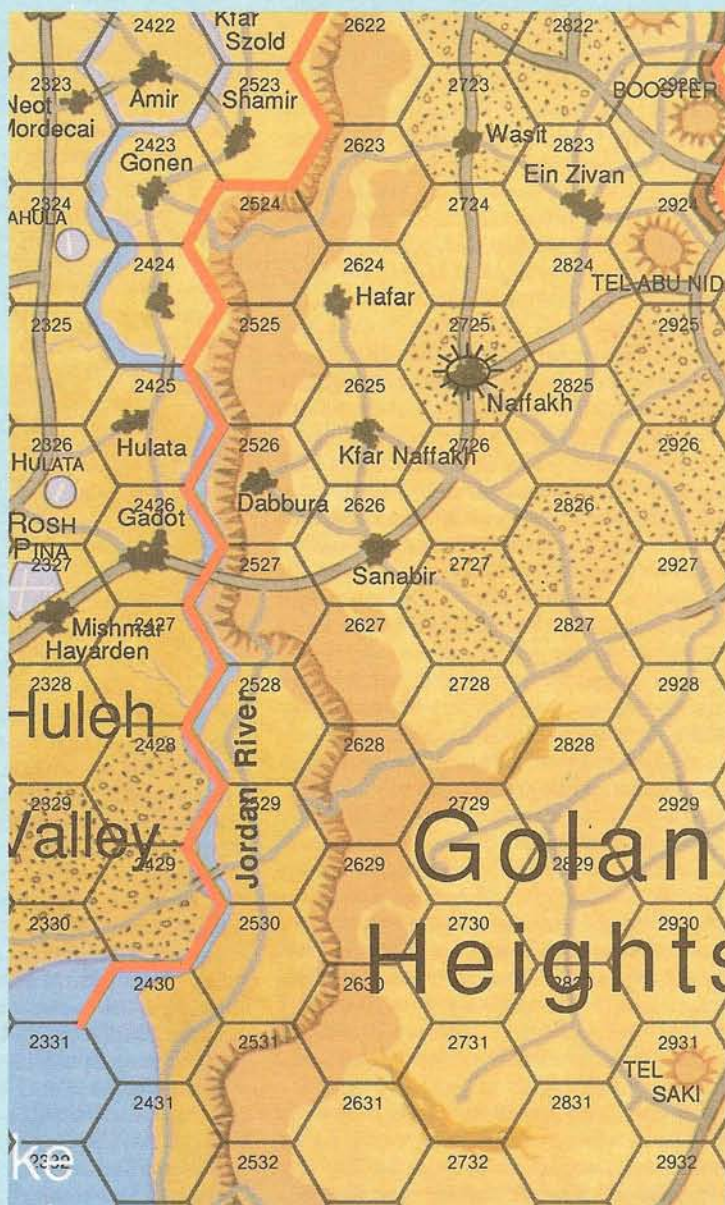
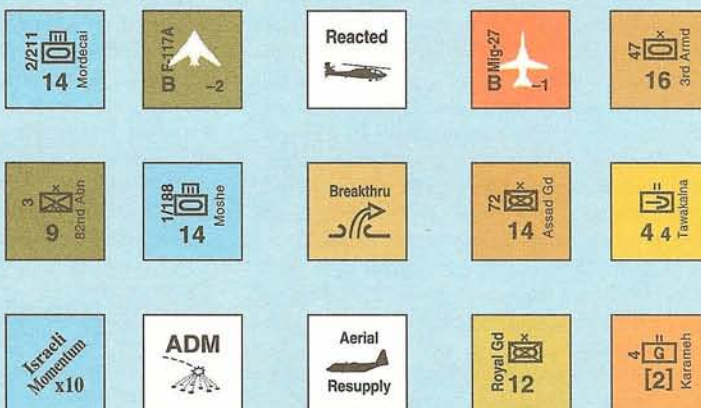
FLASHPOINT: GOLAN features an interactive system of play whereby enemy moves can be detected and reacted to immediately with artillery, helicopters, air strikes, tactical ballistic missiles or electronic jamming. The projection of long-range firepower deep into the enemy's rear areas is the key to victory, pinning and disorganizing his forces *before* they can come into direct contact with friendly troops. Headquarters play a crucial role by providing vital combat support and logistical assets to the front-line combat units. The importance of retaining the initiative is represented by the concept of *Momentum*, which shows how an aggressively prosecuted offensive increasingly disrupts the enemy's plans, and therefore accelerates the relative tempo of friendly operations.

FLASHPOINT: GOLAN is now available for \$35.00 from your favorite game store or from The Avalon Hill Game Company (4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214). If ordering direct, please add \$5.00 to cover shipping and handling (\$10.00 for Canadian and Mexican orders; \$15.00 overseas). Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.

Avalon Hill
and
Victory Games



We Make
History



THE MEN ON THE BOX

“From The Archives”

By Paul E. Ison, USMC (Ret.)

A combat photographer was with L Company one morning on Okinawa after all the units had fought their way through some heavily contested terrain. We had taken a pillbox made of reinforced concrete, and in order to destroy it we decided to use four satchel charges of TNT, a total of ninety-six pounds. We tied primer cord around all the charges so they would all go off simultaneously. The combat photographer was standing up and pointing his camera in the direction of the pillbox when I gave order to take cover. He did not take cover because he wanted to make sure he got a good picture; he got more than he expected.

The TNT charges went off with a loud crash, knocking the photographer down and sending his camera flying up into the air. It landed near him, and he moaned, “Oh, no. I guess my camera is broken.” But he was wrong; not only was the camera not broken, but it had kept taking pictures while it was up in the air.

Later, those same pictures were used in Marine Corps training films. I am told by young Marines training today that they are *still* being used. (My son, who served in the Marine Corps from 1959-1963, was the first to tell me; the pillbox, incidentally, was completely destroyed.)

On the dark, rainy night of May 9, 1945, my squad and some other Marines at Battalion Headquarters were in an Okinawan burial tomb. Today one would not think that anyone would sleep in a burial tomb after removing the dead; but when it is raining, one will try to sleep in a dry place, no matter where.

We were talking and laughing at some kind of jokes. The Japanese were firing a 150mm gun and the shells were exploding nearby. One Marine had put a candle in a human skull, and as a shell exploded, it would shake the walls and floor of the tomb; the candle in the skull would flicker and it looked like the eye sockets in the skull were moving.

We all knew that death was everywhere around us. Lieutenant Ellington came to the door of the tomb and said, “Ison, get up early in the morning and take your squad up on the line. Captain Smith has a job for you.”

Early the next morning, May 10, 1945, we had a cold breakfast of C-rations and went to the ammunition dump to get our satchel charges of TNT, one per man. When we got to the ammo dump, I told the sergeant in charge of the ammunition who I was and what I would need. The sergeant said, “I’ve already sent a working party up to the front line with all the TNT charges they will need.” (Note: That damn sergeant sure gave me bum dope. I never did like him after that.)

Knowing that our team could move up to the front faster without carrying any extra weight, we decided to move out and use the TNT that was supposed to be waiting for us at the front. On the way up we came to a draw between two hills, later to be known as “Death Valley”.

Some of our men in the assault platoon were on the other side of Death Valley, and one of them called out: “Send one man at a time across this draw.” By the sound of enemy machine gun fire and “incoming mail” (artillery), I knew he was right, and sent my Marines across individually. I noticed a combat photographer on the other side trying to take pictures; his name was Private Bob Bailey. When I made my dash across I ran past his foxhole, and from the corner of my right eye I saw his camera come up and take my picture.

I ran a short distance, hit the deck and fell into a foxhole. Two good buddies, Steve Evans and Ernest Hawer of Davenport, Iowa, said: “Hey, Ison, that guy took your picture as you went past.” I answered: “Well, I’ll never live to see it.”

On my right, Death Valley ran east and west; the front was to the south, and amid bursting shells we made our dash below the hill south of Death Valley. In so doing, we had to take cover in any place we could find, which happened to be at a communication post. Enemy fire had cut the communication wire, and I saw a young Marine make a dash across Death Valley to find the break. He disappeared into that exploding hell of smoke and the hot steel of enemy shells, his fellow Marines yelling for him to stop and come back. I do not know if that brave Marine made it or not, as things were happening so fast, but I sure hope he did.

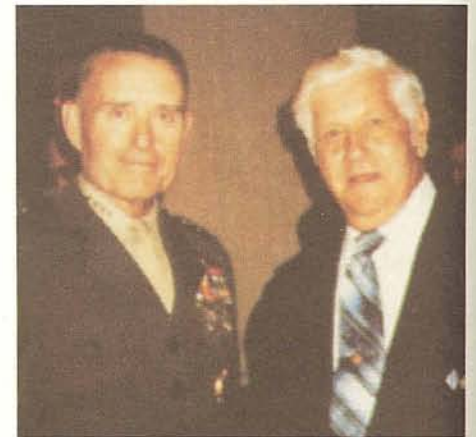
After we reached the front and found L Company, Captain Smith told me what I had to do. I asked if L Company had received the TNT that had been sent up. He looked at me very surprised and said, “No.” As Captain Smith was very busy, I did not say anything about the NCO at the ammunition dump. I just ran down the hill to where my three men were and said, “Come on, fellows, we have to go back to the ammo dump and get our TNT.” Again we had to cross Death Valley. We were very angry about this deal, thinking what we were going to say to that sergeant at the dump. But when we got there another NCO was in charge, so being in a hurry to do our job, we just grabbed our satchel charges and headed off to *again* cross Death Valley.

How we made it, I will never know. All of this was accomplished under intense enemy fire, and reports showed that we suffered one hundred and twenty five casualties in one 8-hour period.

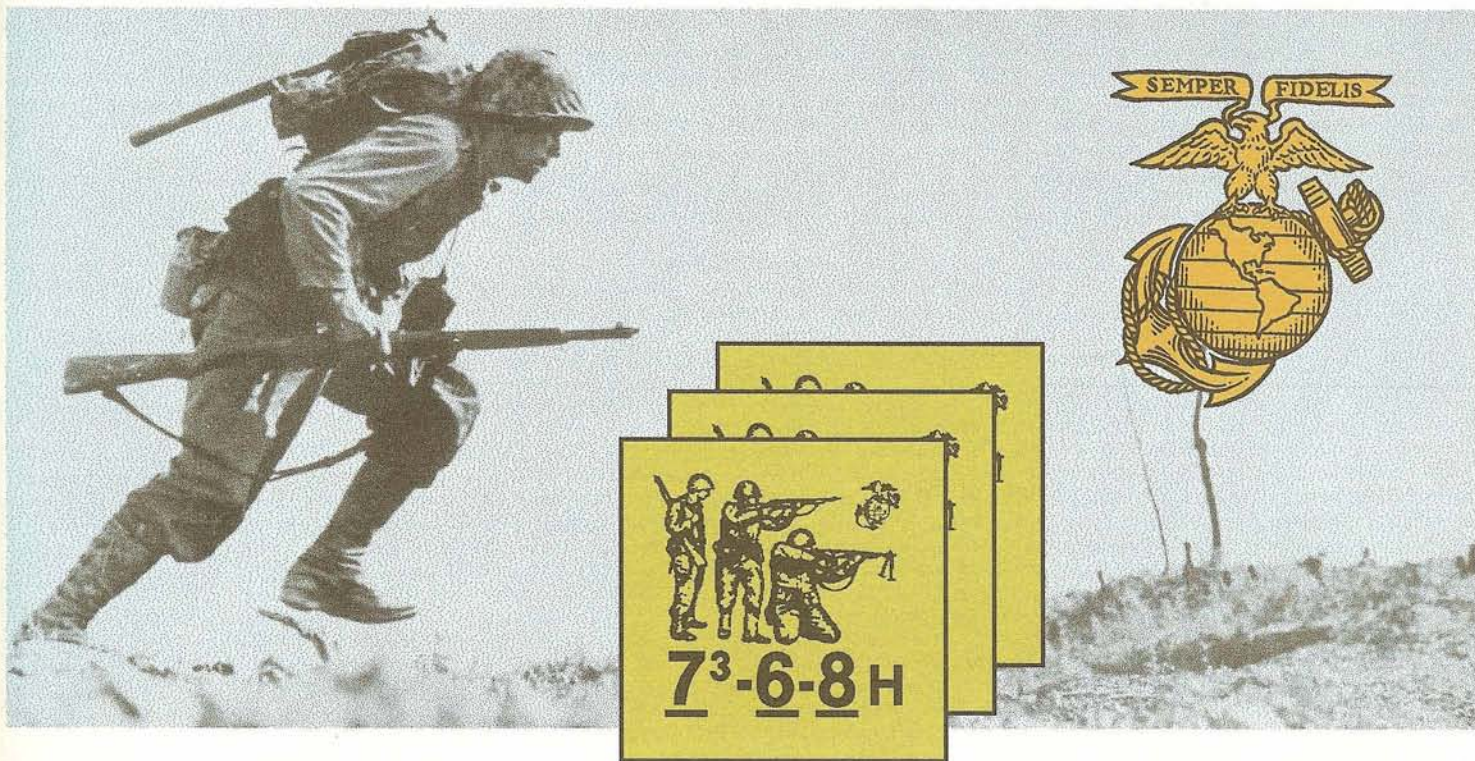
Today I am retired and living out the Autumn of my life in Fort Myers, Florida. I am a member of the Marine Corps League, Lee County Detachment, the Marine Corps Historical Foundation, a life member of the Sea Bee Veterans of America (Island X-8), and an active member of the American Historical Foundation. I am also a World War II historian and do a little writing for our Marine Corps League News Magazine, Lee County.

I hope you have enjoyed reading my story as much as I have enjoyed writing it.

Semper Fidelis,
Paul E. Ison



The above photos are reproduced with the kind permission of Mr. Paul Ison. Top to Bottom, they are: Pvt. Bob Bailey's photo of Pfc. Ison at Death Valley, Okinawa, May 10, 1945; Mr. Ison today, with Gen. Mundy, Commandant of the Corp; A young Marine at the Marine Corps School of Infantry, Camp Pendleton, California, who "knows 'art' when he sees it!" Welcoming sign at the United States Marine Corps' School of Infantry, Camp Pendleton, California. Mr. Ison is standing in the foreground.



SEMPER FI!

The United States Marine Corps in ASL

By Steven C. Swann

It sounded so easy. Just go to my local library, look up the Table of Organization (T/O) for a US Marine Rifle Company during World War II, and convert that into ASL equivalents. After performing this chore many times in the past for my previous articles, I believed that it would be a fairly routine assignment. I don't know what I was thinking of . . . Just like Boot Camp, it turned out to be anything but "easy".

First problem: The US Marine Corps (hereafter, "USMC" or "the Corps") changed the T/O of its divisions *every* year from 1942 through 1945. To varying degrees, each such change affected every level of the unit — right down to the rifle company. Second: During 1942 and 1943 the Marines had one standard Line Rifle Company OB, two types of Raider (Commando) Rifle Companies and a Marine Parachute Rifle Company. Even with all of this variation, there were also special companies composed of elements of pre-war Marine Defense Battalions and Scout-Sniper units and organized in the field for specific tasks. All this meant that I had to research nine different types of infantry companies and convert *all* of them into ASL counters to adequately reflect the USMC.

It should be mentioned that the information I gathered about the US Marines has been (or will be) presented in two different articles. This article, *Semper Fi!*, will concern itself only with the standard Marine Divisions (MarDivs) that were established from 1942 to 1945. Beginning

in the 1930s and continuing throughout the war, the Marine Corps experimented with several different types of rifle companies. The T/Os described in this article will include only company organizations that actually saw combat service during World War II. These would include the standard rifle and heavy weapons companies, and the 1945 assault platoon. ("First to Fight!" will be published in the *1993 ASL Annual* and will cover the Defense Battalions and other special Marine units.)

FIREPOWER

The ASL system does not use a SMC to represent every officer and senior NCO that is listed in a T/O. If so, there would be a large number of SMC cluttering up our cardboard battlefields. Instead, the SMC that are shown on a scenario's "Order of Battle" (OB) represent the extraordinary officers and NCOs that appear on the battlefield and who perform above and beyond the normal call of duty. The training that every Marine rifleman received upon induction always included the basics of military leadership. American Marines were taught, and expected, to take command in any situation where they found themselves to be the senior man present. Because of the high proportion of officer casualties that occurred in the Pacific war, it was not at all unusual to find platoons led by corporals and companies led by sergeants. To reflect this leadership ability by all ranks of the Corps, the Leader-

ship Generation Number (LG#) for the Marines has been set at "4.5", a considerable improvement over the usual American value. Therefore, the ASL leaders shown on the Marine OBs are representative of exceptional leaders and not of numerical quantity.

There are many men in any military organization or unit who are not front-line combat personnel. Even on a company level, there are some whose jobs do not normally require their presence on the firing line (except under unusual and dire circumstances). Except by SSR, all enlisted personnel of a unit will not be represented by MMC. Personnel that will not be shown in counter form would include the clerks, supply and maintenance personnel, vehicle drivers (inherent in vehicle counter), stretcher bearers and medical corpsmen, company and platoon communication runners, and US Navy personnel. After 1942, all Marine rifle squads are represented by 6-6-8 and 7-6-8 squad counters, while Marine support troops (who were not issued BARs) will be represented by a 4-5-8 squad MMC and respective half-squad counters.

Squad firepower for the Marines was a thorny problem for the ASL design team. In 1942, a USMC rifle platoon had four squads, of which three were nine-man rifle squads and the fourth an eight-man BAR squad. The rifle squads were equipped with one BAR and eight M1903 bolt-action rifles. Equating this to the ASL standard that had already been developed

ACROSS THE WAVES

What can one say? *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*, which began as simply an infantry-oriented tactical wargame, has grown to be more than most of us ever expected. With the inclusion of Sections 11-18 of Chapter G (*GUNG HO!*), the system now encompasses all aspects of World War II land combat. In fact, here in the Dakotas, the section on Landing Craft (G12) alone has caused several *ASL* fans to turn into sea-sick novices and back away from the water. Rather than lose any more troops to this strange phobia, perhaps I should take a beginner's look at these unique vehicles. To make this trip palatable and painless as possible, let's board an LCVP (Note #3 on Page H110) and ride along with a bunch of Marine Scouts.

Looking down into the LCVP, I see that it appears to be armored — but not heavily. Still, it is designed well enough that the passengers can be BU (G12.123) and protected from small-arms fire. Unfortunately, this is not so for the Coast Guard crew which must be CE in order to pilot the craft and man the AA as it approaches the enemy shore. The Scouts are very glad that the armor plate was added after June of '43. And that two 4FP MMGs are mounted, providing some chance to inflict damage on the Japanese during the run-in.

My fellow passengers are already aboard awaiting the "land-lubber". Since the LCVP's PP (39) is underlined (signifying a bow ramp), there are a couple of jeeps (15 PP each) with their HS (zero PP cost, since they are passengers — G12.121). Too, there is a 3-4-8 (five PP) carrying a dm MMG (two PP) and the platoon leader, a 9-1 SMC (one PP). The Marines gladly make room for me, since there is some to spare (one PP).

Casting off from the APA (troop transport), the LC starts its run-in to the shore, clipping along at five hexes per turn (one MP per hex entered). As we pass the Line of Departure, I take a quick peek over the side . . . and wish I hadn't. Splashes caused by enemy artillery shells are all around us and the high whine of passing bullets doesn't help my nervousness at all. As our craft gets closer to the shore, the enemy fire finds the range; we are being peppered by a hidden Japanese HMG. Taking a hit in the cockpit (1MC), the crew falters and are Stunned (G12.111) as the helmsman falls wounded, momentarily losing control of the boat and allowing it to shift direction. We also lose speed until another crewman grabs the wheel and fights to re-establish our course.

Because we've lost some time, we are now far behind the other LCs in our wave and appear to have become an excellent target for a Japanese gun firing from a bunker. With a loud *CLANG*, I know that something has hit us, registering a TK DR of one less than the necessary TK value. This 1944 model LCVP must have fairly good flotation chambers since I see that it has a Damage Point rating of "3" (on the back side of the counter). After suffering that one DP (12.62), we all start to pray aloud that any other hits are only near-misses. Tearing my eyes away from the hole in the hull, I suddenly notice that the crew and passengers are all taking the MC caused by the collateral attack. Our crew must have been toughened by the first one and passes with ease. But the HS riding in the first jeep fails and is "Casualty Reduced" (12.13). That Japanese TK DR was a devastating blow to the Scouts, as it was just enough to hit the second jeep with a "4", immobilizing it. Standing next to the jeep was the 9-1 Lieutenant, who fails his MC also but is lucky that it is just a minor wound. In true "John Wayne" fashion, he is able (though slowed) to continue.

Glory be! Finally we approach the shore and the surviving Marines prepare to disembark. Pulling the dead from the lead jeep, the HS from the immobilized one climbs in and readies itself. I'm simply grateful that it was the rearmost jeep that was immobilized by that hit, for had it been the front one both would have had to be left behind on the LCVP (12.151 and 12.42). The Guardsman pilot shouts that we are nearing shallow water. As we enter each shallow water hex, the helmsman pulls out his dice and rolls to determine if he has run Aground (12.21). The first is safely passed on this Slightly Sloped Beach (G13.4), leaving only two to go.

Nervously we all watch him. He rolls a second time, and again passes through the shallows safely. Who knows; maybe we can reach this beach without getting wet after all! Entering the third (and last) hex of the water, that "+2" DRM to the left of the LCVP's MP finally catches up and we run aground just a few feet from the dry sand. Seeing a Japanese gun on a hillside traversing in our direction, the "bow hook" (ramp operator) lets go the ramp and we jump out. Splashing about in the water with the LCVP has cost us 25% of our MF/MP, but at least we are all out of that damn big target. Just in time, too, as an enemy artillery round turns it into scrap. Ah, maybe it will provide some cover (12.83) for the next assault wave.

Having found the biggest grain of sand on the beach to hide behind, I notice that the Coast Guard crew was able to survive that last, devastating blow and are milling about in the water as if they don't know what to do. No wonder, thinks I, since their morale instantly drops to a "6" (12.112) as soon as they are out of their element. So long as they can avoid combat, they should be safe since they are only worth 1VP (12.114) unless captured, which won't happen when fighting these maniacal Japanese. I shout that they should find a spare MG abandoned by the Marines, since they can operate that and could at least contribute to the fight. Hell, they could even Scrounge (12.83) one of the LCVP's MMGs.

That Scout jeep must have been water-proofed (G13.4221), as it cruises past me paying only one MP for wading (instead of the usual 2MP). Even as I watch, the MG-toting HS advances into the jungle, faithfully following the wounded leader. Finding a nearby crater (easy to do after the naval bombardment of the shore), I settle back to study some of the approaches used by other LCs in the second wave. After all, I am just an observer.

The next wave consists of two LCM(3) loaded with a Sherman tank each, and six more LCVPs bring in infantry reinforcements. But, having found a gap in our vaunted air cover, two Japanese FB drop down and make straight for the approaching boats. Passing its TC (a fairly easy thing to do with a vehicle moving across open water), the first elects to attack the LC as an armored vehicle (12.66) and drops its single bomb, achieving a Near Miss for a hull hit with halved FP. Taking three DP, the LCM continues to chug along. The second FB must be piloted by an ace, since he achieves a CH (12.679) on the other LCM, sending it and all its passengers to Davy Jones' Locker with no survivors (it was in deep water still).

Coming around for another pass, the first pilot decides to make a strafing run on an LCVP, attacking it as though it were an unarmored vehicle due to its open top (12.61). Rolling an "8", the Japanese attack doesn't harm the LC itself, but does force all of its passengers to undergo a collateral attack. They all pass with ease, bolstered by the fact that our own fly-fly boys finally roar down to get the enemy planes off our back.

But oh, what a wily foe this Japanese commander is! Another American LCVP has just blundered into an A-B (anti-boat) Minefield (G14.53). Making an Availability dr, the mine attacks the hapless LC on the 36FP column, using the ★ Vehicle line as though it were unarmored. A tremendous explosion (DR of "7") causes six DP to the LCVP. Good fortune favors us today, and since A-B Mines can be placed only in shallow water, allows a survival DR for all its PRC. The third LCVP is obviously handled by an expert as the helmsman, cursing loudly and declaring he'll never play again if the dice go cold, pilots it through the three Aground TC and, altering course slightly, steers it from the hexspine to a hexside in its VCA for a perfect Beaching (12.3). However, one LCVP has fallen behind the others and is making only four hexes per turn now, with every Japanese gun turned on it; I'll bet that it is manned by an inexperienced crew (12.113).

I just realized something significant! Most everything I've seen today has a corresponding rule in Chapter D. These LC have run Aground (Bog), been blown up by A-B mines (A-T mines), suffered air attacks, moved forward, been loaded and unloaded, and had their crews survive the destruction in shallow water. I guess that means that using an LC is pretty much the same as transporting our boys in trucks or halftracks. This new way of war doesn't look all that complicated now.

Oh, I know that there are many details we've not experienced in today's assault; but then, when does one ever see *all* the rules applied in a single scenario? This is just a small action, not like going through *Hell or High Water* (ASL #73) with 11 LCVPs or hitting the *Bloody Red Beach* (ASL #74) with 19 LVT and four LCM. They are a bit much for one's first time at the ocean front. In fact, given what I've seen on this outing, I've decided upon a training run for would-be commanders to get their feet wet:

Take Overlay F from the old *G.I. gamette* (a true fan throws nothing away) and place it in the middle of one of the *Ocean* overlays from *GUNG HO!* The island is named "Siroi" and is part of the Green Islands group, has Slightly Sloped beaches, and is covered with Light Jungle. Surf is NA, and there is a Mild Breeze from the NW. Now get yourself two LCVP, 4.5 British 4-5-8 squads, loaded with two LMGs and led by an 8-1 SMC. On the island, have your opponent set up HIP 2.5 Japanese 4-4-8s, one 50mm MTR, a MMG with its 2-2-8 crew, all commanded by a single 8-0 leader. Now, Sergeant, clear that island of unbroken enemy troops in five turns or less. [*Siroi, an unimportant dot in the vast Pacific, was actually taken by elements of the 37th Battalion, 3rd New Zealand Infantry Division on the morning of 17 February, 1944 against the stiff resistance put up by its small, isolated Japanese garrison.*]

Making a few practice assaults on this island should give you all the basics. These sessions will cover the movement, running aground, non-ordnance direct fire and ordnance indirect fire, and unloading of Landing Craft. Switch sides and play through this training scenario several times. Once you get the basic rules down, you might start adding other elements (surf, heavy guns, fortifications, reefs, etc.) to the action. In fact, this practice scenario might be more fun than you can imagine, and could grow into an exciting scenario of endless variety. Upgrade the forces involved, remembering to increase the capabilities of the combatants evenly to keep it in balance. No reason to limit the battle to just the Japanese and New Zealanders either; after all, every army practiced for assault landings and beach defense. You might even wish to substitute *SL* Overlay A, G, H or I for new challenges.

But, that's all the time I've got for this today. The Marines are pushing into the jungle in force now, making for the hill that is their objective, and I need to get moving so I can watch how they deal with the cave complexes that lie ahead. After all, I'm just the observer. You boys can get your sea-legs now, I suspect. Maybe we'll get a chance to ride together again; you drive next time.

Hey, Gunny, wait for me!

for other nationalities provides a FP of "4". The BAR squad had two BAR gunners and six M1903 riflemen, providing slightly more firepower with the extra BAR even while losing a rifleman. The extra BAR (LMG) would boost the FP to "5" for a BAR squad. These two squad types are given fair representation by the use of a 4-5-8 MMC and a 5-5-8 MMC for the 1942 time period.

During 1943, all Marine rifle squads were reorganized and equipped with at least two BARs and the number of men increased to 12 per squad. The BAR squad formation was dropped, leaving three 12-man squads per platoon. While this may not seem like much, it should also be remembered that by 1943 all Marine companies had been issued the new M1 Garand rifles. While retaining the 5FP for two BARs per squad, we now have increased the manpower by three men and are using semi-automatic M1 rifles. This increase in both manpower and firepower provides the basis for the 6-6-8 Marine squad of 1943 and its assault fire capabilities.

By 1944 the Marine rifle squad was increased to include three BARs and gained an extra man as well, giving a total of 13 men per squad with at least three automatic weapons and nine semi-automatic rifles (the SL often carried a SMG). The extra BAR man now allows the FP to increase to "7", and the automatic and semi-automatic types of weapons allow the capabilities of Spraying Fire and Assault Fire to be assigned. The standard Marine squad remained at that level until the end of the war, so giving us the final 7-6-8 Marine squad MMC. The ASL designers have provided a series of squad counters that perfectly reflect the changing T/Os of the US Marine Corps throughout World War II.

MORALE

The ASL counters for the US Marines all have a Morale level of "8". This will likely raise a controversy between various players (especially those from one branch of the services or the other) about the difference in morale for Marines and regular — even Elite — Army troops. There are several reasons why the Marines were assigned a value of "8". Let's take a brief look at the background of the United States Marines.

The red stripe worn by officers and NCOs on their dress blue trousers (known as a "blood stripe") was earned for the Corps in the Mexican-American War. Several times the regular Army had assaulted Mexico City and been repulsed. After the Army had given up, the Commanding General (Army) finally offered the Marines a chance. Men of the Corps carried the assault into Mexico City and won, but at a heavy cost — 90% of the Marine officers and NCOs present were killed or wounded in that one day. At Belleau Wood in World War I, the Germans gave the US Marines the name "Devil Dogs". All soldiers of any nation have nicknames for themselves and their opponents, but bestow such fearsome epithets only upon units that they respect and fear. This was, and still is, considered an honor by Marines.

Skipping over World War II for the moment, during the Korean War even General

MacArthur wanted Marines for assault troops because he knew that they could carry the day. The Chinese troops were told by their superiors not to fight the "Yellow Legs" (Marines) because they would not retreat, and it would cost too many troops in relation to the position gained. The Marines were eventually ordered to stop wearing their leggings in order to prevent the Chinese regulars from knowing whether they were fighting the Army or the Marines. Of all Allied POWs during Korea, the Marines surrendered least and broke under brainwashing least of any of the United Nations' troops.

The Marines have always prided themselves on their self-reliance and fighting ability. Due to the tremendous manpower needs during mobilization following the Pearl Harbor attack, the draft was instituted in December 1941. Many amateur historians might claim that, since the Marines were using the draft, troop quality would surely be the same as that of the US Army. But this line of reasoning turns out to be in error. The Marine Commandant of the time, Lt-General T. Holcomb, assigned liaison officers to all State Governors' offices and draft boards to defer all draftees who indicated a preference for the Marines and hold them until Marine training camps could take them. The rest of the story can be best summed up by a direct quote from the *History of Marine Corps Operations in World War II* (Vol. 2, page 35):

... This program, which was quite successful, resulted in the seeming paradox that most of the draftees in Marine uniforms were still volunteers, in fact if not in name. The intangible but clearly evident atmosphere of a volunteer outfit was retained by the Marine Corps throughout the war. This spirit was especially evident in the units of the Corps' striking arm — the Fleet Marine Force — where officers and men alike were intolerant of anyone attempting to get by with a marginal performance. The prevailing attitude was that every man had asked to be a Marine and no complaints were expected when the going got a little rough.

One other attitude prevailing in the Pacific theater was not in evidence in the European theater among the Americans. In the Pacific, America was fighting the Japanese, a people that had attacked Pearl Harbor without warning and without a declaration of war. Most Americans were so outraged that they flocked to join the military services so that they could fight the Japanese. The war in Europe had not touched the lives of the majority of Americans on the emotional level as yet. Thus the Pacific war was a more "personal" war to many Americans at home, while the European war was a distant fight involving distant people. This difference in attitude had a large effect on the determination and mental willingness of a Marine to face combat.

Last, the question of play balance must be considered. Look at the way the Japanese are handled — step reduction in squad strength until broken in the half-squad unit. This method of handling the Japanese was considered necessary due to the unique Japanese characteristics

of *bushido*, of fighting and dying even when victory was impossible. The USMC and the Japanese regulars went head-to-head on the beaches and coastal areas many times. While the Army fought its war of fire-and-maneuver, this option was not available for most Marine commanders. As amphibious troops, the Marines were expected to take their objectives — usually by direct frontal assaults against an opponent who would fight until the end without mercy expected or given. For this type of simulation, some equalizer was needed to reflect the intensity of the fighting that occurred between these two opposing forces, even on the tactical level. Too, the structure of the amphibious assault rules — where the attackers have nowhere to fall back to and rally — necessitated a higher-than-usual morale level.

The morale level of "8" is a justifiable value for the Marines, who were the elite amphibious assault troops of the US forces in the Pacific and whose *elan* became legendary. Emphasis must be placed on the difference in the theory of attack between the Marines and the US Army. The training of the Marines stressed that objectives were to be taken as quickly as possible (the longer the fight dragged on, the longer the fleet had to sit vulnerable offshore), while the US Army's approach was much more methodical, with much stress put upon taking as few casualties as possible while securing the objective. This is not just an ex-Marine's view; even the Army's General MacArthur wanted to retain the Marines for leading his amphibious assaults in the SW Pacific, and in fact kept the 1st and 3rd MarDivs under his direct command as long as he could.

EXPERIENCE

Here again, Bob McNamara was forced to diverge from the existing charts for the Americans as given in the ASL Rulebook. Chapter H (H1.28) provides a chart with ELR guidelines for American forces that is incorrect for the Marine units in the Pacific Theater. The Marines have always considered themselves a breed apart from the other armed forces of the United States. Marines, for the most part, have been volunteers. The men who have answered their country's call by enlisting in the Marines have a high *esprit de corps*, one that is raised even higher by the training that they receive.

For many years prior to World War II, individual Marines had been gaining combat experience in the so-called "bandit wars" of Central America. After Guadalcanal, the Corps took the tactical lessons learned there and in Central America and modified the training of all regiments. Some lessons were brought home from the Makin Raid by the 2nd Raider Battalion. Still more insights and new procedures for amphibious operations were learned from the invasion of Attu Island (Alaska) by the 7th Infantry Division, US Army. With the new training and equipment developed through hard experience, the ELR is and should be "5" for all Marine units. The only time the ELR might be lowered would be in a scenario where the American unit is heavily depleted, to represent a very desperate situation, or for the early Marine actions in the Philippines or the Wake Island defense during December 1941.

OFFBOARD ARTILLERY

The selection of OBA values for *ASL* Marines was made easier by using the Divisional Equipment charts provided. The values offered below are for OBA that is provided by Marine parent units. Other forms of OBA may be provided by US Navy destroyers, cruisers and battleships. Divisional and Naval OBA would always enjoy "Plentiful Ammo" conditions (except by SSR). An exception might be at Guadalcanal, where the Marines were left unsupported on the island by the withdrawal of the Navy before all supplies were offloaded. At Guadalcanal, any US OBA (except mortar) should be shown as having "Scarce Ammo" until November 1942. During the first two years of the war, the Navy's pre-invasion bombardments left a lot to be desired in accuracy; therefore for the years 1942 and 1943 the placement of United States Naval OBA should require an accuracy of "1" to be on target (G14.64). The use of Naval Battleship and Heavy Cruiser OBA should also be restricted to scenarios that allow the Japanese an overwhelming number of squads. HE FFEs of 350mm (14") and 400+mm (16") give a very high KIA value and are just too easy to abuse. Battalion and Regimental OBA could be affected by Scarce Ammo conditions, and should be determined by studying the historical references for the scenario in question, while still conforming to all OBA rules as given in Chapter C.

Artillery support provided by parent units of Marine companies was slightly different from that of the US Army, but does not seem skewed by the *ASL* rules. As an aid to any scenario designers among the readership, two charts are offered giving the level of artillery support from Marine resources and Navy resources afloat. Readers will note that naval guns are usually given in inches while *ASL* OBA is always designated in millimeters (mm). The naval chart below provides both measurements, as well as the primary type that could be expected from each ship type present.

Marine OBA Chart:

Type	Level	Year
60mm MTR	Company	42-45
81mm MTR	Battalion	42-45
75mm ART	Regiment	42-44
75mm ART	Division	42-44
105mm ART	Regiment	1945
105mm ART	Division	42-45
155mm ART	Division	1945
155mm ART	Corps	43-45

Naval OBA Chart:

Naval Type	ASL Type	Ship Type
5" Guns	127mm ART	Destroyer
8" Guns	203mm ART	Light Cruiser
14" Guns	355mm ART	Heavy Cruiser
16" Guns	406mm ART	Battleship

A BRIEF HISTORY

At the time of the American entry into World War II, the US Marines had already begun expanding and reorganizing their divisions based on the triangular concept. This system was based on the fact that all sub-units of a parent unit would be grouped in threes. In other words, a division had three regiments of three

battalions, of three companies, of three platoons each. In 1942 this was the form in all USMC formations except the light tank battalions of Marine divisions. (The light tank battalion had four companies of M3s.)

Unlike the US Army, which had small (approximately 15,000 men) and separate infantry and armored divisions, the Corps had true "combined arms divisions" from the very start. Each Marine division was equipped with enough artillery, tanks, support and transport units to insure that each regiment could have its own attachment of each in any combat situation. The regiments with such attachments were termed "Regimental Landing Teams" (RLTs) and were numbered according to the infantry regiment number. An example would be the 5th Regimental Landing Team, consisting of the following units: 5th Marines (Inf), one company of tanks, one battalion of artillery, one company each of pioneers, engineers, transport and supply. Each RLT would also receive its own naval medical unit to handle casualties. In general, each Marine regiment in an assault could bring any and all types of units with it that were required for it to fulfill its mission.

In December 1941, only two Marine formations would see any ground combat. In the Philippines and at Corregidor, the 4th Marine Regiment fought the Japanese until ordered to surrender in May 1942 (*ASL* Scenario #68). On Wake Island, the 1st Marine Defense Battalion withstood the initial Japanese invasion attempt, but eventually had to give way before the overwhelming strength of Japanese reinforcements. In the absence of a 1941 T/O, the D-Series 1942 T/O should be used for any scenarios concerning these two actions.

At the beginning of 1942 the Corps had only two divisions available for combat; the 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions. As the fighting progressed, the number of divisions gradually increased to six full combat divisions (with supporting elements) by the war's end. During August 1942, the 1st Marine Division landed at Guadalcanal and fought the Japanese to a standstill in a series of "battles of attrition". In November, the 2nd Marine Division and elements of the US Army arrived at Guadalcanal to relieve the depleted 1st MarDiv, which had spent the last four months fighting alone against the Japanese.

For the first few months of 1943, the Marine divisions were unable to assist the American advance in the Solomons Island group. The 1st MarDiv was still in Australia and New Zealand undergoing re-organization, retraining and refitting with new equipment. The 2nd MarDiv was deeply involved with preparations for the Gilbert Islands campaign, where it was to make the Tarawa assault. The 3rd MarDiv was still in the States finishing its training and formation. The burden of combat in the Central Solomons campaign of 1943 fell on the ParaMarines, Marine Raider Battalions and the Marine Defense Battalions. This campaign included battles for the islands of New Georgia, Vangunu, Rendova, Vella Lavella and Kolombangara.

In November 1943, the new 3rd MarDiv and the Marine Raiders were committed to action in the Northern Solomons campaign, beginning with the invasion of Bougainville (scenarios

#67 and #73). ParaMarines were moved north and landed on Choiseul Island for a week-long raid as a diversion for the Bougainville operation. Meanwhile, the 2nd Marine Division took part in the bloody invasion of Tarawa (20 November) in the Central Pacific drive through the Gilbert Islands, in the process proving the worth of the new LVTs. Tarawa was the bloodiest combat action for American forces to date, where the 2nd MarDiv averaged 1,000 casualties per day during the three-day assault. The 1st MarDiv, after spending some months recuperating and replacing men lost due to combat and tropical diseases, assaulted the island of New Britain on 26 December, 1943, applying direct pressure on the huge Japanese naval and air base at Rabaul.

The year 1944 was an active one for the Marine divisions, who were all involved in the Central Pacific campaign. On 1 February, 1944, the 4th MarDiv landed at Roi-Namur and secured the islands in two days. On the 18th, the reinforced 22nd Marines began securing the islands of Engebi, Eniwetok and Parry. The new 4th Marine Regiment (former Raiders) seized Emirau Island in the Bismarks on 20 March, 1944. Saipan was invaded by the 2nd and 4th Marine divisions in June. On 21 July, Guam was retaken by the 3rd MarDiv (Scenario #74) and the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade (ProvMarBrig). The 4th MarDiv landed on Tinian (July 24) in the Marianas. Meanwhile, the 1st Marine Division invaded Peleliu in September of 1944 (Scenario #72) in preparation for the Army's invasion of the Philippines.

In 1945 there were two major Marine campaigns. The 4th and 5th Marine Divisions stormed the black sands of Iwo Jima on 19 February 1945. By the 25th the level of fighting on Iwo Jima was so intense that the 3rd MarDiv was committed. Iwo Jima . . . Mount Surabachi . . . names that carry an immense amount of emotion for Marines from that day to the present. Here on the sides of a volcanic mountain a Marine company started its trek up the mountainside. Hours later, only six Marines and one Navy corpsman survived to place a small American flag on a bent piece of pipe and raise it on the mountaintop so that all those fighting below could see it. A later reenactment of this flag-raising for the photographers would inspire a monument to those brave Marines that is still visited by thousands each year. The Marine's assault on Iwo Jima prompted the admiral commanding the Navy's fleet to write of the action: "uncommon valor was a common virtue".

The 1st, 2nd and 6th Marine divisions (together, the 3rd Amphibious Corps) invaded Okinawa on 1 April 1945. Here on a "home" island of Japan itself, three Marine divisions and three Army divisions (the 24th Corps) fought a three-month battle that would prove to be the most costly campaign of the war for America. By July 1945, the official end of the Okinawan campaign, American losses were 12,000 dead and 37,000 wounded (against an estimated 110,000 Japanese casualties). Prior to the Okinawa invasion, the two senior regimental elements of the 6th Division (4th & 22nd Marines) had been designated as the 1st Prov-MarBrig and had taken part in the Guam

TABLE 1: Table of Organization - D-Series Marine Infantry Battalion (Authorized 1 July '42)

Unit	Manpower	ASL Equivalent
Infantry Battalion	933	
HQ Company	111	
Battalion HQ	75	10-2 SMC 8-1 SMC 5x4-5-8 MMC 2xJeep
Company HQ	36	4-5-8 MMC
Weapons Company	273	
Company HQ	29	9-2 SMC 8-1 SMC 8-0 SMC 4-5-8 MMC 1-Ton Truck
AA/AT Platoon	24	2-3-8 HS 3x2-2-8 Crew HMG 3x37mm ATG 3xJeep
MTR Platoon	76	4x2-3-8 HS 4x81mm MTR
3 MG Platoons (each)	48	6x2-3-8 HS 6xMMG
3 Rifle Companies (each)	183	
Company HQ	29	9-1 SMC 8-1 SMC 2x8-0 SMC 4-5-8 MMC LMG*
Weapons Platoon	28	
Platoon Section	4	2-3-8 HS
MTR Section	11	2x2-3-8 HS 2x60mm MTR
MG Section	13	2x2-3-8 HS 2xMMG
3 Rifle Platoons (each)	42	
Platoon HQ	7	2-3-8 HS
BAR Squad	8	5-5-8 MMC
3 Rifle Squads (each)	9	4-5-8 MMC

* - see article for explanation

TABLE 2: Table of Organization - E-Series Marine Infantry Battalion (Authorized 15 April '43)

Unit	Manpower	ASL Equivalent
Infantry Battalion	953	
HQ Company	137	
Battalion HQ	123	10-2 SMC 8-0 SMC 6x4-5-8 MMC
Company HQ	14	4-5-8 MMC 3-4-8 HS
Weapons Company	228	
Company HQ	41	9-1 SMC 8-0 SMC 3x6-6-8 MMC 1-Ton Truck
MTR Platoon	58	4x2-2-8 HS 4x81mm MTR 4xJeep
3 MG Platoons (each)	43	6x3-4-8 HS 6xMMG
3 Rifle Companies (each)	196	
Company HQ	28	9-1 SMC 8-1 SMC 2x8-0 SMC 2x6-6-8 MMC BAZ '43**
Weapons Platoon	39	
Platoon Section	4	3-4-8 HS
MTR Section	16	3x3-4-8 HS 3x60mm MTR
MG Section	19	3x3-4-8 HS 3xMMG
3 Rifle Platoons (each)	43	
Platoon HQ	7	3-4-8 HS
3 Rifle Squads (each)	12	6-6-8 MMC

** - after 10/43 only

assault. Both Okinawa and Iwo Jima were part of the original Japanese empire at the beginning of the war, and the capture of these islands showed the world that the US Marines had brought the war home to Imperial Japan. The end was near.

This summary account of the USMC's experience in the Pacific touches only upon the major campaigns. Obviously, there are many actions involving the Corps that can now be gamed. The five scenarios featuring the Marines that are part of *GUNG HO!* barely touch upon the many unique and bloody battles in which they were involved. The PTO now offers fertile ground for ASL scenario designers.

ORGANIZATION 1942 D-Series (Table 1)

At the time of the invasion of Guadalcanal the Marines were organized under the D-100 Series Table of Organization (T/O). The D-Series Table was officially adopted on 1 July 1942. In this scheme a Marine division was composed of 19,514 men divided into a special troops regiment of 3,031 men (which included the tank battalion of four companies of light

tanks), a service troop regiment of 1,946 men, an engineer regiment of 2,452 men, an artillery regiment of 2,581 men and three infantry regiments of 3,168 men each. A Marine infantry regiment had its own H&S company, a heavy-weapons company and three infantry battalions. Each battalion had its HQ company, a weapons company and three infantry companies. A rifle company included the company HQ section, a weapons platoon and three rifle platoons. At the time of Guadalcanal, Marine platoons were composed of an HQ section, a BAR squad, and three rifle squads. As explained above, each rifle squad at this time had one BAR, a submachine gun, and six riflemen and a rifle-grenadier. The BAR squad was armed with two BARs, a submachine gun and five rifles.

A normal 1942 series Marine rifle company, using ASL definitions, would be composed of three platoons, each of which would include three 4-5-8 rifle squads, a 5-5-8 BAR squad and a 2-3-8 HQ HS. The company HQ should be represented by one 4-5-8 squad and, using an LG# of 4.5, four SMC (9-1, 8-1 and two 8-0s). Each company had a weapons platoon with a mortar section and a MG section. The mortar

section would have two 60mm MTRs and two 2-3-8 HS, while the MG section would be composed of two HS and two MMGs. The weapons platoon HQ could be represented by a 4-5-8 MMC. For combat, the entire weapons platoon would come under the direction of the company CO. At the beginning of the Guadalcanal campaign, there were a few Vickers LMG (left over from WWI) still being carried about by some Marines. For DYO scenarios that take place between August 7th and November 30th 1942 on Guadalcanal, you might add one British LMG to each Marine infantry company.

Looking at the D-Series T/O, one can see that the weapons company T/O calls for three 20mm combination AT/AA Guns. The ASL US Ordnance counters do not include a suitable 20mm AT/AA gun counter — but it really doesn't matter since these 20mm guns did not see combat with the Marines in the PTO (except possibly with certain Philippine militia units in 1941). By August the Marine Divisions had already upgraded to the 37mm AT Gun for the invasion of Guadalcanal.

Any scenarios representing the defense of the Philippines (the original 4th Marine Regiment)

TABLE 3: Table of Organization - F-Series Marine Infantry Battalion (Authorized 5 May '44)

Unit	Manpower	ASL Equivalent
Infantry Battalion	918	
HQ Company	213	
Battalion HQ	138	10-2 SMC 8-0 SMC 5x4-5-8 MMC
Company HQ	17	5-5-8 MMC 2-3-8 HS
MTR Platoon	76	4x2-2-8 HS 4x81mm MTR 4xJeep
3 Rifle Companies (each)	235	
Company HQ	53	9-1 SMC 8-1 SMC 2x8-0 SMC
HQ Section	33	2x7-6-8 MMC BAZ '44
MTR Section	20	3x3-4-8 HS 3x60mm MTR
MG Platoon	44	12x3-4-8 HS 12xMMG***
3 Rifle Platoons (each)	46	
Platoon HQ	7	3-4-8 HS
3 Rifle Squads (each)	13	7-6-8 MMC

*** - see article

TABLE 4: Table of Organization - G-Series Marine Infantry Battalion (Authorized 4 Sept '45)

Unit	Manpower	ASL Equivalent
Infantry Battalion	996	
HQ Company	270	
Battalion HQ	131	10-2 SMC 8-0 SMC 5x4-5-8 MMC
Company HQ	26	2x4-5-8 MMC
MTR Platoon	58	4x2-2-8 HS 4x81mm MTR 4xJeep
Assault Platoon	55	
Platoon HQ	10	9-1 8-0 5-5-8 MMC
2 Assault Squads (each)	8	4-5-8 MMC FT DC
3 Rifle Companies (each)	242	
Company HQ	51	9-1 SMC 8-1 SMC 2x8-0 SMC
HQ Section	31	2x7-6-8 MMC 2xBAZ '45
MTR Section	20	3x3-4-8 HS 3x60mm MTR
MG Platoon	56	14x3-4-8 HS 14xMMG***
3 Rifle Platoons (each)	45	
Platoon HQ	6	3-4-8 HS
3 Rifle Squads (each)	13	7-6-8 MMC

or the first four months of the Guadalcanal Campaign should use the 1942 Marine T/O&E. Armor support available to Marine units under the D-Series organization would include all variants of the M2A4 and M3 light tanks (except the M3A1 Satan).

1943 E-Series (Table 2)

The E-Series T/O was authorized on 15 April 1943. Some of the changes that were instituted by this divisional re-structuring saw the light tank battalion reduced to three tank companies, and the artillery regiment increased by the addition of one 105mm howitzer battalion. Marine parachute battalions were removed from divisional command and became Corps-level units. Under this series, flamethrowers were used by engineer units only, with one company of engineers assigned to each RLT.

The 1943 division had a total manpower of 19,965 men, a 459-man increase over the 1942 D-Series. The special troops regiment (which included the MPs, AA units, and Light Tanks) had 2317 men. The service troop regiment (including Motor Transport, Medical, and the Amphibious Tractor unit) totaled 2,200 men. The engineer regiment of 2,513 men included the Navy "SeaBees" and Marine Pioneer and Engineer battalions. The artillery regiment was increased to 3,207 men with the addition of the second 105mm battalion. Three infantry regiments had 3,242 men each. Each regiment had a H&S company, a weapons company and three rifle battalions.

Many changes occurred at the battalion level with the creation of the E-Series T/O. The battalion HQ company expanded with the addition

of another Navy medical unit (amphibious assaults were proving to be casualty-intensive). The Company HQ section was decreased in size, while the HQ section of the Weapons company was increased. The 81mm mortar platoon had a decrease in personnel without a decrease in the number of mortars. The rifle company weapons platoon was increased by one medium machinegun and one 60mm mortar, now totaling three of each weapon. The rifle platoons lost the BAR squad, but each rifle squad was increased to 12 Marines and two BARs each.

In ASL terms, the T/Os which came after 1942 are much easier to organize and represent. The company HQ would include a BAZ '43 after October 1943. The increase in the weapons platoon just means adding another MMG and 60mm mortar with their respective half-squads. With the reorganization of the Marine squads, each rifle platoon now numbers three squads; and we can use the 6-6-8 counters for the normal Marine rifle squad universally. The battalion weapons company loses its AT Gun platoon to its parent regiment, a move which gave the weapons company more maneuverability in jungle combat.

The 6-6-8 Marine MMC should be used for all MarDiv combat actions commencing with those involving the 2nd MarDiv in November 1942 at Guadalcanal. These counters will represent Marine units in the Northern Solomons campaign (Bougainville), the Gilberts campaign (Tarawa and Buarika atolls), the Marshall Islands campaign (Roi-Namur, Eniwetok, Parry Island) and the New Britain campaign (Iboki Plantation, Volupai Plantation, and Emirau). E-Series armor support could

include all of the M3 and M5 light tank models except the M3A1 Satan, but could even include some of the M4A2 medium tanks which appeared at Tarawa.

1944 F-Series (Table 3)

Even though the F-Series T/O was not authorized until May 1944, it was in use in an *ad hoc* form prior to that month. The Marine F-Series division had a paper manpower of 17,465 men, down about 2,000 from the prior form. The divisional tank battalion took on the numerical name of the parent division (such as the 1st Tank Battalion of the 1st Marine Division). The tank battalions were given the M4A2s, while their scout company was transferred to the headquarters battalion as a recon company. In the divisional artillery complement, the number of 75mm pack howitzers was reduced to two battalions per division. The engineering regiment was reduced to just an engineer battalion and a pioneer battalion. The Navy construction battalions (SeaBees) and amphibious tractor battalions became corps-level troops.

The F-Series infantry regiment had a manpower of 3,218 men. In the HQ company the supply section was increased to platoon size. The 75mm SP (self-propelled) gun platoon of the regimental weapons company was doubled in size to four guns per platoon. All vehicles and flamethrowers were maintained in the H&S Company and issued to the various low-level units as required.

The 1944 infantry battalion saw an overall decrease in personnel with the elimination of the weapons company. The Headquarters company was increased to 213 men by the inclusion

of the 81mm mortar platoon (76 men), transferred from the former weapons company. The three machinegun platoons from the weapons company were distributed among the three rifle companies, one MG platoon per company. At the same time, the number of machineguns per MG platoon was increased from six to twelve. This gave the Marines the increased firepower needed to resist the Japanese banzai attacks which were becoming common as American forces approached the Japanese homeland. The rifle platoons went from 43 men to 46 men per platoon, with an increase of one man per squad. This one-man increase brought another BAR to each squad (making three BARs) — in *ASL* terms, this increases the squad FP to “7” and allows Spraying Fire.

Bazookas finally make their way into the formal USMC OB with the F-Series, even though bazookas had first been used by the 2nd Para-Marines Battalion during their Choiseul Island raid in October 1943. As can be seen on the SW Allotment Chart line for 11/43-3/44, one bazooka was issued per ten squads. Actually, the Marines themselves (including officers and enlisted ranks) were not overly fond of the 1943 bazooka model and were just as likely to “forget” to load it into their landing craft. With the advent of the more reliable and accurate 1944 bazooka, its use became more widespread throughout the Corps.

The major difference between the E-series and the F-series battalion T/O in *ASL* format is the placement of the units. The HQ company now includes the 81mm mortars and their crews as well as the HQ personnel. You may notice that the MG platoon now has 12 MMG counters and is located in each of the three rifle companies. This means that 36 MMG counters would be needed to fill out an entire battalion T/O. (Compare this to the maximum of 16 MMG/HMG in a Japanese infantry battalion!) The *ASL* counter mix does not allow this (unless the player wishes to order extra squad/weapon counter sheets), and it is not recommended since giving any nationality that many MMG would destroy the play-balance of any scenario. Rather, use of the official *ASL* SW Allotment Chart (G17.151) is recommended except when historical references state that a heavy weapons unit was participating in the combat action being played. The *ASL* size of the USMC rifle platoons and 60mm Mortar sections remain the same as that of the E-Series.

Use of the 7-6-8 MMC should begin with the Marianas campaign (Saipan, Tinian and Guam). In September 1944, the assault on Nge-sebus Island marked the end of the New Britain campaign just as the Marines were hitting the beaches at Peleliu. By the time the F-Series T/O took effect, all armor support except the Scouts would have converted to the M4 medium tank. The Scout units would still operate the M5 light tanks, and the M3A1 Satan finally makes its appearance with the Corps beginning with the Saipan operations.

1945 G-Series (Table 4)

In 1945 the size of the Marine Division was increased to 19,176 officers and men per division. The HQ battalion now included two new units: A war dog platoon of 64 men, 18 scout dogs and 18 messenger dogs; and a rocket platoon of 54 men. The rocket platoon used multiple rocket launchers (rocket OBA) mounted on trucks to provide rapid artillery support. The tank battalions were designated “Medium Tank” battalions and were using M4A2s or M4A3s; each battalion had also officially received nine medium flamethrower tanks in their T/O. The artillery regiment was increased in firepower with the addition of a third 105mm howitzer battalion.

The 1945 Marine infantry regiment was composed of a headquarters and service company (H&S with 249 men) and a weapons company (175 men) of one 105mm Howitzer platoon and two 37mm AT gun platoons at four AT guns per platoon. There were three infantry battalions of 996 men each. In the regimental weapons companies, the 75mm SP motor carriage was replaced by the M7 “Priest” self-propelled 105mm howitzers.

Each G-Series Marine infantry battalion now included a new assault (engineer) platoon of 55 men organized in three sections, each with two seven-man assault engineer squads. These assault units were trained in the use of flamethrowers and demolitions and were allotted as needed to the rifle companies. The rifle companies remained the same, except that each machinegun platoon was increased by two more MMG (making a total of 14 allowed per company).

In *ASL* terms, the differences between the 1944 Marine battalion and the 1945 battalion are slight. The Company HQ section of the HQ company was increased in manpower and

results in two 4-5-8 squads being assigned. The HQ company also saw the addition of an assault platoon. Since the assault platoon was composed of combat engineers with a low number of men per squad (seven), the 4-5-8 squad MMC should be given Assault Engineer capabilities (H1.22) and Assault Fire capabilities in 1945 to serve as dedicated assault squads. You can see on Table 4 that the assault squads were small but were equipped with semi-automatic weapons.

All Marine divisions that took part in the Iwo Jima and Okinawa campaigns were organized under the 1945 G-Series T/O, even though this series was not *officially* authorized until after the war. In the rifle companies the only change was the increase of the two MMGs in the machinegun platoons. Again the standard *ASL* counter mix will not allow battalion-level play without ordering extra squad/weapon counters; the use of 14 MMG per Marine company is not recommended!

The year 1945 marked the final offensive by American ground units in the Pacific with the invasion of Iwo Jima in February and Okinawa in April. For all scenarios dealing with these last two offensives, the G-Series T/O should be consulted for determining the correct supporting elements that could be drawn upon by the typical Marine rifle company. By 1945, the Sherman based POA-CWS-H1 Flame Tank (US Vehicle Note #21) was available for the Marines, and made its appearance at Iwo Jima along with the normal allotment of the M4 family.

Fitting the Marines into *ASL*

In all cases, it must be remembered that the full number of counters in an *ASL* T/O may not actually be used in a PTO scenario. There were always some losses before the beginning of any combat action on the beach or inland. Losses in men and equipment are to be expected during any assault landing occurring under fire. Many landing craft were unarmored and very susceptible to artillery fire while approaching the shore. The coral reefs common in the Pacific could rip out the bottom of the smaller landing craft (LCPs and LCVPs) or cause the craft's crew to unload the Marines many yards from shore. This, of course, increased the number of casualties to the assaulting Marines wading through the surf. Would-be scenario designers are cautioned to carefully study the historical records and accounts before deciding upon the Marine OB in any simulated ground action.

I hope that this information can be put to good use by other *ASL* players; and especially by hopeful scenario designers. I began this series of “Reference Notes” in response to a query from the then-editor of *The GENERAL* on unit composition. It has been a wonderful learning process for me, and a challenge I do not regret taking up. Never again will I question the historical research that goes into designing well-balanced *ASL* scenarios.

For my part, with *GUNG HO!* now available and so many of my comrades designing scenarios for the PTO, I'll just enjoy the vicarious pleasure of pitting the USMC against the best of the rest.

TABLE 5: Standard Marine Rifle Company OB

To allow comparison, the following shows the *ASL* composition of a single Marine company under each of the organizational schemes. For actions involving three or more companies, the HQ company of the battalion should be added.

D-Series	E-Series	F-Series	G-Series
9-1 SMC	9-1 SMC	9-1 SMC	9-1 SMC
8-1 SMC	8-1 SMC	8-1 SMC	8-1 SMC
2x8-0 SMC	2x8-0 SMC	2x8-0 SMC	2x8-0 SMC
10x4-5-8 MMC	11x6-6-8 MMC	11x7-6-8 SMC	11x7-6-8 MMC
3x5-5-8 MMC	10x3-4-8 HS	10x3-4-8 HS	10x3-4-8 HS
8x2-3-8 HS	3xMMG	4xMMG*	4xMMG*
2xMMG	3x60mm MTR	HMG*	2xHMG*
2x60mm MTR	BAZ '43	3x60mm MTR	3x60mm MTR
LMG*		BAZ '44	2xBAZ '45

* - see article for explanation .



MORE OLD CHESTNUTS

The Origins ASL Tournament Scenarios, Part II

By Jim Stahler

This is the second installment of a two-part article describing the re-design of four scenarios (see last issue, wherein "The Niscemi-Biscari Highway" and "Devil's Hill" appeared). Jim Stahler updated these SL designs to mate with the ASL system, playtested them, and then used them in his round-robin ASL team tournament at Origins '91. The four all feature American paratroopers battling the Germans.



THE ATTEMPT TO RELIEVE PEIPER

I did not plan it this way, but each of these four scenarios takes place in a different season (as well as in a different campaign). "Hunters In The Sky" takes place in the early spring; "The Niscemi-Biscari Highway" occurs in the summer; the Americans attempt to take "Devil's Hill" in the fall; and "The Attempt to Relieve Peiper" occurs in the winter, with snow on the ground!

The Battle of the Bulge! Colonel Peiper's famous *Kampfgruppe* has broken through the American lines but been stopped cold, exhausted its supplies, and is now cut off by fresh troops from the 82nd Airborne Division, who were rushed to reinforce the beleaguered GIs holding the line. In this match, we find troops from the 1st SS Panzer Division trying to break through the thin rank of paratroopers to reach their comrades.

This scenario didn't turn out as well balanced as I hoped. It seems like there is one "dud" at every tournament, and this one is it. The Germans won 11 games, with the US taking only four. It wasn't as imbalanced as it sounds however, since a lot of the games came down to the wire. I have made a few small changes to help the Americans, playtested the scenario some more, and I believe that this version is an even contest for the readers.

As in all these scenarios, each US paratrooper squad lost a factor as it was updated for ASL, and each German MG gained a factor. Helping the American player somewhat, artillery is much more effective in ASL than it was in SL. It can get more than the old maximum of four missions, and each mission lasts for a complete game turn. In addition, a spotting round is two levels high, making it easier to see. (In SL, spotting rounds always landed out of sight, and it was a rare game in which the artillery actually contributed.) Artillery is the American's most

potent weapon in this scenario, as it was in World War II. I also changed the SSR to allow the US to make artillery requests from the start of the game; and I allowed the radio to remain offboard, with its owner secretly recorded. These changes should make up for the reduced firepower of the paratrooper squads.

To compensate for the increased firepower of the German machineguns, I deleted two of their six LMG, reducing them by six firepower factors. I also removed the German armor leader, and gave the Americans two more foxholes. In the tournament, I allowed US squads to set up in foxholes if they start in suitable terrain. That gave the Americans a total of seven foxholes possible, but it led to strange situations (such as the American player starting a squad on a hill-top just to allow the artillery observer on Hill 621 to be in a foxhole). Now the Americans have four foxholes, but they are not restricted to being set up with a squad.

Another post-tournament change that I have made was to allow the US player to use HIP for one MMC. This adds some extra excitement to the game as well as serves to bring the game to a better balance. The German player must constantly worry about that hidden unit. Needless-to-say, there are lots of good hiding places throughout the woods.

I kept the number and type of squads the same as in the original, as well as the infantry leaders and the SW - with the exception of reducing the number of German LMG. Of course, the German HMG must start dismantled. The Americans still have ten Concealment counters, and the game is still ten turns long. I gave the Germans the minimal SAN of "2". The Americans are on the defense amid the dense woods, so I gave them a high Sniper number of "5". The paratroopers have their special ELR of "5", of course. The Germans normally have an ELR of "3" at this period of the war, but I increased it to "4"; after all, they are the Waffen SS.

There is no StuG IIIIG with a 105mm gun in the ASL counter mix. The closest German equivalent is the StuH 42, which was in common use at this time of the war. It has the same speed, about the same armor and the same gun as the StuG IIIIG in the original scenario, but its machineguns are its weakness. It only has a feeble 2FP AAMG, which can be used only if it is CE. However, the assault guns do have *Schuerzen*, as they could have been so equipped during this period (and since they were SS AFV, they probably were).

Historically there was snow on the ground, so Ground Snow is in effect in the updated scenario. This automatically results in "Wet" environmental conditions. The main effect of Ground Snow is to negate the road bonus and make it more difficult to negotiate the slippery slopes. Units are still not allowed to roll for entrenchments, because of the frozen ground. Let's assume that it took a long time and perhaps some explosives to dig any foxholes that begin the scenario on board.

I used the ASL exit victory point format of A26.3 to replace the original victory conditions. The SL scenario required the Germans to exit seven squads, with each AFV counting as two squads. This gives the Germans the equivalent of 13 squads, of which seven must exit. The updated scenario OB gives the Germans 25 points worth of infantry, plus 12 points for the AFV, for a total of 37 possible points. Seventeenth of 37 is just about 20, and so this is the number of victory points that the Germans must exit to win. The exit location, the German entrance location, and the American setup limits remain unchanged from the original scenario.

For the German play-balance provision, it seems only fair that I give them back the 9-1 armor leader that they had originally. To help the Americans, I take away a turn from the Germans, putting that much more time pressure on the attackers.

Before I start discussing any strategy, I want to touch upon some of the important match-ups in this scenario. The most obvious one is a bazooka against a StuH 42. The frontal armor is "8" in both aspects, upper superstructure and lower. The To Kill number of a bazooka is "16", which eliminates the target on a DR of seven or less, immobilizes or shocks the AFV on an "8", and does some possible damage on a "9". A flank or rear hit is a guaranteed kill, barring a dud. Clearly, the assault guns want very much to avoid the bazookas.

Another factor to consider is the chance of getting that deadly hit. The bazooka has its own To Hit table on the counter. The 1944 bazooka's maximum range is four hexes, but at that range the To Hit number is only "4". The StuH 42s are small targets, and if they are moving then the chance of hitting them is negligible, even if the bazooka is directed by a leader. One hex closer and it becomes a different story. The To Hit number goes up to "7", and it improves by one for each hex of range closer to the target. It goes way up to "11" at range 0, but that is not a likely range in this scenario. Suppose that a StuH 42 makes a dash past an adjacent bazooka in the woods. The To Hit number is "9", with a +3 DRM; a hit occurs on a DR of "6". This is risky play for the German player, but doom is far from guaranteed. Of course, if the StuH 42 comes to a halt, it becomes much more vulnerable. As always in ASL, there are other factors to consider, such as leadership and LOS hindrances. In general, at four hexes there is little to worry about, especially if the vehicle is in motion. Anything closer starts to become dangerous, and moving adjacent to a bazookas should only be done in desperation.

The StuH 42 commander also has to worry about artillery, which can attack the AFV with either an HE concentration or harassing fire. An HE concentration attacks armor on the "20" column of the IFT. None of the DRMs apply. A DR of "3" is needed to eliminate the AFV outright; a "4" or "5" will do some harm, either

immobilizing or shocking it. An HE concentration is dangerous, but it can be survived more often than not. Note that immobilization is almost as good as a kill in this instance, since an immobilized StuH 42 cannot exit the board and earn victory points.

American harassing fire is a bit less dangerous to the AFV. It attacks on the "6" column. Note that even though it is four columns to the left of the 20 column, the first KIA is only one less than on the 20 column itself. A DR of "2" is required to eliminate the vehicle, but a "3" or "4" does harm it. This is significantly less dangerous than an HE concentration, but it is still to be avoided if possible.

The StuH 42 can, of course, fire back. Suppose that the leader with the radio is in a foxhole on the hilltop. What chance does the StuH 42 have of discouraging that pesky forward observer? The farthest likely range is 19 hexes, say from 5A6 to 2Q6. At this range the infantry To Hit number is "5". If the vehicle is buttoned up, and acquisition cancels out the foxhole TEM, a DR of "4" is needed for a hit. That is not a very good odds, even though a hit would result in a 20FP attack with no TEM. An Area attack ignores the TEM on the To Hit DR. With the AFV buttoned up and the target fully acquired, a "9" is needed to hit. However, the resulting attack is only on the 8-column with a +2 DRM for the foxhole. This is still more effective, overall, than the attack on the infantry target type. If the observer is concealed, as he is at the start of the game, only an Area attack makes any sense.

In this scenario, your tactics begin with the US setup. The premier weapon in this scenario is the American radio. In the previous discussion, I assumed that the leader with the radio is stationed in a foxhole on top of Hill 621. The best spot is 2Q6. A leader in that hex can see nearly all the board except the far north, which is irrelevant. Of course, the obstacles all over the board create vast numbers of blind hexes. Some interesting hexes that can be seen from 2Q6 are 5L6, I8 and J8 across the clearings in the woods; and C3, B3, B4, A5 and A6 at the southern edge of Board 5; 5H1, G2, G3, G4 and F3, where some critical fighting is sure to take place.

There are other options for the observer besides being placed on Hill 621, though. Since the owner of the radio is recorded, the 8-0 leader can be placed on the hill to draw German fire, and the real observer can set up HIP (along with a squad now) with LOS to some of the same locations that the 8-0 on the hill can see. Won't the German player be surprised when the 8-0 breaks and routs away but the FFE still lands!

With that plentiful American ammunition, the US player shouldn't be shy about drawing an extra card in the attempt to nail German units out of sight. With one black card drawn, there is still a 2/3 chance of drawing another black card and keeping the FFE right where you want it.

The American player must bear in mind that there are four types of FFEs that can be called down. The most used is an HE concentration. That is certainly deadly, especially against enemy units in the woods or moving in the open. However, don't ignore the benefits of harassing fire. This scenario is tailor-made for

that option. It affects a much larger area than any concentration (19 hexes rather than seven), and attacks with a respectable six factors. Add to that the air burst DRM or FFMO/FFNAM and it is dangerous enough to cause damage and seriously hinder German movement.

Smoke is normally thought of as protecting the movement of the attacker, but it can be useful in a couple of ways to help the defender in this scenario. For example, suppose that the Germans are face to face with paratroopers across the road running from 2GG6 to T2. If powerful German fire-groups are in 2Z1 or AA1, a likely mid-game situation, a smoke concentration in 2ZO would be handy. It would disrupt the German fire for two turns, but the road that the Germans must cross remains clear of smoke. If smoke is a good idea, WP is sometimes a better one. Even though the hindrance isn't quite as much, that initial morale check may break a squad or two. Smoke can also be used to cover a squad's retreat; and as smoke costs an extra MF to enter, it can slow down the German advance at a critical time.

After the leader with the radio is placed, the next big decision faced by the US player is the composition and location of his HIP force. One possibility is to deploy the squad and hide one of the HS with a bazooka to worry the German armor. This should be somewhere in the rear adjacent to a road that the enemy armor must use. It will be discovered late in the game, if at all, which keeps the enemy wondering where that HIP unit is.

Another ploy is to use HIP for a full squad with the MMG and a leader somewhere in the woods. The hope is that the Germans will blunder into it with some juicy target that can be hit with a punishing 20-factor attack with a "-1" modifier. I walked into one such a trap in 5L0 and had three SS squads and the 9-2 leader break and run away. Note that this position also covers the road from 2V1 to Z2. These are just a couple of suggestions for the use of your HIP. The point is to be creative and unpredictable.

The rest of the US force should be mixed with dummy stacks and be prepared to use a fallback defense. They should start as far forward as possible, but not in locations where they can get cut off. For example, in the first turn the German infantry can move to 5I5 and advance to I6. This cuts off any units that start in 5E3 or F3. Units in 5C2 or D1 are at risk too. They had better get back to a safer spot on the first turn. If the Germans are about to apply strong firepower on 5FO and GI, units in 5F1 and G2 had better pull back now or get trapped. Similarly, LOS on hexes 2AA1 and ZO will trap units in 5G1.

Ideally, the Americans can pull back, without sustaining many casualties, to the woods that used to be hill 538 while holding the German player up for about four turns. The paratroopers can defend positions such as 2CC4, AA3, X2 and W2 with lots of fire covering the road, and the threat of bazookas keeping the StuG 42s at bay. This is a good line to fortify with foxholes. However, those foxholes may not be much of an advantage. True, they give a +2 TEM instead of the +1 TEM of woods . . . but there is a price to pay. In the aforementioned woods hexes units can move deeper into the woods in their

movement phase to protect themselves against the German defensive fire, and then advance back into position for the German turn. This doesn't work if in a foxhole. The unit must expend a MF in its hex to exit the foxhole, at which time it is subject to the very torrent of defensive fire that it was trying to avoid. With all that German firepower, it may be foxier to remain outside the foxholes.

If possible, the Americans should have two lines of troops. On the German turn, one line is at the edge of the woods, while the other remains one hex inside the woods after gaining concealment. The Germans must Prep fire at concealed units, who themselves only open fire at units moving in the open. On the US turn, everyone exposed moves into the woods, and the concealed units advance back into position, while the revealed units stay in the rear to gain concealment for the next turn. If it takes the Germans more than two turns to crack this position, their time-table is in severe difficulties.

With the endgame, the Americans must retreat and delay as best they can, and hope for some artillery to land as the Germans emerge from the woods near their VP exit area. One guiding principle while defending in the woods is to keep at least three hexes away from the Germans. If the Americans are only two hexes away, the Germans can assault move adjacent to the US units, maintain their concealment, and then advance into close combat. If they are three hexes away, the Germans must use non-assault movement to move adjacent to the Americans, and so forfeit their concealment.

It is easy for most players to overlook the anti-infantry role of the bazookas. Since it is too early in the war to fire WP with them, they are limited to HEAT only. And HEAT cannot be used against the Germans in the woods or in the open. However, there are a few places where HEAT can be used. There almost certainly will be Germans in the building in 2Z1 at some point, a prime bazooka target. There is a good chance that a bazooka can fire at 2T1 in the course of the game, and at 2W7 at game's end.

The US smoke grenades have limited use in this scenario. I wouldn't expect a US squad to be in a situation where it can use WP. The Americans are not likely to move adjacent to the Germans in this game; and if the Germans start adjacent to a US squad, the Americans will either prep fire or move away too quickly to spend time throwing grenades. Smoke can be useful if the US player finds some of his troops trapped, however. A smoke grenade can give some protection to the retrograde movement and make it a lot easier to exit a foxhole in good order.

Now let us examine the SS options. The German forces have a bunch of advantages in terms of numbers, morale, leadership, range, machine-guns and armor support. The high German morale allows them to take risks, and the length of the game allows the Germans to spend a turn or two trading fire with the Americans, applying their superior firepower and leadership.

The Germans must exit 20 victory points. The Germans start off with 18 points worth of squads, seven points from leaders, and 12 points for the armor - for a total of 37 victory points possible. Thus the Germans must exit the majority of their forces. However, don't forget

that the Germans can take prisoners, who count double for exit purposes.

The German player's greatest headache will likely be the US artillery. There are two ways to deal with this. One is to carefully avoid locations that can be seen from the hilltops. This is not so easy; eventually the German infantry must emerge from the woods to reach the exit area. And harassing fire can be brought down on a hex two away from German units without even drawing an extra battery access card.

The alternative is to find the observer and break him. The two StuH 42s can fire at the artillery observer from the southern edge of the board using either Area Fire or the Infantry Target type. The HMG can fire at the observer with the help of a LMG and the 9-2 leader. From a hex such as 5L6, this fire group can get a 4-factor attack with 0 DRM while the observer is concealed, and an 8FP (+0) attack once concealment is lost. Or that same force can move to 5M7 on the first turn, assemble the HMG in the DFPh, and move to 5O2 or P3 on Turn 2. From there, the squad's inherent firepower can join the probing attack. Of course, the observer will be "shooting back" with his OBA. It may be safer to abandon the woods for open ground to avoid air bursts. The trick is to dance between the shells and still bring down fire on the observer. If your infantry can't break the observer, perhaps the StuH 42s will.

I like to divide the German infantry into three stacks, plus a couple HS to use as scouts. One stack has the 9-2, HMG, two LMGs and three squads. This engages the artillery observer and then applies its considerable firepower to any enemy squads in sight. A second force has a 9-1, two LMGs and three more squads. This is a powerful force with 24 firepower factors that can make a 12 (+0) attack against a concealed unit in the woods. The third element has the other 9-1 and two squads. The last squad is deployed into two HS that scout ahead and, perhaps, draw some US fire.

A German stack with a leader can get as far as 5I5 on Turn 1 by entering 5I10, bypassing 5I9, I7 and I6, and ending its MPH in I5. Then it advances to 5I4, where it cuts off anything in 5E3 or F3. A HS or two should scout 5E3, C2 and D1 just to make sure that there are no hidden bazookas that can threaten the assault guns.

The main German tactic in the tournament seemed to be to move up to an enemy unit and advance into its LOS with several powerful stacks. This gives the US the choice of Prep firing with the chance of breaking a German unit but with the near certainty of getting blown away itself, or withdrawing. If the US player is careless, the Germans maneuver to cut off and eliminate enemy units. In this way the Germans work their way through the woods on Board 5, across the road on Board 2, and into the woods that used to be Hill 538. Then they simply march through the woods and off the board.

This route does have the advantage of clearing the road for the StuH 42s. An alternate route goes to the north directly to Hill 621. Units taking this route must deal with the snowy, slippery slopes and must cross the open ground around 5R1. The northern route has the advantage of being unexpected and is not as likely to be well-defended. It certainly avoids the HIP

unit, and allows the entire German firepower to be massed against the artillery observer on the hill. It, however, has the disadvantage of leaving the StuH 42s without infantry support.

Those StuH 42s are an important part of the German forces. Their victory points are important sure, and so is their firepower! Any paratrooper that becomes acquired had better move somewhere safer. When they are buttoned up, the AFVs are relatively safe; the only long-range American weapon that can hurt them is the OBA, which is probably chasing after infantry in the woods.

It goes without saying that they should keep buttoned up if there is any chance of enemy infantry in the same county. When buttoned up they cannot use their AAMG, which makes them very vulnerable to close combat, so they should keep well away from American infantry. They can still engage the observer at long range. Once the observer is disposed of, their most effective use is to move to a position five or six hexes away from a US unit that has just had a German force move adjacent. Move, halt, and acquire the enemy in the AFPh. It adds one more reason for that paratrooper squad to run away.

If the German infantry chooses the northern route, the StuH 42s can try to run the gauntlet and join them. On the first turn they should move to 5B6 and B7, remaining in Motion. This move keeps some distance between them and the US infantry. On Turn 2, they can boogie as far as 5K3 and J3. Note that Ground Snow negates the 1/2 MP movement rate for roads, so the StuH 42 crews do not have the option of exposing themselves to gain speed on the roads (which is not a good idea anyway considering the proximity of the paratroopers at this point). On Turn 3 they are out of the woods and near their little friends on foot, provided that they survive the enemy fire on the road. How likely is that? A bazooka on the road has a very good chance of killing one of the AFV; if the StuH 42 enters the bazooka's hex, the To Hit number is "11" with a +3 DRM (+1 for small target, +2 for motion). This yields a hit on a DR of "8" or less, with damage on an "8" or less To Kill DR. If the bazooka is adjacent to the road, the chances of a hit goes down significantly. If a paratrooper unit is on the road when the StuH 42s go by, it has a chance to make a Close Combat Reaction attack. A squad would need a DR of "4" to immobilize the AFV (CCV = 5, with a +2 DRM for motion, -1 DRM for no MG), provided that the infantry unit passes its PAATC. Depending on what the enemy has on the road, there is an excellent chance that one gun gets through and a good chance that both will, but it is risky.

Since this scenario takes place in 1944, the Germans do have panzerfaust capability. These fire HEAT just like bazookas. They do not have an enemy vehicular target in this scenario, but the PF has some potential use against enemy units in buildings and behind walls. This can be useful if the paratroopers are defending the buildings 2Z1 or T1, or dug in at the building/wall complex around 2V8. The chance of the PF doing any damage is not great; first the unit must have a PF (a squad needs a dr of "1" or "2" since the target is not an AFV) and then it must get a hit. If the target is in a wooden building or behind a wall two hexes away, a "4"

TH DR is needed. However, if the PF hits, it attacks with 16 firepower factors and no DRM! Don't make the attempt if the squad has a MG to fire, or if it is the German turn and a Pin result would be inconvenient, and certainly not if the SS squad firing it is already pimed. Still, if the circumstances are right and if the dice are friendly, this shot can break the game open.

Do not forget that the SS squads also have smoke. Their smoke exponent is only "2" and they do not have WP. Nevertheless, smoke can be just the ticket needed to cross the 2FF6-T2 road to get to the woods, or to protect the approach to an American position while in the woods. For example, a stack of three squads and a leader in 2BB1 that would like to get to BB3 could start by placing smoke in BB2. Three tries will normally yield at least one smoke counter. The stack spends two MF in the attempt to place smoke, two more MF to enter BB2 with smoke there, and two more MF to enter BB3. In another situation, that same German stack is in 2BB3 with a US squad in ZS, three hexes away. The Germans move to BB4 (two MF), place smoke in AA5 (two MF), and then declare CX to enter AA5 (three MF with smoke). If there were no smoke placed (eight chances out of 27), they do not declare CX. There is a risk, of course; each squad that rolls a "6" in its smoke availability dr ends its MPH and remains in BB4.

In summary, the Germans have a lot of tricks to use in this scenario, as do the Americans. It will always be a fluid fight, decided by strategy, tactics and the dice. And it makes a terrific tournament scenario for experienced players.



HUNTERS FROM THE SKY

Field Marshal Montgomery is poised to cross the Rhine with his British 21st Army Group. The assault is to be spearheaded by two airborne divisions, the British 6th and American 17th. This scenario depicts some of the action involving the US paratroopers in their last combat drop of the war. A company of paratroopers land amid waiting German infantry and AA guns, with more German reinforcements on the way. The paratroopers must take and hold their rally point. The Germans must keep them from doing it, without being quite sure where the rally point is.

"Hunters From the Sky" was originally published in *The GENERAL* as Scenario I. It is an interesting situation, partly because it starts with a paratroop drop, which randomizes the situation and makes every game play very differently. It also, conversely, makes the scenario hard to balance. There is even more randomization in the selection of the US assembly point and the appearance of the German reinforcements.

In the tournament, it first appeared that there

was a play-balance problem when the Germans won four of the first five games reported. However, the Americans won the last three, and two games were too close to call and went uncompleted. When the dust cleared, the German players had won four games and the US, four. I call that "balanced". However, if the game ends quickly, it is probably because the paratroopers were shot up by the Germans on their way down, and the game is a German victory. After that, the Americans have the advantage.

Like all the other scenarios in this tournament, each US squad lost an attack factor in the conversion to *ASL*. To make up for this, I added another US squad to their forces. This also has the effect of filling up the second wing so that both wings have five squads. I gave the Americans another leader, an 8-1, to allow both wings to have two leaders.

I gave the Germans another squad too, since our playtesting showed that the US was doing *too* well once the paratroopers hit the ground; and I gave them a 7-0 leader, since they seemed too fragile with but one leader. I did take away a LMG, since they now have three factors instead of two. I also gave an 8-0 leader to the German "Reinforcement Group 2".

I eliminated the part of the victory conditions that gave the Germans an immediate victory if they eliminated six US squads. Historically, paratroopers were frequently able to accomplish their objectives with only a fraction of their strength. Now, the game goes to the side that controls the US assembly point, regardless of casualties. One other major change I was forced to implement is to allow the US player to keep secret the assembly point until the end of the game. I could see no reason why the Americans would announce to the Germans what their assembly point was to be. And, this keeps more suspense in the game; the German is guessing right until the end.

Another change that I made is to require one wing to land on its pre-designated drop point, and the other wing to land on a randomly determined drop point. If both wings land on their drop points, the paratrooper player has a big edge in the scenario; it is far too easy when the whole force comes down near its objective. But if both wings land randomly, the Americans can be in big trouble. Some units you can expect to see shot up, and the survivors probably have a long march to get to their assembly point. Thus, half the time the game would be determined after the American player rolls for the drop points (i.e., after only two die rolls). To avoid this situation, the new SSR guarantees one wing to land on target, and the other wing to miss.

With all the randomness in this scenario, every game plays out differently. It is difficult to discuss strategy and critical terrain when you don't know what the US objective may be, you don't know where the paratroopers will land, or where the German reinforcements will enter. But I can try.

A key element in the US strategy is to keep the enemy guessing about the location of the objective. Each drop point should threaten two or more possible assembly points. Further, each drop point should be at least six hexes from the nearest board edge, so that there is no chance of an offboard landing. Of course, the closer to the

center of the board, the more likely it is that the paratroopers will be subjected to German AA fire while in the air and vulnerable.

If the assembly point is 2W9, 2M9 or 4S2, a good area for the two drop points is in the center of Board 2. There is no large patch of woods; the paratroopers can maneuver their chutes away from any small stand of trees, as long as they are adjacent to open ground. Most of the squads will land within two turns' march of all three possible objectives. For best effect, send at least one squad to take each of the three objectives, and let the German figure out which is the real one. Hopefully, he will take back two of them, but the wrong two!

If 4I10 is the assembly point, reasonable drop areas are the northern end of Boards 4 and 5. The northern end of Board 5 is safer, since it is farther from the center of the board and likely concentrated German AA fire, but it does give away the objective. The northern end of Board 4 threatens both 2M9 and 4P6 as well as 4I10. Send forces towards all three objectives if there are enough available; at the least, move forces toward two of the possible assembly points.

Hexes 4P6 and 4I10 are the tough objectives. The temptation is to place the drop point in the middle of Board 4, near the objective. I did that once. I got shot to pieces. It is much better to land farther away to get down in some order, and then move out for the assembly point. If 4P6 is the VC, your best bet is to land in the northern part of Boards 4 or 5 and feint toward 4I10. However, the central position of 4P6 that makes it so easy to defend also makes just about any drop point on the board equally good. The paratroopers can reasonably land anywhere *but* the middle of Board 4 (because of the threat from the Germans) and the southern half of Board 5 (because of the threat from the trees). The odds are that the wing which is forced to a random drop point will be in just as good a position as the wing whose drop point was selected.

I think that 4I10 is the toughest objective of all to reach. It is very risky landing too close because the threat from German AA on Board 4 and the woods on Board 5. Reasonable landing sites are the southern edge of Board 4 (from where the Americans can also threaten 2W9 and possibly 4P6), but the Germans are not likely to be fooled. Other possible landing sites are the southern third of Board 2 threatening 2W9, and the northern third of Board 5, making a feint toward 4I10. Both of these sites are quite risky too however, given the long distance the paratroopers must travel on the ground to win.

The German player must make his onboard set-up with no knowledge of the American objective, nor the drop points, nor even the location of his own reinforcements. He can view the game as a defensive battle and place a squad to hold each of the six possible enemy objectives, but they cannot support each other and this arrangement is likely to fail. A better approach is to create a flak trap in the middle of the board with the squad firepower and the AA guns and view the game as primarily a counterattack to retake the assembly point (once deduced) from the paratroopers. The Germans have the advantages of organization at the start of the game, greater range in his squad weapons, machine-guns, mobility from the trucks, and, for half the

game, they have unopposed armor.

From the selection of the pre-designated US drop point and the movement of the paratroopers on Turn 2, the German player should be able to deduce the assembly point, or at least narrow it down to a couple of buildings. Organize the six squads that start on board, coordinated with the reinforcements when they arrive, into a powerful force to retake those buildings. Their advantage in mobility should allow the German player to mass against the paratroopers, and the advantages in range allow the German squads to stand back and blast the enemy from a relatively safe distance. If all goes well, the StG III arrives to deliver the *coup-de-gras* and win the game.

Of course, all *never* goes well. The paratroopers have a lot of inherent firepower and two bazookas to make the armor keep its distance. Five squads can land anywhere and cause all sorts of havoc. It promises to be a tough struggle for both sides.

Weapons that can fire at descending paratroopers include the two AA guns in the scenario and the infantry's inherent firepower. Oddly, the LMGs may not fire at paratroopers in the air. The AA guns should not be placed in buildings, certainly, since they could not fire at descending paratroopers at all. If placed in woods, their ROF is reduced by one and their "Case A" DRM is doubled should they have to change the covered arc - so woods are not a good place them either. The AA guns should not be placed adjacent to woods or buildings to avoid having their LOS to targets in the sky blocked by those obstacles. That leaves plenty of good spots for them in the open on these three mapboards. I think that the best places for them are covering the middle of boards 2 and 4. These are the spots away from the dense woods closest to the most possible US assembly points.

For instance, hex 2P8 is an excellent place for one AA gun. It is well away from any blocking obstacle, it can cover a lot of the center of Boards 2 and 4, and it is in LOS of two possible assembly points (2M9 and 4S2). Another good spot for a gun is 4Q4. It can cover much of Boards 2 and 4 also, it is within LOS of the two possible assembly points 4P6 and 4S2, and it also has a very convenient LOS along the hex-grain to 5A9, even though this is hindered by some grain (which is being treated as brush in this scenario). Even though these guns are in the open, they receive the +2 TEM from being emplaced until they relocate.

The German infantry should be set up in a central location so that they can move on any of the possible assembly points. I suggest splitting the squads into two three-squad platoons, each with a leader. Position one near the border of Boards 2 and 4, near the middle. This force can quickly move on 2W9, 2M9, 4S2 or 4P6. The other force should be placed near the middle of the Board 4/Board 5 border; it can contest 4P6, 4Y9 or 4I10. Unlike the AA guns, the infantry has no need to worry about changing covered arc. Single-hex woods are good places for the squads. They have some protection and their aerial LOS is unblocked.

On the drop, your infantry must fire at any paratroopers in range. Even at long range (up to six hexes) the squads each attack with two factors. The Americans are most vulnerable while

still in the air, with no TEM and with the Hazardous Movement penalty. If a couple of US squads can be nailed before they hit the ground, so much the better. Once the paratroopers are on the ground, the German infantry should head for the probable enemy objectives. Occupy the threatened buildings first if able. If the paratroopers get there first, don't engage in an uneven fire fight with them. Trade shots at a range of five or six hexes, where they are halved and you are not. Be patient and wait for friendly reinforcements to arrive. Interdict the enemy movement when possible, to keep them from reinforcing any squads holding their assembly point. The Germans should infiltrate some troops to encircle the Americans and prevent rout. When there are a few enemy squads broken, or if the Germans have a strong local numerical advantage, make the move and attack. If that opportunity does not arise and you must be patient; the StuG III G should be able to swing the balance in your favor if your losses are light.

The two trucks are quite important units for the Germans. Vulnerable as they are, they can be used in three ways. Yes, they can attempt to overrun paratroopers that have landed in the open, and that is one use (but not a very promising one). Alternately, they can start the game loaded with squads, giving the infantry "instant" mobility. Unfortunately, the infantry can move nearly as fast on foot as a truck moving off-road, so the roads are not as convenient as they could be. Their very best use is to haul around the AA guns. Each truck can be positioned in the same hex as an AA gun, allowing it to be moved to a more convenient spot once the paratroopers have landed.

But the strongest German unit is that StuG III G. It comes in late, Turn 5 or possibly Turn 6, so it is available for only half the game. However, by that time the Germans should be concentrated against the US objective, and maybe a few American squads are broken or destroyed. The StuG III G should position itself out of range of the deadly bazookas. The bazookas have a To Kill number of "16" versus frontal armor of only "8". If hit, there is a better than even chance that it is gone. It is too valuable to lose in this way.

The obvious use of the StuG III G is to fire HE at any paratroopers ensconced in a building. At six hexes, even if buttoned up (a good idea with all the bullets flying around) the gun can hit on a "7" with a -2 DRM for acquisition. When the gun does hit, it attacks on the 12 column with no TEM. The StuG III G has another important weapon some players will overlook - smoke. When it is time for the German infantry to make its final assault, place some smoke right on top of the Americans to disrupt their defensive fire. Also, you can use its smoke dispenser to leave some smoke to block US LOS. At the end of the game, if the Germans are desperate, the StuG III G could be used to overrun the Americans in their objective building. This has little chance of success, since it has so little MG firepower, but it can be effective in preventing the Americans from firing outside their hex while the German infantry make their last assault. This could also be accomplished by bypassing the building without attempting to overrun it. And don't forget the tactic of Armored Assault, with the infantry hunkering down behind the assault gun as they

approach the building.

Once the drop points are chosen, and until the paratroopers hit the ground, the American player has few decisions. All he can do is maneuver his parachutes one hex, mostly to avoid landing in the trees or on top of a building. He has to trust in luck. Once on the ground use defensive fire to shoot at targets of opportunity, if any. The real action starts on the second turn. It is then time to move out.

Move toward all possible assembly points. Only you know the real one. Keep it that way. Take at least two of them, and maybe threaten another one or two. Much depends on where your troops end up on the ground, especially that half that landed randomly. Do what you can to prevent the Germans from concentrating against your objective. This includes interdicting German movement as much as possible, threatening alternate objectives, and blocking the German reinforcements if you have troops in the neighborhood.

There are three possible entry points for the German reinforcements: 5GG5/6, 2Q1 and 4GG5/6. The first can be blocked by a squad in the woods or a building. Good positions are 5CC6, FF6, GG4 or GG7. If the squad has a bazooka, keep out of the building so that it can get a better shot at the trucks or the StuG III G. The 4GG5/6 entry can be countered by a squad in either 4GG4 or GG7. The 4CC6 building is a possibility if the squad doesn't have a bazooka, but its LOS is limited by the hedges. Hex 2Q1 is the least likely entrance point. It can be blocked by a squad in any of the nearby woods, which is all the more dangerous with a bazooka.

Speaking of bazookas, they are powerful weapons in this scenario. Since it is 1945, the bazookas can fire WP at infantry in any hex. This can be very effective against a large German firegroup, not only does the smoke reduce the effectiveness of outgoing fire, but the units in the target Location must take a morale check. The bazookas can also fire HEAT against infantry in buildings, which is handy if the Germans get to your assembly point first. Of course, their natural use is against the StuG III G, since they are the only weapons the paratroopers have that can affect it (outside of Close Combat). If the German player is careless, a bazooka can be used against the trucks; if it hits, it is not a pretty sight. And don't forget that a leader can direct bazooka fire.

One important American weapon to consider is their infantry smoke grenades, which can also be WP. If an American squad is pulling back, it is wise to consider throwing a smoke grenade to cover the retreat. On the offensive, when the squad moves adjacent to the enemy, it is time for WP. It has a good chance of breaking the German unit; and even if it doesn't, it significantly hinders the German defensive fire against any other units moving up.

Because of the few units involved, all these tournament scenarios are playable in one evening; but the low number of pieces also require that each unit be all it can be. All these scenarios require careful thought, but I believe none more so than "Hunters From The Sky". I hope you enjoy them.

ASL Scenario Briefing; *Cont. from Page 21*

Of course I won't actually be *trying* to lose tanks; but I do want to emphasize that tank losses are acceptable provided they can be afforded; that they disclose the location of one of those killer 88s to enable the rest of my troops to react against it; or even if I am just gambling and the potential gain justifies the risk. Every move on the board (or every non-move, for that matter) carries with it some level of risk. The player who best manages the balancing of all these risks will probably be winning ASL scenarios more often than he is losing.

One advantage in attacking along the west edge is that it makes the entrance of my reinforcements a bit safer. If I want, by the time Turn #4 rolls around I ought to be able to bring those Crocs onboard without worry in the 24Q10 area, which will have been cleared by my infantry. That's not to say I won't go for an entrance further north after all—if the threat to the northern stone buildings would be of more help. But if I need some help in the village, or if the 88s have not yet been found, the northern entrance loses most of its attraction and I'll probably just drive right into the village and start flaming everything in sight. The ideal weapon to pry high-morale troops out of stone buildings, those 36-FP flamethrowers are effective from two-hex range, and still have 18-FP at a three-hex range. Notice that D3.31 allows the FT to fire in Bounding Fire at full FP, but D2.42 will halve fire if the vehicle is in Motion. Curiously, during its MPH a vehicle is not "in Motion", only before/after can it be in Motion, by definition. Thus, the vehicle can fire the FT during its MPH at full FP, or stop and fire it in AFPh at full FP, or end its MPH in Motion and fire in AFPh at half-FP. Take special note of this, for there has been some talk of altering Rule D2.42 such that it applies during the MPH as well, so it will be best to determine how your opponent reads this important rule.

Above I mentioned the British 63% FP rating; but consider what occurs as the reinforcements enter the contest. The British begin a might weak with 52%, leap to 67% on their fourth turn and then slide to 63% when the JgPzs enter later than same game turn. Adhering to my expected 62% rating for a successful attack (see sidebar), I believe this helps emphasize the value of using all that smoke capability in the early turns to work your troops forward, despite the fact that the British are about 65-FP shy of what I'd like to have. Forward progress still must be made, and smoke is the key. Once the Crocodiles enter play, the lethality of their FTs can best be gauged if we consider the British would control only 55% of the FP without these two weapons. As if any further proof were really needed, this shows the FTs are vital to British victory and demand to be used.

Conclusion: Elite infantry and quality leadership, high-powered guns and flame-throwing tanks promise top-notch action in St. Joost. It's a cold day in Crocodile heaven—only these beasts are impervious to the weather, and to much of what the Germans can throw their way as well.





SCENARIO BRIEFING

Player's Notes for ASL By Mark C. Nixon

Mark Nixon is a wargamer without peer, and a fine writer. His insightful articles offering hints on the play of ASL scenarios ("Desert Winds" and "Desert Sands" in the pages of Vol. 25-6 and 26-1; "Early Victims, Early Victories" in the '91 ASL Annual) have been very popular. When Mark made the offhand suggestion to Rex Martin that an irregular column could be devoted to such, my predecessor wisely did not hesitate. What follows is the first installment of "Players' Notes for ASL". Given that there are now some 213 ASL scenarios (with another three dozen or so being added each year), I expect there will be many more.

ASL Scenario A25 Cold Crocodiles

Rating: 60% British

Attraction: How could anyone resist seeing those Crocodiles in action? And, the confrontation between Cromwells and Challengers on one side and panzerfausts and barndoors on the other promises high excitement indeed.

German Advantages: PFs; 88LL Guns; Stone Buildings; HIP

If you normally play against opponents experienced enough to maintain a goodly distance from your PF-toting infantry, it may actually be that the potency of these weapons seems quite less than it truly is. But never lose sight of the value in scaring the enemy into keeping his distance, particularly in this situation when they are driving AFVs at you which would surely end the gaming lives of any German troops they elected to hammer. When they do try to move in close you can "PF" them; but, for the most part, the British armor will remain about four or so hexes away. Of course the 88s can do pretty well too, and ought to give both the enemy infantry and AFVs plenty to fear. The combination of two HIP guns sporting two ROF, 16 IFT factors and a TK# of 27 guarantees the German can dominate play in two locations—at least for

awhile—when these guns enter the battle. Their Large Target size limits set-up choices, but there are still enough available to keep your enemy guessing. Defending stone buildings will, as always, make your "8"-morale troops very difficult to break, and the ability to HIP a squad-equivalent just might be turned into a broken stack of enemy squads or a defunct tank at a crucial moment.

German Disadvantages: Outflanked; Mobility; Time

This German force is wonderful, but these three big disadvantages combine to find them, often, overwhelmed by about Turn #6 when the Crocodiles and their escorting infantry drive into their right flank. The problem for the Germans is the need to defend stone buildings, but all the ones south and west of 23O10 (on the west side of the canal) are just about impossible to hold onto without sacrificing the large group northeast of this position—and possibly the bridge as well. The German player who attempts to hold all will soon find his command reduced to a few isolated pockets of hopelessness; and even if he tries to withdraw before the enemy, he will likely find his avenues of retreat cut by the more adroit British and their AFVs. On the other hand, a defense which yields the southern half of the battlefield will invite an early British assault upon the bridge area and building 23010 (the "break-even" building for the British, as it is the 11th stone building they should normally come upon) and a possible crossing to the east side, with all that entails. In this case, the defense might be well situated to fend off the enemy reinforcements due on Turn #4, but has allowed the "at-start" British contingent too much freedom of action. The Germans are in a bit of a pressure cooker in this scenario.

German Defense:

The defense must protect stone buildings and the bridge at 23P7, while also providing optimum fields of fire for the 88LLs, HMG and MMG. This must all be done without excessive

concentration in any one area lest the enemy 80mm FFE lambast a major share of your strength at a single blow or, equally devastating, lay in FFE Smoke on the position and allow the British infantry and tanks to overwhelm your troops. Placing those 88s will determine the nature of your defense, assuming you are not going to merely stick them out on their own and not try to support them (a tactic I won't even discuss here). Notice that Board 23 from hexrows H thru V offers only four whole-hex locations where these guns can be HIP: T7, T8, M10 and I8. Avoid the common error of trying to HIP on that orchard-road, for guns cannot be emplaced on paved roads (C11.2) and therefore cannot be HIP (A12.34). Of those four locations, only hexes T8 and M10 would allow the guns to remain HIP once the enemy pulls into LOS. But, happily, there are several decent locations on Board 24 and in the half-hexes shared by the two boards for the big guns. If you like to gamble that the British will bring on the Crocodiles at 24I10 or north, there are HIP locations galore which can nearly guarantee elimination of at least one Croc, provided the opponent obliges, and neglects to land a smoke FFE in the area to cover their reinforcements. The woods in 24Q2 and 24N1 are a favored place, as is the orchard in hex 24O3. At least these spots allow your infantry to hang in there and support the guns for awhile, since this is the point where the enemy's attack is most susceptible to getting hung-up as they attempt to traverse that wicked, deadly area from 23S9 to 23O10.

But, of course, that is why you must also expect the FFE to land here, and the British to concurrently swoop through the Board 24 village to come at 23010 from the west as well. After all, they need to gather in those stone buildings there and threaten to drive on past towards 24J2 and beyond. Because you must expect the British anywhere and everywhere across your entire front, selecting remote but devious locations for the 88LLs will be a very tough decision for you. A spot like hex 23G3

seems nearly a foolhardy choice, but take a look how it controls key hexes 23S8, R7, R8, Q8 and P7, while effectively screened from all other fire. Unfortunately, once you're spotted, a smoke FFE in the bridge area will eliminate the threat from this ATG long enough to allow the trapped British to escape the kill zone. Another devious spot is 23H10, which not only can cover the northern end of Board 24, but also will see a wealth of targets along the orchard road, and the P7 bridge as well, and can also deal some death to enemy infantry coming through the 23J10 woods area. But, again, the LOS are so restricted from this position that the gun can be smoked and hit from multiple directions once found. Therefore, I am putting these guns in more conventional positions from which they ought to be able to lend more of their much needed fire to the conflict. I expect the guns in these outposts to eventually fall to the enemy, but to at least enjoy plenty of fire opportunities while they last.

If I were willing to risk a squad to try to take out a tank with its PF, I might HIP a 5-4-8 in 23V5 in order to take a shot at any British tank which might park itself at 23X4 to control the orchard road and bring fire on 23N9, or in P8 with the intent to lay smoke. But I think it rarely wise to expose a squad in such a place as this from which rout may become impossible. Any of the other orchard road hexes would be safer, and might be just as good. They certainly would be less suspect. In any case, some of my set-up selections will probably register high enough on the "unsuspected" scale to be a surprise. The 88LL ATG at 2403/1 is a normal enough tactic, but the one at 24S2/6 might look a bit out of place. However, despite setting up HIP in open ground, the gun will not lose HIP unless the enemy reaches hex 24V1 (a real squeaky LOS)—which is just what the HIP 8-1 and MMG are in place to prevent—or hex 24U5, adjacent hexes or the many hexes north of the "S" row with LOS. I see the gun occupying a spot where the British won't expect it, and enjoying some entertaining command of the bridge area. It can stay concealed when it fires, too!

Unusual, for this scenario, is the absence of both the HMG and the MMG from building 23010 in my placement. The German units in that building actually expect the British to come straight at them, in which case I will pull back and let them come. All the Dummy counters are on Board 23 to try to confuse the enemy (why would there be Dummy stacks way back in L9 and M8?), with the idea that if he believes this area is held in strength, he will assume the Board 24 village is weakly defended. I'd be happy to fool him into coming for the village in strength, for that's where I am waiting and can fight an even battle; but in truth, I expect him to go straight for the bridge after all. When that happens and the FFE and all guns zero in on that area, I am hoping my heavy fire from the west flank will be enough to prevent them crashing through. One thing in my favor is that, as I mentioned earlier, the bottleneck around the bridge will be tough for the British to cross.

If their Smoke works well, there is not much I could do either way; but I am banking on coming out of it better by keeping my strength away from the *schwerpunkt* in this gambit set-up.

Because the British will show me where they are attacking on their very first turn, I will be able to react and reposition my troops. If the attack comes straight at 23O10 as I suspect, peripheral units at 24V7 and 24O5 will immediately head for the northeast. They can get themselves in position to hinder the enemy reinforcements, or back-up the 23O10 position, or even support the 24O3 ATG as needed. The JgPz IVs will not only try to maneuver for some high-odds shots on the enemy armor, but will also keep an eye on self-preservation since I cannot afford to lose their seven CVP apiece. When the game deteriorates to the point where I am taking high risks with these vehicles, I will be sending my opponent a message that I think the battle is nearly lost.

The standard "accepted" defense for "Cold Crocodiles" would see the HMG and MMG in building 23O10, with the Germans attempting to stop a British thrust at that point. But I am convinced the British are too strong for such a defense to work well, especially once the smoke starts pouring in. So I am allowing the

enemy to reach that area without sacrificing substantial elements of my own force. With my troops to the north and also still holding in the village to the southwest, British infantry who have pushed into the bridge area will find routing a serious problem, and pushing further north perhaps impossible.

British Advantages: Crocodiles; OBA; SMOKE; Firepower; 76LL Guns; Leaders

No big hurry to end this scenario, for the real fireworks don't even enter play until Turn #4 when those two Crocodiles waddle into the picture. Coupled with healthy AF, impressive SMOKE capability, fast-turreted 75mm gun and 4-FP CMG, the BF36 make these among the most imposing vehicles in the entire game system, marred only by their lowly 7MP allotment. Indeed, it can even lead to frustration to have such vehicles available yet have to suffer the tedium occasionally involved in wheeling them into play. But it is worth the wait to give players a chance to experience the "joys" of dealing with such beasts. These British reinforcements bring with them approximately 63% of the firepower in the scenario and enough SMOKE to ensure ample screening to ease your attack forward. In order to deal with German reinforce-



Positions at the end of the first British Player Turn. Actually, most of the British units would still be under "?" at this point, as they all enter play concealed.

ments we see the 76LL in action, as sure to end the gaming life of a JgPz IV as the 88LL will of any of the British vehicles. Add in two "-2" leaders, and I'll take the British.

British Disadvantages: Vehicular CVP Losses, Northeastern Buildings

As those Cromwells and Challengers provide the cutting edge to carve your way to victory, their loss will inflate enemy CVP enough to keep the Germans in the game; and if the Crocodiles fall as well, unthinkable as that may be, it would be a total of 43 CVP for the six AFVs and 9-2 armor leader—quite a deep hole indeed for the British infantry to navigate across afoot. Not that these lads cannot afford to lose an AFV to find an ATG, for they have the tools to then dispose of the offending gun and proceed. But enough of this kind of trading, plus a loss or so to PFs and assorted German devilry, and the number of extra stone buildings in the northeast needed to secure a win might escalate out of reach. Not enough of a worry to convince your tankers to hide, but just enough to keep them dispersed at first, until those 88LLs are found, in order to avoid the embarrassment of one lucky enemy gun taking out more than a single tank in one fire phase.

British Attack:

I think the most conventional attack here is to rush up CX into the 23Y7 building and walled-in area and push on due north from there, hopefully with FFE landing support fire right away (be it SMOKE or HE). Naturally your tanks will initially fire off sM left and right to provide flanking cover, and to hinder potential enemy killer shots from suspected HIP locations (like a 23V5 HMG boresighted on 23AA6, 9-2 leader directed for a 6-FP, -4 DRM). This is probably how the game usually opens; but since my Germans have tried to set up to defy such an attack, let's suppose this British commander has played the scenario two or three times and wants to do things a bit different this time, just to gain a new angle on the encounter. So this time the attack kicks off on Board 24, with just a reduced platoon moving into the two big stone buildings on Board 23 to secure their eight CVP and maintain the look of pressure on that flank. One advantage here is the unlikely event of any harm befalling British units moving up to the 24W6 woods area on Turn #1. There shouldn't be anything much to fear, so the British squads ride tanks and use Armored Assault CX to close with the enemy quickly. Notice the two HS rode the tank to 24Z8 and unloaded in that hex (overstacking as they did so) without CX (disallowed for unloading units anyway) thanks to the peculiar timing of Armored Assault, which actually leaves a world of freedom in the hands of the AFV to spend its MPs quite however it pleases with very limited restrictions. Of course, these tanks are getting as far as they do because they have entered play CE, although they have opted to BU once the road rate has been utilized.

From the positions reached on Turn #1, my Tommies will bull their way on into the Board 24 village over the next few turns while the tanks poke and probe, sticking close to the infantry and remaining dispersed. One tank

THE PERCENTAGE OF FIREPOWER

Welcome to my "Scenario Briefing" series, the latest semi-regular column to feature the play of ASL. My two-fold purpose is to review popular scenarios for *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*, while concurrently using each as a means to explore some of the many tactics available to players (experienced and novice alike). Readers will, therefore, encounter occasional references to numbers and probabilities (basic stuff only, I promise), but will frequently come across the "percentage of firepower" wielded by one side or both in these columns. As an introduction to the series, permit me to explain.

The "percentage of firepower" is the raw firepower totals, adjusted for ROF, for the contestants. I use this to gain a rough idea of exactly how much IFT FP advantage the stronger force could theoretically apply against the opposition in a single half-turn at normal range, assuming hits for all TH weapons, average ROF and no malfunctions or cowering. Here is an example of how I calculate ROF-adjusted FP for a hypothetical German force (and thereby derive the "%-FP"):

Type	Quantity	Strength	ROF	ROF-Adjusted FP
Infantry	4	6-5-8	—	24
FT	1	24	—	24
HMG	1	7-16	3	14
MMG	1	5-12	2	7.5
LMG	1	3-8	1	3.6
50mm MTR	1	2-IFT	3	4
50L ATG	1	6-IFT	3	12
PzVG (MA)	1	12-IFT	1	14.4
PzVG (MGs)	1	3/5/2	—	10
80mm OBA	1	16-IFT	—	16
TOTAL =				129.5 FP

Thus, a 3-ROF weapon will average 200% of its printed value; a 2-ROF weapon, 150%; and a 1-ROF, about 120% - excluding breakdowns and cowering. Obviously, OBA might affect many Locations and not just the single one I assume, but it might also not be available at all on many turns or might be used as SMOKE. Since this is a single half-turn average, I believe counting OBA for only one Location is a fair representation, as expecting it to affect more (or less) than this would be even less realistic. Compared to a British force which fields 79-FP, the above German OB would brandish 62% (129.5/208.5x100) of the FP in the scenario.

Forms of FP that I do not include in such a calculation are:

1. MOL, PF, Psk, Baz and PIAT (too restricted vs infantry and availability/hits too unreliable)
2. Demo Charges (a "one-shot" weapon)
3. SAN, Mines, Booby Traps, PreGame Bombardment (no player control).

These are all important elements of ASL, but must be handled elsewhere in my coverage, and not included in the %-FP. I have a theory that the attacker normally needs about 62% of the FP (calculated in this manner) to hope for success in a well-balanced scenario, and that any substantial deviation from this must be explained by other features of the encounter. For example, heavy fortifications, dense TEM, amphibious operations, time limit, armor-versus-armor actions (or any non-IFT battle), special morale or leadership are some qualities which might allow the %-FP to float above or below my expected level. In the absence of such factors, however, an FP advantage or disadvantage might be the primary reason for the "balance" of the scenario to swing one way or the other. Too, timing of any reinforcements influences the ebb and flow of the percentage advantage. Thus, using these raw figures on occasion will provide a solid point of reference which can act as a standard to aid me in the examination of various unique scenario features.

goes through the 24U8 pass along with my infantry. But only one tank at first until I secure the immediate area. Likewise, the tank on Board 23 will work its way northward in support of the small force there; and a third tank will work the 24U3 road, very cautiously. There is no room to push forward with the fourth tank without exposing at least two of my AFVs to potential shots from a single HIP 88LL or the HIP infantry, so the fourth tank hangs back in the 24X4 area to exploit any opening. It will also be able to provide support fire and smoke, especially in and around hex 23S8, which might be welcome indeed for my weak right flank. In the meantime, the FFE will target the best enemy concentrations found and, hopefully, pile up some CVPs.

I believe I have enough to win the game even without my reinforcements, although the 60%

advantage I've claimed would then be history. In such a situation, I don't feel I have to worry about each and every CVP as though its loss could mean an enemy win, so I will be very aggressive with the AFVs. After all, even if I lose one to a HIP 88LL, locating that gun will, from my point of view, also mean locating four German CVPs (the gun with crew) which I will nail to nearly even the score—and I may even be able to capture the Gun for more CVP. Therefore, I gain maximum use from my tanks, which will in turn assist my infantry and improve my overall performance. Compare my progress to the overly cautious commander whose tanks will remain safe and secure but not of much help to his infantry, who will find themselves moving very slowly against tough troops with "8" morale in stone buildings.

Continued on Page 18

AVALONCON II

The Hobby Re-Establishes Its Roots

By Don Greenwood

So what would we do for an encore?

The birth of AVALONCON last year sent ripples through a Board Gaming hobby which had grown increasingly unhappy playing second fiddle to the larger Fantasy- and Science Fiction-Role-Playing branch of the Adventure Gaming industry. All across the country, boardgamers applauded Avalon Hill for setting out on its own to re-establish its birthright as the founder of the simulation game industry by hosting its own national championships. The faithful breathed a collective sigh of relief when the first venture was proclaimed a success, and the doubters must have been dismayed by all the positive vibes flowing from Camp Hill, Pennsylvania.

Those who attended the first AVALONCON made that leap of faith because they were hopeful of turning the tide of a hobby in open retreat. However, those who came this year were looking for a good time. They had already been convinced that this "Back to Basics" competitive theme was a concept whose time had come. They had gotten a taste of organized competition and come back for more. AVALONCON had already proven its point to them. Now they were just looking for fun, and that's exactly what they got.

But among those who returned there was even more—a sense of belonging to an event—something in which they had a stake. There was the chance to renew old rivalries and start new ones. In essence, we had formed the biggest gaming club going. The sense of belonging to a band of brothers (and sisters) with common interests was never greater.

Mike Fitzgerald of Norwalk, CT writes: "I just had to write to tell you what a great time my family and I had at AVALONCON this year. ... I had a better time this year than last because I felt more comfortable having known so many of the people. You should mention how the enjoyment level increases the second time. Our club members had such a good time that next year I anticipate another two joining us for a total of six."

The club is growing. The friends Mike made at these past two AVALONCONs will bring him back again and vice versa. That's what it is all about; friendly, quality competition.

What better backdrop than the ongoing games of the XXV Olympiad to frame Avalon Hill's championship weekend with a real sense of purpose? Few, if any, of us can lay claim to that kind of athletic prowess, but when it comes to vicarious thrills on a cardboard playing field, those of us on the wrong side of 40 can still feel young again—if only for a day.

It was an early-arriving crowd. The Registration Desk did a steady business from noon on, dispensing badges so that the line never grew beyond a few minutes wait. Although we stayed open past midnight to accommodate the late arrivals, most players were already in combat by 7 PM.



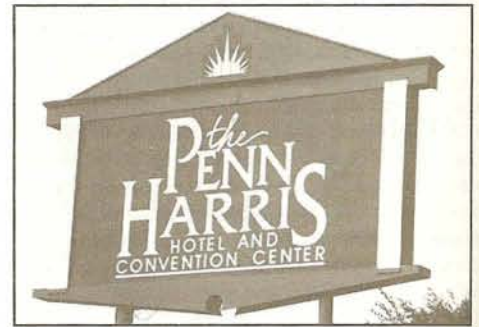
The inaugural AVALONCON winners were not forgotten. Their names were put on display for all to see—to be joined next year by the 1992 winners.

THURSDAY

TITAN Junior was the first event to finish as Nikki Rush of Summerville, SC bested a table of boys foolish enough to corner her Ranger Legion. GM Larry Lingle, fresh from a bungee jump in central Florida, waded into new thrills by attending throughout the match and demonstrating the finer points of TITAN for the youngsters. After jumping from a 200 foot crane, these kids were easy. Although lightly attended, the TITAN camp expects to attract more youngsters next year and with special Teaching-GMs like Larry on hand there are sure to be future AVALONCON champs who got their start in a Juniors tournament. In the meantime, Nikki's TITAN Junior plaque will sure look nice next to her father James' on the gameroom wall. Uh, James... you do have one, don't you?

The THIRD REICH Team competition was a tad more serious and a lot longer. Twelve players formed four three-man teams to play both sides in each round. This provided not only a sense of teamwork lacking in the single-man games, but also reduced the field of players for the regular THIRD REICH competition to a perfect 16. The team of Paul Edwards, George Coury and Brian Sutton (last year's THIRD REICH champ) won in two rounds over the team of Robert Wartenberg, Baron August, and Neil Moran. Paul, as the Axis, was forced to keep the initiative throughout by a US DoW on Norway/Sweden but managed a Marginal Victory. Meanwhile, Brian and George as the Allies kept the French in the game by recapturing Paris in Winter, 1940 and finally driving into Berlin in Spring 1943, with the Russians following a Soviet paratroop on Rome in the Spring of '42.

Elsewhere the individual THIRD REICH tournament was also getting underway with a perfect field of 16. Although the scheduled GM neither arrived, answered his mail, nor notified us of his change of plans, David Bowman of Dallas, GA (whose unanswered queries to the



wayward GM alerted us to the problem) stepped in and served admirably, much to the relief of the AH staff who did not get pressed into service as emergency GMs, and instead got to partake in the games of their choice. This no-show was the start and end of our GM difficulties—all others performing their tasks admirably. Indeed, GMs were not in short supply. I have received many requests to GM events next year, and AVALONCON III's tournament offerings should be even more diverse.

Three of the 16 REICH'ers were members of the AREA Top 50, and of these, two advanced to the Semi-Finals. The AREA seeds proved reliable as all eight of the top seeds advanced to the second round on Friday. (Although second-seed and eventual winner Jerry Ingersol of Hot Springs, AR faced his toughest challenge from Ed Chatley in the opening round.) Britain, encouraged by a successful Soviet Five-Year Plan and a full scale Russian offensive, seized Paris and Rome in a daring offensive. Ultimately, the game came down to one die roll. Had the Axis 1-1 attack on Rome succeeded, England might well have fallen in the following double turn. The Axis rolled a "5", leaving Germany with less than 12 BRPs and Jerry with a ticket to the second round. From that point on, the Germans would not win a game. Time after time, the Axis fell victim to the dreaded 4-6 dice combination in big attacks. The final game was decided at 5 AM on Sunday morning when Jerry's Allied forces finally took Joseph Hoffman's Berlin, leaving Joe with much to contemplate on the long drive back to Carrollton, TX.

KOREAN WAR was a new event which barely avoided the tournament ax for having less than eight players when two stragglers joined the field. The UN proved to be the dominant side, winning four of seven matches played, but GM Joe Bellas won as the North Koreans over Jerry Black in the final round. The VP Bids for sides seemed to be the single most important determining factor.

THE LONGEST DAY demonstration picked up where it left off last year with two three-man teams commencing hostilities on the June 26th turn. Four of the players were returnees from last year's slugfest. Canadian Paul Sommers headed up the project for Steve Piotrowski who

had moved to Australia. The setup alone took five hours and consequently they only managed to complete one half-turn before retiring for the evening. Sixteen hours of play on Friday carried them through July 2nd, but the lines weren't changing significantly. The game had settled into its grinding attrition phase, and by July 5th—ten hours later—with the arrival of the SS Panzer divisions being more than the Allies could bear, our heroes decided to pack it in and avail themselves of what was left of the convention. In retrospect, it was decided that it would have been better to start a new game since the Germans were in a commanding position already, and the mid-game of *TLD* is by its very nature too attritional to be of much interest to any but the most serious student of the campaign. The participants decided the Allies could still have achieved a breakout, but it was debated whether it could have been achieved by the August 31st deadline. Those wishing more information about *TLD* at next year's *AVALONCON* should write Paul Sommers at 27 Simeon St, Kitchener, ONT CANADA N2H 1R9 or by Email (GEnie: P. Sommers or Internet: paul@monet.uwaterloo.ca).

ANZIO was notable for two upsets. The first was that GM Tom Oleson wasn't twisting my arm to play it to achieve minimum participation because it already had 13 players and was thus assured tournament status again in '93. The other was that Oleson lost in the opening round to Mike Sincavage—who he had beaten in the finals last year. Such a pairing in the opening round is surprising until one realizes that the GM is under no obligation to pair opponents in any particular way. Although AREA ratings are provided and recommended for use in seeding tournaments, GMs may ignore them if they wish. It would appear that Tom purposely dealt himself the toughest opponent so that if he did lose, he could concentrate on the later TPS tournament. In the absence of further details, I suspect Sincavage had little trouble in beating the rest of the field.

B-17 was a new event this year and the "let-fate-sort-it-out" approach was a welcome respite from the more intense fare judging by the 32 pilots who took part. Two missions were flown with only 13 planes completing both. Fifteen bombers were lost with 139 crewmen KIA, 33 wounded, and 29 captured. The Germans lost 37 Me110's, 98 Me109's, and 49 FW 190's. Our own Don Hawthorne drew posthumous honors for being one of only three flyers to be shot down twice and finished dead last (literally). Serves him right for flying again—once you're shot down, you should stay down, pilgrim. Or so it seems to me, anyway. I always thought the appeal of *B-17* tournaments was in cheering every time one of your competitors went down in flames. Frank Alexander of Royal Palm Beach, FL took top honors with 115 points to Howard Newby's and Daryl Luby's 106. Advisory Panel member Dave Terry was one of the hardest-working GMs we had. His overhead projector was the high-tech high point of the week. All of his entrants will receive a detailed post-con report in the mail, probably in late October or early November. If you have any input to share for next year's *B-17* raid or sim-

ply want a closer look at what happened this year, drop him a SASE at 7501 Norris Ave, Sykesville, MD 21784.

1830 used three preliminary heats to generate 14 first-round, four-player games. It took three rounds for Dave Harshbarger of Chapel Hill, NC to prove himself the best railroad mogul.

FORTRESS EUROPA had the largest percentage growth of any event by nearly tripling in size from last year's minimum requirement of eight players. Michael Newman of Colrain, MA improved on his second-place finish in 1991 to win as the Axis when the Allies rolled a "1" in a 3-1 on Toulouse and failed. GM Randy Heller once again failed to advance far in his beloved event.



GM Charles Hickok rides herd on a flight of space traders in the first *MERCHANT OF VENUS* Juniors tournament.

The *MERCHANT OF VENUS* Junior tournament drew two-thirds as many entrants as the adult version and may soon overtake the adults if the youngsters continue to descend on *AVALONCON* in growing numbers. Dave Bowman writes: "I brought my 12-year-old to the convention to participate in the Junior events and he loved it. He was shy at first but those running the Junior events made him feel welcome and he seemed to fit right in. I think the wargaming hobby has gained another convert." Lauren Hickok made GM daddy Charles proud as she edged Holly Buck for her family's first *AVALONCON* plaque. (Sorry, Charles—couldn't resist.)

SUPER DELUXE ASL was won by GM Ron Berger of Thousands Oaks, CA. It marked both the first and last competitive miniatures event to be held at *AVALONCON*. The battle between the 100th Jaeger and the 14th Guards in the outskirts of Stalingrad used GHQ micro-armor and styrofoam terrain to play ASL in miniature using an open-ended system that allowed players to jump in and out of action throughout the weekend until their personal leader was killed. However, the consensus of opinion on our survey was that *AVALONCON* was the best boardgaming convention extant because it focused on boardgames and to maintain that focus we need to concentrate on what we do best. Henceforth, the Keystone room will be reserved for the ever-growing *ASL* competition.

By 7 PM the next slate of tournaments got underway with 17 politicians throwing their hat into the ring in *CANDIDATE*. Three first-round games advanced Steve Kyle, Ken Gutermuth, Jerry Smolens, Randy Cox, Robert Rademaker,

and Steve Pedlow to the finals where Cox proved to be the most underhanded, er, *competent*, candidate. He went into the convention with a commanding lead, but it came down to the final vote to claim the third place finisher's delegates before he won 277-261.

The gridiron wars heated up with the largest field for *FOOTBALL STRATEGY* that I can remember since *ORIGINS II* topped out at 64. I had money on this one. Four members of a rival Philadelphia league were on hand just for this tournament and I had \$10 riding on one of our league members winning it. Of course, we had nine of our 28 members playing in the tournament. My momma didn't raise no fools.

Then again, maybe she did. This was also the first event for "Team Doily" in the Team Competition and our team came up with the brilliant strategy of entering games that fellow team members were also playing for points. I, alone of my team, was playing in an event not also contested by three of my teammates. So, I fully expected Team Doily to repeat its shutout performance of last year when we were beaten by our own teammates. We put our strategy to the test with three of us playing in the football tournament. One of my teammates, Cliff Willis, lost in Overtime of the first round to George Holland—my betting protagonist—while I was destroyed 28-10 in the second round by Winston Forrest, a member of our league who I had beaten five times previously. So much for Team Doily committing suicide. Bill Cleary—our eligible team member—won his third game 24-17 over George Holland to win my bet and then advanced to the final with a 21-17 win over Lee Kershaw. Meanwhile, Winston was feeling his oats, beating Gordon Rodger 14-3 and Tom Shaw 27-10 to advance to the finals while giving up only 23 points in his last three games. Mike Fitzgerald, last year's winner, was beaten 16-13 by Lee Kershaw in Overtime after missing three 10-yard field goals himself. Both finalists had entered the Team Tournament using *FOOTBALL STRATEGY* as their eligible game, so a lot rode on the outcome when Cleary won and put Team Doily on the board with eight big ones. The AHFSL claimed the three top spots as Tom Shaw took third. It almost eased the sting of the drubbing Winston gave me... almost.

With 30 entrants, *NAVAL WAR* was well situated to draw a large crowd on Thursday night as a quick-play event before the start of the glamour events the next morning. The six finalists probably did not expect it would be six hours before the issue was decided at 1 AM. Kenneth Shunk of Ancaster, ONT won over David Davis, Mike McAnnany, Greg Wilson, Steve Proksch, and Bill Taylor who finished in that order.

GETTYSBURG fared far better as an adult tournament than it had previously as a Junior event. Nineteen Lees/Meades required five rounds before Michael Uhrich of Lebanon, PA emerged triumphant as the rebels. The Confederates dominated the early rounds while the later rounds were split evenly.

BRITANNIA became the fourth largest tournament with 53 players, thanks in no small part to the dedicated GM'ing of Tony Strong. The Long Beach, CA resident devoted the entire weekend to his event, preparing excellent hand-outs, and allowing players to qualify for the finals by participation in two of five preliminary heats. Playing in additional heats increases the chances of qualifying for the finals but is not necessary, so many of Tony's players got to partake of other events as well. Duane Wagner of Mt. Laurel, NJ won the second round on Sunday to claim top honors.



One of the five qualifying heats of **BRITANNIA** which always seemed well-attended.

AFRIKA KORPS is one of those golden oldies or "classics" that seems to endure forever. Fifteen players provided stiff competition for the crown. Defending champion John Poniske fell in the first round to the Axis attack of Ivan Lawson. AREA postal champion and GM Joe Beard of Phoenix, AZ revenged his first round loss last year to Greg Smith with an Axis win but fell in the Quarter-Finals to Mike Crowe who then met veteran Bruno Sinigaglio in the finals. Heretofore, the games had been long, drawn-out affairs, but the final was over relatively quickly. Mike encircled and cut off the bulk of Bruno's British army from Tobruch in the May II '41 turn using a series of high and low odds attacks including a "must win" 1-2 for the victory. I'd feel sorry for Bruno except that I recall a game against him wherein my Germans never received a supply unit. What goes around, comes around.



Bruno Sinigaglio (left) ponders how those panzers got behind him.

"Gone but not forgotten" might be a fitting way to describe the discontinued **STORM OVER ARNHEM**'s return to tournament play. Fifteen players contested the streets of Arnhem with GM James Fuqua of Detroit edging Trevor Bender of Arlington, VA in a closely-played final to collect his third **AVALONCON** plaque. Bender's Germans took all of Arnhem but lost by a single point in the final.

The first of two heats for **ADEL VERFLICHTET** ended the events for Thursday and was notable from my viewpoint because Team Doily was swinging into action again in the person of GM Ray Pfeifer. At this point, perhaps a little history is in order: Ray used to be about as hard-core as they come. There was no wargame too complicated or too long for him. Suffice it to say that **THE LONGEST DAY** was one of his favorites. Then I made the mistake of introducing him to Bill Cleary, Cliff Willis, and Mick Uhl, and Team Doily was born. Now if it takes more than an hour to play or to read, it's off his list. During this sorry evolution, Ray fell in love with **ADEL VERFLICHTET** and now proclaims it one of the greatest games of skill ever devised, to which I say "hogwash".

To make matters worse, he won the tournament last year (knocking out our own last eligible team member in the process) and now fancies himself the World's Best Player of the World's Best Game. Again, I respond: "hogwash". My teammates have probably played **ADEL VERWHATCHAMACALLIT** a hundred times. I've played it with them perhaps three times and won all three games. Yet, every time I've shown it to novices, I lose miserably. This is a great game of skill?



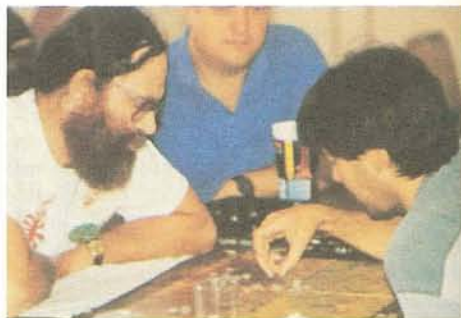
Tara Greenwood collects the bounty on Team Doily from her dad after finishing third in **ADEL VERFLICHTET**.

To prove my point, I enlisted my 14-year old daughter to play in the tournament and promised her a \$20 reward if she beat both of my teammates in the tournament. Since she had played the game only once before I figured she was novice enough to prove my point. Naturally, she came in third, and Bill and Ray were nowhere to be seen in the finals. It was the best \$20 I've ever spent. Terry Tegler of Fort Worth, TX took home the plaque, but I took home the bragging rights for my next debate with the members of Team Doily. Despite Ray's humiliation and thanks to a generous final round that admitted more entrants than the NHL playoffs, he actually managed to score a point for Team Doily. We now had nine—which was nine more than we scored last year, and put us among the current leaders.

FRIDAY

The glamour events started Friday morning and none was more glamorous than the **ASL** field at 112 strong. Over 300 games and some 48 hours later, the second **ASL** National Cham-

pionship came down to two players: Perry Cocke of MD, and Ray Woloszyn of NC. Each had beaten heavy favorites; Ray faced down Gary Fortenberry of TX in a grueling nine-hour match only to follow it with a blistering match against Virginia's Guy Chaney. Perry did the seemingly impossible by topping 1991 champion Mike McGrath and last year's GM Bill "Fish" Conner in back-to-back games.



Perry Cocke (left) upsets Mike McGrath (right) on his way to the **ASL** crown.

The championship game came down to the **Barrikady**—specifically, Bread Factory #2. This scenario had been played 22 times already in the tournament with the Russians prevailing 13 times, and after two turns Woloszyn's Russians looked good for win #14. The Germans had lost a leader and a squad-and-a-half, as compared to no losses for the Russians. But two KIA's and an Ambush later, the Russians were in full retreat. Fish placed third, Chaney fourth, and newcomer Eric Givler took 5th and "best of class" honors for the highest finish by a player rated at or below 1500. Ironically, he edged-out Rob Wolkey for that honor, although Wolkey had given him his only defeat.

Considering the size of the field, **ASL** may well split into divisions next year with additional plaques for best performance by a player in his class (based on AREA ratings) and perhaps a bounty hunter plaque to the player who scores the biggest upset as determined by the difference in their AREA ratings. Fate can be fickle. During the last five **ASL Oktoberfests**, *Guryev's HQ* was won by the Germans at a 17:5 clip, while the Russians prevailed at **AVALONCON '92** at a ratio of 5:10. Such are the quirks of tournament play.

BULGE '91 was one of the few tournaments to decrease in size—losing nearly half of its field and barely staying eligible for tournament status with eight players. Moreover its champion was decided by forfeit when the other finalist, Mark Guttag, had to depart, leaving Randy Heller as the unchallenged champion. The small field allowed the first round to be played as two games by switching sides in each game to adjust for the perceived imbalance. Mark was the only player to win twice as the Allies and Randy had the two highest scores as the German.

Between its recent publication, voluminous rules, and the competition of two other **THIRD REICH** tournaments, I figured **ADVANCED THIRD REICH** would have a tough time qualifying as a tournament. However, playtester and GM Joe Brophy managed to pull enough curious grand strategists together for an official

event and walked off with the plaque. I suspect the event was as much a teaching experience as a competition and that Joe will find both a larger and more experienced field to contend with next year.

George Seary of Endwell, NY became the first *AVALONCON* champ to successfully defend his crown when he repeated in *CIVIL WAR* by beating Tom Drueding in the semi-finals and Don Johnson in the final.

James Falling of Raleigh, NC also held serve by repeating as the champion of *RUSSIAN FRONT*, albeit against a reduced field of only ten. The objective bids for sides ranged from a high of 39 to a low of 27. Runner-up Bruce Kernan gained a high of 45 objectives as the German in one round while Sean Finnerty aggressively pursued the Axis satellites as the Russians in another game and captured both Constanta and Helsinki.

WOODEN SHIPS & IRON MEN was decided in the fifth round when John Boisvert blew away the rigging of GM Jim McAden to end the tournament as the only undefeated player.

Perennial tournament favorite *KINGMAKER* drew only 11 entrants this year, less than half last year's total, and may be showing its age in the face of a rising crop of new multi-player games. Yet the four-hour championship round of the "War of the Roses" produced more than its share of tension and excitement for the six finalists as the lead changed hands no less than four times in the final 30 minutes of the game! GM and last year's winner, Heikki Thoen, finished third this time out behind the victorious George Sauer III of Circleville, OH. George is a worthy champion, having written an imaginative article on *KINGMAKER* variants in Volume 24, Issue Number 5 of *The GENERAL*.

No lack of participants troubled *TITAN*, which retained its status as the fifth-largest event with 48 players. Hard-working GM Bill Scott, who makes rules clarification mailings to his players before the convention and detailed summaries of the results afterwards, is among our most dedicated GMs and his overall GM rating of 9.21 in our convention survey bears that out. Six finalists from a field which included past winners of *AVALONCON*, *Origins*, *Atlanticon*, and the *Charlottesville TITAN Open* began play in the final round. Bruno Wolff gained much respect as he cut down Mike Pustilnik, the highest scoring qualifier, Brian Bouton, and last year's winner Steve Rareside. Steve Kolesar chose that time to put Bruno out, but not without being crippled in the process. Kevin Quirk, having quietly stayed clear of the mayhem, then charged Steve and the last battle pitting Serpents and a Titan against each other took place in a swamp. When a Behemoth eliminated Steve's Titan, Kevin emerged as the new *TITAN* champion.

Speaking of dedicated GMs, Glenn Petroski also rated very high with a 9.2 rating in our GM survey. Small wonder. Glenn also precedes the tournament with an extensive mailing of clarifi-

cations for his *VITP* tournament and then hovers over his seven-round, Swiss-style tournament throughout the weekend. This year's event was exceedingly hard-fought with no one going undefeated. 76 games of *VITP* were played, with 38 Japanese wins, 36 Allied victories and only two draw games. Glenn tells us: "Characteristic of [the '91 *VITP* tournament] was the separation of the men from the boys. Characteristic of *AVALONCON* '92 was the fact that the boys had grown up. As Marvin Birnbaum commented after besting me: "That is for throwing sand in my face last year!" ... All of '91's Top Ten finishers had taken a loss by the third round and had to fight their way back through the new contenders to hold any standing at all." Wes Erni and Alan Applebaum took first and second, respectively, with only one point separating them. Wes Erni overcame his early loss to pull out the win for himself and his team in the Team Tournament.



GM Pat Flory comes up short in *THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN*; finishing second again.

THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN had a slightly reduced field this year for a new format which used a "Round-Robin" preliminary to determine the eight finalists who would battle it out in single elimination format. This resulted in a ten-round tournament which saw Alan Frappier of Norwich, CT go undefeated, leaving GM Pat Flory, the AREA postal champion, as the bridesmaid for the second year in a row. Pete Menard, a third finalist from CT, also entered the Semi-Finals undefeated but fell to Flory as Tom Gregario of Norristown, PA lost to Frappier.



Who said the "classics" are dead?

WATERLOO was the last of the Friday morning major events to get underway with a perfect field of 16. All found the decisive battle would be fought forward of Mont. St Jean with the French in need of cavalry and the PAA in need of infantry. The PAA took ten of the 15 games played as Rob Beyma won his second plaque with wins over J. Evans, Barry Rockwell, Chuck Stapp and Mark Gutfreund in that order.

DUNE was the most frequently requested tournament last year so it returned from the grave as a discontinued game to draw 12 players to the two-round event. Paul Saunders of Sterling, VA was the only double-winner, winning as Emperor allied with the Guild and as Atreides in an Atreides-Emperor-Harkonnen triumvirate. All games ended in an alliance win.



... and who says kids don't like boardgames?

The new version of *D-DAY* fared no better than its predecessor in attracting a qualifying field. Only four generals battled for control of the beaches, topped by David Grosskurth of Powder Springs, GA who came from nowhere in the final round to win the only full victory of the tournament.

James Fleckenstein of Sterling, VA won the *FIFTH FLEET* tournament with an overwhelming victory over the Indian navy by sinking both the *Vikrant* and *Viraat* in the appropriately-named *Battle of the Flattops*. It was easy to see how James got his practice. His ten year-old son scored decisive victories in the first two rounds.

COMPUTER THIRD REICH failed to draw enough entrants to qualify as an official tournament (which is probably just as well, since 70% of our Survey respondents felt that computer games had no place at *AVALONCON*). Consequently, the first and last *AVALONCON* computer event was won by Baron August of Aliquippa, PA.

The *WIZARD'S QUEST* Junior tournament grew to 13 players and had to be a success judging by the enthusiasm of my 9-year old. I felt guilty dumping this bundle of energy on GM Bill Navolis without having taught her the game but Bill did an admirable job of explaining the game to those who had never played before. So good, that my daughter is now constantly bugging me to play *WIZARD'S QUEST*. Anabel Raymond of Dorval, QUE won with an easy victory in *Red Dune* while Carolyn DeMarco took second by routing the Orcs in "Lair of the Lizard".

Michael Anchors of Rockville, MD won the *ACQUIRE* tournament by qualifying for the finals on a tie-breaker and then winning the final game. In the three preliminary rounds, a player received one point for each player he beat in the four-player games. Dave Plotnick and Doug Gollulo scored eight of a possible nine points to advance while Anchors and Mark Derek were among seven players with seven points. The final order of finish was Anchors,

Derek, Plotnick and Gallulo. *ACQUIRE* was also notable for my teammate's failure to score in the Team Tournament. In two years, Team Doily has failed to score a point in *ACQUIRE*. When will we learn?



Obviously, this isn't the finals of *ACQUIRE*—not with Team Doily's Bill Cleary (left) in attendance.

EMPIRES IN ARMS joined the tournament ranks this year using a "domination of the board principle" to resolve winners in one round. Four full tables went the entire weekend with Aaron Smith of Trenton, NJ declared the winner based on going dominant with Russia in 1806. In the 1792 game, France went dominant in 1796 before Napoleon arrived. Tema de la Pena, Tim Stone, and Kurt Schlegl finished second through fourth, respectively.



You mean all you guys want to play *EMPIRES IN ARMS* all weekend?

With the beginning of *TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD* at noon, the "manly" portion of Team Doily went into action. I drew Paul Fletcher in the opening round and was surprised to get the Germans despite a bid of 0. My German win was just one of 13 against a total of only four Russian wins despite a preponderance of VP bids of one and two for the Germans. Seven hours and an adjudication later I was into the second round against the GM Henry Jones. Jones is the local opposition for Ron Fedin—the fellow who so unceremoniously dumped me in the opening round last year. With seven German wins in the first round, I decided to up my bid for the second game to a point. That matched Henry and he took the Germans on a Unit Elimination tie-breaker bid of +10. The game that followed once again proved my contention that *TPS* is better with chits than dice, as Henry was consistently out-rolled. His German offense deserved better than it got but still almost broke through at the very end when I got careless and allowed his armor to threaten the Red Barricades. Meanwhile, Fedin had dispatched last year's winner, Byron Stingley, in an extremely close game resolved by the tie-breaker on the final die roll.

I was third in line for the bye caused by our uneven field of 17 and gladly took Saturday morning off to wrestle with my daughter in the Tag Team tournament. When I returned, my old foe, Ron Fedin, had dispatched Jason Robert with another +2 bid and was waiting for me with mouth watering—or so it seemed. Ron again bid two for the Germans and I gladly took the Russians. Ron even graciously offered to use chits, no doubt not wanting to hear me whine about the dice for the next six hours. But it did no good. Ron's dice tower, the same one I dubbed the "Tower from Hell" the year before—did me in again even while using chits to resolve combat. The Russian got only two of 12 rubble rolls and couldn't refit artillery at all. When Ron drew his "2" to end my night on the first turn I knew I was in trouble. Falling further and further behind, I made increasingly more desperate gambles and as despair replaced hope, added bad play to bad luck for an unbeatable combination. Ron won easily for the second year in a row, and my two points left Team Doily out of contention with but 11 points and no events remaining. It was no consolation that Ron lost in the finals to James Doughan by an even wider margin—his bid of 2 VPs for the Germans had little to do with his downfall, so complete was the Russian victory. In fact, Doughan won three of his four games as the Russians, although German bids of as much as two VPs certainly helped.



Our hero manages to avoid an opening round defeat in *TPS*.

Faced with such excellent German play, I finally had to admit that the game indeed favored the Germans. To redress the balance, Tom Oleson and I played four more games in the week following the convention to experiment with a new rule that allowed the Russian to activate the area they bring reinforcements into and to infiltrate with those reinforcements in or adjacent to the landing area rather than limiting them to merely landing. The result was one Russian outright win and three ties decided by unit losses. With this new play balance provision, I feel *TPS* will be an even more exciting tournament. Wait till next year!

CIRCUS MAXIMUS again used four qualifying heats to amass 67 entrants to edge *DIPLOMACY* for the second largest event. The first two finishers in each race qualified for the final gala on Sunday, which resulted in a Roman spectacle of epic proportions as 15 chariots took to the *Circo Massimo*. The "Valiant Try" Award should go to Lee Kershaw, who entered all four heats only to finish third each time—just out of the money. Jeff Barnum of Grand Rapids, MI won the empire-sized main event on Sunday.

BLACKBEARD posted one of the largest gains in participants—nearly doubling in size and requiring a shifting of sites as well as the addition of a third round to crown Gordon Rodgers of Philadelphia the top seadog among the field of 36.

DRAGONHUNT drew only four junior competitors but that didn't prevent Beth Barnard of Fairview, PA from slaying the dragon, after having faced down and wounded the vile worm twice previously.

LEGENDS OF ROBIN HOOD was another of the successful Juniors events with 18 youngsters "riding through the glen". However, it got me in hot water with my nine-year old when the GM cut the published game length in half—thus making my pre-tournament coaching obsolete. Poor Jessica ended the half-game tournament with lots of Merry Men but no gold. Ah well... losing is a more important lesson than winning. Melissa Pafenberg of Arlington, VA proved to be the best young archer.



Young archers practicing before the *LEGENDS OF ROBIN HOOD* tournament.

With 19 competitors, *SQUAD LEADER* proved itself to still be a quality event, although obscured by the shadow of its progeny. Indicative of its plight is the fact that its GM and original winner, Scott Romanowski, is abandoning it next year to enter the *ASL* ranks. Eventual winner Jeff Miller of Massena, NY dispatched Scott in the opening round of the Single Elimination Finals and then beat Brook Shultz and Eric Stranger for the win. Jeff won as the Germans in the last four rounds with Scenario 7 (*Buchholz Station*) being his battlefield of choice.

RAIL BARON remained a popular event with 29 entrants and yielded the first double winner of the weekend when Kevin Quirk of Mechanicsburg, PA ended the two-round marathon ten hours later at 2 AM. Marcus Foster of Ft Worth, TX, the son of last year's winner, came within one dot of winning, but as a result of the short-fall fell beneath \$200,000—allowing Kevin to win on his next run.

PELOPONNESIAN WAR, which barely made tournament status last year with eight players, was not so fortunate this year as only six showed to contest Greece despite the enthusiastic GM'ing of designer Mark Herman. Roberto Sanchez nevertheless won in three rounds when his Athenians rebounded from certain defeat to capture Sparta.

SUPERSTAR BASEBALL also slipped drastically from its inaugural showing of 23 entrants to only 9, proving that scheduling is everything, and prompting GM Randy Cox to abandon it and move on to something else next year. Perhaps the competition from the newly added Statis Pro Baseball tournament proved too much, but with sports coverage at AVALONCON on the rise the competition is only going to get tougher. Using the special charts provided by GM Cox, John Brandeberry's 1991 Atlanta Braves beat David Baumgardner's 1991 Toronto Blue Jays four games to one for the second AVALONCON World Series title.

Speaking of sports, my least favorite "sport" and my favorite "sports game" also got underway at this time with 16 "wrasslers" pairing off with teams of three wrestlers apiece in a *WRASSLIN'* Elimination tournament. I predict this fast-paced game will grow in popularity at AVALONCON as more gamers see how much fun it is. I'd planned on entering it myself if I had made my typical first round exit from TPS, but as it was I had an appointment to keep on the Volga. Consequently, Mike Fitzgerald won his second AVALONCON plaque in as many years by defeating J. Rush, Ray Stakenas, Steve Rugh, and Mike Stein in that order.

Moving now from the ridiculous to the sublime we come to *DIPLOMACY*—ranking third in the AVALONCON hierarchy with 65 players, but first in prizes. In keeping with the traditional prizes of *DIPLOMACY* events, Best Country Armies were given out for best performances by each player and a "Hammered" plaque for the poor soul who lost the most centers in a single turn due to a stab. The unfortunate recipient of that booby prize was Marc Rosenthal of Brooklyn, NY who was done in by Tom Kobrin of Mebane, NC to take both the Golden Knife Award for best stab as well as winning the overall competition with the best overall performance over the three rounds. He also posted the only solo win. Kobrin was followed by Steve Chilcote (MD), our own Rex Martin, Greg Gayer of VA, Lee Kestler (PA), James Stevens (GA), and David Hood (NC). Best Country Awards went to our own Rex Martin as Turkey (come to think of it, I've often referred to him as "Turkey", myself), Tom Kobrin as Russia, Jerry Pitcey as England, Tom Mainardi as Germany, Steve Chilcote as France, Tom Pasko as Austria, and Fred Hyatt as Italy.

GANGSTERS made an impressive showing in its first tournament at AVALONCON with 28 players—many of them taking advantage of its "B" rating to learn as they played. One such newcomer, Debbie Otto, won it all—gaining all the experience she needed as she advanced through the three-round tournament. I bet that was a long ride back to St Louis for her husband.

PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN slipped from 16 entrants to ten, but that didn't stop GM Phil Rennert from repeating as champion of his own event. Phil noticed that most games saw the Russian player make a serious forward

defense on the Vitebsk-Orsha line. Phil believes that the 30-50 point bids for the German side (which he considers low) were due to the perceived advantage of this tactic. Phil's response: "In my experience, the Russian can't get enough [units] forward to hold, and can lose his army trying." Phil recommends trying to hold the main line along Smolensk-Hex 2418-Roslavl. Doubtless there are quite a few die-hard PGG fans out there who will be eager to test Phil's premise next year.

Far from lacking participants, **REPUBLIC OF ROME** added more players this year; but that didn't stop it from being a one-round tournament as the "game" defeated three of the four boards to prevent anyone from advancing. One fell to an outbreak of no less than seven active wars. Robert Rudolph of Pittsburgh, PA won on the fourth board to take the tournament outright in one game.

PAX BRITANNICA attracted a disappointing total of seven entrants, thereby failing to make tournament status. That didn't prevent Mark Franceschini of Owings Mills, MD from enjoying a great game as Britain when Germany declared war on him without allies and lost Africa in the process.

TYRANNO EX had a good start for a new game with a perfect field of 16 for a two-round tournament. Most had never played it before as the ink was still wet on the copies rushed to the show. I must commend my teammates on Team Doily for their restraint in not entering the tournament but instead helping GM Mick Uhl explain the game to beginners, for this is one of their favorite games. Next year, no more Mr. Nice Guy. William Patrick of Rossville, MI took first followed by Dave Pugh, John Irvine, and John Ellsworth.

MARCH MADNESS used one of my favorite tournament formats. It is unique in that the more players it attracts, the faster it concludes. Using each Regional as a qualifying heat allows up to 16 players to try for the Final Four final round at any of four different times. And, if space permits, players can enter more than one heat fairly because repeat entrants are penalized by lower draft numbers. It is the perfect tournament format for AVALONCON. Steve Rugh won the East Regional with his Duke '89 team while Bruce Reiff took the West with UCLA '69. In the SE Regional, GM John Ellmann advanced 8th seed Louisville '75 while yours truly advanced the fifth seeded Michigan '89 team from the Midwest by blowing away Heikki Thoen's vastly superior top-seeded UCLA squad with torrid dice rolling. The Final Four competition saw Reiff's UCLA squad overcome a ten-point deficit to edge Rugh's team by a point, 92-91. My dice remained hot as Michigan crushed Louisville 99-74. One game away from a plaque—could I back into another one? "What goes around, comes around." My torrid dice turned ice cold in the final, and in a game where high rolls are king, I rolled a total of 9 with six rolls in the first half. UCLA 83, Michigan 72. Bruce Reiff became a double winner for the weekend and took home his third AVALONCON plaque. I just sat there rolling dice.

SATURDAY

MERCHANT OF VENUS began the new action on Saturday with a two-round contest decided by percentage of money made at the respective boards. Kathy's first game was close, but in the second game a fast start gave her the lead, which she expanded to beat her opponents (including her husband) by a wide margin. Although both Kathy Stroh and Brian Bouton finished with 2-0 records, Kathy won the tie-breaker game and took the plaque back to Lilburn, GA.

There is never enough time to do everything you'd like at AVALONCON and one of the events I regrettably bypassed was *UP FRONT*. Our new editor, Don Hawthorne, has quite a reputation as an *UP FRONT* player, and it tickled me no end to secure office bragging rights at *Atlanticon '92* by winning two out of two and then beating a hasty retreat with my virtue still intact. It was enough to tempt me to enter the tournament, but I had a date with Ron Fedin on the Volga.



Jim Burnett (center) kibitzes as Don Hawthorne's Russians grovel before wife Maria's German onslaught in the *UP FRONT* finals.

This year, *UP FRONT* used an improved tournament format to ensure that undefeated players would not have to settle for second and third place. In fact, no less than 27 players survived the preliminaries with winning records to qualify for the Single Elimination portion of the tournament. After dispatching Mike Stein and John Droescher in the semi-finals, only the husband and wife duo of Don and Maria Hawthorne remained. The championship game was now for all the marbles—not just best *UP FRONT* player in the land, but more importantly, best in the household. In a technically flawless match, onlookers enjoyed a nip and tuck affair that literally went to the wire and was decided on points at the time limit when Maria's last German attack on Don's Russian firebase ran out the third deck and pinned two men at Range Chit 2 for a 21-20 victory.

PANZERBLITZ and **PANZER LEADER** both started in tandem which was probably a mistake in terms of drawing participants, as the sister games competed with each other for players. The older **PANZERBLITZ** managed tournament status while the relative newcomer had to settle for Demonstration status with but six combatants. Both used a Double Elimination format to entertain their players throughout the day. Johnny Hasay of Benton, PA went unbeaten in five games and defeated Ron Long (4-2) twice using scenario 18 to take the **PANZERBLITZ**

title while last year's winner, Bart Rigg of May's Lick, KY again went undefeated, this time in *PANZER LEADER*.

I was looking forward to the *WRASSLIN'* Tag Team tournament. After being drubbed by my daughter dozens of times, I was glad to be on her side for a change. Seriously, you can cheer at their sports events, enjoy their triumphs, and comfort them in defeat, but there's no substitute for actually playing with your child on the same team in a shared endeavor. I heartily recommend it to any gaming parent. My only problem was which daughter to team with as 9-year old Jessica is now ready to enter the Welterweight ranks. I suspect next year the Greenwood clan will have to hold a qualifying meet to see who gets stuck with mom as their partner. Tara and I won our first match, but in the finals that great card-drawing luck that won her two plaques last year deserted her. With five points of damage she tagged dad into the ring and was never seen again—failing to draw either a Recovery or a Power Surge, or even so much as a Referee to help her old man, who was beaten to a pulp by the Stakenas father-son duo from Livonia, MI. Second again. "Wait till next year" is starting to sound old.

BULGE '81 yielded the weekend's first double winner when Rob Beyma added to his *WATERLOO* laurels by fortifying key towns as the Americans and hanging on against massive armor, nebelwerfer, and stuka attacks against Jeff Martin in the finals and Phil Evans in the semi-finals after defeating Barry Conley with the Germans. The game's designer, Bruno Sini-gaglio, fell to GM Bryan Eshleman who then lost to Jeff Martin in the semi-finals.

ADVANCED CIVILIZATION has apparently replaced *CIVILIZATION* as the event of choice for the marathon gamer. This year's event started out with six boards of eight players each.

GM Charles Hickok relates: "The level of play was excellent and the games tightly contested, with people who stayed out of war generally doing best. Most early front-runners (including the GM) attracted early end-game unpleasantness and were thumped out of their leads. Six qualifying-round winners combined with the three best second-place finishers to fill out the board for the final game. Dan Vice of Fanwood, NJ led the Iberians to a victory characterized by intelligent play and excellent diplomacy."

GM Hickok, who placed second, offers this advice: "Don't get in front until the game is over and don't expect to catch up if you draw five disasters during the end game."

Charlie's planned improvements for next year include tighter time limits and possible "Best Country" awards for outstanding play in the first round.

STATIS PRO BASEBALL was an ambitious first time event at *AVALONCON* in which twelve entrants drafted individual player cards to form their own teams and then engaged in league play and playoffs. As predicted, the GM woefully underestimated the time required for

his format and when last seen the World Series was still underway Sunday evening as we departed. I am told that Steven Pedlow of Chicago, IL finally edged Pat Jones of Pittsburgh, PA for the first Statis Pro Baseball crown. This is a unique event which deserves a place at *AVALONCON* but should realistically start at the beginning of the convention and plan to run through the end.

For the second year in a row, GM Ray Stakenas proved to be the best Pied Piper by drawing 20 youngsters to the lost plateau to hunt dinosaurs in *DINOSAURS OF THE LOST WORLD*. Lauren Fitzgerald, who finished second in the event last year, joined her father in the winner's circle by edging out last year's champion Ryan Boufford in the finals.



One of five youthful expeditions to the Lost World plateau gets under way.

Bruce Reiff of Powell, OH became a double winner for the year and claimed his third plaque overall by amassing a winning margin of \$115,000 in *WIN, PLACE & SHOW*. His winning margin came primarily from betting Cockroach in the fifth. Linda Pedlow placed second by buying and backing Leyte Gulf in the sixth. Jim Burnett, a veteran GM of many conventions, achieved the only perfect score on our GM ratings for this event when six of his ten players answered the poll and each gave him a perfect "10".

The GM ratings serve a dual purpose. They help us to choose a recipient for a well-deserved honor as we single out one of our outstanding GMs and honor him/her with a plaque. The ratings also let us know who, if any, may not be suited for the task. All GMs are sent their evaluations and comments so that they can learn from the experience and hopefully improve their event in future years. To my knowledge, *AVALONCON* is the only convention which works with its GMs in this way to provide feedback and attempt to improve their performance.

Although we had many excellent GMs, the nominations were limited to the top six in overall ratings on the GM Ratings survey with a minimum of six responses. That resulted in nominations for Jim Burnett (10) for *WIN, PLACE, & SHOW*, Randy Cox (9.66) for *SUPERSTAR BASEBALL*, Russ Gifford (9.44) for *ASL*, Bill Scott (9.21) for *TITAN*, Glenn Petroski (9.2) for *VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC*, and Dave Terry (9.05) for *B-17*. The Advisory Panel committee for these awards selected Russ Gifford as the winner—not just because he ran the largest event and ran it well—but also

because he came all the way from Nebraska and sacrificed his own weekend (not playing in much of anything himself) in order to administer *ASL* as a late replacement GM. Well done, Russ. Richly deserved.

If I may digress for a moment, I recently read a review of *AVALONCON* by someone who obviously isn't one of its fans, and whom I recall as someone who ran events for a fee. He basically had two complaints. First, the events were limited to Avalon Hill games. Second, Avalon Hill was too cheap to pay its GMs. As for his first criticism, I have no excuse, nor do I feel I need one. Parker Brothers doesn't run events for Milton Bradley games when they're holding the National *Monopoly* championships. Nor does Nintendo promote SEGA when they crown their world's champion of video games. I don't feel the slightest bit guilty about not hosting tournaments in our competitor's games—especially when those competitors don't contribute one dime to the considerable expense of organizing this convention. One of the reasons that *AVALONCON* is such an intense, enjoyable experience is its concentration and focus; not just on boardgames, but on one specific brand of boardgame. It is that focus which makes it unique, and so enjoyable that over 40% of its attendees come from a distance in excess of 800 miles. Those who find this objectionable can continue to go elsewhere; frankly, we're having a great time without you.

As to his second complaint, I would point out that the decision not to pay GMs is not Avalon Hill's, but mine. The company wanted to reimburse GMs but I vetoed it based on my prior experience with such matters while running both *ATLANTICON* and *Origins*. Both of those conventions have had to offer incentives to attract GMs in the past. I know because I was the one who was paying them. I've seen this policy expand from free admission to actual bounties for each event ticket a GM can collect. I've also seen the GM performances under this system deteriorate progressively from year to year as it attracted more and more mercenary types more interested in making a buck than in running a good event. In contrast, *AVALONCON* GMs not only don't make anything, they pay up front for the privilege—long before their event is publicized—so that the pre-registration form can be prepared. I am immensely proud of the fact that this policy—although proposed by me—was solidly endorsed by the Advisory Panel of 16 GMs which make the policy decisions for *AVALONCON*. They openly rejected compensation in favor of retaining the volunteer spirit that has so far attracted only those with the best intentions. I ask you which event would you rather enter: the one being run by a GM collecting tickets for his cut who is then off to administer his other 11 events, or the one by the guy who does nothing else all weekend but administer that game and who has sent you a pre-convention guideline sheet at his own expense? For me, it is no contest. This is just another reason why I feel our volunteer GMs are the best in the world. Apparently many agree with me for we have no shortage of volunteers to host events under these terms. Indeed, I've noticed more diversity in our

boardgame event offerings than in several prominent national conventions. So my answer to our critic is that far from returning to the archaic systems he espouses, I would suggest to him that the other conventions consider adopting our policies.

WAR AT SEA is another event I wouldn't mind trying my hand at if I could find the time. Thomas Scarborough of St. Louis, MO was the undefeated winner of the five-round Swiss-style event with a perfect score of 50 victory points out of a possible 50. Bruce Monnin of Minster, OH (the defending champion) tied for second with Ken Shunk; both had 4-1 records and 40 VP's each. Chuck Stapp of Freehold, NJ was fourth with 38 VP's and a 4-1 record.

KREMLIN employed a point system to advance the top six players to a winner-take-all championship round. The final turn saw a "purge spree" combined with the "Kremlin Flu", leaving too few politicians to fill the Politburo. Sean Cousins of Bangor, ME saw his Party Chief ousted after an assassination scandal, but not before promoting *Lech Schukrutoff* to KGB head, thus winning Sean the tournament via the "Highest Active Politician" route.

Considering that this is a game of diabolical backstabbing, I found the following statement from Sean especially meaningful:

"I would like to relay one event that summed up the whole weekend for me. On Saturday night I was competing in the *KREMLIN* finals when we took a break to attend the After Action meeting. All six players left the table, with Intrigue cards, I.P. sheets, etc. sitting unattended. No one seemed at all worried about their opponents taking advantage of this. In fact, we were using my copy of the game, and I had no reservations about leaving it spread out for almost two hours with no one watching it. I have never played in any tournaments outside of *AVALONCON* where such trust was commonplace. I didn't speak to anyone who didn't thoroughly enjoy himself and almost every conversation ended with "see you next year". I know the 650+ mile trip won't deter me from attending."

ROADKILL became a demonstration instead of a tournament when the game failed to be produced in time. Nevertheless, GM and playtester Mike Fitzgerald put an interested group through their paces in a demonstration race with my prototype. He must have excited them for I was besieged with requests to borrow the set for the rest of the convention. I predict it will be among our most popular events within a few years as the Campaign game version lends itself very well to a unique tournament format. Craig Taylor reported similar enthusiasm from his ad hoc playtesting of *MUSTANGS*—the newest game in our Smithsonian American History Series.

FLASHPOINT: GOLAN failed to draw enough entrants to retain tournament status, but that didn't prevent Byron Stingley of Cary, NC from taking home another plaque. In his third and final round *Battle of Armageddon* scenario against Rodger Taylor's Arabs, his Sabra Brigade artillerymen disorganized an

entire Syrian Armored Division, setting up a devastating attack by the Israeli Natani Division for the win.

At 4 PM the Greenwood clan finally got on the scoreboard. Diminutive Jessica, all of nine years old, redeemed the family honor by taking the Junior division *WRASSLIN'* title over five other half-pint competitors. Lacking the necessary eight entrants to qualify for tournament status is a technicality I wasn't about to explain to her. A plaque is a plaque—and this one has her name on it.

An hour later, *ENEMY IN SIGHT* for little admirals got underway with Scott Cornett of Monroe, CT edging out last year's winner Megan McBride in a two-round affair.

The rules for *PATTON'S BEST* were amended to allow for a multi-player format, and GM Jason Robert of Northridge, CA led ten players in a drive on Bastogne.

NEW WORLD picked up additional players with a Saturday night start which is looking like a prime time-slot to start two-round Multi-Player games for a Sunday morning conclusion. Trevor Bender of Arlington, VA proved to be the best colonizer with Ryan Bouffard, George Sauer, and Jim Smith finishing in that order behind him.

SPEED CIRCUIT was the last event to get under way on Saturday, as 18 racers pitted their skills against the Monza course. The winner at the checkered flag Mike Fitzgerald who claimed double-winner status for the weekend and his third plaque overall with a high speed slipstream on the last turn after making the last lap with no Wears remaining. Rick Kissan finished second, followed by Thomas Greene and Michael Duffy.

The *AVALONCON* After Action Meeting brought Saturday to a close and compared to the inaugural meeting of a year ago was a pretty tame affair. Contentment seemed widespread. The most controversial discussion centered around the "No Smoking" policy with smokers and non-smokers backing predictable sides. The point was made that a designated area could be set aside for smokers and that issue was brought to a vote and soundly defeated in the Advisory Panel meeting that immediately followed in the wee hours of the morning. The prevailing attitude was that such an exception would only cause problems for GMs who would have to keep track of games in two locations. This decision was soundly backed by the attendees who answered the *AVALONCON* survey with 90% favoring the present "No Smoking" policy, 9% advocating a less severe restriction to allow smoking in the lobby, and only 1% advocating allowing smoking anywhere. For the most part, the smokers among us were remarkably cooperative in restraining their habit and the weekend passed largely without incident. Certainly the number of favorable comments on the "No Smoking" policy far outweighed the negative so the decision to stay the course was an easy one.

The only other significant discussion that I can recall involved the unhappiness of one fellow who to play his favorite game had to commit the entire weekend to a Swiss style format of playing only that game. Like the smoking issue, this is a matter which cannot be resolved to everyone's satisfaction. I specifically recall that the game in question settled on the Swiss format, because a number of people requested it—not wanting to be eliminated from a Single Elimination tournament on the first round because that was the only game they wanted to play. Obviously, these two sets of desires are in conflict with one another. My answer was that tournament formats were a matter of individual choice by the GM and those who were unhappy with the current format should make that known to the GM so that he can poll his players as to the format they would prefer in the future.



The winners of the Team Tournament with 16 points were the representatives from Wisconsin (from left to right) Peter Wilke (BRITANNIA), Wes Erni (VITP), Bruno Wolff III (TITAN), and Tom Mueller (ASL).

SUNDAY

"Get away day" at *AVALONCON* began with an interfaith religious service on Sunday for those hardy souls able to rise early from three straight nights of wee-hours gaming. For most, Sunday is reserved for the final round of events started previously and an early departure for those beginning the long trek home. But for others, there remained three last chances to grab an *AVALONCON* plaque.

ENEMY IN SIGHT led off the action at 9 AM with 32 admirals breaking up into four groups of eight to advance four of their number to designer Neal Schlaffer's final round. Robert Kilroy and John Filbride jumped off to early leads by each capturing a pair of prizes (prize ships, that is). In the second deck Gordon Rodgers pulled into the lead, but Bill Sanders' luck remained bad throughout as he assumed a trailing position at the back of the pack. The third hand proved to be the last as many prizes were taken and Gordon Rodgers went to 107 points with a third of the deck remaining. John Kilbride sank two ships and took another prize worth 32 points, removed a Break The Line played against him and the Philadelphian returned to port with 147 points and the win.



AVALONCON'S



Acquire
MICHAEL ANCHORS
ROCKVILLE, MD

Adel Verpflichtet
TERRY TEGLER
FT. WORTH, TX

Advanced Civilization
DAN VICE
FANWOOD, NJ

Advanced Third Reich
JOE BROPHY
NEW ROCHELLE, NY

Afrika Korps
MIKE CROWE
SPRINGFIELD, VA

Anzio
MIKE SINCAVAGE
STERLING, VA



Britannia
DUANE WAGNER
MT. LAUREL, NJ

Candidate
RANDY COX
CLEMSON, SC

Circus Maximus
JEFF BARNUM
GRAND RAPIDS, MI

Civil War
GEORGE SEARY
ENDWELL, NY

Dinosaurs of Lost World
LAUREN FITZGERALD
NORWALK, CT

Diplomacy
TOM KOBRIN
MEBANE, NC



Football Strategy
BILL CLEARY
OWINGS MILLS, MD

Fortress Europa
MICHAEL NEWMAN
COLRAIN, MA

Gangsters
DEBBIE OTTO
IMPERIAL, MO

Gettysburg
MICHAEL UHRICH
LEBANON, PA

Kingmaker
GEORGE SAUER III
CIRCLEVILLE, OH

Korean War
JOE BELLAS
FAYETTEVILLE, AR



New World
TREVOR BENDER
ARLINGTON, VA

Panzerblitz
JOHNNY HASAY
BENTON, PA

Panzer Gruppe Guderian
PHIL RENNERT
SEABROOK, MD

Patton's Best
JASON ROBERT
NORTHRIDGE, CA

Rail Baron & Titan
KEVIN QUIRK
MECHANICSBURG, PA

Republic of Rome
ROBERT RUDOLPH
PITTSBURGH, PA



Superstar Baseball
JOHN BRANDEBERRY
CHAMPAIGN, IL

The Russian Campaign
ALAN FRAPPIER
NORWICH, CT

Third Reich
JERRY INGERSOLL
HOT SPRINGS, AR

TP: Stalingrad
JAMES DOUGHAN
CHICAGO, IL

Tyranno Ex
WILLIAM PATRICK
ROSEVILLE, MI

Up Front
MARIA HAWTHORNE
SPRINGFIELD, VA



1992 CHAMPIONS



ASL
PERRY COCKE
BALTIMORE, MD

Attack Sub
STEVE RUGH
NORWALK, CT

B-17
FRANK ALEXANDER
ROYAL PALM BEACH, FL

Bulge '81 & Waterloo
ROB BEYMA
POCOMOKE, MD

Bulge '91
RANDY HELLER
GROTON, CT

Blackbeard
GORDON RODGERS
PHILADELPHIA, PA



Dune
PAUL SAUNDERS
STERLING, VA

1830
DAVID HARSHBARGER
CHAPEL HILL, NC

Empires in Arms
AARON SMITH
TRENTON, NJ

Enemy in Sight
JOHN KILBRIDE
PHILADELPHIA, PA

Enemy in Sight Jr.
SCOTT CORNETT
MONROE, CT

5th Fleet
JAMES FLECKENSTEIN
STERLING, VA



Kremlin
SEAN COUSINS
BANGOR, ME

Legends of Robin Hood
MELISSA PAFENBERG
ARLINGTON, VA

March Madness & WP&S
BRUCE REIFF
POWELL, OH

Merchant of Venus
KATHY STROH
LILBURN, GA

Merchant of Venus Jr.
LAUREN HICKOK
HARRISBURG, PA

Naval War
KENNETH SHUNK
ANCASTER, ONT



Russian Front
JIM FALLING
RALEIGH, NC

Speed Circuit & Wrasslin'
MICHAEL FITZGERALD
NORWALK, CT

Squad Leader
JEFF MILLER
MASSENA, NY

Statis Pro Baseball
STEVEN PEDLOW
CHICAGO, IL

Storm Over Arnhem
JAMES FUQUA
DETROIT, MI

Super ASL
RONALD BERGER
THOUSAND OAKS, CA



Victory in Pacific
WES ERNI
WEST ALLIS, WI

War At Sea
TOM SCARBOROUGH
ST. LOUIS, MO

Wizard's Quest
ANABEL RAYMOND
DORVAL, QUE

WS&IM
JOHN BOISVERT
SEA ISLE CITY, NJ

Wrasslin' Battle Royal
JUDY KIBLER
EDGEWOOD, MD

Wrasslin' Tag Team
RAY STAKENAS JR. & SR.
LIVONIA, MI

ATTACK SUB again drew well in the get away slot with 26 submariners vying in a "best two out of three" format in the preliminaries. The final came down to a scenario of *Flattop* between Steve Rugh of Norwalk, CT and defending champion James Fuqua of Detroit who was trying to become our first back-to-back double winner by claiming his fourth plaque. Steve was down to his last sub and NATO had just hammered it with three separate attacks—all misses—when the lone Soviet sub sunk the *Kennedy* to win the tournament.

Nineteen wrasslers showed up for the **WRASSLIN'** Battle Royale at 11 AM and the last chance at a plaque. Being the defending champion in this event is like walking around with a kick-me sign taped to your back so I unchained my wife from the Registration desk and sent her off to defend the family honor. Much to my surprise, she survived the first round and made the final six. Fortunately for my own peace of mind, she was soon ousted from the finals when she got a bit frisky with a BR card. The struggle was now a three-cornered battle between the Judge (Troy Middler), Manly Mike (Judy Kibler), and the Garbage Man (Gene Gibson). The latter two combined to hurt the Judge but not enough to prevent the Garbage Man from making a quick exit when his BR was reversed with a Power Surge. That left Judy Kibler, last year's runner-up, in position to finish off the crippled Judge with a Bear Hug.

As much as it pleases me to honor all of the aforementioned for their gaming prowess, there are others who stand even higher in my esteem. With all of the emphasis we place on competition and winning at **AVALONCON**, the best thing about the convention is the high degree of sportsmanship which is displayed throughout. Thus I tip my hat to the following folks, who so impressed their respective GMs to earn a nomination for the Sportsmanship Award:

Trevor Bender (*SOA*) • Ryan Bouffard (*BKBD*) • Fred Calderone (*VITP*) • Bob Cloyd (*RFT*) • Sean Cousins (*GNG*) • Mike Ellsworth (*MVJ*) • Laureen Fitzgerald (*LRH*) • Tom Gregorio (*TRC*) • Mark Gutttag (*B91*) • Frank Hamrick (*PPW*) • Keith Hunsinger (*WSIM*) • Lee Kershaw (*CMS*) • Sylvain Larose (*B-17*) • Alan Libuzuski (*KRW*) • Dennis Mason (*CVW*) • Mark McBride (*SCT*) • Tom McCorry (*ASL*) • Troy Medler (*WBR*) • Bill Navolis (*PTB*) • Forrest Pafenberg (*B81*) • Linda Pedlow (*WPS*) • Randy Schilb (*FSE*) • Bruno Sinigaglio (*AFK*) • Bill Taylor (*NVW*) • Marcelo Triunfo (*SSB*) • Andre Uhr (*GBG*) • Mark Walker (*SQL*) • Bob Wartenburg (*3RT*)

The job of the Advisory Panel Sportsmanship Award committee was made easy when Chuck Stapp of Freebold, NJ was nominated in two events to become the clear winner. Rodney Robinson, the *WATERLOO* GM, had this to say of Chuck: "An opponent that is a pleasure with which to do battle. Always remembers that fun cometh before the win." Chuck also drew GM Andrew Maly's endorsement in the *UP FRONT* tournament.

And so ended another **AVALONCON** which would have to be considered by any measure a great success. What it lacked in numbers was more than made up for with enthusiasm. Management is now convinced that this "Back to Basics" championships theme is a concept whose time has come, and is committed to making it an annual event. More importantly, the format is one which the majority of our attendees simply adore.

A quick accounting of the survey results reads like an across-the-board endorsement of the convention structure. Consider the numbers which follow:

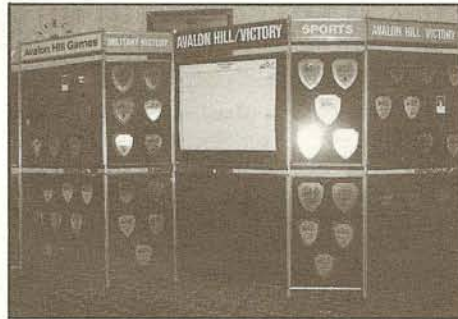
- 90% rated their **AVALONCON** experience as "Great", compared to 10% who gave it an "Average" grade. Not one person among 300 responses rated it "Poor".

- 65% said they would probably return next year with others in tow, while another 32% indicated they'd be back alone. Only 3% indicated they would probably not attend next year.

- 48% found the AREA rating program "interesting" while only 7% found it "annoying". This is a major shift in its approval rating, and would seem to indicate that the system is winning converts.

- 48% also found the Team Tournament concept "worthwhile" while only 2% found it "Not worth the effort". A 50% increase in the number of teams in this year's tournaments seems to indicate that this is another concept growing in popularity.

- 85% felt that the plaques "were the main attraction" while only 15% favored replacing them with more merchandise credits. This proves my point that while "you can't play a plaque", neither can you remember how you got a free game ten years later.



The **AVALONCON** plaques were much sought-after honors. This year, as the plaques were won, they were replaced on the display by photographs of the winners. See this issue's center spread for photos of the various tournament winners.

- 60% favored maintaining the present Thursday-through-Sunday format while 40% opted for a longer format. Given the high number of people who attend by travelling great distances, I'm inclined to give them more bang for their travel buck. The compromise solution of maintaining the Thursday-to-Sunday format, but moving the starting time up by eight hours, seems like the most logical solution.

- 51% favored an early August date, compared to 27% for July, 13% for any holiday weekend, and only 9% for June.

- 92% were in favor of staying at the Penn Harris. Only 8% were interested in moving to a larger facility in a major city.

- 81% felt that the "free" souvenir t-shirts/hats were a good promotion to encourage early pre-registration as opposed to 19% who favored a lower registration fee instead.

Interest in spousal-support programs was minimal, so we won't be going into the tour business. It was largely felt that people interested in seeing local points of interest would rather do so in the family car than in a bus. Besides, the point of **AVALONCON** is to promote boardgaming as an enjoyable social activity. It doesn't really say much for gaming if we have to offer tours to other activities as an adjunct. The "wargame widow" argument loses a lot of its validity when you examine the breadth of the tournament offerings at **AVALONCON**—or the Winners Circles of such games as *GANGSTERS*, *MERCHANT OF VENUS* and *UP FRONT*. In addition to which, there are enough beginner's games and socially-interactive, easy-to-learn games to keep anyone entertained who will give them a chance. My wife is even threatening to run a *FACTS IN FIVE* tournament next year.

On the question of adding the fringe activities one sees at other conventions, the responses were uniformly in favor of keeping **AVALONCON** as an exclusively boardgame convention with the emphasis on playing games. A clear majority disapproved the addition of game auctions (57%), seminars (59%), flea markets (56%), role playing games (94%), and computer games (70%). Only on the issue of adding more free Juniors-only events was a majority (72%) in favor of adding to the current format. We will try to respond to that request to the best of our ability to attract quality GMs. It takes a special kind of person to GM a Juniors Event well. There is also the matter of which should come first—the Juniors or the events to attract them. Although attendance by youngsters appears to be on the rise, we have to be sure that the number of events doesn't dwarf the participants. The prime ingredient in any event is players, and a paucity of them lessens the enjoyment for everyone.

A surprising 32% favored the "stick" approach of charging an additional \$5 to those who don't pre-register on time as opposed to 68% who favored the "carrot" approach of offering free souvenirs. I favor "carrot" to "stick" incentives because once the deadline has passed for pre-registration, the extra charge serves as a *negative* incentive for someone to attend. Consequently, we'll be trying a combination of the two incentives next year, while charging the same fee to both. Early pre-registrants will receive a free t-shirt or hat *and* a \$5 credit to be used for any game purchase made at the show. This largesse will be funded by a \$5 increase in the registration fee which, among other things, will enable us to mail the program by first class mail—avoiding the problems we've had in the past using bulk rate mailings for timely delivery.

A cynic would be quick to point out that the registration fee for **AVALONCON** has increased every year. But before you complain, stop to compare our \$30 price which includes a free souvenir and a \$5 game credit to the \$35/\$40 charged by other national conven-

tions, who then sell you a souvenir for another \$8-\$10, and charge you again for admission to every event in which you participate. *AVALONCON* is a bargain—especially if you avail yourself of the credit to make a purchase, and value the free souvenir.

Michael Tsuk of Arlington, MA writes: "I just wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed *AVALONCON*. Basically, I had the time of my life! ... The format was great. It was wonderful to just play games for four days straight. I'm definitely coming back next year, and I'll try to bring some of my gaming friends from the Boston area, too. On that note, I think you could easily charge more for the registration fee, especially since there's no fee for individual tournaments. I, for one, would be willing to pay \$50 to register. After airfare and hotel room, the registration fee is pretty insignificant."

We're not interested in raising the registration fee, but we do want to attract more people to experience *AVALONCON* first hand. The most vital ingredient to hosting a great convention is gamers—the more the better.

I realize that there are those who will dismiss all of this as PR hype. I exchanged letters with one cynic last year who insisted my description of *AVALONCON* had to be fiction. He hadn't attended but he wouldn't believe me or the eye witness accounts of another correspondent who had. Such people will never be convinced. But if you have your doubts, I urge you not to take my word for it but to seek out someone who has attended and ask them their opinion. That's why we give away t-shirts and hats rather than charging for them as other conventions do. We want you to ask those people what they thought of *AVALONCON*. If you do, odds are you'll be joining us next year at the Hunt Valley Marriott Inn in Baltimore, MD when we do it all again on August 5th-8th. See you there.



PLAYTESTERS WANTED

We're looking for more playtest volunteers. This time the subject is nothing less than the **HISTORY OF THE WORLD**; a multi-player game of global conquest tracing the rise and fall of civilizations across all of recorded history. The game system is very simple and reminiscent of a *Risk* variant. Priority will be given to those already in possession of the Ragnar Brothers version of the game, although a few "virgin" groups will be chosen as well. The playtest will require groups of at least four players and preferably six. Volunteers must be willing to spend a minimum of 20 hours per month in playtest, and submit three written, monthly reports regarding their findings. Applicants are cautioned that playtest materials are pre-production quality and may involve considerable labor to assemble. Remuneration is limited to a free copy of the game for each group coordinator. Applicants should send a short letter of introduction to Don Greenwood c/o The Avalon Hill Game Company, 4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21214. We regret that, due to the volume of mail such playtest invitations usually generate, we will be able to reply only to those actually selected.

POST-ATOMIC (!?) ADVANCED CIVILIZATION

Variant Rules for the (Re)Birth of Mankind

By Richard Berthold

The new *ADVANCED* version of *CIVILIZATION* has so re-kindled our enthusiasm for this venerable game that Gary Mayhew and I have actually tried the two-player version, surely an act of gaming desperation. There are two immediately obvious problems with only two players: trading opportunities are severely limited and there is too much turf available, even though the rules call for use of the Italian and Balkan peninsula panels without any of the island city sites. What we suggest here are a few rules modifications that we feel produce a two-player game of much greater interest and variety.

First, any two adjacent panels may be used, and an appropriate number of provinces and city states is created by randomizing some of them out of existence. For each province in the playing area (if the population limit number is on the panel, the province is in the playing area) a die is rolled to determine if the province is in play. Provinces determined to be not in play are marked with counters, and they are completely inaccessible to tokens. If they are coastal provinces, ships may still pass through them, but may not remain there between turns if carrying tokens. Consider these areas to be radioactive hot spots left over from the nuclear holocaust that destroyed the previous civilizations.

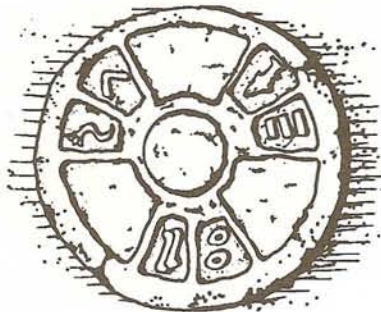
The percentage chance of a province being eliminated from play depends on the panels selected and the interests of the players. If, for example, the Italian and Balkan peninsula boards are used, a twenty percent chance of elimination will generally produce a good map, whereas a fifty percent chance is better if the Babylonian and Egyptian panels are used. These percentages could be increased if the players want a very constrained and challenging environment. In any case, once the randomizing is done, the resulting map must be checked for topographical suitability. Are there start areas for at least two different nations available? Is there any significant number of provinces completely cut off from the rest? You may have to tinker a bit for a playable map.

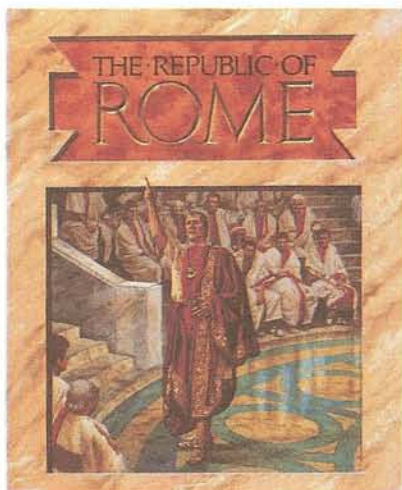
Since, with two players, trading will be severely limited or nonexistent (we don't trade at all), a player may now hold eleven commodity cards in his hand. A player is also no longer limited to two calamities, but when he draws a calamity, he immediately draws another card from that commodity deck. If it is another calamity, he is stuck with it, but draws again. This insures that regardless of how many calamities he gets hit with, the player will still get a commodity card from each stack. The non-tradable calamities are shuffled along with the tradable calamities when returned to their commodity stacks.

Now, the game resulting from these changes is perhaps something other than *ADVANCED CIVILIZATION*, but so is any two-player version, since the core dynamics of trading and dealing will be missing in any two-player game. What you do get is a variant that emphasizes all the non-trading aspects of the game, which can be quite interesting. The province elimination mechanism ensures that each game presents fresh geographical challenges, and efficient growth and token management becomes the real heart of the game. Preparation for and reaction to calamities assume a tremendous importance, since a player will now be suffering *many* calamities, both because there is no two-calamity limit and because he is the only possible secondary victim for the other player's calamities. Civil War is particularly interesting in a two-player game; as often as not it can be a benefit to the victim, setting him up to attack cities transferred to his opponent and thus to steal valuable commodity cards.

The civilization card picture is also changed. *Agriculture* and *Coinage* tend to be generally more important than in the regular game, and *Mining* becomes an absolute necessity, since it is so difficult to build large sets of commodity cards. *Metalworking* and *Astronomy* are also extremely valuable, because in a two-player game, war is all of a sudden feasible and even profitable. The enhanced possibility of war, incidentally, contributes to the need for careful token management, since moving second can be a tremendous advantage in certain situations. *Military* of course allows this, but the card is so expensive and otherwise so useless that it is unlikely ever to be purchased.

All things considered, regular *ADVANCED CIVILIZATION* is still a far better game, but if there are only two of you and you're still itching to play, this is the way to go. *Post-Atomic ADVANCED CIVILIZATION* is not only intriguing and challenging in its own right, but with its emphasis on token management and geography it continually provides valuable insights into the play of its parent, regular *ADVANCED CIVILIZATION*.





A GAME of Political Intrigue with Military Overtones

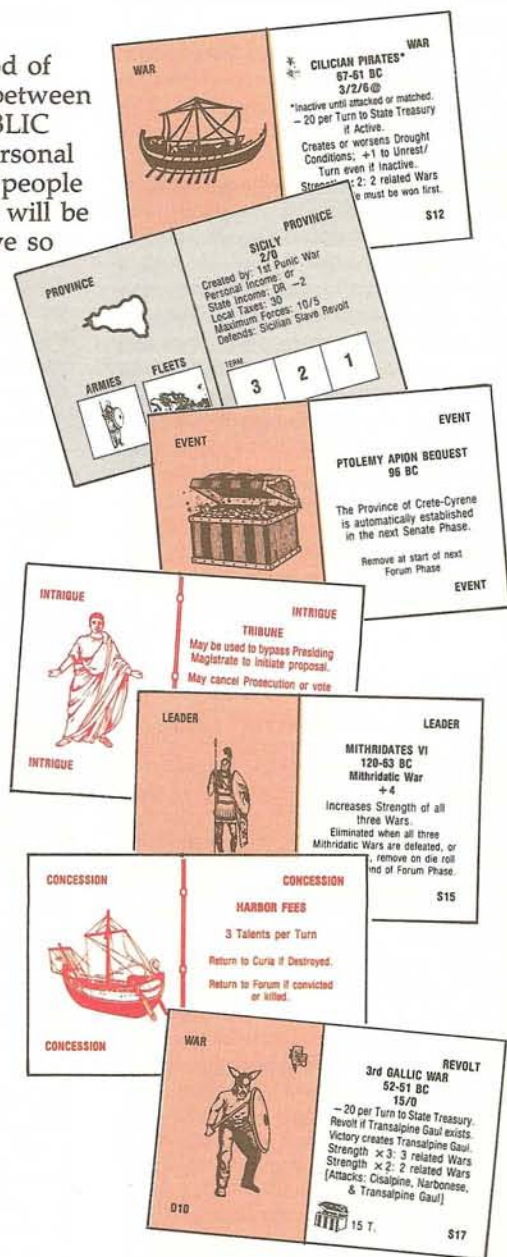
REPUBLIC OF ROME is a multi-player, diplomacy game set in ancient Rome which spans more than 200 years of the republic from the Punic Wars to the assassination of Julius Caesar and the onset of the Empire.

Players vie to control the Senate while also cooperating for the good of the state against Rome's enemies. It is this constant balancing act between personal advancement and the welfare of the state that sets REPUBLIC OF ROME apart from ordinary games. If the players allow their personal goals to interfere too heavily with the republic's best interests, the people may revolt or the state may fall to foreign conquest and all players will be put to the sword. Not since KINGMAKER and CIVILIZATION have so many innovative concepts appeared in a multi-player boardgame.

Not a wargame in the traditional sense, it is a game of political intrigue with military overtones that literally oozes the rich detail of the period's history. A deck of 192 illustrated cards sets the scene for the panoramic spectacle that was the Roman republic. As that history unfolds before them, each player's faction of influential Senators vies for political power, military commands, and economic advantages against the backdrop of a turbulent world. Deals and counter-offers abound. Short the necessary votes for Consul? Trade the Armaments Concession for a faction's support. Spartacus has destroyed your villa? Send Pompey off with ten legions to crush him. But is that too much power to entrust to one man? What if Pompey rebels and marches on Rome? Such checks and balances abound in a game replete with moves and countermoves as historical figures with special capabilities appear and die with the passing years. All of the great names of Rome and those who opposed them appear once again to contest control of the Mediterranean. Wars, revolts, droughts, epidemics, and a host of other random events flash before the paper time machine as fortunes rise and fall.

The game contains three scenarios which divide the color-coded cards into decks simulating the Early, Middle, and Late Republic. Those wishing a larger game can combine them into a Campaign Game of truly epic proportions.

No.	TITLE	Players	Ages	Complexity	Solitaire Suitability	Suggested Retail
885	Republic of Rome	1 to 6	12 & up	High	High	\$35.00



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FIFTY WAYS TO LEAVE YOUR SENSES

The Pursuit of Defeat in *REPUBLIC OF ROME*

By Stuart K. Tucker

If you've ever wondered how the Congress of the United States *really* works (perhaps a better term is "functions", since the system may not always "work"), then you should not miss the chance to experience it vicariously through play of *REPUBLIC OF ROME* (hereafter, *ROR*). Although our nation may not face the life and death issues that plagued Rome (such as dealing with Carthaginian invaders), the game system simulates parliamentary politics in full form. The political glory-seeking, pork-barrel politicking, silent back-stabbing, investigations of ethics, and appeals to non-partisan unity all seem eerily familiar—whether we are considering the Senate of modern America or that of ancient Rome. I have never experienced a game system which so well pits players against each other *and* against the game itself that no artificial constraints on naturally antagonistic attitudes are necessary. Antagonism can be played out fully, and will reap its own just desserts.

In the nomenclature of political science, governing systems are often classified by the method of alternation of opponents within the key offices, and by the relative loyalty of the opposition to the goal of maintaining the basic rules of the system. Disloyal oppositions in *ROR* can threaten to try to bring down the whole system as a way of forcing the governing coalition(s) to include them in the spoils of office-holding. However, the Republic is more likely to collapse through actions (whether well-intentioned or not) of the ever-shifting coalition partners. Unfortunately for the people of Rome, the temptations to depart from unity are many, and the resulting chaos can end the existence of Rome suddenly. Even clawing your way to the top is no guarantee. In this factionated Roman Senate, running the Republic becomes a demanding test of your ability to manage demands for personal glory (influence and popularity points) with both external and internal threats to your very existence.

Unlike other political games, where the threats of systemic failure (wherein *all* players lose the game) are somewhat artificial, *ROR* realistically shows historic threats to the Senate that each faction must consider (as opposed to threats to their own faction's position in the power structure). In *ROR*, there are no improbable nuclear blowouts, insane military psychos, or unanticipated random decapitations. This is not to say that there are no random events in the game system (known as "external shocks" to we economists). However, the consequences of these events are fully known and can be at least partially guarded against to minimize their effects. The problem is that most players are too busy maximizing the benefits of other activities to push for the "common good" policies that would save all from defeat.

So, what is there about *ROR* that makes it so appealing? Well, to fully comprehend the nuances and many facets of political life, you must play the game. And to play it well, you

SPQR

must understand the many, *many* ways you can lose the game. Once you fully digest the threat of losing, you will then know what it means to win. All too often, new players undertake any unfamiliar design by grabbing for a quick solo victory (and sadly, most game designers have catered to this by crafting unimaginative systems that reward such anti-systemic behavior). But in the real world, *nobody* has the power to be on the top of the heap all by themselves. Coalition-building, sycophantry, negotiations, payoffs, meritorious action, self-sacrifice, skilled finesse—these are the elements of real-life promotion, and of victory in *ROR*. Yet even the most skilled player at the game of politics will find the challenges to the Senate in this game multifarious, difficult and entertaining.

The tedious histories we have suffered through in reading about the Roman Empire often neglect to remind us that the formation and survival of the Republic was a troubled birth, to say the least. It is truly a credit to those long-dead Romans that there were so many centuries of democracy (however limited) in such a hostile Mediterranean world. The old Senate was amazingly resilient. But in this game, disaster accrues. It seeps in each turn. Like poisonous residues in the food chain, you know it is happening but prefer to discount the immediate threat until it is perhaps too late to do anything. Interestingly enough, this game reinforces two general, but contradictory, principles: 1) power begets power; and 2) all energy (read, "power") tends to maximum entropy ("dispersion").

Formally speaking, *ROR* is won by one player through one of the following methods:

- I) Acquiring gobs of influence for one of the senators of your faction (requiring many terms in office); or
- II) Getting one of your senators to have significant influence, while having sufficient votes in your faction to elect him "Consul for Life";
- III) Getting one of your senators (preferably, your most able military commander) into the field with many loyal legions, and/or with adequate moneys, to defeat an ill-organized Senate (rebel victory in battle);
- IV) Declaring one rebellious provincial governor at the moment an opposing, unpopular consul faces deep-seated unrest (a popular revolt); or
- V) Having the most combined influence among all your senators after the Republic has faced down all threats and finished the deck (or "decks"; there can be as many as three in a long game).

On the other hand, the Senate collapses—and thus, all players lose—if:

- I) There are four active wars facing Rome at the end of a turn;
- II) There is a Popular Revolt because of too high an Unrest Level;
- III) Rome has overspent her funds, has too many outstanding obligations in the form of military and social expenditures, and faces a natural disaster beyond the treasury's capacity; or
- IV) The Senate's army loses to a rebellious commander.

The enjoyable challenge of this game is that as each player strives for personal victory, all players risk defeat *en masse*. If you are too civic-minded, you may not have the opportunity to grab the solo victory you (so richly) deserve. If you are too independently greedy, you may undermine the vitality of the state and bring about the collapse of Rome about your (and the others') ears.

Since this article is intended for novices in this game, I suggest that when you first begin to play *ROR* you clarify your main objective. Clearly, the rules are complex and the ways of winning varied, and difficult to accomplish. Therefore, as a beginner, you should set your sights on a reasonable objective for your first few games. That objective being of course not to win, but to *lose*.

Let us then, with tongue firmly in cheek, consider the ways in which you might engineer your own defeat. If you embark on this straightforward objective, you have a fair chance of success and will finish the game with the gratifying feeling that you have at least accomplished *something*. Furthermore, you will now know a lot more than your fellow beginners about how to avoid defeat next time—because it is precisely at the point when all players together are about to lose that one player is most likely to emerge victorious in *ROR*! Julius Caesar recognized this truth when he was at the Rubicon. Marius is a lesser-known figure because he did not.

Which would you rather be?

Defeat through Mortality:

1. **Old Age.** The game provides for the random death of from none to two senators each turn. Over the course of 8-10 turns (at about a one in thirty-six chance each), the odds of death for your best senator are quite significant—thereby making him fairly useless to any governing coalition.

Defeat through Assassination:

2. **Get Assassinated.** More deadly than a random mortality draw, should another player decided to bump off one of your best senators, the typical odds are 33% (and higher if the attacker devotes the proper cards). You can best expedite this method by concentrating all your

wealth and power in one senator and then ticking off another player who has an obscure senator he would sacrifice for the chance at your big-wig. Best done when you have no body-guard cards to get in the way.

3. Fall an Assassination. Pick a player—any player (especially one having many Intrigue cards that might be bodyguards)—and try an assassination that fails. Your assassin dies and your faction is then open to prosecution. Better still, you've gained an enemy for life! What better way to ensure that you will never get elected to any significant post?

4. Succeed in an Assassination. In this case, you will have many friends smiling, but you will have done nothing whatsoever towards gaining influence or votes (or promises from others that might lead to these). Mostly, you will have ticked off at least one other player, and with luck have killed the one senator that was needed to defeat the barbarian hordes or keep down popular unrest next turn—thereby bringing *everybody* down. Of course, you might ignite a string of assassination attempts that will pretty well bring about the demise of both targets and shooters alike, leaving some formerly out-distanced faction in command of the Senate.

5. Fail to Try an Assassination. Lest you assume assassinations will always insure your defeat, remember that some players will be trying to force the killing of rising big-wigs. You can conveniently forget to knock off the most influential senator around, or maybe forget that by killing a senator you can defeat a vote to send a Dictator off to glorious military victory (soon to be followed by a glorious military rebellion). Or perhaps you might forget to assassinate that unpopular Consul that is likely to foster a game-ending popular revolt. Finally, you might want to just lay low and get ignored for the entire game, gaining no influence whatsoever. So, don't make the mistake of assassinating anybody—other players in future games might just offer deals to keep you from doing it again.



Defeat through Bad Money-Management Techniques

6. Spread Your Money Thin. By allocating your Faction income evenly among your senators and leaving little in the Faction treasury, you can make every one of your senators vulnerable to persuasion, render each of them incapable of direct action themselves, and rob your Faction of vital reserves all at the same time.

7. Persuasion Defense of Neutrals. Giving money to other neutral senators in defense of persuasion attempts may seem like a winning "counter-balance", but in reality you make yourself poor and give the richest player in the game the only chance for big bonanzas when *he* takes control of them—a surefire way to imbalance the game quickly by throwing money to him!

8. Sponsoring Games. This expensive method to buy popularity is best done when you have little cash, thereby robbing your coffers of moneys that should be preserved for crucial votes and rebellions.

9. Contributing to the State. To lose with real class, propose equal contributions when you are the poorest. But even if you are the richest, you can still lose through such contributions by making it possible for the Senate to send more loyal legions after your rebellious Consul at some point in the future.



10. Attract Knights With Cash; Lots of It. By spending five talents per Knight, you can squander the most per talent gained. Better yet, their extra votes make you seem powerful without really accomplishing much. And your Knight-heavy Senator (remember to concentrate them all on one) is a sure bet for persuasion, prosecution, assassination or distant governorship.

11. Play those Concessions Early. This way the opposition can prosecute you before they get distracted by more important investigations. It is amazing how jealous the smallest concession can make people if you but make much of it.

12. Play those Concessions Late. After all, you don't want to reap too much money from armaments or ship-building in the early stages of the game when the bulk of these are being raised.

13. Save Money (Especially all in one place). The accumulation of piles of unspent coin will certainly ensure that none of the others will ever consider you for a field command with any significant number of legions. Further, if you put it openly on your best senator, his life expectancy will quickly and gratifyingly drop!

Defeat through Ignoring the Polls

14. Pay no Attention to the Unrest Level. Let those improbably low population rolls put the squeeze on the Senate. Take care never to be a lowly governor in revolt at such times—the people might actually look to you for salvation!

15. Elect a Popular Senator to Reduce Unrest. Since this rival senator is likely to be very influential anyway, the troubled times and your heartfelt support of him should catapult him to victory!

Defeat through Acts of God(s)

16. Be Pontifex Maximus. Then you can empty your treasury *really* well by being the Pontiff at the moment of "bad omens". Certainly, your doubled votes on military matters will make some players very leery of giving you other important spoils as well.



17. Let Someone Else be Pontifex Maximus. Those priesthoods and Pontiff votes can lead to some very manipulative field assignments for commanders. You should be able to attract at least one opportunity to fight a losing campaign with your best senator.

Defeat through the TKO (Technical Knock-Out)

18. Be a Rules Lawyer. In any crowd of players who have only cursory knowledge of the rules, you can gain everybody's ire simply by correcting their errors publicly and loudly. You may have to do this often, no doubt encompassing all possible coalition partners. Remember, most players will not discern a "clarification" from true politicking.

19. Do Not Learn the Rules. If you ignore such "minor" details as the intricacies of naval/land battles, multiple commanders (to protect against Disasters and Standoffs), revolting provinces, treasury allocation, and Senate Phase procedures, you will certainly find your faction hung out to dry soon enough.

20. Talk to Your Coalition Partners—Late. A good Rome Consul will be able to deprive you of your votes on the issue at hand if you wait and talk only after the vote is called. This ploy should, however, be reserved for crucial votes, where your coalition is being screwed to the wall and in need of your suggestions to present a united front.

21. Be Quiet. While it is possible for you to—horrors!—win this way, it is hard for others to be so inept as to give you any consulships just for being silent. Try to avoid expressing any desires; other players might just believe you are powerful enough to be a threat, since it is impossible to know what damage your hidden cards can cause. Just to play it safe, don't hold any red cards in reserve.

Defeat through Voting

22. Avoid Those Knights. The more you have, the more the other players will feel obliged to give you some office(s).

23. Accumulate Votes. If you can get enough extra Senators and Knights, you can get everybody else thinking of creative coalitions that exclude your faction. Good move! It also can cost lots of money to achieve this, thereby doubly insuring your defeat.

24. Use That Veto Power—Often. The Tribune cards and automatic tribunes of certain senators give you plenty of opportunities to stop a vote. This should be done when the mathematical combinations of other, different (but essentially the same) proposals reach into the range of four-factorial, as usually happens. Never, *ever*, save these tribunes for prosecutions—as this will keep you powerful for too long.

25. Propose Anything Objectionable. Should you have the misfortune of being Rome Consul (or Dictator), you can quickly lose control of the meeting by proposing anything and having it rejected by all concerned. Alternatively, you can carry on and so drive your own influence down precipitously. This is best done by cutting off debate right away to make the other players feel negative towards anything you propose.

26. Propose Everything. Perhaps you also have the misfortune of having some misguided voting ally. Now you will have to be more devious in your attempt to lose the game. In this case, propose every possible combination that others think will help you, which they will surely vote down, thereby leaving the Senate no choice but to elevate the prospects of some other faction.

27. Propose Nothing. If you bore the Senate with lots of votes on minor motions, you should be able to get them all to jump happily at the first real proposal you offer—especially if you commence the voting illogically with the likely “yea”-sayers. Be certain, however, that the proposal does not inadvertently help your cause!

Defeat by Popular Acclaim

28. Sponsor Land Bills. This will certainly bring about an early demise of the Republic's finances if you do it often.

29. Oppose Land Bills. The loss of popularity from this action should make you a vulnerable target for assassinations and a very poor choice for Rome Consul.

30. Pay for Land Bills. The rules require that you pay for them once passed. So, you need to conscientiously help the Treasury get low enough so that it can't pay, thereby ending the game (this requires lots of fleets and legions lying about, and many undeveloped provinces). But even if Rome manages to pay for one you have proposed, you might luck out and get a disaster or bad omens to put on the final touch.

31. Repeal Land Bills. Ooh, this will make a lot of senators very unpopular at the very time when they (and Rome) need their popularity the most. Wait to do this until the Unrest Level is especially high.

32. Mention Land Bills. The shudders you send through competent players will surely end your participation in winning coalitions.

33. Let Your Rivals Sponsor Land Bills. Their gain in popularity ought to give them immunity from prosecution and a psychological defense against assassinations.

Defeat by Legal Reform

34. Play a Law Card. Do this strictly for temporary personal gain, knowing that the changes to the rules and political dynamics are likely to make Rome ungovernable, and your victory impossible.

35. Hold a Law Card. You wouldn't want to upset your rival's final march to victory by changing the rules on him at the last minute!

Defeat by War

36. Fight the Strongest War First. Since this war is also likely to have the highest probability of Disasters and Standoffs, you can manage to lose the most legions/fleets (and state money) by sending everything after it. The ideal situation is to keep the fighting going, but have as few wars won as possible, so that the four wars necessary for systemic collapse build up fast.



37. Fight the Weakest War First. This is pretty good too, because the stronger wars then have the chance to double in strength or acquire able leaders before the Senate can get around to fighting them.

38. Dispatch Lots of Force. The more troops you send, the more likely that one of the following wonderful things will happen: 1) a victorious Roman commander rebels with Rome's legions under his command; 2) a commander (preferably one of your Senators) runs headlong into a Disaster or a Standoff and loses lots of troops; or 3) a commander from another faction wins quickly and piles up game-winning amounts of influence and popularity through the victory.

39. Send Minimum Forces to Several Wars Simultaneously. While some players may hope for victory in at least one of those four wars confronting Rome, you will know that the odds are much more in favor of stalemate and collapse.

40. Send the Wrong Commander. Every military failure will decimate your rivals, of course, but at least Rome will lose more wars than she will win.

41. Send the Best Commander. A militarily competent field general will be a tough rebel to beat. Good prospects for Senate loss in the civil war to follow!

Defeat by Statesmanship

42. Play Statesmen Cards Early. You will want these game-winning bozos to face as many mortality draws, assassination attempts and prosecutions as possible. To that end, be sure to assign them plenty of concessions and Knights to insure their death.

43. Keep Statesmen Cards Hidden 'til the End. If you wait long enough, these will be unplayable—or at least their special abilities may be irrelevant. Trade them away if they are valuable to other factions.

Defeat in the Provinces

44. Take a Provincial Governorship. This way your votes will be in temporary exile, giving your opponents free rein for skullduggery in the Senate Phase. Don't try for any personal income, either.

45. Give Opponents Provinces. Propose and vote them the richest plums. They can probably use the money they reap to defeat you.

46. Collect Personal Income from Provinces. This way you can minimize your influence gains from “development” of the province and subject your Senator to prosecution upon his return to Rome.

Defeat by Long-term Policy

Remember that there are four ways for Rome to lose to the system or to a rebel. By pushing for full prosecution of any one of the following policies, you should be able to see the collapse of the Senate by the loss of its ability to deal with the others:

47. Prosecute all wars to the fullest.

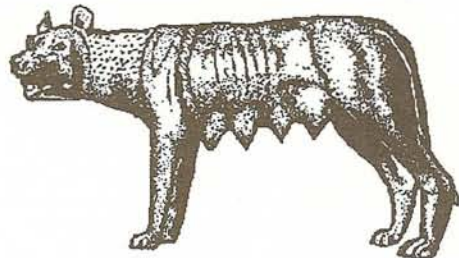
48. Keep the Unrest down.

49. Never spend too much State money.

50. Never send out too many legions with any one commander.

And just remember the Fifty Ways:

*If you, Lou, haven't figured it out by now;
the plan, Stan, is to do this:
Either concentrate, Nate, on everything
or push one scheme, Akeem, to the extreme.
Oh yea, Ray, rebel as often as you may.
And the response, Alphonse, should be
overwhelming!*



SO THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING

(Volume 28, Number 2)

Titles Listed: 114 Total Responses: 305

Rank:	Title	Rank Last	Times		Freq. Ratio
			Pub Time	On List	
1.	Advanced SL	AH	2	34	5.6
2.	Up Front	AH	1	21	4.6
3.	Blackbeard	AH	--	1	4.3
4.	D&D	TSR	--	1	3.3
5.	Third Reich	AH	3	14	3.3
6.	Diplomacy	AH	8	35	3.0
7.	Air Force	AH	--	1	2.6
8.	B-17	AH	17	2	2.3
9.	Bulge '91	AH	5	2	2.3
10.	Adv. Civilization	AH	--	1	2.0
11.	Circus Maximus	AH	--	1	1.6
12.	Peloponnesian War	VG	--	1	1.6
13.	Russian Campaign	AH	9	8	1.6
14.	Tac Air	AH	--	1	1.6
15.	Adv. Third Reich	AH	--	1	1.3
16.	Ambush!	VG	--	1	1.3
17.	Britannia	AH	11	2	1.3
18.	Civilization	AH	4	7	1.3
19.	Panzer Leader	AH	--	1	1.3
20.	Storm Over Arnhem	AH	--	1	1.0

Quite a shake-up, as over half the titles fall off the list, to be replaced by a mix of new titles and revered greybeards. *STORM OVER ARNHEN*, *CIRCUS MAXIMUS*, *BULGE '81* and *AIR FORCE* all enjoy a resurgence (and all deservedly so), while *PELOPONNESIAN WAR* and *ADVANCED THIRD REICH* evidently benefit from, respectively, this magazine's coverage and convention appearances over the summer.

The three solitaire titles (four counting the easily solo'ed *BLACKBEARD*) reinforce the popularity of this format, while the appearance of both original and advanced (or updated) versions of conventional titles implies that at least a few players are comparing games like *THIRD REICH*, *CIVILIZATION* and *BULGE '81* to their heirs.

FLASHPOINT: GOLAN

A Strategic Primer

by Kevin M. Boylan

The single most important point that one must always keep in mind when playing *FLASHPOINT: GOLAN* is this: The game mechanics are designed to simulate how the combination of long-range reconnaissance capabilities and high-tech airpower, SRBMs and artillery assets allow commanders in modern warfare to fight a Deep Battle behind an enemy's front lines. The idea is that properly-employed long-range detection and strike capabilities can fatally disrupt—or even destroy—enemy forces before they ever come into contact with friendly forces. The course of the recent war in the Persian Gulf was a perfect illustration of the importance of the Deep Battle concept. The four week strategic bombing effort shattered the Iraqi Army's command and control network, seriously disrupted its logistical system, and heavily attrited its front line and reserve combat formations; all before the ground campaign was even launched. While the Air Forces available to the belligerents portrayed in *FLASHPOINT: GOLAN* aren't strong enough to duplicate fully the Allies' accomplishments in the Gulf, the most vital strategic lesson that the game's players can learn is how to wage and win the Deep Battle.

JORDAN:

Jordanian Defensive Strategy

The Jordanians possess a high-quality professional army that is indisputably the best in the Arab World (and, indeed, stacks up well against virtually anybody). It is, however, much too small to successfully defend Jordan's extended borders against the Israeli juggernaut for any extended period of time. Jordanian defensive strategy must, therefore, recognize the reality that the Israelis will almost certainly achieve a major offensive victory if the war lasts as long as a week. The numerical superiority of the Israeli Army is so pronounced that even a fairly clumsy Israeli player could probably crush the Jordanians within that time frame. When the Israeli Air Force is factored into the equation, the Jordanian position can become virtually hopeless in as little as three days. The Jordanians can hope to win a Defensive Victory only if either the UN intervenes before they've lost too much ground, or if they inflict enough losses to reduce the Israeli level of victory. Since the Jordanians cannot hope to hold off the Israelis indefinitely, their strategy and tactics should be structured so as to impose the maximum possible delay.

Artillery

Unfortunately for the Jordanians, their Air Force is too weak to seriously influence the Deep Battle, and they possess no SRBMs. Consequently, Jordanian artillery units are the only long-range firepower assets available, and the success or failure of the Jordanian defense will be determined largely by how well they are

employed. As a general rule, Jordanian artillery should be used *en masse* to pin and inflict casualties upon moving Israeli stacks by firing Reaction Strikes. Not only will this upset the rhythm of the Israeli offensive, but keep in mind that only 20 step losses need to be inflicted upon the Israelis before their level of victory is reduced. If there's sufficient artillery left over to support Jordanian combat units defending in battles, that's all very well and good, but the best way to resist Israeli attacks is to break them up before they get started. Generally, Jordanian Special Munitions Points should be used to fire Improved Conventional Munitions (ICM) against large Israeli stacks, but Artillery Delivered Minefields (ADMs) are also a viable alternative, particularly if they are used to block otherwise undefended routes leading into the Jordanian rear. Wherever possible, Jordanian artillery units should be positioned in fortifications in order to optimize their chances of surviving Counter-battery Strikes. Finally, the one-hex range advantage that most Jordanian artillery has over Israeli artillery must be exploited to the hilt by deploying the artillery units where they are immune to Counter-battery (unless the Israeli player wants to throw in one of his MRL units, or use a Special Munitions Point to fire RAP).

Airpower

The Jordanian Air Force is so hopelessly out-matched by the Israelis that it rarely gets to show up at all except on the first day of hostilities; and even then it will probably have only one strike available. For what little it's worth, that strike should probably be used to hit a moving Israeli stack. Knocking out one of the bridges across the Jordan could prove more beneficial, but the odds of success aren't very high ("Are you feeling lucky today, punk?").

Reserves

As soon as the Israelis secure Level 2 Air Superiority (usually on the second day of hostilities), the Jordanians will find themselves confronted with the same dilemma that bedeviled Rommel during the Normandy Campaign; how can one react effectively to enemy attacks, much less organize strong counterattacks, when the enemy's overwhelming air superiority makes it virtually impossible for one's reserves to maneuver? As Rommel discovered, there really is no answer to this dilemma, except to disperse the strategic reserve and form instead a series of tactical reserves directly behind the front. Therefore, Jordanian reserves should be deployed as far forward as the scenario allows. Naturally, this means that the Jordanians probably won't be able to influence the overall shape of the campaign after their initial deployment, but at least *some* of the reserves will be in the right place at the right time instead of being chewed-up by Israeli airpower while marching

up to the front. As a general rule, Jordanian units should move using tactical mode in covered terrain (i.e., hills) so as to avoid Israeli Reaction altogether.

Parachute Battalions

On the defense, the Jordanian parachute battalions are tailor-made to play the role of air-mobile reserves. All three can be lifted by a single use of the Jordanian High Command HQ's Transport Helicopter capability, and their high Permanent Troop Quality (6) means that even Israeli mechanized units cannot just roll over them. The Jordanian airborne units can be dropped in front of rampaging Israeli columns when no other reserves are in reach, but they are more profitably employed in the Deep Battle, dropping in *behind* advancing Israeli units to cut their communications and block reinforcement. One particularly effective technique is to chopper a parachute battalion into a hex adjacent to one in which a road or highway crosses the north-south escarpment; Israeli mechanized units down in the valley will be blocked by the paratroopers' ZOC, but will be unable to attack them due to the escarpment. If the parachute battalion can re-occupy a permanent fortification which the Israelis have advanced past, all the better.

Combat Engineers

One of the most effective means of delay available to the Jordanians—in lieu of an effective Air Force—is mines. Minefields should be laid as thickly as possible along the roads and highways leading back from the north-south escarpment. Sometimes it may even be beneficial to lay minefields behind Jordanian units—effectively cutting them off—since if the Israelis are attacking heavily in that sector the units won't live long anyway. Don't bother laying many Barrier Minefields, since both the necessary time and HQ Capability Points are lacking. Putting down a profusion of Hasty Minefields is a much better bet, especially since two Hasty Minefields can be laid using the same expenditure of HQ Capability Points as is needed to lay one Barrier Minefield, but require the expenditure of twice as many enemy HQ Capability Points to breach them.

The Jordanians could really use a whole series of Fortifications constructed along the roads running eastward from the escarpment, but their engineers will rarely have the opportunity to build more than a handful because of the speed of the Israeli advance and the need to lay minefields behind those sectors where defending units have been largely or totally destroyed.

Special Operations Forces (SOF)

Jordanian SOF Missions should generally be of the Raid variety, and be targeted against either Israeli HQ's or bridges across the Jordan

River; although every now and again it may be worthwhile to run an Ambush or Target Acquisition Mission against a crucial Israeli stack.

Deployment

The Arab player is probably best advised not to deploy any Jordanian units on the floor of the Jordan Valley except perhaps the far south. While it may look tempting to put a few delaying units in the fortifications adjacent to the river, the Jordanians simply cannot afford to sacrifice their units in so prodigious a fashion. Furthermore, if Jordanian units are deployed adjacent to the river, the Israelis can conduct Set-Piece Battles against them immediately, and then Pursue up to the escarpment/hill line without fear of Reaction Strikes. Deploying on top of the escarpment limits Jordanian losses on the opening day of hostilities, extends Jordanian Detection ranges (see 11.1), and forces the Israelis to cross open ground and expose themselves to Reaction before they can attack. As an additional precaution, some Jordanian units should be deployed to the immediate rear of the fortifications in order to prevent Israeli airborne troops lifted in by helicopter from getting a Rear Attack modifier.

The southernmost sector of the Jordanian line (i.e., that portion just to the north of the Dead Sea) generally does not require all that many maneuver units for its defense because an attacking Israeli force has a lot of open ground to cover before it can come to grips with the main defensive line. A relatively small number of Jordanian artillery units deployed in the second line of fortifications along the Jerusalem-Amman highway can sweep the entire sector with their fire, turning it into a virtual "valley of death" for the Israelis.

Don't use the 5th Infantry Division to defend any important sector of the front, since the Israelis will simply focus their offensive against it and blow right through it in short order. Instead, the 5th Division should be deployed in the reserve role, and preferably *not* in any truly critical sector. Its units can be used as one-turn delaying forces along the major roads when nothing else is available, or the Jordanians don't want to sacrifice a better quality unit. The 5th Division is really best-suited for the static defense of a position in strong defensive terrain; the city of Irbid—blocking the northern thrust line—is one possibility. In any case, units of the 5th Division should occupy fortifications whenever possible due to the formation's low Troop Quality.

Syrian Expeditionary Force

Syrian reinforcements should be committed against the closest Israeli thrust (usually along the Irbid axis) in order to minimize their exposure to Israeli Reaction Air Strikes. If they arrive before the Israelis break out of the range of hills lying behind the escarpment, Syrian reinforcements can increase the life-expectancy of the Jordanian Army by as much as three days by enabling it to concentrate its efforts against the Israeli thrusts in the central and southern portions of the front.

Jordanian Offensive Strategy

There is much less to say about the Jordanians' offensive options, simply because they have only a very limited capability to mount an offensive at all. The Jordanian Army is a high-quality military instrument, but fundamentally a fragile one because of its small size. By comparison, the Syrian Army is more than twice the size, and has to cover a frontage which is less than half as long! Consequently, when Jordan is an aggressor, it should conduct its offensive operations cautiously and with a definite eye toward limiting losses. Because of the limited forces at Jordan's disposal, offensive operations should generally be mounted only in one sector of the front at a time, and Jordanian units in other sectors should be deployed in keeping with the defensive guidelines given in the previous section. Overall, Jordan's role in a combined Arab offensive is to divert Israeli forces away from the Syrian front.

Because of their offensive weakness, the Jordanians should probably set their sights somewhat low, seeking only to secure a Limited Victory. Furthermore, the objectives of a Jordanian offensive should be determined beforehand in very specific terms, and strong forces should not be squandered in further offensive action once those objectives have been secured. This is not to say that opportunities developing out of good luck or Israeli mistakes should be ignored, but rather that such opportunities must be exploited judiciously, without risking the objectives already secured, or endangering the integrity of the front. Given the extent of Israeli numerical and air superiority, this means that no more than a handful of Jordanian units should be employed in risky ventures unless some combination of Israeli incompetence and dramatic Syrian offensive success has blown the game wide open. Generally, the Jordanians should aim to take their objectives and begin consolidating them before Israeli air superiority becomes overwhelming.

There are two sectors in which the Jordanians can hope to achieve an offensive victory without undue risk:

1. A thrust toward the southern extremity of Lake Tiberius can secure a Limited Victory by grabbing Ashdot and Afikim; and provides the Jordanians with a defensible front along the Jordan River. This option is particularly attractive because the distances are so short, and because of the close proximity of Jordanian fortifications that can shield reserves and artillery, or offer strong fallback positions in case of failure. Furthermore, this strategy strongly complements a simultaneous Syrian offensive by denying Israeli reinforcements the southernmost route onto the Golan Heights.

2. An offensive in the southern region of the Jordan Valley opens up the possibility of gaining a Major Victory if Jericho can be taken and held. If that proves impossible, there remains the alternative of winning a Limited Victory either by grabbing the two towns adjacent to Jericho, or by securing a bridgehead encompassing ten hexes on the West Bank.

In any case, a Jordanian offensive should be supported by the insertion of airborne battalions along routes which are likely to be used by Israeli forces staging for counterattacks (though naturally this will be possible only before the Israelis secure total Air Superiority). Additionally, whichever Israeli HQ is in the path of the Jordanian offensive should be the target of a concentrated assault featuring SOF Raids, Jamming and even helicopter-transported airborne troops.

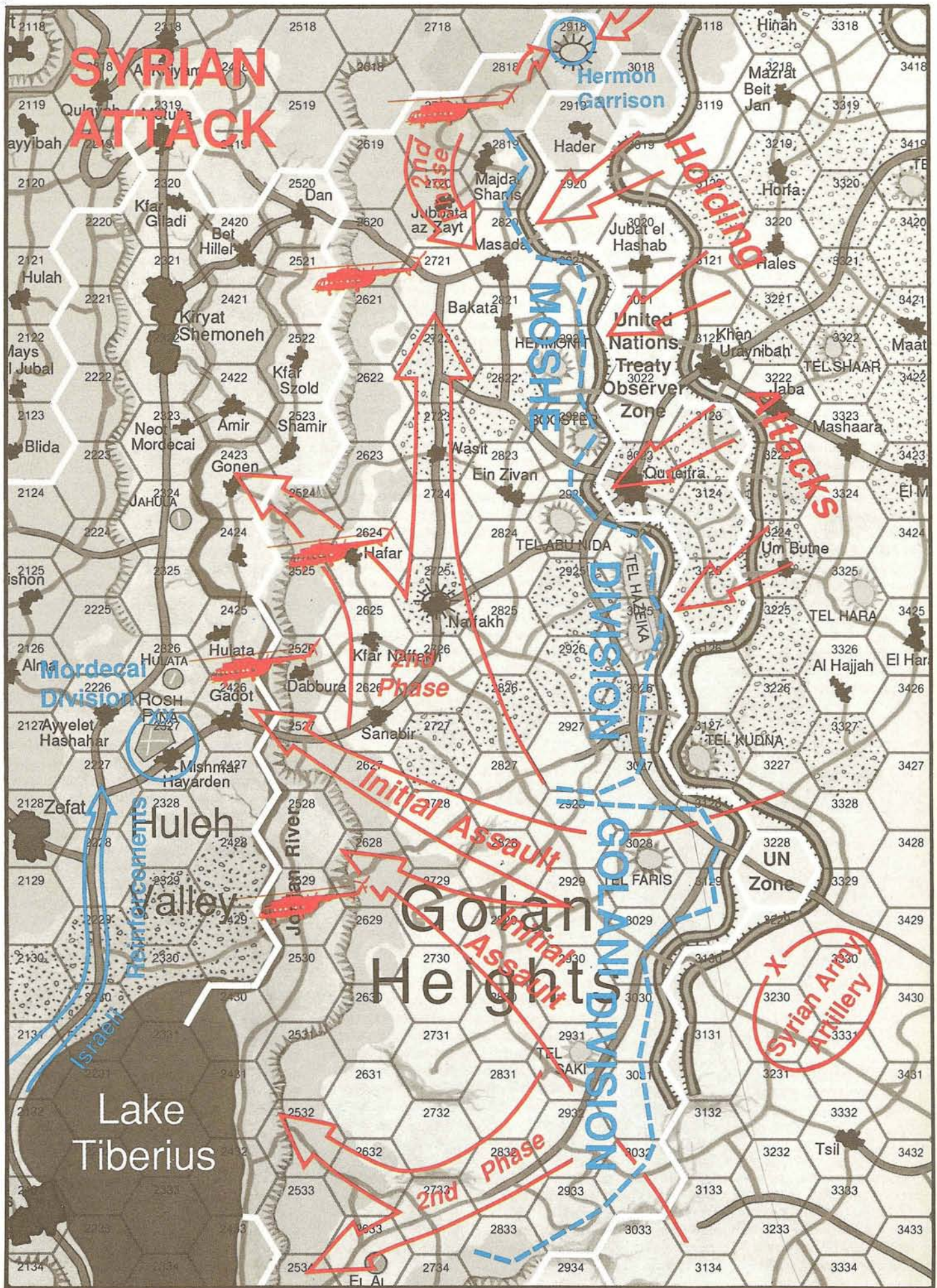
As a final point, the Jordanian player should always keep in mind that all he needs to do to win a Decisive Victory is to have a unit occupying any hex of Jerusalem at the end of a scenario—it doesn't even have to be in supply! Therefore, the Jordanians should never miss an opportunity to sneak a unit into an unoccupied Jerusalem hex; again, a helicopter-inserted parachute battalion seems the natural choice, although a mechanized unit dashing up from the Jordan Valley shouldn't be ruled out. If this gambit succeeds, the Israelis face the difficult task of extracting a high Troop Quality from City terrain (which permits it to largely ignore retreats (see 10.5)). Even if the Jordanian unit(s) don't hold out until the end of the scenario, its ability to distract Israeli forces away from the main battle could prove most helpful.

SYRIA:

Syrian Offensive Strategy

The Syrians, unlike the Jordanians, have sufficient forces to mount a major offensive in pursuit of decisive victory. However, they too must confront the reality that, barring a totally incompetent performance by their opponent, the balance of power will eventually swing decisively in favor of the Israelis. Therefore, the Syrians will have only one quick shot at grabbing the Golan Heights before Israeli mobilization and air superiority slam shut the window of opportunity. Optimally, the Syrians should try to secure their initial objectives before the Israelis achieve total air superiority on or about turn #3, and all of them before the Israelis receive the bulk of their reinforcements around turn #6. Once they have achieved their objectives, the Syrians should hunker down, dig in and wait for the inevitable Israeli counteroffensive; hoping all the while that the UN will soon pass a cease-fire resolution.

The main weight of the Syrian offensive on the Golan Heights should be directed against the southern portion of the Israeli line, which is defended by the weaker forces of the Golani Division, and where there is little of the highly-defensible terrain (Tels and Rough) that predominates in the Moshe Division's sector. Once a breakthrough has been achieved, the leading Syrian units must thrust forward aggressively to widen the breach and grab the road defiles leading down into the Huleh Valley. At this point in most scenarios, the Syrians can afford to "burn up" a division or two in order to maintain the pace of their advance, since three strong armored divisions (the 1st, 4th and Assad Guard) are readily available as offensive reserves.



While a strong Syrian force presses on westward and southward to deal with the remnants of the Golani Division and secure the southern Golan, the bulk of Syrian forces should turn northwards to outflank and envelop the Moshe Division. The destruction of the Moshe is not, however, the real objective of this northern thrust. Rather, it should aim to win control of the roads leading down the escarpment to the valley below. This is far more difficult for the Syrians to achieve than the initial breakthrough onto the Golan, and will become almost impossible if the Israelis succeed in bringing a reinforcing division onto the heights in the Moshe's sector. To help prevent that from happening, the Syrians shouldn't be afraid to push on down into the Huleh Valley if the opportunity presents itself. Even a fairly small commitment can have a considerable effect because the narrowness of the valley means that virtually any advance threatens to cut the highway that runs along its floor. Furthermore, by threatening to win a Major Victory on the cheap by grabbing the Rosh Pina Airport, the Syrians may force the Israelis to divert some of their attention from the battle on the Heights.

Mount Hermon

Any Syrian offensive should include an effort to capture the Israeli summit of Mount Hermon. Not only is Mount Hermon the equivalent of five hexes on the Golan for Victory Determination purposes, but its capture opens up the possibility of Syrian forces coming down behind the Moshe Division's northern flank. Because of the strength of the position, and the difficulty of moving up additional forces, the best way to take it is to chopper a Special Forces Regiment in behind the Israeli garrison and attack in conjunction with the 45th Special Forces Regiment advancing down from the Syrian summit. Naturally, the best time to conduct this operation is during the first or second turn of hostilities, before Israeli air superiority virtually puts a stop to Arab Helicopter Transport.

Special Forces Regiments

The Syrians may want to consider the possibility of using Helicopter Transport to insert a couple of Special Forces Regiments where they can seal off the Golan Heights from Israeli reinforcement. Even in the best of circumstances this stratagem will almost certainly result in the destruction of the Special Forces, but it may prove decisive in allowing the Syrians to cement their gains on the Heights. Another worthwhile Special Forces mission would be to attack and occupy the Mordecai Division's mobilization center. Because of its proximity to the Golan Heights, the Mordecai is always the first division that the Israeli player mobilizes and it can swiftly put paid to any Syrian hopes of achieving a Major Victory. However, if the Mordecai can be taken out of the picture, then the nearest Israeli reinforcements (the Vardi Division) have to come all the way from Afula.

Special Operations Forces (SOF)

The Syrian SOF Initial Strike has a range of valid strategic targets from which to choose; Israeli HQ's, the bridges leading onto the Golan, and Israeli air bases. However, the best results will be achieved by following the principle of concentration and directing the initial Syrian SOF Missions against one particular category of targets. It's up to the individual Arab player to determine for himself which targeting concept best suits his overall strategic style.

Artillery

The Syrians like to use their artillery *en masse*, Russian-style—which is why their artillery is organized into brigades instead of battalions like everyone else's—and the Arab player should employ it as it's intended to be used. Because Israeli units have such high Troop Qualities, it's almost impossible for the Syrians to dislodge them from behind the anti-tank ditch without the benefit of artillery superiority. Since Israeli divisions have 14 strength points of artillery compared to a Syrian division's 11, achieving artillery superiority requires the support of Syrian army artillery units. Thus, the fire of the army artillery must be massed in support of a handful of attacks per phase. (A useful tactic that can help the Syrians gain artillery superiority is to run small units up adjacent to Israeli artillery units as soon as a "Breakthru" result is accomplished. The weak Syrian Reconnaissance Battalions are custom-made for this role).

The key to ultimate Syrian success, however, lies in their ability to wage and win the Deep Battle. Unfortunately for the Syrians, their Air Force, like that of Jordan, will literally play no role in the Deep Battle after the first turn or so of hostilities. Consequently, once the Syrians have achieved a large-scale breakthrough on the Golan Heights, the primary role of their army artillery switches from providing direct support in battles to that of interdicting the arrival of Israeli reinforcements. This is best accomplished by pushing artillery units well forward into positions from which their fires can cover the highways in the Zefat-Mishmar Hayarden area—a strategic bottleneck through which the vast bulk of Israeli reinforcements have to pass.

Momentum

The Arab player must be constantly on guard against the possibility of generating large swings in Momentum in the Israeli player's favor by launching overly risky or gratuitous attacks. Because all Syrian ground combat units are brigades and regiments, and because the Syrians mount so many Set-Piece Battles, it is shockingly easy for an unlucky Battle Resolution Die Roll to result in a nine point shift in Momentum. All it takes is a handful of these shifts to give the Israeli's 50 Momentum points and a Bonus Activation Chit; and a top-rate, quality Israeli division moving and attacking twice per turn will fatally compromise the Arab player's prospects of winning in virtually any scenario.

The Lebanese Front (Offensive)

There is a definite appeal to the idea of supplementing the main Syrian offensive effort on the Golan Heights with a thrust into the Huleh Valley by Syrian forces deployed in Lebanon. There are, however, several problems with the concept. First of all there is the extreme narrowness of the offensive axis, constricted as it is between the Litani River on the west and the shoulder of Mount Hermon to the east. Another factor is the difficult hill terrain that stretches between the Bekka and Huleh Valleys, and is traversed by only a single road that has a series of easily-defended towns dotted along its length. However, the greatest problem faced by a Syrian offensive mounted from Lebanon is insufficient forces. There is initially only one division available, while at least two (supported by a sizeable slice of army artillery) are necessary to keep the attack going. Thus, a Syrian offensive from Lebanon probably cannot be mounted until the second or third day of mobilization, which may well prove to be too late. Nonetheless, if the Syrian forces in Lebanon can distract Israeli attention and forces from the main front to any degree whatsoever, it's probably worth it so long as they don't waltz into disaster.

Syrian Defensive Strategy

Syrian defensive strategy shares much in common with the Jordanian strategy already described. For example, the Syrians will also find it almost impossible to maneuver their reserves in the face of Israeli air superiority. And, even though the Syrian Army is significantly larger than the Jordanian, and has a much shorter front to defend, it too will be unable to stand up for long against a full-fledged Israeli offensive. Consequently, Syrian strategy is shaped by the same fundamental imperative of delaying the Israeli advance until the UN intervenes and brings the conflict to a halt (hopefully before the Israelis secure a major victory). If there will be no UN resolution, however, then the Syrians—and all of their co-belligerents—had best make their peace with Allah and prepare to start rolling dice really well.

The Syrians shouldn't expect to be able to conduct fighting withdrawals back to the second or third fortified lines, because the withdrawing units will either have been bloodied in earlier battles, or disorganized by Israeli Air Strikes as they pulled back. Thus, the Syrians should try to have fresh, intact reserve forces deployed in the rearward fortified position before the front line formations have to fall back. If the maneuver is timed properly, the retreating formations can rally and reorganize themselves in relative security behind the new front line occupied by the former reserves. They can then begin preparing the next rearward position, assuming that the pace of the Israeli offensive permits it. (In military jargon this is known as Defense on Alternate Positions.)

Syrian artillery plays an even more crucial role in defense than it does on the attack. Again, the crucial consideration is winning—or at least breaking even in—the Deep Battle. The Israeli Army will invariably prevail in Set-Piece Battles

because of its high unit strengths and excellent Troop Qualities. Therefore, the best way for the Syrians to resist the Israelis is to break up or disorganize their attacks before they can be mounted. Given the uselessness of the Syrian Air Force, artillery becomes by default their main weapon for waging the Deep Battle. The Israelis, realizing this point, will typically concentrate their Deep Battle effort upon suppressing Syrian artillery with a combination of Counter-battery Strikes and Set-Piece Air Strikes. Consequently, Syrian artillery units ought to be kept well back from the front, fortified whenever possible, and should never be stacked with one another (increasing their vulnerability to all varieties of strikes).

Other Syrian Deep Battle assets should be integrated into the defensive strategy of delay in much the same way as was previously described for the Jordanians. Special Forces Regiments are dropped in behind Israeli lines to occupy strategic bottlenecks and block reinforcement and supply. Special Operations Forces and Jamming are used to disorganize and Disrupt vital Israeli headquarters; and Air Strikes are used (on those rare occasions when there are any available) either to hit large stacks maneuvering beyond artillery range, or to knock out crucial bridges. None of these elements will have great odds of succeeding, but if they do, they can have a considerable (and possibly, decisive) strategic effect.

The Lebanese Front (Defensive)

The character of Syrian defensive strategy in Lebanon varies depending upon whether Lebanon or the Golan Heights is initially the primary theater of war. In either case, the Syrians should integrate PLO forces into their defensive tactics to the greatest extent possible. Syrian and PLO units can benefit dramatically from the symbiotic benefits of being stacked together. The Syrians benefit from PLO units' extended Ambush (see 22.9) zones, while the weak PLO units are protected from quick destruction by Israeli attacks. This cooperation is most easily realized in the Bekka Valley, where the Syrians and PLO can be initially-deployed in close proximity. In the coastal region, where there are initially no Syrian units, the PLO will be on its own.

The run of the terrain west of the Bekka Valley creates two narrow, easily-defensible axes of advance; one along the coastal highway, and the other between the headwaters of the various rivers and the flank of the Shouf Mountains. In between, the rivers—often running through gorges impassable to armor—offer a series of strong defensive lines running perpendicular to an Israeli thrust to the north. Some PLO forces should be deployed fortified in the various cities and towns running along the coastal highway, while others interdict the highway with their Ambush zones from positions in the hills two hexes to the east. The inland north-south roads are defended on the successive river lines. Note that sometimes roads can be interdicted by Arab ZOC's from positions on the top of Escarpments where they cannot be attacked by Israeli armored and mechanized units.

Syrian/PLO forces should attempt to hold the southern portion of the Bekka Valley (where it's at its narrowest, and the terrain is most

favorable to the defense) for as long as possible. As one proceeds northward, the valley opens outward like a funnel, requiring a defensive line which is both longer and much easier to outflank. The Syrians must also assure that a disaster in the Bekka Valley doesn't create an opportunity for the Israelis to invade Syria and threaten Damascus by the "back door" along the Beirut-Damascus Highway. If there's any possibility of the Israelis being able to attempt such an operation, a Syrian force consisting of, at the absolute minimum, two Special Forces Regiments should be kept in occupation of the fortified line running across the highway.

ISRAEL:

It is difficult to discuss the Israeli military without the continual use of superlatives. The Israeli Army is excellently-led, well-motivated, equipped with the latest technology, and has a well-proven doctrine. The game accurately depicts the strengths of this superb military machine which dominates the Middle East by the absolute technical and professional superiority which it enjoys over all of its enemies (except perhaps Jordan). Indeed, it enjoys such significant advantages over its enemies that there is no prospect of any single Arab nation being able to stand up to Israel on its own; only a strong coalition can hope to succeed even on the defense.

The Israeli Army is, however, only one element in the equation. The Israeli Air Force enjoys qualitative and technological superiorities over the Arab Air Forces which are, if anything, even more pronounced than the superiority which the Israeli Army has over enemy ground troops. The Israeli Air Force has played a vital—if not decisive—role in every one of the Arab-Israeli conflicts to date, and would undoubtedly do so again in the event of another major war. It virtually guarantees Israel victory in the Deep Battle, with all of the many tactical and strategic advantages that implies. When Israeli airpower is properly integrated with the operations of their excellent army, the combination is almost unbeatable.

The Israeli Air force has historically been employed primarily as a tactical instrument, flying Close Air Support and Battlefield Air Interdiction missions in support of Israeli ground forces. Both roles can have a decisive effect when playing a scenario in *FLASH-POINT: GOLAN*. By conducting strikes in support of Set-Piece Battles, Israeli airpower often tips the scales against the Arab armies, which cannot count upon air support in anything like the same quantity or quality. However, Israel's Air Force exerts its greatest influence in the game by the way in which it hamstringing Arab maneuver. Both on the offense and in defense, the Arab forces will find it extremely difficult to react to the quickly-changing situation because any large-scale movement at the highway rate or in open terrain immediately draws a hail of Israeli Air Strikes.

Israeli Offensive Strategy

There's no real need to provide detailed tactical advice for the Israelis. Their army is so powerful and versatile that it can conduct a very

flexible offensive, constantly shifting the point of the attack to take advantage of fleeting opportunities in a fashion which its opponents simply cannot match. Additionally, since Israel will virtually always have air superiority, its forces can—and should—use Helicopter Transport to a much greater extent than the Arabs. Israeli offensives should also be characterized by the aggressive, deep exploitation of any penetration, and the maintenance of unrelenting pressure upon the enemy. This last point is of particular importance when fighting the Syrians, because it's generally much less expensive to overrun their successive defense lines by an aggressive (albeit risky) pursuit than it is to try to break them by assault, even if pausing would allow additional troops to be brought up. In any case, the Israeli player's worst enemy is always time; since the longer he takes, the greater the odds are that a UN Resolution will rob him of his shot at victory. Israeli offensives cannot afford to be slow and deliberate!

The greatest threat to Israeli offensive success is Arab artillery, and the efforts of Israeli airpower, Special Operations forces and airborne operations should concentrate upon silencing it. This can be accomplished either directly, by attacking the artillery units themselves, or indirectly, by Disrupting the Arab headquarters that control them. It's a toss-up which approach will work best, since there may be more artillery units present than can be effectively attacked, while the headquarters are generally better-defended and much more difficult to detect.

Versus Jordan

Israeli Offensive Victory Conditions dictate that an offensive versus Jordan be a broad-front affair, because all three levels of victory require the capture of widely-scattered objectives, some of which can be up to 20 hexes apart. One place to avoid, however, is the most direct route to Amman, along the highway from Jerusalem. The open plain south and east of Shuna can be turned into a killing ground for Israeli attackers by Jordanian artillery occupying the fortifications which look down upon it from the heights above. Forces of at least an armored division in strength should be sent up each of the other three highways running out of the Jordan Valley. The aim is to pierce the Jordanian front at several points preparatory to rolling-up and encircling the rest.

Helicopter Transported parachute battalions inserted behind the Jordanian fortifications lining the top of the escarpment can gain that all-important Rear Attack bonus for the Israelis, and it will probably be necessary in order to dislodge units with Troop Qualities as high as those possessed by most Jordanian formations. Indeed, the Jordanians are so strong that the Israelis will typically have to dismount a number of mechanized and motorized infantry brigades in order to dislodge them from fortifications.

To satisfy their Decisive Victory conditions, the Israelis have to capture three Jordanian cities. For a number of reasons, Irbid should be one of the cities against which the offensive is directed. First of all, the range of hills east of the escarpment is at its thinnest along the Irbid axis, meaning that a breakout into open country can be effected fairly quickly. Another consider-

ation is that if Syria is also at war with Israel, a penetration past Irbid threatens to turn the flank of the entire Syrian position opposite the Golan Heights. Finally, taking Irbid opens up the highways to Mafraq and Ayn al Sasha, either of which can be used to make a strategic end-run southwards behind the Jordanian front.

Versus Syria

The Syrian front initially doesn't offer much scope for subtlety in an Israeli offensive because of its narrowness and relatively large numbers of troops that the Syrians can commit to the defense. The Israelis just have to pick some point in the Syrian line, and mass their troops and airpower against it. If they can break through, however, it becomes an entirely different ball game; since the Israelis will be able to maneuver while the Syrians cannot (due to the Israeli Air Force). The Arab player, realizing his inability to win a battle of maneuver, will naturally do everything that he can to keep the battle static. The Israeli player, therefore, must act boldly to prevent the Syrians from solidifying their defenses behind one of the rearward fortified lines. The best way to do this is to overrun portions of the fortified line before the enemy can occupy it. Either deeply-penetrating maneuver units or airborne forces inserted by helicopter can carry out this task.

To achieve a decisive victory, the Israelis have to grab three Syrian cities and/or major airports. Studying the map, it quickly becomes clear that the Israelis must decide whether their offensive will be weighted toward the south (where Nawa, Dara and the As Suwayda airport can be secured), or toward the north (where Darayya, Damascus and the cluster of major airports southeast of Damascus are the objectives). The southern route is somewhat shorter, and the enemy forces there are likely to be weak, because Syrian formations will typically mass on the road to Damascus (where most of them are initially deployed anyway). However, to ensure that the Israelis can achieve their Major Victory Conditions in case a Decisive Victory cannot be secured, a major thrust should also be made in the northern and central part of the front in order to ensure the capture of the requisite 30 towns. While the Israelis certainly have the capability to mount two separate thrusts, they may not be sufficiently strong to press both of them home before a UN Resolution brings the offensive to a screeching halt.

As a final point, any Israeli offensive against Syria should include an operation to capture the summit of Mount Hermon. As was recommended in the case of a Syrian attack against the Israeli summit, airborne troops should be inserted behind the fortification by helicopter in order to gain the Rear Attack bonus.

In Lebanon

An Israeli major offensive probably cannot be launched in Lebanon if a major battle is taking place simultaneously in the Golan Heights region, and certainly not if Jordan is also involved in the war. If an offensive is undertaken in Lebanon, it will most likely consist of thrusts up three axes of advance; the coastal highway, the road running just to the west of the Shouf Mountains, and the Bekka Valley. The main weight of the offensive should be put into the

two flanking drives, while the move up the central axis is a more-or-less secondary affair. Amphibious assaults can materially assist the drive up the coast by outflanking Syrian and PLO positions based upon the easily defended river lines.

The weaker Syrian air defense capabilities in Lebanon make Helicopter Transport missions especially appealing in an Israeli offensive to the north. Furthermore, the Shouf Mountains divide the Lebanese theater in two, while Mount Hermon and the Jabal al Hasiyah combine to largely isolate the Syrian forces in Lebanon from reinforcement from the homeland. The only route available for movement between the Lebanese coast and the Bekka Valley, and between the Bekka Valley and Syria, is the Beirut-Damascus highway. Therefore, if the bottlenecks along the highway (where it passes through or around the two mountain chains) can be occupied by Israeli airborne troops, the Syrians will encounter considerable difficulty in shifting their forces laterally to mass against the Israeli thrusts, and in pumping in reinforcements from Syria.

An offensive into the Bekka Valley may open up the possibility of a drive into Syria by way of the Beirut-Damascus highway. At first, the Syrians may seem invitingly weak in this region, but their reserves will be fairly close at hand around Damascus, and the highway runs through a two-hex choke-point that could be defended indefinitely by a well-fortified Syrian force. If the Israeli player wants to try this he must do it quickly, by surprise, and should probably think about sacrificing some airborne to hold the pass open until the armor can break through. Even if the effort fails, it may distract sizeable enemy forces away from the main front, and will certainly scare the hell out of the Arab player.

Israeli Defensive Strategy

Israel has little to fear from the Arab armies once Mobilization really gets underway. What the Israelis have to worry about is an M+0 or M+1 scenario that allows the Arabs to mount an offensive with their initially more numerous and better-concentrated forces. In that case there is a definite possibility that Syria can overrun much of the Golan Heights, and Jordan gain a bridgehead on the West Bank; all before most of the Israeli Army even gets into the game. At first glance, this doesn't look all that bad, since continuing mobilization and air superiority will soon tip the scales back in Israel's favor and permit the launching of a strategic counteroffensive. The danger is, however, that the UN will push through a cease-fire resolution so quickly as to deny Israel sufficient time to secure a victory. Although this is admittedly a nightmare scenario for Israel, it's by no means impossible; particularly not if the UN Resolution Modifier is +2 or +3.

Defending the Golan

There's little that one can say about the deployment of Israeli maneuver units on the Golan because there are barely enough of them to cover the front; the Israeli player therefore has no choice but to form a thin, "crust" defense. One point that is worth making, however, concerns the deployment of Israeli artillery. The

Moshe Division's artillery can be deployed fairly close to the front because the Israeli line here is reasonably strong (largely a function of the terrain) and is not likely to collapse under Syrian attack. Furthermore, the UN Treaty Observers Zone creates a buffer zone in front of the Moshe Division's sector which the Syrians must cross—exposing themselves to Reaction Strikes—in order to attack.

The Golani Division, on the other hand, must face the primary Syrian attack on terrain which is much less favorable to the defense. Consequently, there's a good chance that it will be broken through and suffer heavy casualties. Deploying the Golani's artillery as far back as possible therefore reduces the chances that it will be overrun or at least that it will be overrun quickly. An additional consideration is that the Syrians can deploy adjacent to the Golani, and will be able to conduct Set-Piece Battles against it without having to move. That means that the primary role of the Golani's artillery will be providing Artillery Combat Support; Reaction Strikes will generally be fired at close range against Syrian units that have broken through the divisional front.

The Mordecai Armored Division should be taken as Israel's M+3 reinforcement, since once it gets firmly established on the Heights, the Syrians will make no further major advances. The Mordecai should try to climb onto the Heights in the Golani's sector, but if the road defiles are controlled by Syrian units or clogged by retreating Golani units, the division should detour north into the Moshe's sector rather than to try to fight its way upward. Other reinforcements (commonly, the Vardi Armored Division) should try to get onto the Heights using the El Al road. In combination with an attack in the Moshe Division's sector, a thrust from the El Al direction becomes the second arm of a double-pincer offensive that threatens both flanks of a Syrian penetration in the Golani sector.

Defending Against Jordan

The weakness of the Jordanian Army is such that it will experience great difficulty in mounting anything but a limited-objective offensive. Therefore, any competent Israeli player shouldn't have to worry about the prospect of Jordanian mechanized columns roaring westward toward Tel Aviv and the Mediterranean Coast. Typically, the Jordanians will be able to secure at least a Limited Victory in the first two or three game turns by blasting through the highly-dispersed units of the Rachel Armored Division, or by penetrating through the gaps between them. However, it will be a bold Jordanian player indeed who tries to continue a strong offensive to the west. A far more common (and practical) strategy is for the Jordanians to consolidate their gains by fortifying a strong defensive position around their objectives. The Israeli player's strategy versus the Jordanians will usually, therefore, be self-evident: Mass forces against the enemy advance and launch a counter-attack as soon as possible. Keep in mind the option of cutting off the Jordanian spearhead by mounting an attack across the Jordan River above or below the enemy bridgehead, and then thrusting laterally behind it.

CONCLUSION:

So far, this article has had little to say about the tactics of fighting conventional ground battles in *FLASHPOINT: GOLAN*, but the topic is easily addressed. Simply put, the mechanics of movement and combat in the game reward the use of blitzkrieg tactics.

When on the offensive, attacks should be made *en masse* along very narrow fronts, with the objective of producing a breakthrough. Once through the enemy's lines, attacking units push on into the defender's rear areas to suppress his artillery, disrupt his units' supply, and attack his headquarters. Following waves of attacking units widen the initial penetrations by rolling up the enemy's front through a series of flank and rear attacks.

On the defensive, the front line's strength is usually kept to an absolute minimum, unless an abundance of defending units are available. Those units not committed to the front line are used to create a series of tactical reserves that are deployed in positions from which they can reinforce as many hexes of the front line as possible. Whenever possible, strong operational reserves should also be maintained for the purpose of counterattacks and sealing off enemy breakthroughs.

Having said all this, I must emphasize once again that firepower is the decisive element on the modern battlefield, and that *FLASHPOINT: GOLAN* is fundamentally a game about such firepower. For example, when an attacker assaults an enemy's line, he must fight and win two engagements; one against the defender's ground units, and another against his artillery and other long-range firepower assets. Of these two, the contest for indirect fire superiority is the more important, since if the attacker does not win it, then his advancing forces will be shot up, pinned, and disrupted before they ever come to grips with the defender's front-line combat units.

The "Deep Battle" referred to throughout this article is primarily the business of applying long-range firepower to the tasks of restricting the enemy's strategic mobility, disrupting his command structure, and neutralizing his long-range strike assets so they cannot be used against you. This is the proper role of airpower, SRBMs and the long-range MRL artillery units in *FLASHPOINT: GOLAN*; using these assets to attrite the enemy's front-line combat units is a waste of their potential. Helicopter-transported airborne troops and Special Operations Forces activities should also be integrated into the Deep Battle effort, and not used to gain purely tactical advantages in the immediate vicinity of the FLOT ("Forward Line Of Thrust").

In closing, I cannot stress too strongly the importance of winning the Deep Battle; although the effects of such a victory may sometimes be subtle, they will almost always make a decisive contribution to the achievement of final victory in *FLASHPOINT: GOLAN*.



25.1 BATTLE SCENARIO

25.16 NORTHERN INCURSION IN MINIATURE

Situation: *On the morning of February 20, 1992, an Israeli mechanized task force supported by helicopter gunships broke through roadblocks maintained by UN peacekeepers (UNIFIL - United Nations Independent Forces in Lebanon) and pressed on to attack two Lebanese villages located in the UN zone from which Shiite guerrillas were firing artillery and katyusha rocket barrages into northern Israel. This was the third occasion on which Israeli forces had mounted a ground incursion into Lebanon beyond the limits of the Security Zone that Israel occupies to a depth of several miles along the entire length of its northern border. The incursions of 1978 and 1982 were, however, much larger affairs, constituting full-scale invasions undertaken by Israeli forces ranging upwards of five divisions. This latest incursion, on the other hand, was a quick in-and-out raid that lasted only a day or so.*

This latest round in the cycle of violence in the Middle East had begun on February 15th, 1992, when three soldiers at a camp in northern Galilee had been hacked to death by PLO infiltrators. In retaliation, Israel launched a series of airstrikes against Palestinian guerrilla forces inside Lebanon. However, in a move apparently unrelated to the PLO attack, Israel also sent attack helicopters to strafe and rocket a motorcade carrying Sheik Abbas Musawi, leader of the Iranian-backed Islamic fundamentalist group Hezbollah, which has been involved in acts of terrorism against Israelis and Westerners for almost a decade. Musawi and several members of his family were killed in the attack, prompting Hezbollah and allied Shiite guerrillas in southern Lebanon to begin a major artillery attack upon Israel for the first time since 1982.

Scenario Parameters

Scenario Length: 1 Activation Segment.

Air Superiority Level: Neither side has any airstrikes available.

Initiative: N/A.

Special Munitions Points: None.

Initial Deployment

Israel:

- 1st Task Force, 46th Mech Infantry Brigade of the Lev Armored Division, and one self-propelled artillery battalion of the Lev Armored Division (Strength = 3, Range = 5) - Hex N1924.
- 2nd Attack Helicopter Battalion - Rosh Pina airport (N2327).

Shiite Guerrillas:

- 3rd (Guerrilla) Battalion of the Karameh Brigade and the Karameh Brigade's Artillery Battalion - Yatar (N1622). The 3rd Battalion is deployed on its Disorganized side.

Design Note: *Use PLO units to represent the Shiites. Their military capabilities are, in any case, quite similar; that is to say, very limited.*

Reinforcements

None

Troop Quality

Israel: Both units have a Troop Quality of 5.

Shiite Guerrillas: Both units have a Troop Quality of 3.

Special Rules

Game Length: The entire scenario consists of the Lev Armored Division's Activation Segment. The Shiites do not get an Activation Segment and consequently never get to move.

Shiite Artillery: Shiite artillery cannot fire Reaction Strikes in this scenario, although it is counted when determining the artillery advantage in battles.

Design Note: *This rule reflects the fact that the Shiites' guns and rocket tubes are highly dispersed and constantly on the move in order to avoid Israeli counteraction, that the gunners are trained to fire barrages against static, area targets such as Israeli cities, not mobile, point targets like an armored column, and that the Shiites have no real command and fire control system such as would be necessary to coordinate the tactical massing of artillery fires.*

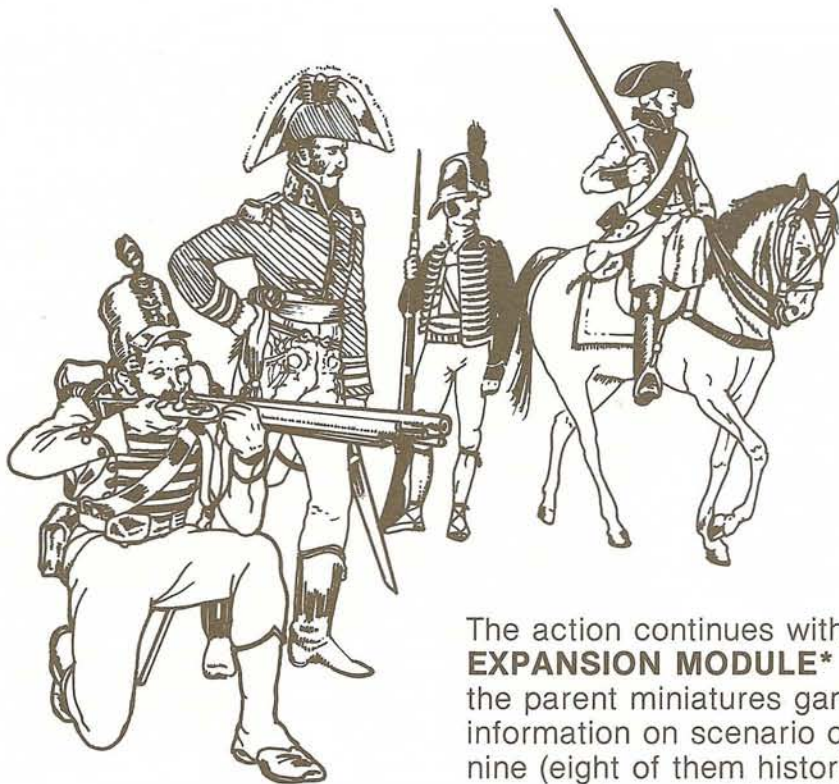
Victory Conditions

Israel wins if it captures Yatar (N1622); if it doesn't, the Shiites win.

Commentary:

Clearly this isn't much of a scenario. In fact, the entire thing basically consists of a single Meeting Engagement Battle in which the outcome is highly predictable. The odds are 4 to 1, the terrain is Town, and Israel has a 2 to 1 advantage in artillery/attack helicopter strength (6 points versus 3) which effectively reduces the Shiites' Troop Quality to 1. Consequently, the Israelis have a 90% chance of victory, since the Shiites can only win on a die roll of 9. Therefore, I offer this scenario not to increase the play potential of FLASHPOINT: GOLAN, but because games such as this can be highly informative, and act as a tool for understanding current events as they unfold.

— Kevin Boylan



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it was safe to
go back on the
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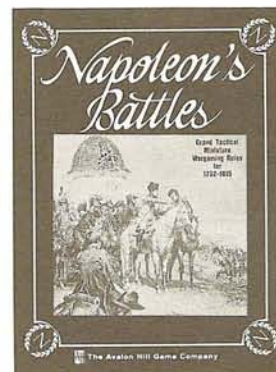
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*This is not a complete game. Use of Avalon Hill's **NAPOLEON'S BATTLES** game is required to employ the information in this module.



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“THE TARGET FOR TODAY IS...”

Reminiscences and a B-17 Tournament Scenario

by Don Hawthorne

Several months after purchasing my first copy of *B-17, QUEEN OF THE SKIES*, I was pleased to learn that a local convention would be holding a tournament for the game. At the time, I wondered how a tournament could be run for a solitaire game, but I needn't have worried. The event referee, Dana Moreland, himself a pilot and a fan of all flight games, is a man devoted to the principle that games exist primarily to be played. Dana had worked hard and produced a tournament that ranks in my memory as one of the three best convention events that I have ever participated in.

(Well, yes, I won; but that's beside the point.)

The tournament was held on Monday morning, the last day of the four-day convention. The field consisted of myself and thirty-one other participants, who had gathered in the Essex/Bombay Rooms (no kidding!) of the Los Angeles Hyatt Hotel Convention Center. Three long tables were reserved for the players, and Dana had even prepared a large chalkboard sketch map of the bombing route to the target. That target was to be the Rail Yards at Hamm, deep in enemy territory.

Dana assigned us to squadrons by random die roll, and within each squadron, we drew straws for the Lead and Tail positions. We took our seats at each table relative to our respective positions in our squadrons. Every player was required to name his aircraft and to enter his own name as the Pilot. My bomber was the *Lady Sam*, named after an English girlfriend named Samantha. (What better name for a B-17 flying out of Britain in 1943?) Dana gave us the go ahead, and the formation of thirty-two gamers — each in command of his own Boeing B-17/F and nine imaginary fellow crewmen — took to the air to do battle with Hitler's *Luftwaffe* in the skies over Europe. Good-natured wisecracks among the players soon took on the tone of the non-regulation chatter that had filled the airwaves almost half a century ago.

I mean, this was great stuff! After three days of heavily intensive, even cutthroat competition, often between many of the same gamers who now shared this very room, here we were faced with a situation that must inevitably become a cooperative effort. Each of us wanted the best bombing run, the most enemy planes shot down — that was how we'd score points and how we'd win the tournament.

But the real competition was not against each other, but against The Cold Equations¹ that would largely determine each player's fate. Everybody wanted to beat those equations, and beat them soundly enough to win the tournament. But everybody wanted the other guy to get back in one piece, too. This wasn't immediately evident, but it became surprisingly clear when the first plane in the formation went down.

Ironically, it was the *Memphis Belle*, lead bomber for the Low squadron, who fell victim to a Fuel Tank Fire Explosion which ripped off her starboard wing. There were no parachutes

to be seen, and no “Maydays”; her “Pilot” would not even elaborate on the circumstances that had doomed his aircraft and crew, except to say that his radio had been destroyed by one of the enemy's previous hits, and thus it wouldn't be fair for him to continue communicating with his squadron mates.

There was a long silence after that; this was not a role-playing tournament, nor an exercise in psycho-drama, and the nature of the contest was such that losing a comrade did nothing to help or hinder our own chances of survival (we could not, for instance, provide supporting fire to adjacent players' bombers). Even so, there was a feeling of loss. The first of us had fallen prey to The Cold Equations, and while only one of us could win, we were now aware that, theoretically, we could all very easily lose.

The survivors pressed on, dwindling from the original thirty-two aircraft to the twenty-five which entered the Poor Weather over the target, there to encounter enemy fighters and Heavy FLAK which claimed three more bombers. Of the remaining twenty-two, only ten were On Target in their bombing runs, but of these, three scored hits of 88% and higher; a red-letter day indeed for the Eighth Air Force.

Nor was the long trip home anti-climactic. Resistance seemed stiff as ever (another example of this game's tendency to produce opposition in an almost intelligent manner).

I've been hearing the groans of the Number Crunchers as I've written this account, and I guess I really can't ignore them any longer. By “Number Crunchers” I mean those who reduce all wargaming to a purely mathematical exercise. Among B-17 players, they include those gamers who, unable or unwilling to create their own simulation, instead write up a program for their home computer using B-17's parameters, then leave it running for a weekend and pat themselves on the back for having “flown” two or three thousand missions. Sorry, but I have to go on record here saying that I have absolutely no respect for such people as gamers. As analysts, certainly. As programmers, sure, you bet; I couldn't do it (and wouldn't). But as gamers, no way.

To that wargaming purist that is the Number Cruncher, B-17 is nothing more than an exercise in odds-making. And granted, sooner or later, with all the dice rolls and the dozens of deleterious effects they generate, we all have that FLAK BIP in the Wing or the loaded Bomb Bay. But if there are such mechanistic dooms awaiting us in the play of B-17, there are also eerily consistent runs of fortune which lend the game a personality of its own. For example:

During that tournament, on the outward bound leg of our journey, I ran into an Me 110 over Abbeville, piloted by an Ace German Pilot. In three passes at my aircraft's front, he shot out the nose and both cheek guns, evading my own fire every time. On the return run, passing once more over Abbeville, the charts and die rolls again conjured up an Me 110, piloted by an Ace

Pilot — which proceeded to make three passes, all from the 10:30 and 1:30 Level positions. Unable to fire on what I believe to this day to be the “same” German, attacking me from the blind spots he had “expertly” created for himself earlier, I could only watch miserably as my Navigator was Severely Wounded, my Bombardier was KIA, and even my Pilot (my paper alter ego) won a Purple Heart with a Light Wound, before our Tail Gunner flared our nemesis after his last pass.

Now, I fully realize and appreciate the fact that, to the Number Cruncher, this is all only an interesting set of coincidences. And that's a shame, for with that sort of attitude, people like them will never truly enjoy this game!

After that first tournament, I bought a WW II flyer's cap in a war surplus store, wore it to the next B-17 tournament, and turned it over to that day's winner (Stance Nixon, as I recall). My intention was that “The Hat”, as it came to be known, should always be handed over to the next winner of the tournament where it appeared. The only condition being that in accepting it, you had to guarantee your attendance at the next local convention and participation in its B-17 tournament, along with your willingness to surrender “The Hat” to the next champion.

To my knowledge, “The Hat” was passed on three more times, until it wound up going to someone presumably more interested in the cash prize certificates than in any sense of tradition or sportsmanship, and disappeared. Alas. Maybe it was a Number Cruncher.

In any case, there were fewer and fewer B-17 tournaments so enjoyable for me as that one. Another referee began running the B-17 events exclusively, and although his heart may have been in the right place, I disagreed strongly with his methods. All too soon the skies over which he ruled became filled with B-17/Gs, Me 262 *Schwalben* and Me 163 *Kometen*; the tournaments evidently remained popular, because they apparently had no shortage of participants. Even so, they had ceased to be the game I had grown to love.

But there was one convention...

This particular event was not attended by the aforementioned referee, and while the convention planners wanted a B-17 event on their schedule, they also wanted it to have some interesting new wrinkle. At the planning session, I suggested we try a wrinkle that a lot of wargamers seem to enjoy: History.

So was born the *B-17 Tournament Scenario* reproduced here. The first one went over so well at that convention that the gaming club I attended at that time asked for several new ones. As you will see from the scenario as reproduced here, they aren't terribly difficult to create, but they do require a little research. Fortunately, that research makes for some of the most exciting reading available on World War II.

I wanted to host an event that would create that same sense of shared danger and the resul-

tant camaraderie experienced by all those nearly-burned-out gamers on that bygone Monday morning at the end of a long convention, and happily, it worked out that way. Although the following scenario was designed for the large number of participants typically found only in tournaments, it also plays well in *B-17's* normal solitaire format. I hope you enjoy it sufficiently to design your own scenarios; but in respect to Mr. Frank's original work, try to keep them within the time frame he established. I have a copy of his *On Target Games* edition, and it's very clear that he never intended it for any period other than the one it simulates. The following scenario is itself a departure of some three months beyond that time frame, and it stretches several design points to their limits as it is.

I wanted this first Tournament Scenario to be a trial for the players and to be as historical as possible. To that end, I wanted to use an excerpt from the air war over Europe that would be immediately familiar to almost anyone who knew enough about the campaign to want to play *B-17*. Naturally therefore, I chose the first of the raids that would prove to be the crucible of the USAAF over Europe.

Gentlemen; the target for today is Schweinfurt.

B-17, QUEEN OF THE SKIES Tournament Scenario I Schweinfurt; August 17, 1943

The first Schweinfurt Raid was the deepest penetration of German airspace up to that time. The raid was in two stages, the first half to be against Regensburg, with a follow-up raid on the ball-bearing works at Schweinfurt. USAAF planners reasoned that most of the German fighters which attacked the Regensburg force would be on the ground, re-arming and re-fuelling, when the Schweinfurt force passed through their sectors.

The Schweinfurt groups, however, were delayed by bad weather in England, and by the time they had assembled and begun their own run to their target, the German interceptors that had already attacked the Regensburg force had indeed re-armed and re-fuelled.

And were waiting for them.

The Schweinfurt Raid force thus had to fight through every mile to its target, and then back to its bases in England, against a *Luftwaffe* determined to make the most of this opportunity to cripple the daylight bombers. Some German *gruppen* flew as many as three sorties that day.

Despite the battering suffered by the Eighth Air Force, and the relatively light damage inflicted on the target, the operation did have an important strategic effect. The *Luftwaffe's* response to the Allied air threat was to now heavily re-deploy its airpower, leaving less than a quarter of its available air forces on the previously "all important Russian Front."²

The *Luftwaffe* forces now in Western Europe, though hard-pressed from this August 17 raid, would be rested and ready for the next USAAF operations of consequence. These would be the follow-up raids, once again on Schweinfurt, which would climax on October 14, 1943: "Black Thursday".

But that is another mission.

SCHWEINFURT SCENARIO RULES AND VICTORY CONDITIONS

Although the Referee will make all die rolls regarding the following conditions, and apply them to all players' bombers in the force, the information is presented here for the players' reference, and as an aid to any future solitaire play.

Fighter Cover: Zone 2 +1 to die roll
Zone 3 No modifier to die roll
Zone 4 -1 to die roll
Zone 5 Poor Cover available on a die roll of "6"

Weather Over Target: As per Table O-1

Weather Over Base: 2/12: Bad; 3,4/10,11: Poor; 5-9: Good

FLAK Over Target: FLAK Over Target is automatically Medium; ignore +1 on Table G-3a³.

Flight Log Gazetteer: The Flight Log Gazetteer is modified to represent the historical situation as follows:

Outbound:

Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Zone 8
-1/W	0/W	0/W-N	0/N	0/G	0/G	-1/G

Return:

Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Zone 8
-1/W	-1/W	0/W-N	0/N	-1/G	-1/G	-1/G

1. This tournament will be a return to the traditional play of *B-17, QUEEN OF THE SKIES*. Certain modifications have been made to the mission profile to better represent the character of the historical event, but the players will be required to perform within the framework of the original game system as Mr. Frank envisioned it. Points will be awarded for downing enemy aircraft, preserving bomber crew members, and for delivery of payload to the target. A special award will also be presented to the player who returns to England with (or perhaps we should say "in spite of") the most heavily damaged bomber, without losing the entire crew on landing (a die roll result of 2 or less on Table G-9).

2. The bomber used will be the *B-17/F* as presented in the original game, with no modifications.

3. The Pilot, Co-Pilot and Bombardier of each aircraft are all considered to be flying their 11th missions, and receive the appropriate benefits for such status to all die rolls on Tables O-6, G-9 and G-10.

4. Ace Gunners may be acquired during the course of play; no player may have an Ace Gunner at the start of the mission.

5. Table B-7, "Random Events", will be used, with the following exception: Result numbers 3, 7, 10, 11 and 12 are treated as "No Effect".

NOTE: Solitaire players may use the "Random Events" Table without modification, if desired.

6. The Referee will make all die rolls for Weather and the level of Fighter Cover in all cases, and the results of these die rolls will apply to all bombers in the force. There will be the possibility of minimal fighter cover in Zone 5 during the mission.

7. Rule 20.0, "German Fighter Pilot Status", will be used.

8. Players will use one side of their Mission Charts for the outbound portion of the game, and the reverse side of the same chart for the return. The Flight Log differs slightly for each half of the mission in this scenario, so pre-printed Mission Charts should be provided for the players.

9. Players of the same squadron will sit at the same table, in the order of their bomber's position within the squadron (i.e., the Lead Bomber player will sit at one end of the table, the next bomber player will sit next to him, and so on down to the Tail Bomber player who will sit at the opposite end). Players will be assigned to squadrons by the Referee; positions within each Squadron should be determined by the players through die roll or, better still, by drawing straws (one historical method). If (when) bombers are lost, the next player in the Squadron will move into their position. Seating order is important because the Lead and Tail bombers in a squadron draw more enemy fighters, and thus have a greater opportunity to gain points for kills, as well as a greater risk of being shot down themselves.

10. If a squadron loses its Tail and/or Lead bombers, the adjacent player in line takes over the particular position vacated. If a squadron is reduced to one bomber, that bomber is treated as being both the Lead and Tail bomber for purposes of apportioning enemy fighters during future attacks.

11. If either the Low Squadron or High Squadron are totally eliminated, the Middle Squadron takes their place. Adjust the Flight Log for each aircraft accordingly. There is no change in the status of the Low or High Squadrons if the Middle Squadron is totally eliminated. If only one squadron remains of the original formation, it automatically becomes a Low Squadron upon entering the next Zone.

12. Players receive one point for each Me 109, one point for each Me 110, and two points for each FW 190 which their crews shoot down. No points are received for enemy fighters forced to Break Off Attacks or driven off or eliminated by Fighter Cover or Random Events. No bonus points are awarded for shooting down enemy "Ace" or "Green" Pilots. Players will also receive points equal to one-tenth of the percentage of their bombs dropped on the target, fractions rounded up. Finally, players receive one point for each crewman returned to England who does not later die of his wounds.

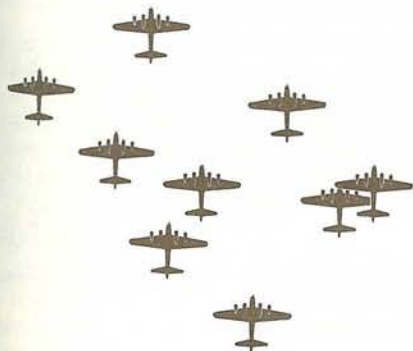
13. This optional condition (appropriately numbered "13") is for the player who somehow manages to limp back to England in a manner better suited to *The Twilight Zone* than to any reasonable expectations based on the condition of his aircraft. The player who returns with the most heavily damaged *B-17*, and lands it with at least one living crew member who does not later die of his wounds, regardless of the final condition of his aircraft, should be given some sort of Honorable Mention or an Award of Recognition. Typically, this is a pair of new "Consolation Dice", hopefully a little luckier than those he played through the tournament with.

Credit Where It's Due

Since writing this article, I have played in another B-17 tournament very similar to the one described herein. This was the AVALONCON '92 event, refereed by Dave Terry. This time out, it was my bomber—the *Avé Maria*, named for my wife—which, believe it or not, fell prey to a Fuel Tank Fire, dictating a Bail Out. Two of my crew escaped occupied France and actually returned to England, only to be lost on the next mission when an FW 190's burst hit the Bomb Bay of my second aircraft, the *Mina Mine-Ah* ("Mina" is my wife's nickname), detonating her cargo. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

I found Mr. Terry's efforts to be in every way the equal of those of Mr. Moreland which I so fondly recall in the above article. All the old fun and good sportsmanship that had been lacking since that first tournament were in full force once more. Any B-17 fan who was at AVALONCON '92 will remember the enthusiasm of the participants and sheer entertainment of Mr. Terry's tournament; any B-17 fan who wasn't there would do well to plan on attending next year. I know I will; I have a new pair of Conso-lation Dice I have to break in.

1. The phrase "The Cold Equations" used in this article is the title of a classic science fiction short story by Mr. Tom Godwin. It shows up from time to time in anthologies, and is highly recommended reading.
2. The source authority for this section was Mr. S. Craig Taylor's own *Bomber*, a design he published for Yaquinto Publishing, Copyright 1985. With all due respect to our own LUFTWAFFE, this now-out-of-print title remains for me the definitive simulation of the air war over Europe. Mr. Taylor's own Scenario Notes for his August 17, 1943 scenario provided the bulk of the information and verbiage for my own synopsis of the *B-17 Tournament Scenario* version.
3. "Table G-3a" is from Mr. Doug Bleyaert's excellent article, "The Queen in Germany; More targets for B-17" (The *GENERAL*, Vol. 23, No. 5), which lists twenty-two new targets for the game, some as deep as ten zones into Germany. Mr. Bleyaert's article also provides a more conventional Flight Log Gazetteer for raids on Schweinfurt as part of its "Table G-11a". Also highly recommended, and *de rigueur* for all fans of B-17, *QUEEN OF THE SKIES*.



Coming Attractions

By Don Greenwood and S. Craig Taylor, Jr.

DINOSAURS AND CADILLACS

TYRANNO EX

Some Background on Our Latest Release

Many of my gaming acquaintances of "Team Doily" fame are presently enraptured by the European school of game design. While their tastes tend toward simpler and less militant fare than would interest the average reader of this magazine, there is little doubt that considerable fresh game design talent resides on the far side of the Atlantic. Everyone has a different idea of what constitutes a great game and I am far from joining the other members of Team Doily in proclaiming *ADEL VERFLICHTET* as the greatest game of all time. Nonetheless, I recognize talent when it kicks me in the butt. Thus, I've had my eye on the European boardgame community for quite some time with the idea of acquiring the right products for Avalon Hill fans.

Prior to the appearance of *ADEL VERFLICHTET*, Team Doily was nearly unanimous in its declaration of *Die Macher* as one of their all-time favorite games. However, a German election game was not my idea of a hot marketing property, so I held my curiosity in check until the same designer turned to a subject I deemed more saleable. Fortunately, I didn't have long to wait before Karl-Heinz Schmiel released *Tyranno Ex* under his private *Mosquito Games* label. This time the theme was evolution and Team Doily was duly impressed. So was I, and an agreement to do an English-language version was soon reached.

Avalon Hill's *TYRANNO EX* is a game for two to four players (four being optimum) in which each player selects from a pool of 28 different species and follows their evolution through rapidly passing millenia as they struggle against the changing environment and threats posed by other species. Each animal has a unique combination of three elements which are vital to its survival. The more these elements are found in the environment, the more robust the species. If these elements are removed from the environment altogether, the species becomes extinct, and therein lies the crux of the matter. The environment is constantly changing as players alternate placing elements in a simulated passage of millions of years. Each player has a supply of elements which he may play to influence the environment or return for another selection. By weighing the elements at his disposal and the needs of his and other players' species, a skillful player can accurately manipulate the environment to best suit his own ani-

mals. The ability to plan ahead and bluff during the secret allocation of elements makes the Evolution Phase far from a random factor.

As the Evolution Phase comes to a close, species will have gained or lost strength based on their own unique element needs and how successful players have been in manipulating the environment. Each player then selects one of his animals with which to attack an opposing species during the Combat Phase to establish dominance at the top of the food chain. The resulting dice battles are reminiscent of *TITAN*, but victory in combat alone does not guarantee survival. Even combat victors are eventually pushed out of play by the survival of new and more successful species as evolution marches inevitably forward.

Whereas Karl-Heinz Schmiel's version used an abstract board, fictitious animals and a more comic treatment, our rendition employs full color illustrations of actual animals. They range from the mighty *Tyrannosaurus Rex* of the title dating back some 66,000,000 years to the harmless *Raphus Cucullatus* (better known as the Dodo bird), which met extermination at the hands of man a mere 300 years ago. Beautifully illustrated playing cards and mounted map-board bring the Primeval World to life in a game that is every bit as challenging as it is fun to play. Pertinent data regarding each animal's size, habits, time period and probable cause of extinction adorn the back of each playing card, making it an educational tool as well.

TYRANNO EX is a relatively simple game suitable for family play and playable in two-to-three hours. Yet, heavy thinkers of the *ACQUIRE* variety may be its biggest fans. Due to the bluffing aspects of the hidden Element placements, it is not recommended for solitaire play. *TYRANNO EX* was released at AVALONCON '92, and the response from gamers indicates it has been very well received, indeed.

ROADKILL

Greenwood Hits the Road (And Everyone On It With Him)

It's a long stretch from prehistoric dinosaurs to futuristic road races, but that's where my next development chore took me. This time the designer was Dan Verrsen of *Modern Naval Battles* fame. Like his earlier claim to fame, *ROADKILL* is a card game. I share Dan's preference for card games as the best medium in which to design sophisticated games with a minimum of rules dependence. A well-designed deck of cards can replace endless pages of rules by providing all the necessary rule prompts at the player's fingers whenever

he needs them. They also provide much more opportunity for graphic support than the average wargame's half-inch counters.

Unlike most of Team Doily, my favorite game is *UP FRONT*. I've been a fan of Courtney Allen's designs for a long time and never miss an opportunity to borrow and improve upon his design innovations. Such was the case here as *ROADKILL* has undergone major in-house redesign to become a futuristic *UP FRONT*-type demolition derby. While *ROADKILL* doesn't have the depth of scenarios or strategy of an *UP FRONT*, it doesn't have a 36-page rulebook either. Many who found the latter's rules daunting will embrace the four pages of *ROADKILL* rules as perhaps more appropriate fare for this type of card game.

ROADKILL is a cross between Hollywood's *Mad Max* and *Death Race 2000* themes, wherein full-contact, combat cross-country auto racing has become the rage of the future. Life is cheap. Cars are well-armed and armored. The event is televised to a blood-crazed, wagering audience more addicted than any NFL junkie. Consider it *CIRCUS MAXIMUS*, sans mapboard, with machine guns and turbo-charged engines.

Each player has a control panel on which he tracks the fuel, damage, and location of his car. A player's hand capacity is reduced as his car's damage increases. So as the race continues and combat takes its toll, cars have to drop back on side roads or rest stops to repair, or stagger forward with reduced capabilities. The decision of when to stop and sacrifice time on the road and position in the pack for necessary fuel or repairs is not unlike those gut-wrenching decisions of when to move forward in *UP FRONT*. The variables to be considered are nearly infinite.

The premise for *ROADKILL* is simple: The course is laid by playing Road cards from your hand. The first car to play and enter the eighth Road section wins. However, only the leader can play Road sections, and remaining in the lead is a perilous undertaking. By the time one has fought his way through the pack to take the lead, he may have little remaining with which to forge a new Road section or defend his recently-acquired lead.

The Road sections come in straight, curved, and mountainous sections which each take proportionally more fuel and time to transit. Balancing a car's position in the race with its fuel/repair needs and current card hand is a constantly changing test of skill, nerves and calculated gambles. Timing is everything. Knowing when to bide your time and build a stronger hand and when to go for broke is essential. Players may play any number of cards in their turn, but their maximum draw capability is reduced by one for each card played. A player who plays all his cards is thus left visibly defenseless with nothing to protect him from attacks by passing cars. The cards are color-coded to allow play either in your own turn or in response to another player's actions during his turn. A player with few cards in his hand invites others to pass him with disdain and kick a little sand in his face for good measure.

Each car must pass a Road-entry random number check to advance to the next Road section. This simulates in a playable manner "time on road" in marking progress along that Road

section. It also serves to handicap a run-away leader as the tail-enders earn beneficial Road-entry modifiers to offset the difficulties of fighting one's way through the pack. The end result is a balancing feature that usually provides a photo finish. Even cars that are all but smoldering wrecks at the outset have an excellent opportunity to repair and overtake the leaders.

Random events add color as weather conditions, mechanical breakdowns, narrowing roads that inhibit passing, and the occasional raised drawbridge screw up even the best laid plans at the worst possible moment. The Advanced Game allows players to augment their vehicles with unique features and custom design their own cars.

ROADKILL is a riotous two-hour game of armored leapfrog for two-to-ten players or teams, ages 12 and up. It is currently scheduled for a spring release. I recommend it highly to those who share my enthusiasm for sophisticated card wargames such as *UP FRONT*, *ATTACK SUB*, or *WRASSLIN*.

Don Greenwood

PROLOGUE:

Fear and Loathing in Baltimore...

I'm no Einstein, but I am not without a certain low animal cunning that, in past years, has often allowed me to slip from the clammy clutches of the editor of *The GENERAL* when nagged to write a *few* (translation: "Pad that sucker so there's no need for a lengthy philosophy section!") words on what's upcoming from my prestigious and plush *office de design*. "So what's the problem?", you ask, perplexed; "Write it and get on with your life." Well, boys and girls, it's like this: Everytime I carefully craft one of these articles, the *very next day* my bosses, without fail, rearrange my design schedule (for *VERY GOOD REASONS*, I hasten to add) and I spend the next five years answering irate letters and convention questions from psychotic stalker-types demanding to know what ever happened to *STURMOVIK*.

In the past, not writing these articles for ex-editor Rex Martin was messy but fairly easy. Making threatening gestures and holding hostage any one of his numerous devil's brood of children, cats, hamsters, gerbils or ferrets was usually enough to kill interest in the feature for another year. Unfortunately, ruthless new editor Don Hawthorne is less vulnerable; that is, he has no children to ransom and his only pet is a rather large dog with sharp, pointy teeth. Also, although nominally a herbivore (he grazes on salads for lunch), this bad boy has the relentless instincts of a red meat-eating bloodhound.

'Nuff said. Hawthorne, here's your accursed article. Indeed!!! Without going into the sordid and unpleasant details (Note, Don, that I did *not* involve the police, precisely as instructed, and I *will* be by to wash the car and windows and do your lawn next weekend) or further ado ...

IDF

Slated for release late in 1992 or whenever our currently-homeless art department gets reassembled, *IDF* ("Israeli Defense Force") takes the *MBT* modern tactical combat system

back to the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973. Published as a separate stand-alone game, *IDF* is still *completely* compatible with *MBT*, and the two games' data cards can be used together for compiling "design-your-own" modern scenarios. Despite the common game system, *IDF*, thanks to the older equipment in use and the more open terrain, has a totally different *feel* from *MBT* when being played.

Vehicles found in *IDF* include the M60A1, various Centurions (Super, Ben Gurion, Mk.3 and Mk. 5), the M47A1, the M48A2 and Super Patton, the ancient but still effective Shermans (M1, M50 Mk.2, and M51 Mk.1), the AMX-13, the T1-67, the T-10M, the Stalin 3, the antique T-34/85, the T-54B and T-55A, the T-62A, the PT-76B, and many others, plus infantry, artillery, aircraft and helicopters.

MUSTANGS

This will be my sixth and last (at least for a while) game for the Smithsonian's *American History Series*. The game should be published early in 1993. It covers *only* fighter-to-fighter combat (if you want bombers, you'll just have to play *AIR FORCE*) at the end of the Second World War. In common with the other games in this series, *MUSTANGS* is quick and easy to learn, and the low number of counters in use at any one time makes this one especially suitable for novices. The game system combines a simultaneous movement system that requires no written orders, with a capability to exploit initiative and so react to enemy maneuvers in a timely manner.

Aircraft found in *MUSTANGS* will include the P-38L "Lightning", the P-47B and D "Thunderbolt", the P-51B and D "Mustang" (of course), the F4U-1A "Corsair", the F6F-3 "Hellcat", the Me-109G-6, the FW-190A-8 and D-9, the Me-262-1a, the A6M5a "Zeke", the Ki.84-Ia "Frank", and the N1K1-Jb "George", plus many variations on these types. Over thirty additional fighter aircraft types and their variants will be available in an expansion kit that will be released later.

NAPOLEON'S BATTLES: MODULE 2

This will be the second and final module for the miniatures rules set, *NAPOLEON'S BATTLES*, and should be out by the summer of 1993. The booklet will include new scenarios (including Austerlitz and Wagram), a campaign system tied to our *EMPIRES IN ARMS* board game, an expansion—correction—update of the list of general officers found in the original game, and some other goodies.

OTHER FUTURE PROJECTS

I have some four projects on the back burner right now, but hesitate to make any further mention of any of them as they are currently on no official company schedule and are at least a year away (from when this article is written—probably no more than a few weeks away by the time it gets printed). So, NO COMMENT!!!

Craig Taylor

Thanks, Craig; you can have your family back, now. DJH





More Programming Guidelines and Global GENIE

By John Huff

How to Build a Computer Game

Several prospective developers have approached me on the question of just how development proceeds on a new computer game. Here is a vastly simplified description of the process. Keep in mind that this is under ideal conditions. Under the pressures of the real world, things can be a little less well defined. For illustrative purposes I am assuming that you have assembled a team of a designer, one or more programmers, and an artist. In the real world you might well have people doubling up jobs, but it's not the best way. Many more people are needed to bring the final product to market such as editors, layout artists and producers, but were talking about the R&D end.

The first step is the design of the game. It is better to have your completed design at hand, rather than to let it grow as things proceed. In this way the programmer has a solid feel for the fundamental structure of the game and can make the game engine as solid as possible. The design for the computer player(s) should not be a part of the fundamental design, but be a separate engine.

The next step is to decide how the game will look, play, and feel. Many programmers use toolbox programs to produce dummy programs. This allows the designer, artist, and the programmer(s) to see an approximation of the finished product. Design parameters can then be discussed and worked out before the programmer writes any good code and avoids conflicts within the team.

The third step is for the programmer(s) to begin the game engine. This starts with the basic functions of the game and proceeds to the higher level functions. Hooks to connect with the human interface and hooks for the computer player are included in the code of the engine. At this point the computer player should still be in the design stage and not actually being coded.

Next step is to program the user interface. Interface code is very time critical, that is the interface cannot have annoying time/control lags, but should react to input without any perceptible delay. Advanced graphics routines (such as scrolling, pop-up menus, and animation) have to be quick, and that generally means ASSEMBLY LANGUAGE (shudder). While I'll admit that good "C" code is better than poorly written assembler, good assembly language is still by far the fastest.

Once the game engine and user interface are complete, they are merged and the complete ALPHA version of the game tested thoroughly. While this is going on, the programmer begins work on the computer player engine. Philosophically we feel that the computer player should be constricted by the game rules in the same manner as the human player. This does not allow for cheating, and eventually gives the human player the edge (as a more flexible CPU is at work... we hope).

Suggestions and bugs from the ALPHA test are implemented, and then the computer player connected to the game engine. This is the BETA version of the program which is tested even more thoroughly than the ALPHA.

Any problems which crop up in the BETA test are addressed and the final version given on last PROOF test. The game is then prepared for market and released (where all the undiscovered bugs... er... *features* come to the surface).

Sounds simple, but in fact it's a complex process, requiring much time and creative energy to do well. Changes in industry standards that have occurred during development, improvements to the design, changes in prompts and requesters and so on which will invariably add to the complexity of the project.

GENIE International

GENIE is available to international users via PDN in the following countries:

Belgium	Italy	South Africa
Denmark	Mexico	South Korea
Finland	Netherlands	Spain
France	Norway	Sweden
Guatemala	Philippines	Taiwan
Hong Kong	Portugal	Turkey
Ireland	Singapore	United Kingdom

To access GENIE from any of the above-listed countries, please follow these instructions:

1. Connect to the local PDN (public data network by joining the local PDN service).
2. Enter the following information all on one line:
3136 (GE Information Services' DNIC)
9 (Indicates PAD Service)
00 (Indicates Asynchronous Service)

Thus, you would enter: 3136900 OR 31369000000000 (If the PDN requires the full X.121 address.) Contact the PTT representative if there are any questions as to the correct

addressing structure. (GE Information Services will distinguish the access speed (300 bps or 1200 bps) automatically.)

3. When you receive the MARK*NET Service sign-on prompt U#=#, follow the traditional user number, password which is:

XJM11997,PDN

4. After the signup, a startup package will be mailed. This includes a contract, which must be returned before the account can be validated. If you choose, you may FAX the signed contract. The FAX information appears on the contract.

The hourly rates for PDN usage are:

	<u>Non-Prime</u>	<u>Prime</u>
300/1200/2400	\$8.00	\$20.00

There is no sign-up fee. A manual is not included, but may be ordered for \$28.95 (which includes shipping and handling).

Prime time is in effect from 8 AM to 6PM ****EASTERN**** time (U.S.A.) weekdays (i.e., Monday through Friday). Non-prime time is all other hours and includes GENIE holidays.



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.

JANUARY 15-17, 1993

THE ASL OPEN TOURNAMENT, Arlington Airport Hilton, Arlington, TX. Seven Round Swiss-style system. For further information, contact Gary Fortenberry at 232 Linda Drive, Burleson, TX 76028, or call (817) 447-2850.

FEBRUARY 12 - 14, 1993

GENGHIS CON XIV, Marriott Hotel Southeast at I-25, Denver, CO. Sponsored by the Denver Gamers Association. For more information, contact The Denver Gamers Association, P.O. Box 440058, Aurora, CO 80044, or call (303) 665-7062.

FEBRUARY 12-15, 1993

ORCCON 16, Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel. The full gamut of the hobby available in tournament and/or open gaming formats. Contact STRATEGICON, P.O. Box 3849, Torrance, CA 90510-3849, or call (310) 326-9440 for more and immediate details.

FEBRUARY 26 - 28, 1993

TOTAL CONFUSION VII, Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel, Marlborough, MA. Contact: Total ConFusion Convention, P.O. Box 1463, Worcester, MA 01607-1463, or call (508) 481-8241 or (508) 9487-1530.

MARCH 25-28

SIMCON XV, sponsored by the URSGA, Rochester, NY. Contact SIMCON, CPU #277146, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627-7146, or call (716) 275-6186.

Dear Sirs:

I am a war gaming enthusiast and have enjoyed gaming with many of your fine designs. However, I am visually impaired, and my sight has become worse. In order for it to be possible for me to game with any of your systems, they have had to be adjusted. I have come up with a conversion kit that will work with many of your systems. Not only is it workable for the partially visually impaired, but people who are totally blind can use this system also.

I think that the system that I have designed could be marketed. People whose vision currently prevents them from using many of your games may now have the opportunity to do so. In addition, some conventional gamers may find this system has advantages, such as easily readable charts, counters that won't fall off the map, and friendlier phase adjustment procedures.

I am hoping that you would be interested in this project. If not, then perhaps your company will allow me to use its games with my system, and market the system myself. I don't know what kind of consumer market is available for this idea, or if any blind people would even have much interest in its use. All I can do is go on my own feelings, and I believe that if people who are now unable to play your games were given an opportunity to do so, they would.

Let me discuss which games I chose to work on first. I felt that the games set up for play-by-mail would be the easiest to convert, especially if someone were going to get started in war gaming. I developed systems for *THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* and *AFRIKA KORPS*, among others. Most of the expensive parts, such as map boards and counters, are modular or re-usable with other games. Once a person acquires all the basic parts needed, the only additional parts they would need to purchase would be rules, unique components, and map sheets for the individual games. I think almost any game could be converted, but the ones listed above were the best to start with to get a feel for the system.

Let me close by saying that Avalon Hill has given me many hours of enjoyment, and is the standard that I use to judge other games. Thank you for your time.

Carl Mickla
Perth Amboy, NJ

Personally, I think it's a great idea. I'd very much like to know the views of the readership on this, so I've printed Mr. Mickla's letter in this column. How about it? Anybody else out there besides me who plays more STORM OVER ARNHEM than THUNDER AT CASSINO just because it's easier to read SOA's components? Think about it before you answer!

DJH

★★★★★

Dear Mr. Martin:

There are a couple of reasons I find myself writing a letter to *THE GENERAL* and yourself.

First, I wish to congratulate you on the always fine manner in which *THE GENERAL* has endured under your guiding hand. It is always a pleasure to see the next issue appear in my mail box. I may disagree about content at times, but I enjoy the exposure to the variety of games published by Avalon Hill. I especially enjoy the Series Replays, as they often give me the "flavor" of a game. I have made purchases in the past based on SR's that I have read. I also wish to commend all those game-players who offer themselves for scrutiny in this manner—there are more than a few of us who appreciate the effort.

My other reason in writing is to express a personal viewpoint that I'm not sure is common but which does exist, at least for

Letters to the Editor . . .

myself, if not for many others. I am a solo wargamer. That in itself is not unusual, but I have always been a solitary wargamer. I understand letters that comment on playing wargames (especially two-person games) and offer the view of how they generally don't understand how a person not "pitting themselves against an opponent" could gain the proper measure of wargaming. I would like to offer my outlook in hopes of their understanding.

I am not a recluse, nor do I lack a competitive spirit (as anyone seeing me play anything from cards to volleyball can attest). But I enjoy wargaming in a different light. I enjoy "experiencing" a game. I started out enjoying the simulation aspect of a game, but I would now place myself squarely on the side of favoring playability over simulation. I enjoy winning—but within the context of wargaming—it's more a matter of playing and enjoying the game. I don't spend a lot of time wargaming, but the time I spend I enjoy. I own a large number of titles from Avalon Hill and Victory Games, and play all the solitaire titles—*CARRIER* especially due to its subject. But for my money the best I've found is the *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER* system. It is very complex, and I'm sure if I were to play anyone competitively I would get my head handed to me, but I do try to practice using the "best" tactics available. My games tend to be slow, but I look forward to each encounter and situation. I agree with Don Greenwood in that *ASL* is the perfect game to be stranded with on a desert island.

At this point I also wish to thank Jim Stahler for his *Training Chapter K*. It has helped me grasp the infantry rules much easier than plowing through the rules. Also, John Mishcon and Bob Medrow have helped me in my enjoyment of game. But it is the "experiencing" factor that makes *ASL* my favorite system.

I quite imagine that I'm a small minority within the wargaming world, and that's okay. I gain as much from the gaming—albeit in a different way—as any two people who compete. I'm glad there's room in the hobby for all of us.

Mike Dom
Alpena, Michigan

★★★★★

Dear Editors:

Thank you all for the most outstanding *GENERAL* issue ever (Vol. 27, No. 6). Just as I was about to let my subscription lapse, along came a boardgame-oriented issue with only the proper proportional-to-sales number of wargame articles. Praise be unto ye. And an article on *STOCKS & BONDS* was a refreshing change. Keep up the good work and excellent direction.

As for the yahoo minority who continue their maniacal slamming of *THE GENERAL* (and Avalon Hill in general) for moving toward the less complex, more playable games, please point out to them that the public has spoken and quick, simpler boardgames are the victors. This is obvious in the Top 25 ad on page 33 (Vol 27-6). Only seven of the titles were wargames (*GUNG HO!*, *BATTLE OF THE BULGE '91*, *GETTYSBURG '88*, *FLASHPOINT: GOLAN, ASL*, *CIVIL WAR* and *THIRD REICH*) and two of those are introductory-level. I'm not saying wargames should be ignored, I'm just saying that times change and gamers should, too. I enjoy many wargames but I won't limit myself to them by closed-mindedly rebuking any discus-

sions of the non-military offerings. If wargamers want to continue receiving periodic new wargame titles from AH, they should enthusiastically support Avalon Hill's new-found bread and butter—plain old boardgames. (I won't even go into the fact that 100% of AH's role-playing line is represented in the Top Dozen.)

Again, keep up the good work and a subscription renewal is on the way.

Randy Cox
Clemson, SC

★★★★★

Dear Mr. Greenwood:

I am writing for the Eastern Pennsylvania Gaming Society (EPGS), to let you know a little about us and the actions we have taken to reverse the so-called "decline of the hobby".

We are a group of gamers which meets the third Saturday of each month in the Eastern Pennsylvania area, currently at the George Washington Lodge on Plymouth Meeting, PA, just off the Norristown exit of the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Our list of fully current members has just topped fifty people, with something like seventy-five members total, and our meetings average twenty-five to forty people each month. We play games of all publishers, but Avalon Hill games are certainly quite popular here. Our members pay a four dollar fee for each meeting they attend, and this goes toward paying the rent for the hall and entitles them to receive our newsletter.

We sent a total of three full teams to *AVALONCON* this year. Most of our membership is very excited about the *AVALONCON* concept, and we are even more thrilled that it will be held for the foreseeable future in PA, since Camp Hill is only a two hour drive down the turnpike for most of us. The only way it could be better is if the convention were held in suburban Philadelphia rather than suburban Harrisburg!

Our membership, including myself and the other officers, is especially enthusiastic about *UP FRONT* and *ASL*—we have quite a number of enthusiasts who would not doubt be ready to give you their opinions. Regarding *UP FRONT*, there are many of us who consider it the greatest game you have ever published—we are making converts all the time, even from those people who make a big noise about not liking Avalon Hill games. Thus we would be most distressed if the rumors we hear about the game being discontinued were true. Let's hope a great deal of enthusiasm can be generated by the *UP FRONT* tournament at *AVALONCON*; both myself and the club Minister of Internal Affairs, Anthony Togliola, will be participating.

In closing, I want you to be aware that the hobby is doing quite well in southeastern Pennsylvania, and we look forward to helping it do even better. Hoping that I might cross cards with you at the next *UP FRONT* tournament . . .

David Bozzini
Exton, PA

★★★★★

Dear Mr. Hawthorne:

As a long time reader of *THE GENERAL*, I wish you well in your new position. I hope that you will continue to expand and improve your magazine as your predecessors have done. You certainly have a tough act to follow.

I felt that I must respond to Michael Anchors' article "Forgetting History" in Vol. 28, No. 1. Perhaps the article should have been entitled "Forgetting Victory". I will admit that the Assyrian player following this strategy will do better than the Asian, but consider the following points:

By committing the Assyrian population to war in Asia Minor early in the game, you remove significant pressure from Babylon and Egypt. These two nations no longer have to make the agonizing decision of either building their two cities on turn four and reducing their farming population to four, or holding off and falling a space behind on the AST. Instead of fighting for the city sites in Palestine and Syria, they can peacefully co-exist, at least in the early game, placing them in an unacceptably strong position.

More important is the time it will take to eradicate the Asians from Asia Minor. Mr. Anchors implies in his article that the side with more tokens has an advantage in battle. This is a fallacy. In *CIVILIZATION*, having a smaller population and the ability to move last is far more desirable. I have found that even with an uninspired defense, the Asians can hold off a large number of Assyrians through at least turn seven. If Assyria holds off building cities until the "Asian Question" has been resolved, as they must if they intend sole possession of Asia Minor, they will have fallen back three places on the AST. I personally am unwilling to embrace a strategy that places me that far behind, if it doesn't also show how I am to bring everyone else to a similar level. When Assyria finally builds its cities, it finds itself far behind in the trade wars that truly determine victory or defeat.

It is easy to lose sight of the fact that *CIVILIZATION* is an economic game as much as it is a military game. Genocide is bad business, and so is not a wise strategy, particularly in the early turns of the game.

Brian S. DuBuis
Ann Arbor, MI

★★★★★

Dear Mr. Greenwood:

Since purchasing *BLACKBEARD* in February '92, it has become the favorite of my children surpassing even *DINOSAURS OF THE LOST WORLD* and *LEGENDS OF ROBIN HOOD*. The enclosed ratings form, a collective effort on our part, reflects our approval of the game and of the efforts of Rich Berg, Jim Eliason and yourself.

The bibliography in the rules manual, and especially, the reference to *THE GENERAL*, Vol. 27, No. 6 featuring *BLACKBEARD*, are great ideas. Incidentally, my copy of that issue has just arrived and it is an excellent companion to the game.

The only "negative" comment on the game concerns the recording of "Net Worth". Somehow, recording numbers on the Ship Log cards does not seem to mesh with Pirates and hoards of plunder. Something more visual is needed. A set of "doubloons", like the gold coins used in *ROBIN HOOD*, would have created the right "feel" for piles of pirate plunder.

Despite that minor inconvenience, thanks for another great game.

Rich Jennings and crew:
Michael, Kevin, Brian and Molly
Saint Ann, Missouri

My wife and I generally "raid" the ROBIN HOOD game for gold-piece counters and use them to cover the chips on the "Net Worth" track of the BLACKBEARD ship cards (some of which may be blanks!); it provides the effect you seek and adds the extra dimension of preventing calculating players from reading one's bank statements.

DJH

Here are 28 Years of Greek History Condensed into a 5-Hour Encounter of the Peloponnesian Kind...

The **Peloponnesian War** re-creates the 28-year conflict that broke out in 431BC between the Spartan Coalition and the Athenian Empire.

In each 3-year turn, the game allows one to chart the destiny of the struggle in a strategic game of ancient warfare.

Includes Unique Solitaire System

The game is designed for play by 2 players, or as many as 7...yet features a unique solitaire system like no other system available today. All existing solitaire systems on the market have the player take one side for the entire game. In **The Peloponnesian War** one gets to play **both** sides. If the game system is winning, the player is forced to continue with the losing side. Success, on the other hand, will eventually force the player to change sides and recover the losing side's fortunes. The duration of the war and the player's performance determine victory. In this manner the player competes against himself in the classic tradition of the Greek tragedy.

Not only can the player experience the game privately, but a competitive two-player version allows one to pit skills against a human opponent. This feature allows a single player to practice sound strategy and tactics while using the same game system in a competitive encounter. The unique multi-player rules allow for a large group encounter of the Peloponnesian kind.

Game includes 200 1/2" Counters, one 22" x 34" Mapsheet, one Historical Commentary Booklet, one Charts & Tables Booklet, one Victory Point Pad, one Player Aid Summary Card, two Strategy Matrix Displays, two 6-sided Dice, Rulebook, and a Counter Storage Tray.



The game system features historical leaders who conduct strategic operations against the enemy coalition. Each three year game turn represents a phase of the 28 year conflict complete with random events, collection of tribute, and rebellions. During each game turn opposing leaders expend money (talents) to move triremes, hoplites, and cavalry forces toward distant objectives in an effort to control strategic lines of communication while destroying the enemy's forces and ravaging his territory.

The unique leader system has historic personages, such as Pericles, Alcibiades, Archidamus, Brasidas, Glyppas, Cleon among others, who not only represent themselves but also the political factions they lead. This political affiliation determines the type of historically-accurate strategies that they will pursue when they are in charge of the polis. Success for the solitaire systems allows it to maintain its strategy while failure leads to a new strategic direction of the war. The combat system features naval battles, land battles, and sieges. Success in battle depends on the ability of the leader, the quality/size of the forces (Spartan Hoplites and Athenian Triremes), and superiority in cavalry.

The Peloponnesian War comes with four scenarios (Peloponnesian War, Archidamian War, Deceleian War, Fall of Athens). The three smaller scenarios allow the player to have a short but satisfying gaming experience by examining a critical segment of the war. Of course there is always the option to play the Peloponnesian War scenario and experience the full panorama of the conflict while not consuming prodigious amounts of time. Included in this package are commissioned articles which trace the strategic course of the war, examine its tactics, and translate the history of Thucydides into the form it would take during an actual game. Whether alone or with as many as seven friends, **The Peloponnesian War** allows one to experience the glory that was Greece.

No.	Title	Number of Players	Ages	Complexity	Solitaire Suitability	Suggested Retail
30034	Peloponnesian War	1 to 7	12 & Up	Medium	Outstanding	\$35



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Stonewall Jackson's Way

August 1862:

President Abraham Lincoln has ordered General John Pope to Washington and given him command over all Union forces in central Virginia. His orders: March "on to Richmond" in conjunction with General McClellan's Army of the Potomac and crush the Rebels once and for all. But General Robert E. Lee's renowned Army of Northern Virginia has secretly moved north from Richmond to confront Pope before the Union plan can be put into effect. With his brilliant subordinates, including Longstreet, Stuart and Jackson, Lee is about to launch his most masterful campaign of the Civil War. When it has ended, the Confederates will be at the gates of Washington, and John Pope will be out of a job. Throughout the four years of the Civil War, the South's prospects for victory will never look brighter, nor those of the North so dim.

This simulation of the Second Manassas campaign is the first volume in Avalon Hill's new series of strategic Civil War games. Future games will link up with the **STONEWALL JACKSON'S WAY** map to portray more of the Civil War's eastern theatre. This is one of the first Civil War games to concentrate on an entire campaign rather than a single battle. Despite its rich detail, the game is fairly easy to learn and play. Indeed, several scenarios can be played to completion in an hour.

Two beautiful 22" x 32" maps portray central Virginia as it was in the summer of 1862, featuring roads, turnpikes, railroads, rivers, mountains—even bridges and fords. These highly accurate maps are based on original Civil War maps in state and county archives. The players control Union and Confederate military units in turns representing one day of real time. The game features five Basic scenarios, two Advanced scenarios, and a detailed day-by-day historical analysis of the actual campaign. **STONEWALL JACKSON'S WAY** will appeal to Civil War buffs of all types as well as to those who are just being introduced to this dramatic period of American history. Its interactive game system assures that each game will be unpredictable, exciting and competitive.

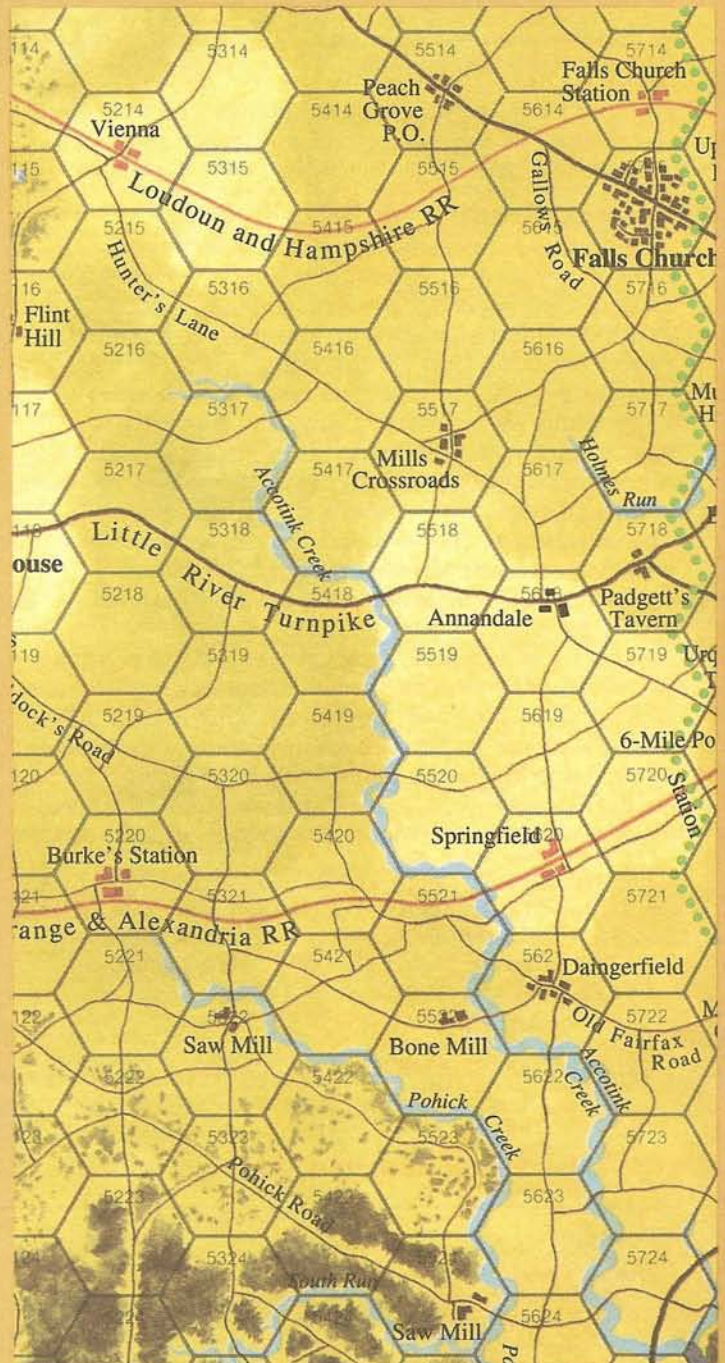
Game features include Corps leaders, distinct Infantry and Cavalry capabilities, Forced Marches, flanking attacks, fatigue rules, bridgelaying and bridge and railroad demolition, weather, supply, varied terrain features and their effects and even foraging. Players may choose from seven scenarios re-creating such engagements as Cedar Mountain, Stuart's Cavalry Raid, and the first encounter between Lee and Pope.

STONEWALL JACKSON'S WAY is now available for \$35.00 from your favorite game store or from The Avalon Hill Game Company (4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214). If ordering direct, please add \$5.00 to cover shipping and handling (\$10.00 for Canadian and Mexican orders; \$15.00 overseas). Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.

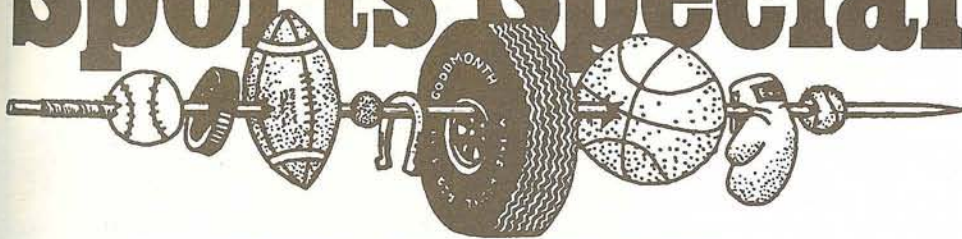
Avalon Hill
and
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We Make
History



Sports Special



THIS IS THE NFL

A Variant for *STATIS-PRO FOOTBALL*

By Frank Calcagno

Although first published years ago (and of course updated yearly for player statistics), *STATIS-PRO FOOTBALL (SPF)*, by the Avalon Hill Game Company, has retained its authenticity very well. This is largely due to fact that few significant rules changes or playing techniques have been instituted in the NFL itself in recent years.

Recently however, one new technique has gained increased acceptance in the NFL which has greatly affected play. This is the "No Huddle" offense. The Cincinnati Bengals were one of the first teams to experiment with this technique, which was then dubbed the "Sugar Huddle". Cincinnati would indeed huddle, but they would do it near enough to the line of scrimmage that, if the defense attempted to change personnel, the Bengals would be in perfect position to snap the ball and force a procedure penalty against their confused opponent. Controversy raged throughout the NFL to the point of suggesting that the Bengals themselves be penalized for utilizing such a "cheating" tactic.

This technique was developed to its fullest during the 1989-1990 season by the Buffalo Bills. Instead of the "abbreviated" Sugar Huddle of Cincinnati, the Bills developed a true full-game No Huddle offense, which in effect amounted to a 60-minute "two-minute" offense. This accomplished several things for the Bills; first, it kept the opponent constantly off balance during defense. Second, the opponents were hard-pressed to substitute any personnel for changing field situations, such as for obvious pass downs. Third, their opponent's defensive players never had a good opportunity to rest between plays—although similarly, the Bills' own defensive players had it almost as bad, since they were required to be on-field so much more themselves... their own offense only requiring a couple of minutes per drive! In addition, this novel technique had many opponents demoralized from the start, thus giving the Bills an edge before they even entered the stadium. Not limited to the 1989-90 season, the tactic was also used quite effectively by the Bills during the 1990-91 season. Although a couple of teams threatened its use sporadically during the 1990-91 season (such as the Washington Redskins, who also went to the Superbowl with the Bills that year), no team was better suited for such an offense than the Bills, with their powerful striking offense, balanced

by a fine stable of receivers, a running threat headed by Thurman Thomas, and Jim Kelly, arguably the best quarterback in the league.

SPF falls short of simulating this new aspect of professional ball, although the main ingredients needed are in the rules with only slight modifications required. So, here are my suggested rule additions to *SPF*, which should bring it up to date *a la* Buffalo Bills Football.

The "No Huddle" Offense

A modified "Two Minute Offense" may be used by the Buffalo Bills at any time throughout the game during the 1989-90 and 1990-91 seasons. (It will be up to the players to decide whether any other teams, or even the Bills, may use the "No Huddle Offense" in later seasons.) The No Huddle Offense runs just like the traditional Two Minute Offense, but does not have the yardage and Completion Range penalties applied to it (nor even the ODD-EVEN out-of-bounds rule), as shown in the third column of page six of the 5th Edition rulebook. In addition, defensive substitutions are limited, as shown below. The Bills may also utilize the traditional Two Minute Offense normally; in effect, they are using even less time in their plays and are rushing themselves even further, thus applying the yardage and pass penalties.

All other teams may *only* use the traditional Two Minute Offense as originally shown in the rules. (As an optional rule, any other team may attempt to use the No Huddle Offense, but in so doing must add FOUR to the Run Number on the next FAC drawn, except for a true Two Minute Offense.)

Defensive Substitutions

Whenever the "No Huddle" or the traditional "Two Minute" Offenses are being employed, the defensive player may only substitute personnel under the following three conditions:

1. Free defensive substitutions may be made at the same time as any offensive personnel substitutions.
2. Free defensive substitutions may be made whenever there is a time out, player injury, or penalty.
3. At any other time, defensive substitutions may be successfully made on a subsequently drawn defensive substituti-

tion Run Number of 1 through 4. On a defensive substitution draw of 5 through 9, the next offensive play Run Number FAC result has a MINUS TWO modification applied to it (due to defensive confusion). On a defensive substitution Run Number Draw of 10 through 12, the defense must either be penalized 5 yards for 12 men on the field, or take an immediate Time Out.

Defensive players currently on the field may be freely switched to different defensive boxes as usual. Realistically, the only problems occur when defensive personnel attempt to enter the field from the sidelines.

That's the essence of the "No Huddle Offense" rule additions. For those who demand the most in your table-top games, here are a few additional optional rules you may wish to try:

Out Of Bounds Kickoff Penalty

The most significant rule change in the NFL (other than "instant replay") has been the new penalty for a kickoff going out-of-bounds (Penalty Table #15). Instead of instituting a new kickoff with 5 "extra yards" (as shown in the rules), the receiving team now automatically receives the ball on their own 35-yard line.

Solitaire Multiple Pass Coverage

Double coverage on a receiver may only occur in a solitaire game if the defensive setup allows it (i.e., if enough defenders are placed in secondary boxes). Solitaire triple coverage (or double-double coverage) is not allowed under any circumstances. Solitaire coaches may "inadvertently" help their own offense along simply by keeping their defensive "opponents" men on the line, thus never allowing multiple coverage to occur against their own teams. Realistic? Hardly! There is an easy way to avoid this "accidental omission", as shown below.

Whenever the FAC Solitaire section shows a result of "P(x2)" or "PR(x2)", immediately check to be sure that four defensive players occupy both Row-2 and Row-3. A result of "P(x2)" or "PR(x2)" with a Defensive Number of 4 (third or fourth down, with 7 or more yards to go for a first down), immediately becomes a triple coverage possibility, with a mandatory three players in Row-2 and five players in Row-3. Arrange the secondary players in any logical way which allows for the proper coverage.

Instead of an automatic double coverage occurring as is shown in the rules, it must be determined if the correct receiver has been covered. If there is only one receiver possible, then the coverage is multiple (double or triple as the situation allows, but never more than double-double coverage). However, if there is more than one eligible receiver, then a subsequent multiple coverage FAC Run Number is drawn to determine who has been covered. On a multiple coverage FAC Run Number of 1 through 8, the eventual receiver was covered. On a multiple coverage FAC Run Number of 9 through 12, another receiver was covered instead (i.e., no multiple coverage). Of course, although not

stated unambiguously in the rules, the offensive play (and receiver or runner) must be determined before the Solitaire section of the FAC is consulted. After the play has been completed, the defensive set-up is returned to its state prior to the multiple coverage.

Audibles and Stadium Noise

As an optional rule, players may wish to introduce audibles and stadium noise into their paper games. To do so, follow these steps:

The offensive play (and player) must be determined before the defensive strategy is revealed. For audibles, the offensive player calls out "Ready" when the play and player are first determined. At this point, the defensive player immediately has the option of changing his defensive formation to anything allowable with the current defensive players on the field. After the defense sets its new formation (if any), the defense calls out "Go". At this point, the offense is committed to the originally determined play, but may immediately "audibilize". To do so, the offensive coach states an audible and draws an audible FAC Run Number. The following audible FAC Run Number modifiers are applied cumulatively to the play:

- +2 if the game score is within 7 points or less;
- +3 if the current offensive team is "On the Road".

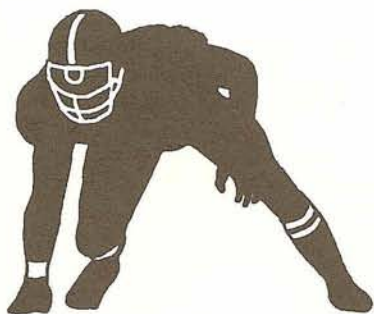
If the modified audible FAC Run Number is 1 through 11, the audible is successfully called out and immediately implemented.

If the audible is successful, the offense form a new play (verifying it by cards, if necessary) and implements it. At this point, the defense reveals its defense and strategy, and the play is resolved.

If the audible attempt was unsuccessful, then the offense has two options:

1. They may call a Time Out;
2. They may run the original play. If the original play was a pass, then the Quarterback's Pass Completion Range is decreased by FOUR (in addition to any other pass modifications). If the original play was a run, then the play is completed as normal, but with ONE added to the resulting FAC Run Number.

So, this is the NFL. Play with some or all of these new variations, and you may even hear Dandy Don in the background, singing something about turning out the lights.



AH Philosophy; Continued from Page 4

This is what we do for fun. You may think *SPEED CIRCUIT* is the *sine qua non* of competitive gaming; you may play home-brewed tactical-level miniatures rules that make *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER* look like *Chutes and Ladders*; you may roll out of bed every morning and paint two dozen miniatures for *NAPOLEON'S BATTLES*, or you might spend every moment of your gaming time playing *RUNEQUEST*. Where ever your hobby interests lie, as leisure pursuits they are, by definition, valid. And as gamers we have an obligation to our hobby overall, and not at the expense of different aspects of it. The ability to enjoy a (well run) role playing game does not preclude enjoying a fiercely competitive session of *THIRD REICH*; I speak from experience.

As to the future format of this magazine, I hold to the premise that "if it ain't broke, don't fix it". This does not mean that *The GENERAL* will go on placidly as before. Like any print venture, *The GENERAL* has a Publisher; that publisher constitutes its Management, and that management has requested a "new look" for the magazine, part of which new look began in the previous issue. Initially, most changes to *The GENERAL* will be similarly cosmetic. But certain "structural" changes will come about as new formats are developed and tested.

These changes will include a semi-regular "Scenario Briefing" column (the first installment of which can be found on Page 19 of this issue), providing an in-depth look at a particular scenario for ASL. Another will be a "Gone But Not Forgotten" section (currently being prepared by Bruno Sinigaglio), an occasional column dealing with such of our out-of-print titles which still command a devoted following. Between these two extremes will be the same extensive coverage of our newest titles, with all the Series Replays, Designer's Notes, variants and other formats that have proven so popular with our readership over the years.

So *The GENERAL* will see alterations in content, style and tone, to be sure; but nothing too drastic unless you, the readers, desire it. And in fact, I am happy to consider any reasonable suggestions as to the sort of things you would like to see in these pages. The best way to make such suggestions is, of course, to write something and submit it to be published. No amount of suggestions or pleas for articles on a given subject will magically conjure up such coverage. The only way to see such articles in print is for them to be submitted to us by one of you.

As to the nature of those articles, back issues of *The GENERAL* will show what sort of coverage has traditionally been welcome, and the next few issues will give you an idea of the new lines we'll be pursuing, but *do not hesitate to submit something entirely new*. *The GENERAL* exists to support our enjoyment of our hobby, and we all have a stake in its success.



AREA TOP 50 LIST

Rank	Name	Times On List	Rating	Previous Rank
1.	K. Combs	81	2583YOW	1
2.	D. Burdick	80	2301IIR	2
3.	J. Kreuz	8	2197IGR	3
4.	B. Sinigaglio	66	2189GIJ	4
5.	D. Barker	8	2119GHN	5
6.	P. Flory	57	2109EHL	6
7.	J. Beard	70	2103JJU	7
8.	E. O'Connor	40	2081GIP	8
9.	P. Siragusa	75	2079FIL	9
10.	P. Landry	55	2054IQO	10
11.	D. Mattson	23	2050MKY	11
12.	L. Barlow	28	2039KLW	16
13.	R. Beyma	1	2034EEG	--
14.	G. Fortenberry	3	2033CDB	12
15.	T. Deane	33	2029GBA	14
16.	C. Com	30	2017FFB	17
17.	J. Noel	34	2015EEK	18
18.	R. Berger	21	2009EGG	20
19.	N. Moran	3	2003DFK	13
20.	J. Ingersoll	8	2003CFI	25
21.	J. Bjonum	15	2000EFK	19
22.	J. Fuqua	5	1996FLA	23
23.	M. Sincavage	8	1984FFK	21
24.	D. Kopp	26	1979HQJ	15
25.	S. Sutton	47	1978GHO	22
26.	M. Mitchell	18	1958GIO	26
27.	R. Shurdut	26	1954GHM	24
28.	G. Chaney, Jr.	3	1952DHA	46
29.	S. Goehring	5	1926GHN	36
30.	F. Reese	61	1911LJD	28
31.	W. King	7	1907BDG	29
32.	T. Oleson	90	1906ZZZ	30
33.	P. Rennett	1	1905BEA	--
34.	H. Newby	46	1896VLQ	27
35.	M. Crowe	9	1890CCH	33
36.	J. Eliason	29	1881GKO	34
37.	P. Menard	1	1874CFA	--
38.	W. Scott	78	1870NLX	31
39.	M. Frisk	35	1866DFJ	35
40.	R. Schilb	5	1864HKN	39
41.	S. Packwood	1	1850BDF	--
42.	L. Risner	1	1845BEA	--
43.	B. Sutton	6	1841EGE	38
44.	W. Emi	1	1836DFA	--
45.	G. Smith	7	1830GHO	44
46.	P. McNevin	3	1822MMZ	43
47.	K. Kinsel	14	1819HHM	40
48.	J. Campbell	18	1818FFD	41
49.	T. Greene	3	1806EGL	45
50.	H. Gratz	1	1804CFA	--

WATERLOO RANKINGS

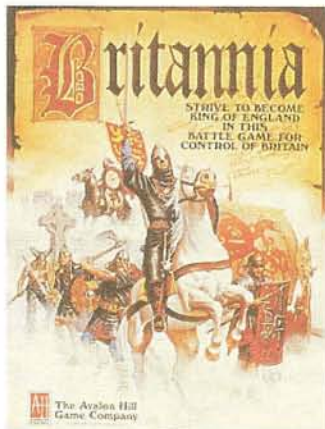


The AREA Specific listing this issue is for aficionados of that *Grande Dame* of Avalon Hill's classic titles, *WATERLOO*. Shown is the member's name, hometown, and Specific rating (V = verified; P = provisional; for this title, all listings are "Provisional"). Note that this does not match the general AREA rating, as Specific AREA reflects only the results of rated play of the title indicated.

Rank	Name	Hometown	Rating
1.	R. Beyma	Pocomoke, MD	P1775
2.	B. Stelski	Paterson, NJ	P1635
3.	E. Kirchner	Florence, KY	P1580
4.	E. Snarski II	Wilkes-Barre, PA	P1500
5.	R. Robinson	New Cumberland, PA	P1480
6.	C. Ponder	Lawrenceville, GA	P1430
7.	J. Ellsworth	Morris, IL	P1370

IN MEMORIAM

George I. Parrish, Jr.
1930 — 1992



On August 27th, 1992 we lost a great friend and talent with the passing of George Parrish to lung cancer at the age of 62. *GENERAL* readers will remember George for his many vivid portrayals of combat scenes which graced the covers of this magazine and 39 of our games. From his first rendering for us (*BEYOND VALOR*) to the last (*GANGSTERS*), George's work was the epitome of quality. Beyond being merely good art, it seemed to convey his love for adventure and history as if painting it enabled him and his fans to vicariously experience the thrill of past feats of bravery.

Simply saying that he will be missed would be a gross understatement. In my 20+ years as the R&D Director at Avalon Hill I have been privileged to work with many brilliant creative people. Few were as talented as George and none were as pleasant to work with. George was a noted historical artist and illustrator. Among his illustrations are a Civil War mural at Stone Mountain Park and commissions for such corporate giants as AT&T, Coca-Cola, Disney, HBO and McDonald's. Yet, he always found time to work for Avalon Hill doing the historical scenes he preferred to the more lucrative commercial art of corporate America. Although not a gamer, I think he would have been a passionate one had it come to him earlier

in life. He had a love for history and adventure that made our association a natural.

Perhaps the best way to describe George is to quote from his reminiscences written shortly before his death:

"I haven't in retrospect, always made the best decisions. One being at 22 when I opted for two years as an army infantryman, as opposed to using that time pursuing a Master's Degree in the sheltered halls of academia. Through pure luck and Eisenhower's truce, I was spared the fate of a Chinese bullet in the snows of Korea, but also later found those doors of academia closed to me. However, part of my reasoning then was that if I were going to paint soldiers as a career, I had to be a soldier for a time..."

"My career as a free-lancer has never offered me great security, but I always chose excitement over security. I've never known "job security" to last for more than six months, and never sought anything different because I seemed to do better making my own career decisions and client choices. All of us, in what I now think of as the last "golden era" of illustration - the late '60s to the mid '80s - lived for the excitement of making it big... But big business has always

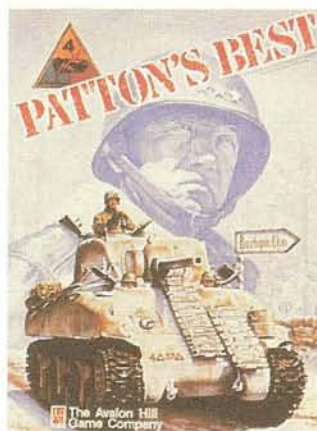
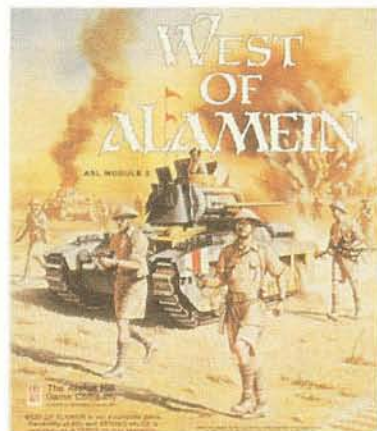
been political and some of my best work never saw print...

"I think I have always been driven by a desire for adventure, without ever having been an adventurer in truth. The army was enough for me of long marches, backpacking and sleeping in the snow. A fear of storms, sharks, and icy depths also denied me the life of the seafarer. My adventures have been of the milder variety, though exciting enough for me..."

"Much of my life has been difficult, full of ups and downs, but so are most lives, and if one is to live life to the fullest one must accept the hard times as part of the whole package and experience them to the fullest extent too. Only then, I think, can one totally experience the happy times, and I have had more than my share."

George was surrounded by his relatives during his final weeks. They never heard a word of complaint from him as his cruel disease took its toll. As his ex-wife Cindy told me, not all heroes are found in war. His passing ends an era in our publications, and more than a little of Avalon Hill died with him last August. He will be sorely missed.

Don Greenwood

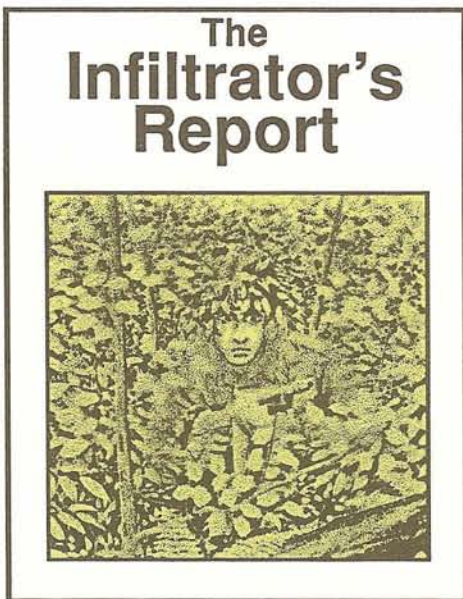


Our *BLACKBEARD* feature issue closed out Volume 27 with a rather lackluster score of only 4.03. Many letters and comments indicated that the people who enjoyed the subject matter (the Age of Sail in general and that of piracy in particular) enjoyed it immensely, while those less enthused about such things cared little for the overall theme. Those seeking trends should note that the featured game itself did only slightly better in the Readers Buyer's Guide survey (see page 58). The breakdown for the readership's rating of 27-6 follows (based on a random sampling of 200 responses, with three points for each first place listing, two for each second and one for each third):

<i>BLACKBEARD</i> SERIES REPLAY	235
WOODEN SHIPS FOR ONE	177
A SCOUNDREL'S LOG	142
THE BATTLE OF RENNELL ISLAND	100
ODYSSEY ON THE HIGH SEAS	93
NAPOLEON VS. LLOYD'S OF LONDON	83
LEARNING THE ROPES	75
A ROGUE'S TALE	61
MOVING UP THROUGH THE MOB	53
PLUNGING THE DEPTHS	31
AH PHILOSOPHY	26
VENUS SMUGGLER	25
NEW ADVENTURING	24
FINANCIAL STRATEGY	21
SPORTS SPECIAL	21
AREA NEWS	20
COMPUTER CORNER	13

Contest #159 seemed to pose little challenge to our readership; over a hundred correct entries have been submitted (a requirement for a random draw if ever there was one), and not one entry was in error. Most of those entries pointed out to us that the non-encrypted number "34" was a dead giveaway which no amount of letter/symbol substitution could obscure. In any case, the ten lucky winners, drawn at random from the Box O' Fate, are: David Berroth, Colorado Springs, CO; Mark Larabee, Washington, DC; Henry Lin, Gainesville, FL; Kyle Madden, Ballston Spa, NY; Dan Manherz, Williamsport, PA; Elizabeth Lester, Toms River, NJ; Cory Miller, Athens, GA; James Penick, Victorville, CA; David Ravetti, Pittsburgh, PA; and Brook White, Marion, OH. Each will receive merchandise certificates from Avalon Hill.

And Contest #160 seemed to prove no more difficult than its predecessor, especially if one had access to a computer (and it seems like just about everybody does). Still, the vast majority of entries gives clear evidence of most contestants having relied on their own wits rather than resorting to mechanical aids. A combination of cipher,



word search and scramble, it was an attempt to combine most of the more popular puzzles into a single challenging one. The only clue—that a boxed string of letters was the name of a WW 2 aircraft—was apparently more than sufficient for the would-be Black Chamber members out there. Neither a double-substitution ("W" and "M" both equating to "W") nor a flip ("U" equating to "J" and vice-versa) did anything to throw them off the scent. But if Contest #160 wasn't all that difficult, we hope it was at least entertaining. The answers are:

```

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

The letter values of each letter/symbol thus translate as follows:

- | | | |
|--------|---------|-------|
| 3 = A | # = B | 7 = C |
| \$ = D | 1 = E | % = F |
| 9 = G | D = H | 4 = I |
| U = J | ? = K | 8 = L |
| ! = M | Z = N | E = O |
| 5 = P | & = Q | 6 = R |
| A = S | @ = T | J = U |
| Q = V | W/M = W | |

X, Y and Z are not used, and so have no substitute characters assigned.

Finally, the highlighted letters yield the scrambled name of the puzzle: "ALLIED AIRCRAFT OF WW II".

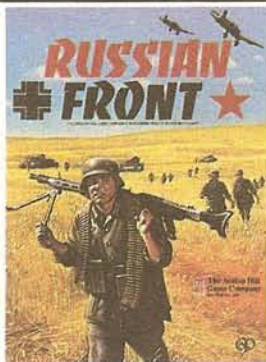
The winners will be listed in Volume 28, Number 3 of *The GENERAL*.

It was with great sadness that we at *The GENERAL* learned of the death last August of George Parrish, whose fine work graces this issue's cover as it did so many of our games. In addition to Don Greenwood's tribute on page 57 of this issue, the following is a list of all the covers Mr. Parrish produced for us over the years.

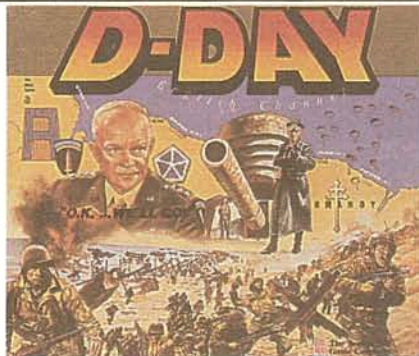
- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Merchant of Venus | Enemy in Sight |
| Beyond Valor | Gettysburg |
| Code of Bushido | Kremlin |
| Hedgerow Hell | New World |
| Hollow Legions | Patton's Best |
| Last Hurrah | Raid on St. Nazaire |
| Paratrooper | Republic of Rome |
| Partisan | Siege of Jerusalem |
| Red Barricades | Tac Air |
| Streets of Fire | Thunder at Cassino |
| Yanks | Turning Point: |
| West of Alamein | Stalingrad |
| Attack Sub | Gangsters |
| Battle of the Bulge | Legends of Robin Hood |
| Blackbeard | Showbiz |
| Britannia | TV Wars |
| D-Day | Gung Ho |
| Devil's Den | Russian Front |
| Guderian | Under Fire |
| Empires In Arms | Spitfire '40 |

Besides the sheer volume of works on a wide variety of subjects, the above list also comprises some of the finest original artwork ever to grace the cover of any publication, and certainly of any line of games.

George Parrish helped to define the look of Avalon Hill products for many years. His impact on our hobby and on historical art was and is welcome and enduring.



Next
The Eastern Front



Vol. 28, No. 4
The Western Front



Vol. 28, No. 5
The War in the Pacific

Play the ULTIMATE WARGAME that Re-creates WWII on an Unprecedented Scale!



What if ...

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- Mussolini had appointed decent commanders?
- Japan had attacked Britain or Russia in 1941?
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- Russia hadn't received aid from the West?
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The first issue of *ULTRA*, a newsletter devoted exclusively to ADVANCED THIRD REICH, is included in the game. Its feature article, "Making the Transition", reviews and explains all the major rule changes from THIRD REICH, making it possible for those familiar with its predecessor to begin their first game of ADVANCED THIRD REICH with minimum delay.

New Features Include . . .

- Diplomacy, allowing players to affect the policies of Russia, Italy, the United States, Turkey, Spain and a host of other countries.
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 - Revised British and Russian surrender rules.
 - More realistic Strategic Warfare rules with increased bomber effectiveness and resolution every turn.
 - Oil rules reflecting Germany's dependence on Rumanian oil.
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Time Scale: Seasonal Turns

Map Scale: 60 miles per hex

Unit Scale: Corps level

Players: 2 to 6, age 18 up

Playing Time: 3 hours for the shortest scenario; 20 hours for the longest

CONTENTS:

- 1 31" x 44" unmounted, full-color map
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- 1 64-page rulebook
- 1 40-page appendix
- 1 16-page ULTRA newsletter
- 6 8" x 11" Scenario Cards
- 2 six-sided dice

Suggested retail is \$49.95 at better hobby, game, book, and comic shops everywhere. If not available locally, feel free to order direct, adding \$6 postage & handling (\$55.95 total).



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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 one-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 2
- 4. Completeness _____
- 5. Playability _____
- 5a. Excitement Level _____
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- 7a. Shortest _____
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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 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, your editor produces 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 List, and the RBG should prove extremely interesting.

Feel free to list any game of any sort regardless of the 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 discretion.

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 uncanceled U.S. postage stamps.
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4. PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY AND LEGIBLY. If your ad is illegible, it will not be printed.
5. So that as many ads as possible can be printed in our limited space, we request that you use official state and game abbreviations. Don't list your entire collection; list only those games which you are most interested in locating opponents for.

Advanced Squad Leader—ASL/SL, Afrika Korps—AK, Air Force—AF, Arab-Israeli Wars—AIW, Attack Sub—ASUB, Battle of the Bulge—BB(Year), Blackbeard—BKBD, Blitzkrieg—BL, Britannia—BRIT, Circus Maximus—CM, Advanced Civilization—ACIV/CIV, D-Day—DD(Year), Devil's Den—DEV, Diplomacy—DIP, DUNE, 1830, Empires in Arms—EIA, Firepower—FP, Flat Top—FT, Flight Leader—FL, Fortress Europa—FE, Gangsters—GANG, Gettysburg—GE(Year), Gladiator—GL, Guadalcanal—GUAD(Year), Gunslinger—GSL, Guns Of August—GOA, Hitler's War—HW, Kremlin—KREM, Kingmaker—KM, Knights Of The Air—KOTA, Luftwaffe—LW, Magic Realm—MR, MBT, Merchant of Venus—MOV, Midway—MD(Year), Napoleon's Battles—NB, PanzerArmee Afrika—PAA, PanzerBlitz—PB, Panzergruppe Guderian—PGG, Panzer Leader—PL, Rail Baron—RB, Republic of Rome—ROR, Richtofen's War—RW, The Russian Campaign—TRC, Russian Front—RF, Samurai—SAM, 1776, Siege of Jerusalem—SOJ, Starship Troopers—SST, Stellar Conquest—SC, Storm Over Arnhem—SOA, Submarine—SUB, Tac Air—TA, Advanced Third Reich—A3R/3R, Thunder At Cassino—CASS, Titan—TT, Tyrenee—TRI, Turning Point: Stalingrad—TPS, Up Front—UF, Victory In The Pacific—VIIP, War and Peace—W&P, Wooden Ships & Iron Men—WSIM, Wrasslin'—WRAS.

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CONTEST #161

Ciphers seem extremely popular with our readers, especially as each one seems to generate another from a reader who is sure they can design a tougher one. In support of that theory, herewith a cipher of a famous quote. Decrypt the quote and send us your solution on this form or a facsimile. To be valid, an entry must include your numerical rating for this issue as a whole ("1" equalling "excellent" and "10" equalling "terrible") and your rating of the three articles which you enjoyed most, in order of preference. The solution to Contest #161 will appear in the next issue, and the list of the ten winners (who will receive merchandise credit vouchers from Avalon Hill) in the following issue.

79 101 53 67 81 103 55 19 5 61 69 17 7 37 8

63 56 21 9 13 43 10 23 97 31 70 15 41 83 57

11 85 3 86 25

Issue as a whole _____ (Rate from 1 to 10, with "1" equating to excellent and "10" terrible). To be valid for consideration, your contest entry must also include your choice for the three best articles, as listed below:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

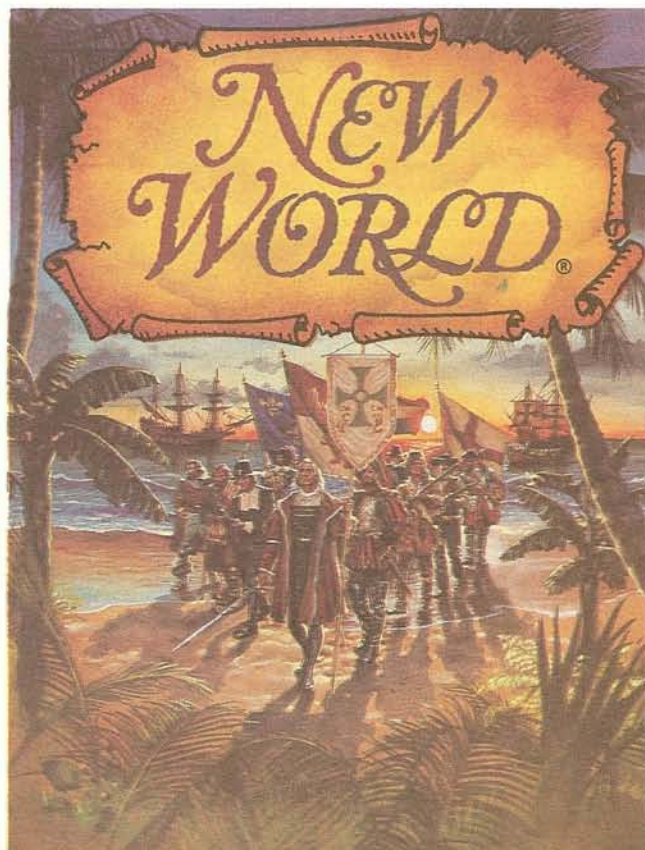
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THE ATTEMPT TO RELIEVE PEIPER

ASL SCENARIO T11



South of TROIS PONTS, BELGIUM, 21 December 1944: The key to the German Ardennes offensive lay with a quick breakthrough and deep penetration. In the north, the success of any breakthrough rested upon Colonel Peiper's *kampfgruppe* from the 1st SS-Panzer Division. But the quick victories which had taken Peiper so close to the Meuse River bridges also left his force in a position of danger. The *kampfgruppe* had outraced most of its follow-up units, and had completely run out of fuel. The "back door" to Peiper had not been kept open. On the morning of the 21st, SS-Oberführer Wilhelm Mohnke, commander of the 1st SS-Panzer Division, collected the remaining assault elements and launched an attack in an effort to reach Peiper's stalled *kampfgruppe*. The main German thrust came at a point south of Trois Pons on the Salm River. There, a company of the 82nd Airborne Division had established a small bridgehead on the cliffs across the river.

VICTORY CONDITIONS: The Germans win immediately upon Exiting ≥ 20 VP off the west edge on/between 2P10 and 2Z10.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:

BALANCE:

- ☆ Shorten Game Length to 8.5 Turns.
- ⚡ Add a 9-1 Armor leader to the German OB.



2	
	S

TURN RECORD CHART

☆ AMERICAN Sets Up First	⚡ 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	END
⚡ GERMAN Moves First											



Elements of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Regiment [ELR: 5] set up on board 2 and on board 5 in any hex numbered ≤ 3 : {SAN: 5}



E 7-4-7	9-1	8-0	4-10	8-4	8	7 morale	5 OVR, OBA: +4 Other: +2
10	2			2		10	4



Elements of SS-Panzer Grenadier Regiment 2, 1st SS-Panzer-Division [ELR: 4] enter on Turn 1 on the east edge on/between 5B10 and 5L10: {SAN: 2}



6-5-8	9-2	9-1	3-8	3-8	13 8 3 105 -1/-2*
9	2			6	2

SPECIAL RULES:

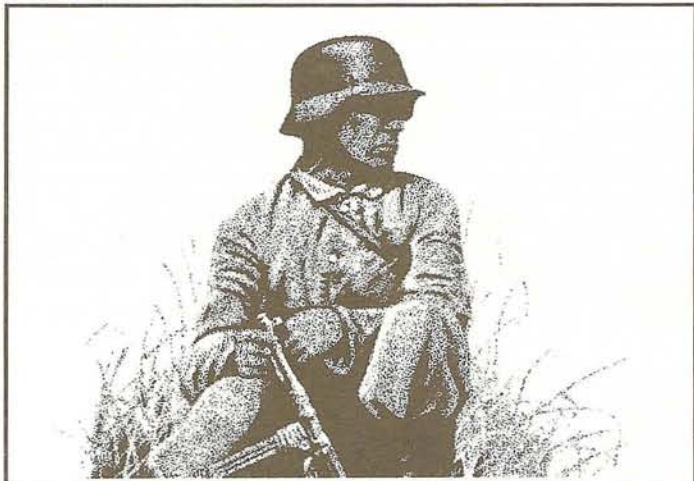
1. EC are Ground Snow, with no wind at start.
2. All hexes of Hill 538 are considered ground-level woods; outline of these woods conforms to the outline of the printed hill mass. All buildings are wooden.
3. One American squad (or equivalent, along with any/all accompanying SMC/SW) may use HIP.
4. The Americans receive one module of 100+mm OBA (HE and Smoke). As per Footnote C5, the American radio may be kept offboard.
5. Bore Sighting is NA.
6. Both German AFVs are equipped with Schuerzen (D11.2).

AFTERMATH: In the morning hours, local civilians had informed the American patrols of German tanks and infantry assembling around Wanne. Just before noon, a company of grenadiers supported by self-propelled guns appeared along a road which ran past the rise held by the paratroopers. Infantry teams equipped with bazookas knocked out the assault guns as they approached, but sustained heavy losses themselves. Finally, artillery support—called in from positions west of the river—disrupted the German advance. Further attempts continued in an effort to relieve Peiper, but each met with little or no success. On December 24th, Peiper's men, leaving all their vehicles in the pocket, escaped on foot and on Christmas morning rejoined the rest of the 1st SS-Panzer Division south of Stavelot.

HUNTERS FROM THE SKY

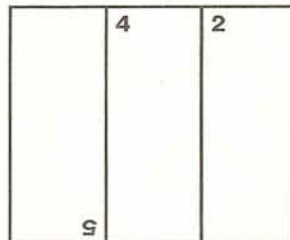


ASL SCENARIO T12



Near HAMMINKELN, GERMANY, 24 March 1945: "Operation Varsity", the airborne phase of the Allies' northern Rhine crossing, was to be the last airborne assault of the war. Artillery units and fighter-bombers pounded the German gun positions in the vicinity of the drop zones—lifting just prior to the arrival of the first flight of transport planes. The 17th Airborne Division's first regiment to drop had little problem from ground fire, arriving so close behind the Allied bombardment phase. But the second regiment, the 513th Parachute, was not so fortunate. With the Germans no longer deterred by the bombing, the paratroopers received heavy small-arms and anti-aircraft fire as they fell to the ground.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:



BALANCE:

- ☛ Add one HMG to the initial German on-board force.
- ☆ Remove one 4-6-7 MMC from the initial German on-board force.

VICTORY CONDITIONS: The Americans win if at game end they Control the US "Assembly Point" (as determined by SSR3).

TURN RECORD CHART

☛ GERMAN Sets Up First	☆ 1	2	3	4☛	5☛	6	7	8	9	10	END
☆ AMERICAN Moves First											

Elements of Infanterie Division 84 [ELR: 2] set up on board(s) 2, 4 and/or 5: {SAN: 2}

 4'-6-7	 2-2-8	 8-1	 7-0	 LMG 3-8	 AA M10 20L (4)	 AA M10 20L (6)	 28 T7 21PP
6	2			2			2

Reinforcement Group 1 enter on Turn 4 as per SSR5:

 4'-6-7	 8-1	 LMG 3-8	 28 T7 21PP	 30 T10 9PP
3			3	

Reinforcement Group 2 enter on Turn 5 as per SSR5:

 4'-6-7	 8-0	 LMG 3-8	 13 75L -1/-2*
------------	---------	----------------	-------------------------

Elements of the 513th Parachute Regiment [ELR: 5] enter by Air Drop (E9.) on Turn 1: {SAN: 2}

 7'-4-7	 1-5	 8-1	 8-0	 BAZ 45 WPG 8-5
10			2	2

SPECIAL RULES:

1. EC are Moist, with no wind at start.
2. Hills 621 and 538 are ground-level terrain; the woods thereon exist normally. Treat all grain hexes as brush.
3. Prior to set-up, the American player randomly determines his "Assembly Point" by Secret dr: 1 = 4Y9; 2 = 4P6; 3 = 4I10; 4 = 2W9; 5 = 2M9; 6 = 4S2. He then secretly organizes each Wing and records its Drop Point (E9.12). During the first turn, one Wing (American player's choice) *must* use its pre-designated Drop Point, and the other Wing *must* use random selection to determine its Drop Point. The recorded Assembly Point and Drop Points must be revealed at the conclusion of the game.
4. Bore Sighting is NA.

5. German entry hex for each Reinforcement Group is determined randomly at the start of the RPh of the turn indicated. A dr is made by the German player and the following applied: 1-2 = 5GG5/6; 3 = 2Q1; 4-5 = 4GG5/6; 6 = Group does not arrive, roll again for arrival during the RPh of the next German Player Turn.

6. The German Sniper counter is placed onboard just before the American parachutes land (E9.4). The American Sniper counter is placed onboard immediately after the first American Player Turn is completed.

AFTERMATH: After a short but sharp firefight, the paratroopers of the 513th Regiment were able to get the upper hand and finally assemble in their battalions. With the regiment in order, the objectives for the first day were all seized and link-up was made by nightfall with the British ground troops assaulting across the River Rhine.