

MOVES

FEB-MAR 1993

Number 74
US \$5.50
CAN \$6.75

GDW at War!

The Race for Tunis and Bloody Kasserine

Also in this issue:
FEATURE: Stalingrad Pocket Replay
1918: Storm in the West
Flashpoint: Golan

Game Design and Theory—a new section
and Scenarios and Variants



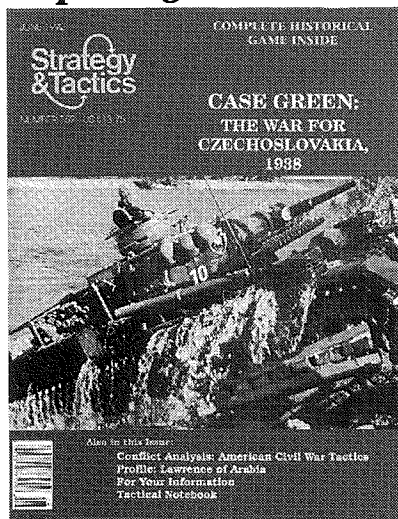


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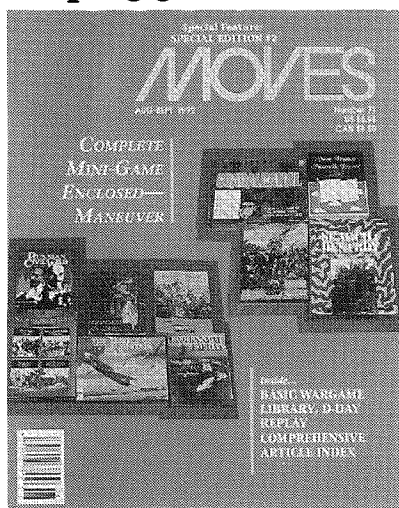
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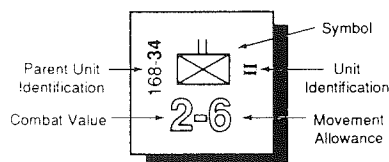
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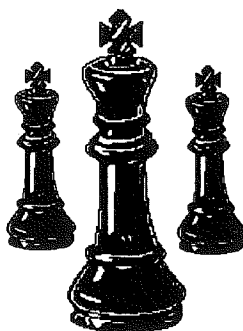
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PUBLISHER : Christopher R. Cummins, Ph.D.

MANAGING EDITOR: Keith Schlesinger

COMPUTER GAMES EDITOR: Daniel Masterson

COPY EDITORS: Rob Dean, David Richtmyer

CONTRIBUTORS: Matthew Caffrey, John Desch, James Gordon, John Kranz, James Meldrum, Joseph Miranda, Terry Rooker, Keith Schlesinger, Rick Swan

DESIGN • GRAPHICS • LAYOUT: Callie Cummins and Christine Lockwood, Lancaster, CA.

PRINTING: Ebsco Media, Birmingham, AL USA

CIRCULATION: James Cason

ADVERTISING: Rates and specifications available on request. Write: Advertising, P.O. Box 4049, Lancaster, California 93539-4049 or telephone (805) 943-6832.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS: MOVES is published 7 times a year by DECISION GAMES. Seven issue subscription in the United States is \$26.00. Canada and Overseas surface mail rate is \$34/1 year. International rates are subject to change as postal rates change. All payments must be in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank and made payable to DECISION GAMES. Checks and money orders or VISA/Mastercard accepted (\$40.00 order minimum). All orders should be sent to DECISION GAMES, P.O. Box 4049, Lancaster, California 93539-4049, (805)943-6832 (1:30pm-5:30pm T-F, 9:30am-5:30pm Sat, PST).

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POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to MOVES, P.O. Box 4049, Lancaster, California 93539-4049.

MOVES is published Bi-monthly and December/Holiday for \$19.98 per year by DECISION GAMES, 3010 Linewood Lane, Lancaster, CA 93536. Second-class permit pending at Lancaster, CA and additional mailing offices.

by
**CHRISTOPHER
CUMMINS**

"HELLO, I MUST BE GOING..."

Here I am again, editor of our seemingly orphan *MOVES* magazine. Seems that we need to find an enthusiastic and interested individual who doesn't have quite so many other things on their plate to head up *MOVES* (and yes, we are taking applications!). Obviously, *MOVES* has not been all it can be and I look first to the string of changing editors it has had since returning to print. I am seeking one person who is willing to take on the task of editing the magazine for an extended period of time. I already have a handful of applicants and look forward to several more before making a final decision.

I also wonder about the decision that led to the return of *MOVES*. As many readers will recall, in 1989 we (meaning Callie & I) took over *Fire & Movement* magazine which was our main competitor back in the days when the only thing we were doing was publishing *Wargamer*, Volume Two. That created a friction between the two magazines which, after much feedback and discussion, we decided to resolve by putting *F&M* on the course of reviews and eventual independence and *MOVES* on the course of strategy and game support with some alliance with *Strategy & Tactics*. This decision has worked out quite well for *F&M* and so I wonder if *MOVES* might benefit from a similar approach. In fact, there is still a group of feedback responders that regularly suggest we should combine *F&M* and *MOVES* into a monthly review and analysis magazine. What I am doing at this point is opening the floor to discussion. I'd appreciate any letters or phone calls or advice, opinions, etc. about what you'd like to see and I have included a couple of questions in the feedback to focus on the major choices at hand. I would like to hear from anyone who wants to have input by the end of March as we would like to implement a decision as rapidly as possible.

Getting back to the issue at hand, you'll probably want to take a good look at the Theory section (oh, and by the way, Keith Schlesinger will continue to be the section editor for the design theory articles—he does have sufficient time to coordinate this area of the magazine). The three authors address the area of playtesting with general and specific comments and I want to take a little space right here to respond as one publisher/designer.

As Decision Games moved from doing magazine games to boxed games, we realized we wanted to spend a lot more time on development and playtesting and incorporate multiple groups of playtesters both for the differing perspectives, but also just knowing the quantity of games we could produce would outstrip the vital area of development. We have been actively recruiting playtest groups and now have four groups (and we'd love to have more so drop me a line if you have at least four to six "players" and one good "recorder" to use John Leggat's terms). The first game receiving the "new" treatment is *Storm of Steel*, a four-map, 1200 counter game of all of WW1 (all fronts, colonies, "the works"). We have five groups (three playtester groups, Developer: Keith Schlesinger, and Designer: Joseph Miranda). To facilitate playtesting, we had our counter artist do the counters and run out black/white counter sheets which we mocked-up on chip board so playtesters have counters that are only one step removed from production. The maps were carefully hand-copied by our in-house artists, and the rules are mock-ups of the production pages. Thus, the playtesters have a near production quality kit to work with. The rules and charts can evolve throughout the process and new editions of the rules can be run out as changes are approved by the developer. In this area, I see we are far ahead of the expectations of Kranz and Leggat.

The area I agree we need to improve on is increasing the communication between the parties especially in discussing the key factors and giving the playtesters a concrete listing of the design emphasis, the areas of concern, and the expectations, deadlines, etc.. It is really

up to the developer to promote communication between the playtesters, designers, and himself and to encourage regular discussions. Checklists and monthly summary reports also would help everyone see the progress to date, what to focus on for the next month, and so on. Having had John Leggat involved as a solo playtester in some of the projects I developed was great. We both tend to play the game and ask questions as we go, trying to test the limits of the system and rules. As we found areas that were lacking, we discussed them, and arrived at suggested solutions. I discussed the changes with the designer to check his design philosophy and simulation emphasis, and then implemented the ideas that maximized simplicity and realism together.

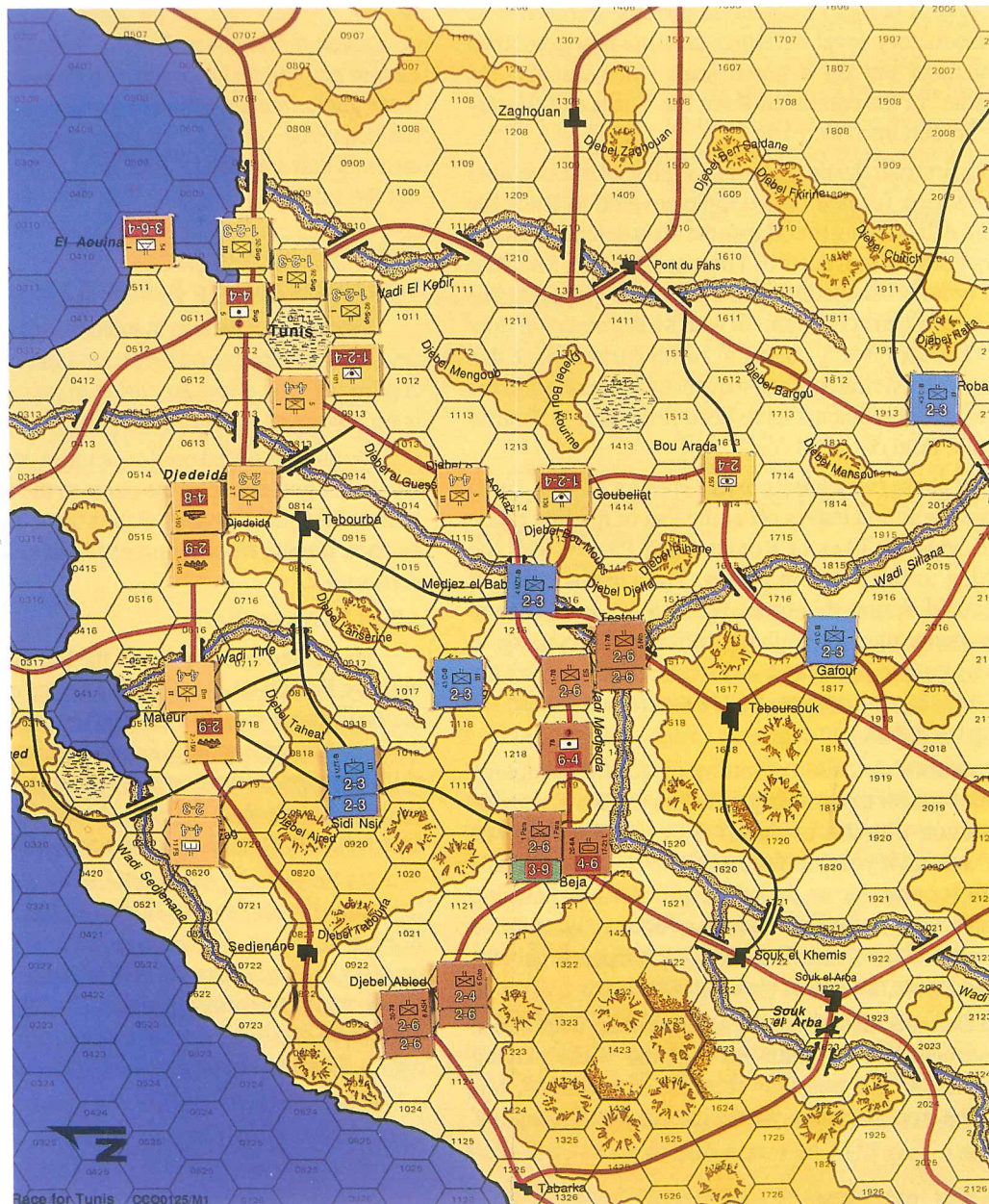
Overall, I am impressed by the apparent strength of the wargaming hobby and its recently begun increase in popularity after a long decline. I have been a long time advocate of wargame clubs and closer ties with the companies and now have the opportunity to work from the publishing end where I used to work from the club end. We are eager to involve more clubs in playtesting and would welcome additional playtest groups. Our projected schedule allows us flexibility in playtest assignments and we are very satisfied with the groups that have joined on for *Storm of Steel*. We look forward to involving more clubs in playtesting.

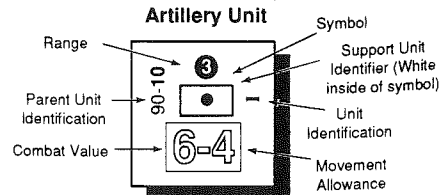
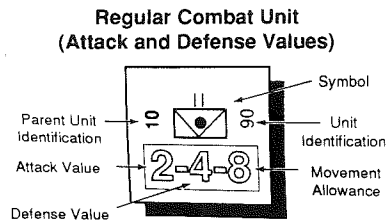
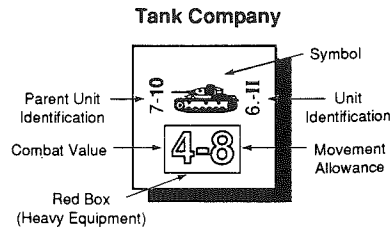
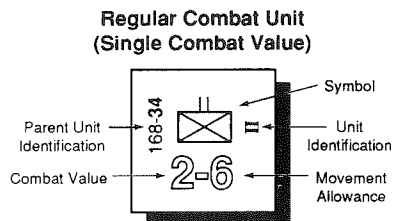
GDW at War!

A Replay of Race for Tunis and Bloody Kasserine

by Alan Emrich as The Axis
and Gary E. Smith as The Allies
(guest commentary by Dr. Christopher Cummins)

Set up positions for Race for Tunis.





As firm believers that “real wargamers play the campaign game”, our intrepid heroes of countless replays grappled with these two introductory level offerings and quickly combined them to play them out on a grand scale. Interestingly, the “campaign game” of the combined *Race for Tunis* and *Bloody Kasserine* is broken into two parts.

During the first part (lasting from November 24 to December 11, 1942), the action focuses on the topic covered in *Race for Tunis*, with the Allies trying to collapse the Axis defenders in and around the big northeastern ports of Tunis and Bizerta. Should it fall, Rommel (who is backpeddling to Tunis from Tripoli at this time after being crushed at El Alamein with Montgomery in slow pursuit) would be completely cut off in North Africa. Since this would have the gravest strategic consequences for the Axis in the Mediterranean, reinforcements have been ordered into Tunisia and instructed to hold out at all costs.

The second phase (which lasts from February 14 - 24, 1943) picks up where the action leaves off at the end of the first phase (literally) and adds the likes of Rommel and Patton, with the action switching to the southern passes. The famous battle of Kasserine occurred during this time. While there were several minor engagements plus the Eilbote “offensive” occurring in between, bad weather prevented any real action and so the calendar can be safely set approximately two months ahead for phase II of the campaign game.

A few questions do arise on setting up for the campaign game. If players opt for the campaign, do you use the Kasserine map in conjunction with that of Tunis? Why shouldn't units be able to enter that area, if you don't use that map? Further, if Tunis goes very well for one side or the other, how does that closing deployment affect set-up for Kasserine? Unfortunately, answers are not provided in either game. However, each separate game is clear enough to figure out and is well organized.

Alan and Gary decided to use the southern map with Tunis, allowing movement “down south” as required while playing *Race for Tunis*. As for possible alternate dispositions, left without guidance from the rules, we decided to would wing it if it came to that.

Since neither of us had ever tried the Tunis campaign before, or this system, one might think that we would want to go conservative. However, GDW has provided a nifty system that is easy to get into and proved to be no problem in playing. Really, these games are as simple to use as: 1) read the rules; 2) follow the sequence of play. Any questions on the mechanics have answers that are easy to find, leaving players to fight the battles, not the rules.

RACE FOR TUNIS

Both Player's Set Up & Axis 24 November:

Since the set up was mandated, hex-by-hex, there is little to say. The Axis are thin on the ground and begin in less than optimal conditions. The Allies are raring to go, and go they shall as there is no Axis portion of game turn 1!

During the Allied portion of turn 1, the Italian Anti-Tank unit Goubeliat got kicked in the pants to the tune of a D4 result. The Italian SPA unit at Bou Arada kept the French attackers in contact, leaving it some opportunities when it disengages during Axis turn 2.

Allied 24 November:

The Allied line is solid on the left but stretched on the right, with the French 43 C-B II (a 2-3) at the end in Robaa. However, the Axis line is weak on their left, strong on the right. Thus, our weak flanks are opposed. Looking things over, I decide to try a shift from the Testour area by road to Robaa and then exploit further towards Pont du Fahs. Alan will probably reinforce this area from his reserve strength around Tunis.

US tanks and British infantry hit the Italian armored artillery at Bou Arada. The French at Robaa move up onto the Djebel Bargou to block a retreat path. British tanks hit the Italian artillery at Goubeliat with 2LF in support with the 7b Br. arty. 6 Cdo to Medjez as reinforcement. The 8 ASH and 6 RWK go to the hills north of Aboid. French units to 0821. The P-38's will help out on Bou Arada; the Spitfires at Goubeliat.

Combat results are not too good. Both of Gary's aircraft were driven off by German air cover. Bou Arada was a CON

SEQUENCE OF PLAY

(Actions for Optional Rules in italics)

AXIS PLAYER TURN

Axis Movement Phase

- Roll for weather (except on turn 1)*
- Determine Supply Status (for both sides)*
- Roll for Axis Command Dispute (except on turn 1)*
- Axis player moves ground units

Axis Combat Phase

- Axis player declares attacks
- Axis player places ground support and interdiction aircraft*
- Axis player declares artillery missions and resolves counterbattery fire
- Allied player declares defensive artillery support
- Allied player moves interceptors and resolves their attacks*
- Axis player calculates odds and resolves combats
- Allied interdiction aircraft removed from map*

ALLIED PLAYER TURN

Allied Movement Phase

- Determine Supply Status (for both sides)*
- Allied player moves ground units

Allied Combat Phase

- Allied player declares attacks
- Allied player places ground support and interdiction aircraft*
- Allied player declares artillery missions and resolves counterbattery fire
- Axis player declares defensive artillery support
- Axis player moves interceptors and resolves their attacks*
- Allied player calculates odds and resolves combats
- Axis interdiction aircraft removed from map*

(contact) result, which leaves the French exposed. Goubeliat was a D4 (defender retreat four hexes), so this looks like the area to exploit.

German 25 November:

Weather: Clear

While piling up the defenders tall and strong to prevent the Allies from making any decent attacks "up the middle" toward my ports, I swing additional Italians and mobile German units to the south. With air support, I achieve 4-1 and 5-1 odds, with one battle to retake a crucial wadi crossing and another to eliminate a surrounded French battalion on some high ground. Both attacks fail miserably with CON results. The dice are laughing at me and this long game is looking longer after I've finished only one turn.

Alan sends the 2-1/90 German panzers plus two Italian artillery units to stomp the French at Djebel Bargou, while moving the It. Lodi 2-5 to Robaa to attack the French 43 CB there, supported by the 6-4 29c It. artillery unit at 1912. Two German airborne bns and the 54 Flak unit move to 0817. He stripped the coast of reserves and has them all on the move to reinforce the front.

Combat results are poor for Alan. While intercepting Spitfires were unable to stop his Stukas from their appointed rounds, the attack on Robaa was a CON, as was the assault on the French on the Djebel Bargou. Still, the French are in dire straits and need relief. Some things never change.

Allied 25 November:

I've got to bust Alan's line now before those mobilizing reserves arrive. The weak Italians are still the target of choice, so onward we go.

Ist Para, 43 C-B Fr and 1st ES hit the It. Lodi in Robaa. 5th Mtn and the 1-1A US armor hit the 2-4 557 It. arty at 1713. 2LF plus support from the 78 arty at 1415 hit the It. 136 AT unit at 1513. Finally, the 43 C-B IIFr. at 1811 hits the 29C It. artillery. My Spitfires are driven off by FW-190s.

The combat results are meager. Three ENGs and one CON. With Engaged results, neither side can move away and the defender doesn't have to attack in his phase, but the attacker does. CONs are a simple no effect. Oh oh — this could be bad.

With all of the action to the south, Gary cannot attack into Alan's strength with his little 2-strength units, so he's moving on the Italian flank. The luck evens out fairly quickly; of Gary's four attacks, he rolls one contact and three engaged results. Despite the good weather, he's moving pretty slow. The Fw-190s are keeping the Allied air power

away very effectively so far, but there's a lot of turns ahead.

German 26 November:

Weather: Clear

With a real penchant for aggressive defense, I counterattack along most of the line. Mopping up the fleeing Frenchmen to the south was no problem, but other attacks had more bittersweet results. While capturing the strategic town of Medjez el Bab by rolling a miracle snake-eyes at 1-1, my larger attacks on the shoulders of the town met with disastrous results, including an Attacker Eliminated against some weak French defenders in the high escarpment. I'm vulnerable to counterattacks, but I don't know if Gary has the gumption to hit me everywhere. We'll see...

Alan uses the German 3T and 11FS engineers to hit the 4MZT II & III in 0919, with two German bns plus the 54 Flak unit at 0918 on the 5BF. Both of these attacks are CONs. The German 2T at 1016 hits the 43 C-B at 1117 and kills it. The major assault on Medjez el Bab sees the 1&2 190 plus a bn of German airborne troops with the Italian 92 SUP III unit, all in 1116, destroys the 6th Cdo and a unit of the 4 MZT on a roll of snake eyes.

An attack by the 54th Flak plu 92 SUP III at 1214 and the 5 Para at 1314 on British armor at 1315 sees a satisfying AR2

Set up positions for Bloody Kasserine.

10th PZ

16-8

8-6

4-8

4-8

2-4-8

6-4

2-4

21st PZ

6-9

12-8

12-8

4-8

4-8

12-8

4-8

12-8

4-8

12-8

4-8

12-8

4-8

DAK

6-7

12-6

4-6

4-6

4-4

4-4

3-6-4

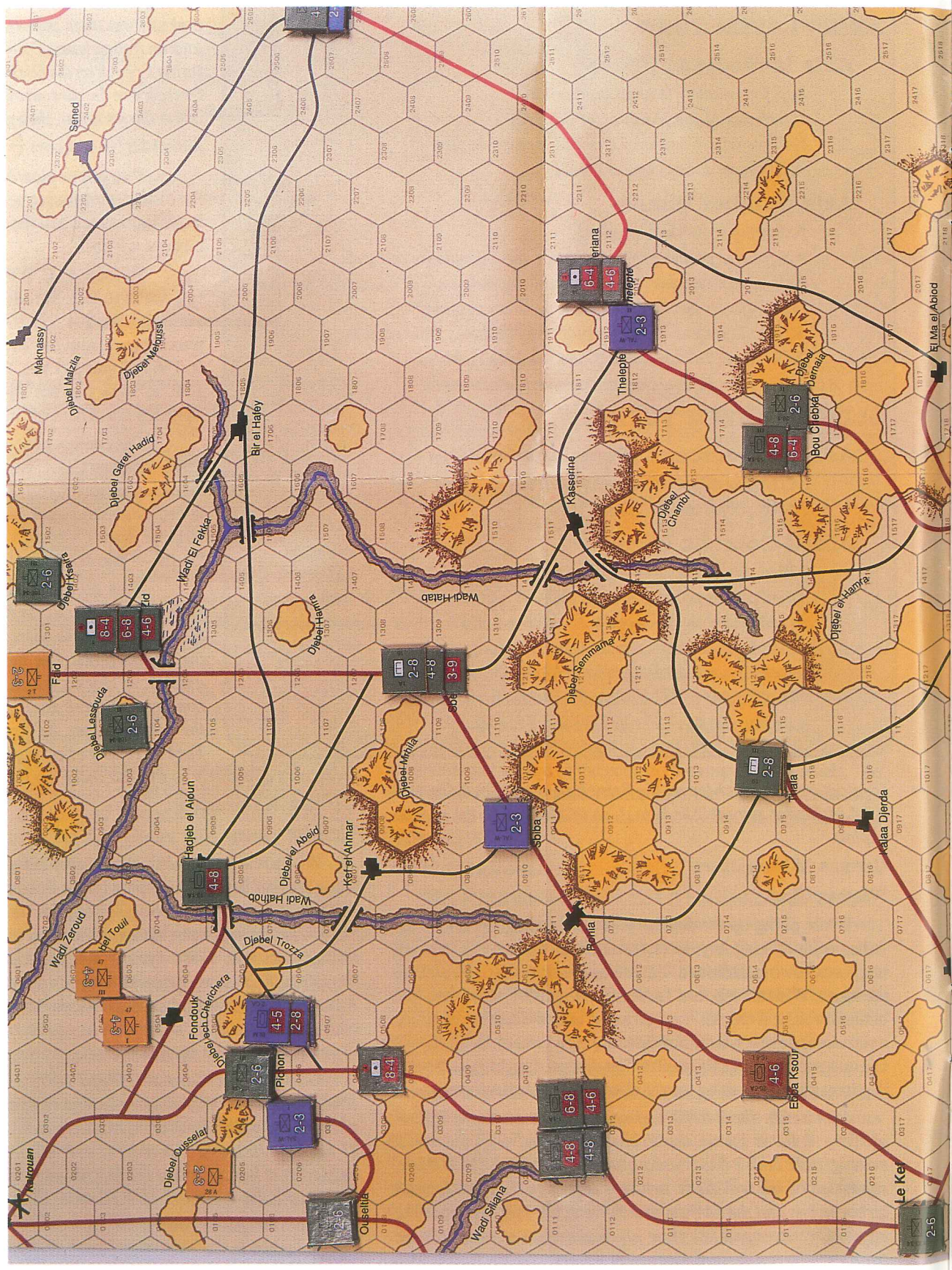
8-4

2-4

10th Panzer enters any hex on the eastern map edge from 0101 to 1201 (inclusive).

21st Panzer enters at hex 1901.

DAK enters the map at hex 2601 during the Axis Movement Phase of the second game turn.



result. Finally, by rolling boxcars, Alan lost the 2-32T German unit and retreated the survivors a hex. 43 C-B III lives to tell the tale — *Vive le France!*

Allied 26 November:

Well, with Alan in Medjez, we'll just have to get it back. We get the 13-1A US armor and I buy back the lost Commando unit with replacement points. The British 17-21L armor plus the French 43 C-B III, with artillery support, assault Medjez el Bab. The new US armor goes to Beja as a reserve, for now. I use my airpower to suppress Alan's artillery wherever possible.

On the Attacker Eng'd at 1714, I roll up an A Elim, losing the 5th Mtn and retreating the 1-1A US armor to 1715. The other ENG'd at 1513 and 1514 draws an Exchange, so the 2LF bn dies as well. This leaves my support artillery at 1516 open to direct assault if Alan chooses to come 'round the mountain, if he comes. At Medjez, I shove out the 5th Para I to 1314. However, seeing the noose that Medjez has become, I am loathe to stick any part of my self into it. Alan's quite the hangman, so giving him enough rope often leaves his opponents at the wrong end of it.

At this point, I am left with fewer strength points "on the line" than Alan. This leaves me really with only the option of going over to the defense and awaiting more reinforcements. This Allied offensive isn't.

While the Combat Results Table is fairly bloodless, they're managing to roll extreme numbers (2, 3, 11, & 12s on 2d6). Thus, Gary has rolled an exchange on his turn which opens up opportunities for both. Unfortunately for Gary, Alan is moving next. While his counterattack (with artillery) managed to push Alan out of Medjez el Bab, he didn't advance back in since that would put his British armored unit right into an Axis pincer.

During this turn, I did some quick calculations about total combat points on both sides over this scenario. The Allies start with 42 versus 58 for the Axis (or 64 counting defense values) and the burden of the attack. For the first week, the Allies are at about a 15- to 20-point disadvantage. They receive two large reinforcement groups that puts them slightly ahead (although in reality the early attrition should be against them, so these forces are more likely going to simply shore up the defense) and a third group on December 5 with which to (finally) take the initiative. With no Axis replacements, the Allied Player should keep his eye on trading losses with the Axis for the first half of the game and using his replacements to replace the larger units, so that his last group of reinforcements will have a greater effect on the balance of power. The Allies will have to make a grab for their victory late.

German 27 November:

Weather: Rain

With the ZOC rules allowing players to always move one hex per turn, even from ZOC to ZOC, infiltration and pincer attacks are a constant threat. Frankly, the Axis seems to be having an easier time of it thus far, and with reinforcements arriving en masse next turn, I wouldn't want to be the Allies. I don't see how they're supposed to mount an offensive!

As Chico said in the Marx Brothers' movie *Horsefeathers*, "Hey diddle diddle, we go straight up the middle." I got a cheap

shot at Gary's exposed artillery unit (one defense strength when caught by itself) and a good chance to pincer his British armor just outside of Medjez el Bab. I rolled like a torrent, eliminating both his armor and (only) artillery unit. My sideshow attack in the south at 3-1 met with an AR1 (Attacker Retreat 1 hex) result, but who cares in the face of such tremendous success in the center. If I were Gary, I'd be a bit demoralized right now. Hmm... I'd better go count his casualties again and make some kind of indirect reference to 'em, just to make sure he STAYS demoralized <grin>.

Right now, everything is coming up roses. Of course, that may be thanks to the rain this turn, which only messes up Gary's airforce and not mine. You see, the Axis airbases which I'm using are "all weather" while many of Gary's are dirt runways. The rain has glued half his airforce (which has been pretty ineffective so far) to the ground.

I'll study the map for a moment and see if that's the place to continue the push. I'll play for position right now and try to secure a good springboard for the beginning of Phase II in the game. Although, if my luck continues, there's no reason why I couldn't turn this thing into a rout. I can't believe the Allies started out attacking historically. The deck looks pretty stacked for the Axis and, to top it off, the cards are falling my way to boot.

Alan rolls for his reinforcements and gets a 4-8 motorcycle bn in Tunis, with two tank units, an AT bn, and an Italian inf. bn at Bizerta. Doesn't look promising for Gary.

Continuing the discussion about the total situation from last turn, it looks like Alan is following what would be the best strategy here. Keep chipping away at the Allies exposed smaller units, trying to use the Axis advantages to best effect. Push the Allies back and secure the best defensive positions for the late Allied push or go for broke and try to push the Allies off the map and/or secure a sufficient advantage such that the Allies will not be able to take the initiative.

Allied 27 November:

Well, 5th Para/I comes over the hills and gets my artillery at 1516 as well as creates another hole in the line. Any spare Dutch boys out there? Alan hits the 17-21L Br. armor at 1316 at an 8 to 1 with armor, paratroops, Stukas and an Italian unit, killing it dead, so to speak. A huge hole now opens in the center, capable of letting me get cut in two. 1st Para at 2013 is hit by German tanks, but an AR1 drives them off. The French unit at 1216 are hit by ME-109s, 5th Para/III and SUP 92/II Italians and is forced back two hexes.

On my phase, it's all redeployment/hang on time. I also have to watch for Alan swinging around on the top of the southern map to outflank my right. So, on to building some sort of line.

At this point, it seems that *Race for Tunis* devolves into which side can strike the main blow first. With a roughly even start total and no reserves to speak of, whichever line is sundered at the start becomes the desperate side. Had I done that to Alan, our positions could easily be reversed.

The Allies redeploy: US 3-9 on 1915, 6-8 US to 1717, 5th BF to 1618, 2-3 Fr plus 6th Cdo to 1319, 43 C-B III Fr to 1218, MZT II & III to 1019, 15 S-B I Fr to 0921, 8th ASH to 0821 and 7 LG-

B II to 0822.

One of the great delights (?) in playing Alan for so many years is that when the chance to break a game open flashes past (good or bad in the long run), he seizes it. My center is that chance. Would that I had the forces to adequately plug it...

Yep, Gary's on the ropes but he's not reaching for the towel yet. He pulled back all along the line, using his newly arrived 6-8 American armor to plug up what would otherwise be a gaping hole in his lines. The French are falling back along the Wadi Medjerda valley.

German 28 November:

Weather: Clear.

I decided to put general pressure along the Allied line, striving for 4-1 or better odds wherever I could find them. With four such attacks and a couple of supporting soak offs, while my luck was definitely average, that is all I needed to keep Gary's strategic situation crumbling, particularly along the Wadi Medjerda. Bleeding three more of his precious units off the board (to my one) is leaving him so thin that he can't take much more of this pounding. Gary's air force has only succeeded in silencing one of my artillery units one time (it was unchallenged), but otherwise has produced a string of unmitigated failures. He simply cannot hold a line against me and the reinforcements he needs to stop me are at least 3 days away.

The sad part is that, while it is looking so grim for the Allies, I don't feel that I've done anything particularly brilliant to put Gary in such a bad position. I factored my attacks carefully, threw a few good (but mostly average) results, and here I am on the threshold of certain success. Frankly, I don't think this situation is play balanced entirely.

Alan puts two 10B/63B It bns to 0919 plus 11FS/I&II airborne at 1018 on both MZT/II&III on 1019. Result is an EX. 54 Flak/II at 1118 plus 5th Para/III and 92 SUP/II & II with Flak 54/II on Fr 2-3/43 C-B/III at 1218. Result is a DR3 back to 1420. The German 1-1 and 2-1 tank bns at 1518 with 10 KS on the 5th BF at 1618. Results are D Elim. 5th Para/I with 1-190 armored cars at 1617 vs 6-8 US armor at 1717. Results are DR2 to 1918. The German 2-190 in 1815 with Italian artillery in support from 1814 on the 3-9 US armor at 1915 results in an AR2 for Alan. Two 4-8 tank companies hit 1st Para at 2013 from 1913 and 2012, but only a CON results from this attack. Stukas were used on the French at 1019, the Spitfires unable to drive them off. ME-109's were used on the US armor at 1717, the P-38's unable to drive them off.

Allied 28 November:

It's "hold-on-by-the-fingernails" time. I use replacement points to buy back the British 5th Bf and send them to 0923. The 8th ASH go to 1122. French 15 S-B/I goes up the Djebel Tabouna. 6th Cdo to 1321. The 43 C-B III plus the 15 S-B/II to 1420. 7LG to 1621. 6RWK to 1619. The US 13-1A to 1818, the 1-1A on 2017. British 1st Para to 2217.

At this point, given that we had another game to be working on, Alan and I opted to call it a day on Tunis and the good Doctor (Cummins, our faithful observer and rules arbiter) agreed. This is a good system, I just wish I had done better to test it.



German Final Comments:

This move, falling back and reestablishing an eggshell thin line in the face of my advancing panzers, Gary, Chris and I agreed that the Allies would better spend their energies ironing and starching their white hankerchiefs rather than continuing the struggle. With the Axis looking forward to a few more turns of bleeding what was left of the Allies away, we decided to move on to a stand alone game of **Bloody Kasserine**. Now that we both have a secure handle on the rules, I don't think Kasserine will be as one-sided. Both of us have played this campaign (by other companies) before. Gary and I know what to expect. We'll see if GDW can supply it.

FINAL NOTES:

Race For Tunis did not turn out too well for Gary. However, other gamers checked with tend to confirm that the game plays with a very strong back and forth swing. Either side can win and the excitement is found in who can, indeed, achieve that major breakthrough that throws the other player onto the defensive. Gary appeared to start out slow and begin major operations against the Italians. Other games have seen the Allies take Djedeida airfield on the 2nd Allied game turn. The prime consideration seems to be that the Allies must NOT let the Axis player take the initiative early. If that happens, the results end up much the same as the game described above (though Alan's luck always helps; Alan, that is).

PHASE II: BLOODY KASSERINE

This game models the first major German attack against US forces in WW2. The battle pitted a veteran Axis fighting force with excellent leadership against a well-trained but inexperienced Allied force with a preponderance of supply. The Allied

COMBAT RESULTS TABLE

Die	1:5	1:4	1:3	1:2	1:1	2:1	3:1	4:1	5:1	6:1	7:1	8:1	Die
2	AR 1	Eng	DR 1	D elim	D elim	D elim	D elim	D elim	Exch	D elim	D elim	D elim	2
3	AR 2	Con	Eng	Exch	Exch	DR 3	D elim	D elim	D elim	D elim	D elim	D elim	3
4	AR 3	AR 1	Con	Eng	DR 1	DR 2	Exch	D elim	D elim	D elim	D elim	D elim	4
5	AR 4	AR 2	AR 1	Eng	Con	Exch	DR 3	DR 4	Con	D elim	D elim	D elim	5
6	A elim	AR 3	AR 2	AR 1	Eng	Con	DR 2	DR 3	DR 4	DR 4	D elim	D elim	6
7	A elim	AR 4	AR 3	AR 2	Eng	Eng	DR 2	DR 2	DR 3	DR 3	DR 4	D elim	7
8	A elim	A elim	AR 4	AR 3	AR 1	Eng	Con	DR 2	DR 2	DR 2	DR 3	D elim	8
9	A elim	A elim	A elim	A elim	AR 2	AR 1	Con	Con	DR 2	DR 2	DR 2	DR 4	9
10	A elim	A elim	A elim	A elim	AR 3	AR 2	Eng	Con	Con	Con	DR 2	DR 3	10
11	A elim	A elim	A elim	Con	A elim	AR 2	AR 1	Eng	D elim	D elim	Con	DR 2	11
12	A elim	A elim	A elim	DR 1	A elim	A elim	A elim	Exch	Eng	D elim	D elim	Con	12

forces also had the benefit of strong defensive terrain on their side. The Axis forces can count on greater overall mobility for their troops, with better armored formations to boot. This has always been a classic battle; the question is, can GDW produce a game to match it?

Set Up & German 14 February:

Weather: Clear

This is an entirely different can of worms now. I kept offering to give Gary (still the Allies) Patton to lead his troops in exchange for a little better German cooperation (giving me half the 10th Panzer and another Fw190 unit to play with), but he wasn't interested in dealing with the optional rules. Too bad. I think the game would have been far more lively if we had.

My set-up, which consists primarily of moving in the panzer divisions from off the map while waiting for the DAK units to arrive on my southern flank next turn, is pretty simple. Rather than going for real estate, I want to crush the units closest to the map edge. Through some skillful maneuvering, most of Gary's blocking units are surrounded. Unfortunately, the odds are pretty low. It's going to take some good die rolling to break things open.

Unfortunately, the battles around Djebel Lessouda and Sidi Bou Zid prove to be indecisive (contacts). While we've forced the bridge over Wadi Hathob and captured Hadjeb el Aioun, it is simply not enough. Gary is going to have to self-destruct on his turn for me to be free to maneuver on my next move. A disappointing start, to be sure, but it could be aggravated severely if Gary decides to pressure me in the north next turn.

Alan need 6 VP's for a marginal win. He starts with 3. His attack at Habjeb el Aioun shove the Allied forces back to fight again and the loss of 168-34/III at 1401 was expected. His move of an armored car unit to the crossroads at 1205 was a backup to his attack at Sidi Bou Zid, which failed. Without that blocking unit there, The Allied forces would have a greater chance of escaping, but still they're not bad now. Certainly better than the historical chances.

Allied 14 February:

Well, so I held against the best the Germans could throw. Since I have been offered the opportunity of saving those troops at Sidi Bou Zid, I've got to make the effort.

I pull the surrounded units down to the bridge at 1203, move the 1-1A/II armor from Maktar and the 4-8/13A-1 to Sbeitia to form a reserve. I build a forward line from 1006 to 1406 to cover

the retreat of my forces from Sidi bou Zid as well as take out the 1-580 a/c unit at the crossroads. This will allow for a safe retreat corridor and the maneuver space I will need when Alan comes at me again.

The balance of the Allied army begins to move towards various defensive positions, with the artillery tagged to come up in support of those positions. Also, we evacuate Gafsa in the south, as there is no reason at all to give battle so far forward. I've left a weak French unit to hold the fort and act as a delay. In the north, we wait. There are victory points in Kairouan and no good defensive ground for Alan to lay low on. It's worth watching for an opening.

The attack results were a disaster for me. I rolled a "9" on a 1-2, which is an AElim. It was a gamble, but the odds were on my side. Win (i.e., don't die) and Alan is held up in a major way. Lose, and this forward deployment on the flat lands is risky. I lost, so now it's risky.

Gary tried a well coordinated relief effort at the besieged Sidi Bou Zid, but it was all for naught when he rolled an untimely Attacker Eliminated. Now Alan has an opening in the center. In the south, he left the French cavalry unit in Gafsa as a "speed bump" to impede the DAK advance on Feriana, which he's reinforcing rapidly.

German 15 February:

Weather: Clear

Carefully factoring every attack and adding in air power both to raise the odds and suppress Gary's cannons, his line at Djebel Hamra was almost entirely vaporized this turn. Lesson: don't mess with two crack panzer divisions in open field fighting. He lost a lot of boys and the remnants will have to head back for the wonderful defensive terrain to their rear. At that point, I'll have to work very hard and pay for every hex I'm after <sigh>.

I made mincemeat of his Gafsa speed bump cavalry unit, but am still perilously weak along my right in the north. Hopefully, I've reduced Gary enough in his center that he'll reinforce it from his left, leaving my right with less to worry about. Gary only gets air reinforcements for the next couple of turns, then the land units will start to replenish his ranks. I've got to move fast, but everything seems against a quick decisive breakthrough unless Gary decides to fight me in the open. Fat chance.

Alan assaults the line in the open by swinging another armored car unit behind the engineers at 1406 and sending the Sidi invasion force directly in on the line. The major blow was

using 2 4-8 tank companies plus a 2-3 unit in 1205, plus 2 more tank units and an AT bn in 1106 to attack Gary's two armored units in 1206. He added in ME-109's and came away with a D Elim. His attack on US forces in 1006 destroyed the tank unit there on a DR3, but the 4-8 mech unit was able to retreat over the djebel and get away.

Allied 15 February:

Hmm, this isn't going to be so easy. With my forward defense now shredded, my plans for having extra units just got modified to having any units whatsoever. So, on to redeployment.

I send the BLM 5 CA to Sbeitla to prevent Alan from slithering thru my ZOCs there. My aircraft interdict 1407, 1408 and 1508 to help slow Alan a bit in the center. I redeploy on my left back to the eastern edge of the high ground to gain better protection. The French BLM 2 CA with a 2-3 plus a US 2-6 bn go to 0808 to block the pass and hold the road. A French 2-3 and US 2-6 end up on 0708 likewise. The rest of the line runs from engineers at 1609 southwest to the US Rangers occupying 2114.

German 16 February:

Weather: Clear

Well, Gary wisely opted to pull back and not instigate any battles this turn. His three air units were concentrated around Wadi Hatab. This is interesting, as I almost certainly would have put at least one of them on the road between Gafsa and Feriana to buy a little time. He left me at least one sneaky little maneuver. I can occupy the cliffs which dominate Kef el Ahmar (where Gary has a strong contingent located). Since he doesn't have a ZOC up to my panzergrenadiers which can make it there, they can sit there during the combat phase and be a nuisance to him on his turn.

In the north, he pulled back to a defensive line. Whew! Looks like that will be a quiet sector of the front for a while at least. Thank goodness! My initial deployment there was awful (a gift from the forced unit set up).

I continue to press straight on, rolling over Gary's two French speed bump units in and around Sbeitla. He's trading units for time right now — a sound tactic. I got a decent attack on the high ground near Thelepte (2012), but my 5-1 odds result was a CON. Still, Gary will probably want to pull out of there rather than reinforce. I've sent my Recce units to the southwest of Feriana. With any luck, they'll force Gary to lengthen his right so I don't turn it. He can easily do it, but it never hurts to keep fires burning for one's opponent to deal with.

Five German tank companies, 2 leg infantry bns and a motorcycle bn surrounded the French BLM 2-8 at 1208. Alan rolled an 11, a DR2, and killed it. Three mech bns, 2 tank companies and a PG bn hit a 2-3 French unit at 1309 at 8-1, with Alan rolling a "6", Delim. The US 4-6 AT bn at 2012 was hit by one 12-6 tank bn, two 4-8 mech bns, along with supporting artillery. The tank and mech units were at half strength since the Americans were on higher ground, so the odds were only 5-1. The results were a (CON). However, since players must in most (but not all) cases attack adjacent enemy units if they stay in their ZOC, a CON result generally means that the defender will retreat on his own volition on the following movement phase.

Allied 16 February:

Alan crashed into the center as expected, but the valiant French BLM at 1208 slowed him up. A stack of 3-4 units got to 1409 but no further due to the interdiction. A huge stack of 6 units hit the French at 1309 while a US AT bn tried to stop an Afrika Korps assault. Alan didn't get Thelepte THIS turn, but with the entire Afrika Korps paying a courtesy call, I can't stay. In fact, my forces out on the ridge at 1509 to 1710 can't stay there either. So, back to the closed confines of Kasserine Pass I go. Alan is threatening to flank me on my right, using those ubiquitous armored car companies of his. Typical Germans, too, driving on the right side of the road and all! <grin>

Again, we have to fall back and readjust. The left stays put on the high ground with only a minor redeployment of some French. The center sees US armor and mech (13-1A II and 6-1A I) bns go to 1111, French infantry 2-3 to 1212 and US engineers to 1311. Right in Kasserine Pass the US 26-1 I infantry, 13-1A III armor and 1-1A III armor hold at 1411. Just behind them as support are the French 7AL-w I inf along with the 67 W artillery holding 1412. In 1413 is a US artillery unit, the 34th, as more fire support. A late decision moves the US 6-1A II, BR 16-51 armor and US 601 AT bn to 0911.

In the south, I interdict the road at 2013 and 2113 as well as string a line of troops from 1712 to 2015. This motley force can only delay Alan until I can funnel more troops out that way. The only thing worth anything in that area is Tebessa, but for now there are several well-placed ridgelines for me to defend. I have to keep Alan away from there, as this prize is worth 3 VP's.

German 17 February:

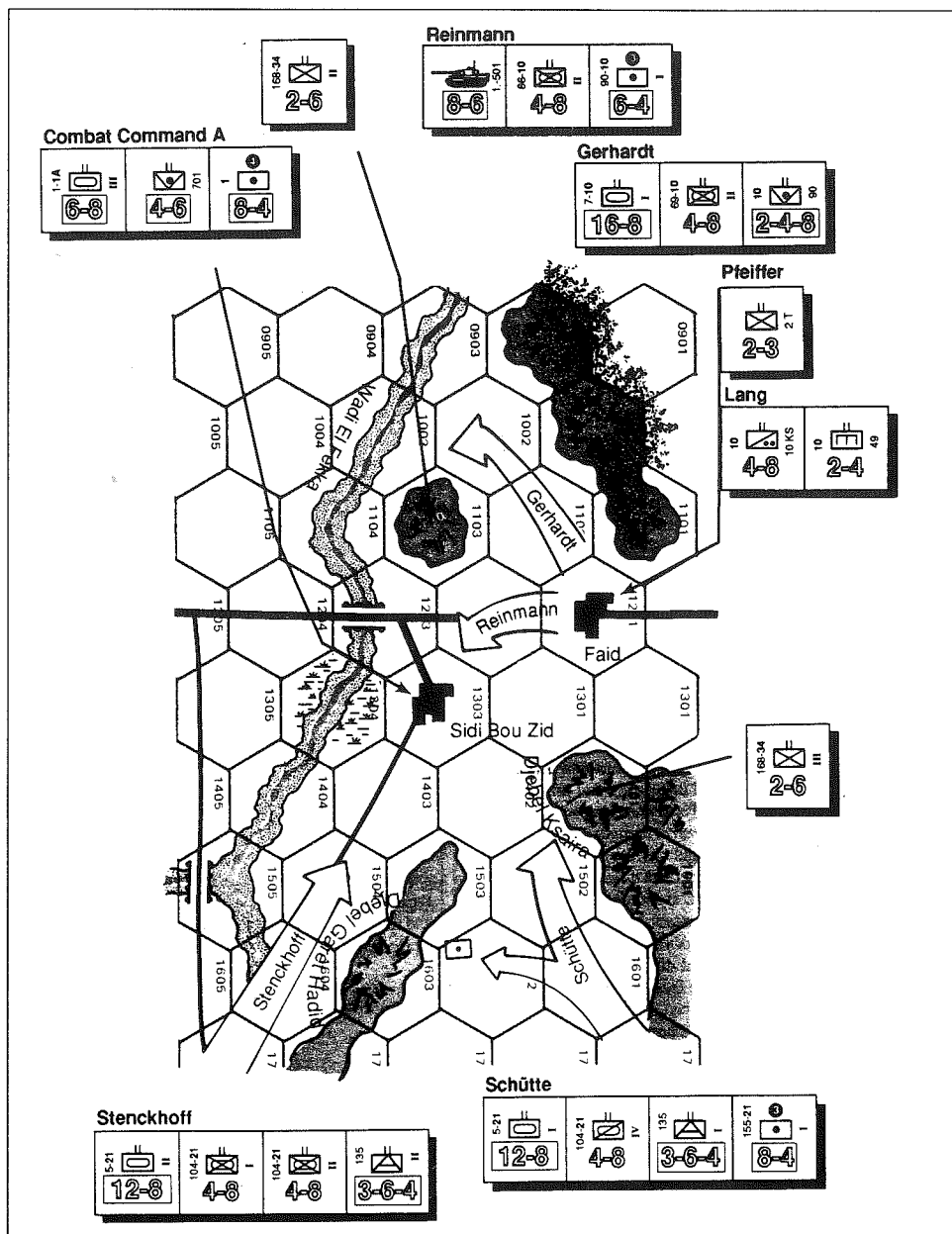
Weather: Clear

Gary's steeling up his nerves for sure, now. He's making a steady retreat back to stronger defensive areas. Oh, not every hex has been optimally chosen, but it's looking a lot better for the Allies now. His interdiction along the Feriana to El Ma el Abiod road was very well conceived. With my work cut out for me, it's time to get the can openers out and see what I can pry apart. Pass the chisel, boys.

Well, there's bad news and less bad news tonight, Mr. and Mrs. Germany... While Rommel's vaunted Afrika Korps did manage to overrun the Allied airfield at Thelepte, minor reverses (in the form of Attacker Retreats) were suffered along the cliffs to the west of Kasserine. Allied defensive artillery was the key to these reverses (a key which we plan to do something about, given the chance).

Fortunately, the "big push" on hex 1111, which would break the back of the Djebel Semmama ridge line succeeded. While the powerful forces advanced into an exposed position upon taking that hex, their sheer strength (38 factors, with AA to prevent Allied air operations against them) should sustain them against any punitive counterattack. With the fall of another French delaying unit in Sbiba, we grind inexorably on to Thala and the "happy hunting ground" of the relatively open ground around it.

What Gary might do in reaction, I can only guess. However, if he tries to hold the passes at Kasserine for one turn too long, it will be a bloody day when we mop up his overextended forces.



The map shows, in the game terms, the composition of the various groups and their appropriate routes of advance. *Stenckhoff* expands 7 MPs to get to hex 1604, and so does not have sufficient MPs to move farther and enter a US ZOC. Therefore, the group stops in hex 1504. Gruppe *Schutte* advances to hex 1502 and there enters the ZOC of III-168 Infantry on Djebel Ksaira. The German player leaves the 21st Panzer Division artillery in 1602.

In the north, Gerhardt moves through the US infantry ZOC in hex 1102 and moves to hex 1002, while Reinmann attacks Sidi Bou Zid itself. Reinmann's artillery remains at Faid with the Pfeiffer's infantry battalion and Lang.

After movement, *Schutte* attacks III-168 on Djebel Ksaira at 4:1 (the armor battalion and flak battalions are quartered, while the panzergrenadiers and artillery are halved. This gives a total attack value of 9 and 3/4 to 2, or just 1/4 point shy of 5:1) *Gerhardt* attacks II-168 on Djebel Lessouda at 3:1, while *Reinmann*, supported by a Stuka, attacks Sidi Bou Zid at 3:1. (Reinmann has an attack value of 18. The U.S. troops in Sidi Bou Zid have a defense value of 18. This is a 1:1, increased to 3:1 by the Stuka.)

With the benefit of excellent intelligence concerning the location and strength of U.S. units, most German players will be able to devise a much more effective first turn attack.

He's determined to make a stand somewhere. Will it be at Kasserine?

Alan surrounded the 2-3 French unit at Thelepte and killed it. A US engineering unit on the heights at 1712 was attacked by two a/c companies from 1812, one tank and one mech bn from 1811 and one PG bn from 1611. The attack was at 2-1 and Alan rolled an AR1, giving yet more hope to US forces everywhere. Another engineering unit at 1311 also repulsed a German attack with an AR2. The French 2-3 at Sbiba died from a close encounter with Tiger tanks, while Allied forces at 1111 were hit by two tank bns (a 16-8 and 12-8!), infantry, flak and Stukas. P-38's were not able to drive off the Stukas and on a DR2 the Allied forces fell back over the ridge. Kasserine Pass itself was quiet, but for how long?

Allied 17 February:

I absolutely must hold Alan to the east side of the Djebel

Semmama. If he gets through the Rohia gap (0711), then my forces at Kasserine are in grave danger of being encircled. Thala would be the first target for Alan to grab. Anyway, there's too much open ground for those 12 and 16 strength point panzer bns to roam around on. Decisive action is called for!

I attack the German Tigers and 2-4 Engineer bn in Sbiba from three hexes with French, US and British forces in a concentric attack from hexes 0809, 0810 and 0911. At 4 to 1 odds I rolled a CON. ARRGGGHH! My best shot and it's in the dirt!

In support of this, I send a 2-8 Engineer unit down from the hills to attack a German artillery unit at 2-3 infantry bn at 1209. I use a 6-4 US artillery unit in support to get 1 to 1 odds. This is only suppose to be a spoiling attack to take his artillery off fire support for the Sbiba battle as well as throw another speed bump in the way. But, I get a 4 result, which is a DR1. Defending artillery is eliminated on any DR result, however, so this happy



circumstance reduces Alan's support firepower enormously.

The balance of my move is to tidy up the right flank some more in order to keep delaying Alan. The main result of this is to finally place a unit (the 133-34/III 2-6) on the ridge at 2019. This anchors my line on the map edge to keep Alan from flanking it. While he can obviously assault my line, he is at some risk doing so, as opposed to giving him an end run option. The reinforcements I get this turn (5 bns of leg infantry and an AT bn), all coming in at Le Kef, are sent down the road towards Thala for duty either in the center or south. Probably the south.

Well, so what does Alan do? Hold at Sbiba, or attack NW towards Rohia (0711)? Does he come over the Djebel Semmama at 1111 towards Thala? My 6-4 artillery is stuck in Kasserine on the front line. Alan certainly will selectively attack it, since artillery is proving to be the key that keeps the Allies in this game. The worry gnawing at me is that when my reinforcements start showing up, the south will be in such a state that I will not be able to feed enough help to any one area to regain lost VPs there. If I can only stabilize it, then Alan has an assured victory of some sort. The key, I think, is still the center. If I can stay in Kasserine Pass, or very close by, my reinforcements will allow me to push Alan around and hence regain territory.

Like the Americans did historically at this battle, Gary is learning by doing. He's showing markedly improved tactical skills as he launched a fierce counterattack on Sbiba. The elite German Tiger tanks and combat engineers held him to a contact (by sheer luck), but that was nothing less than the Führer expected (oh, brother!). To perform this, he ventured forth with some of his engineers which were watching the cliffs along the Kasserine pass around Djebel Semmama. While the close assault on the Tigers didn't go as planned, Gary did manage to come right back and eliminate the best artillery in the Axis forces. Clearly, losing this precious artillery at this early juncture could

be the turning point of the entire battle.

German 18 February:

Weather: Clear

Another day, another disaster (this time around bloody Kasserine proper). Using German tactical abilities to their fullest, I concentrate an 8-1 attack on Gary's artillery in the passes west of Kasserine while soaking off against the rest of the stack in that hex. As fate would have it, I roll a 12 (contact) and Gary's guns will just walk away. Quite simply, I don't know enough German swear words to properly express how I feel after that.

A counterattack north of Sbiba succeeds to a degree. If Gary wants to party around that town or Kasserine, at least he'll have to deal with strong stacks of Axis forces bivouaced in those areas. I can do little in the south, so I move into position to occupy part of the Djebel Dernaia (1915) during my next turn. Two things are fading right now: my momentum and my prospects.

Alan opts to attack the French and US units at 0809 with his Tigers, a mech bn and both tank bns (the 12 and 16 strength units), at 5 to 1 odds. A DR3 shoves them back to 0611. Gary's 2-8 Engineer unit out in the open at 1310 is Purple Hearted (posthumously), while the Kasserine blocking force is hit by two 12 strength tank bns, four 4 strength bns of various types along with an armored car company. Alan gets an 8-1 on the artillery by selective attack, but only a 1-3 on the rest, due to Allied artillery support.

Allied 18 February:

The artillery lives! The rest of Alan's forces roll up an AR4! The Americans hold at Kasserine!! But, looking at the overall situation on the map, I simply can't stay. I am next to forces outgunning me about 3 to 1, so I will have to evacuate this hex. But only back one to 1412, which means I can still hold Alan up here. Most importantly, I keep that 6-4 artillery for use, though Alan has interdicted the area west of Kasserine to slow my pullback.

To achieve that attack out by Sbiba, Alan pulled off of the Semmama from 1111. This, for now, gives me hope in the center. This turn I get 6 bns of reinforcements. I still want to do something about Kairouan, so can I use some of the new folks up in the north? Or all to the south? Decisions, decisions...

This turn sees no attacks from me, but a continued adjustment of the line. The reinforcements puzzle took me a while to decide on, but I ended up sending the entire British contingent of two armor bns, one mech, one leg bn, one AT unit, and an artillery bn up the road from Le Kef to Pichon. The Kairouan push will be on, but these troops can also move SW towards Rohia if Alan heads out that way.

I move to block the pass at Rohia with odds and ends. Alan can go in and attack, but delay is my friend here and he can't push out that way unimpeded with my moving a tank, mech and At bn to 0912, along with an 8-4 artillery unit in 0713 to cover the Rohia gap.

Three US 2-6 in 1012 cover the Thala/Kasserine road while French BLM units occupy Thala itself. Another French 2-3 holds the gap at 1212. Kasserine Pass holds with the artillery and a 2-6 as a blocking force, since the artillery can't move any further

west. From there south, I've reinforced the line with the British Guard bns that came in as reinforcements last turn.

German 19 February:

Weather: Heavy Rain. All planes grounded. All dirt roads are ignored for movement and supply.

A welcome respite comes in the turn of a general Allied pullback along Gary's eastern lines. I've slowed down his artillery enough around Kasserine (thanks to the interdiction of my Stukas) to afford me another swing on them. I'll probably need my Tiger tanks to get there, but he's interdicting the Sbiba-Sbeitla-Kasserine road. That could prove decisive. He reinforced his ridgeline from Ouseltia to Wadi Hathob. Britishers are moving up from Le Kef. I feel a counterattack aimed right at my airbase/victory points around Kairouan.

Despite the heavy rain grounding my airforce and turning the minor roads to 1MP hexes (as opposed to their normal 1/2MP), I manage to concentrate enough tanks through the Kasserine Pass to force the cliffs of Djebel Semmama and Djebel Chambi and breakthrough to the source of Wadi Hatab and the plains below Djebel el Hamra. In the process, I finally nailed that artillery unit which I missed last turn (and about time, too). I rolled very well, although suffering some exchanges which always work to Gary's advantage with his new troops rolling in every turn.

I packed the boys tall in Sbiba and am daring Gary to counterattack there and along Djebel Semmama. Hopefully, my units operating there will distract him away from launching an attack on Pichon and El Ala for a while. With all my artillery (both surviving pieces) concentrated around Kasserine, any counterattack he makes away from that point will be bad news for me!

The attacks worked out as follows: the artillery and 2-6 infantry in Kasserine Pass were hit at 6-1 odds with a DR3. The artillery died and the infantry retreated to 1416. The 2-3 French at 1212 were hit by three 4 point German bns from 1211 and died from a D Elim. A US 2-6 at 1612 was hit by two 4 point German bns and suffered an EX. A US AT bn stacked with a 2-6 inf bn at 1713 was hit and also suffered an EX. A 2-8 Engineer bn at 1814 was attacked and forced to retreat on a DR1.

Allied 19 February:

Overall, Alan did well against me. I'm supposed to be trading SPACE for time, not UNITS for space! My right continues to bleed, which I really can't take if I'm to hold these ridges. My planned attack towards Kairouan will still go off because I need those points and Alan will have to divert forces from the center to stop me. I need good weather next turn as my aircraft are all grounded for now. This is also costly, as I could improve my odds for a major breakthrough up north with them.

The Allies March! An Italian 1-2-3 at 0305 gets hit by two 4-6's and a 3-8 from 0306 as well as four 2 strength units in 0405. The Italians take a DR4 back to 0201. A 3-8 mech and a 2-6 infantry unit grabs that hill at 0305. The Germans at 0505 are attacked by a 2-6 with a 6-4 artillery unit in support, but the attack stalls with an ENG. A soak-off 2-6 attack on a German 4-3 on 0605 sees the US unit die for the cause. Down by Thala, two US units and two French units (all in 1113) along with artillery support hit a German 4-3 and 4-8 in 1212 at 2 to 1, but again the

result is an ENG.

Well, I got my opening up north. I can see the spinning props at the airbase from my hilltop view. Let's see what Alan does in response. After all, from here I can also threaten Faïd (1 VP) as well as Kairouan. Alan has no artillery up here at all, so he's going to have to pull some from elsewhere on the front to help out, or divert his aircraft up here. With 1-2-3 Italian troops and 4-3 Germans, he has neither the speed nor stamina present to stop me. Hopefully he gets the message.

German 20 February:

Weather: Clear

Rats! He's pushing right where I didn't want him to go! Everything will hinge on not getting heavy rain again next turn. If the skies are clear enough, I should be able to shuffle enough boys out of fortress Sbiba to shore up the lines around Pichon. If not...well, let's not think about that now, shall we? <sigh>

Gary's counterattack near Thala comes up ENG, which means that all my unemployed tanks in that area are more likely to head for Djebel al Hamra and a breakthrough toward Tebessa than opening the gap toward Thala. It's going to be a wild turn....

A turn that might have gone down in the Wehrmacht "Hall of Shame". All my artillery suppression attempts (three of 'em) failed! Naturally, that ruined every attack and Loki was having a field day tormenting his Germanic children. The battles around Pichon are a case in point. Two 2-1s and a 1-2, despite throwing in a tank battalion. An AE at the 1-2 really set things back, too. How I'm going to deal with whatever happens there next turn, I don't know. Fortunately, his reinforcements are slowing down. But I'm worried, nevertheless.

So, I'm going to go full out in the south and grind down Gary's forces as best I can. The center, at least towards Rohia, is out as Gary can switch from Pichon onto my flank too quickly for my taste. Besides, I don't need to create a success there, I've got one brewing down by Tebessa which I can reinforce.

Gary left a weak point on the high ground near Bou Chebka. Although he threw in 10 factors of artillery support, I still got the retreat result I needed after flinging every tank, gun tube and bayonette in the area at it. By stacking two 12-8s and a 16-8 in the same hex, I've created a 500 pound gorilla (As in the old joke, "Where does a 500 pound gorilla go? Anywhere it wants to"). Gary has a hoard of small units trying to chip away at König Kong like a bunch of army ants. I must stomp them somehow.

The only problem with a 500 pound gorilla is that it can be in only one place at once. Fortunately, mine is heading straight for Tebessa and Gary will have to strip away valuable forces from other sectors of the front if he wants to stop it. In this crucial sector, with my artillery units stacked together under a flak gun so that he cannot suppress them from the air, I've got some momentum going, and hopefully there is enough time to take Tebessa.

Allied 20 February:

Well, Alan strips out a 12-8 armor and 4-8 mech from the Sbiba area to reinforce his northern waste. He throws three attacks in, the first at units in 0204 ends up AE, costing him that 4-8 German mech bn and an Italian 1-2-3. His 12-8 armor hits

0305 and stops short on a CON result. Two 4-3 German leg bns hit 0506 and are also stopped on a CON. To add insult as well as more headlines to injury, my Spitfires shoot down the Stukas Alan had in support of this effort. Grand!

However, the serious news is that Alan has massed two 12-8 and one 16-8 armor bns into one stack, threw in more troops than I care to talk about and, despite 10 factors of artillery support, he shoved a US Engineer and British GDs bn from 1716 near Bou Chebka back to 1518, just outside of Tebessa (out in the open, to boot): This new stack of armor is dreadfully strong (40 strength points!) and the only counter is artillery. But, now I've got to get even more down there just to slow these boys up. Where's the Death Ray when you really need one?

My plans are simple: Get Kairouan, get Sbiba, and hold Tebessa. Two of these I can do. Tebessa will need massive luck. First, I pull into a perimeter close to Tebessa. All we can do for now is hold and bring up the reinforcing artillery for future use. But not this turn.

Up north, we continue on towards Fondouk. My B-25 unit is driven off again by FW-190's, resulting in the attack at 0504 coming out an AR3 for me. A German 2-3 in 0203 ends up with an ENG result. The Allied counterattack on Alan's 12-8 tank bn is an EX. I lose all my attacking units, but Alan loses his "equalizer" in the area. Again, I've got my chance, but that EX cost me my readily available exploitation forces. I have more, but they are not handy at the moment.

I've made my moves and plans for Sbiba. Next turn will see another battle for it. A major success there and perhaps we could make Valentine's Day interesting in Kasserine.

More "good news/bad news" from the front. While Gary fell back to Tebessa, he exchanged away an entire panzer battalion at the pass east of Pichon. While he bled eight factors to Alan's twelve in that area, it's far from stabilized. If Alan can get to Tebessa, it will take out two of Gary's air units and probably win the game.

German 21 February:

Weather: Rain

Gary had to pull back to a tight little knot around his airbase as I'm threatening his supply lines there. Now to cut his Gordian knot! Let's see... where is that "Appeal to the Gods Table" again? With the bulk of my forces around El Ma el Abiod mopped up after last turn's ENG result, the 500 pound gorilla pressed on against the flower of the Allied army positioned just outside of Tebessa at hex 1518. My Stukas were again destroyed by Gary's timely roll of a 6 in interception combat (he's had quite an impressive streak of those lately). Two factors shy of a 3-1, I roll an ENG at 2-1. The Gorilla is stopped for a turn, but oodles of Axis troops have been freed to reinforce this engagement from the South next turn. It still looks bad for Tebessa.

I've spread myself out real thin elsewhere. While attempting to perform some stabilizing attacks around Pichon, I managed to roll a 12 (Attacker eliminated) and lost another 4-8 battalion. That simply won't do. I'm being bled and pressed everywhere. However, Gary is going to have to make a stand here and a grab there if he's going to win, and his forces aren't looking exactly hot

either. I guess we'll just keep trying to bleed each other to death...

Alan closes the Fondouk gap by pulling even more forces from the Sbiba area. He gets a surround on a British 3-8 mech bn at 0304 and it dies on a DR2. A 4-3 and 4-8 attacks a 2-6 at 0606, but I throw artillery support in and Alan rolls 12 on a 1 to 1, losing one unit and retreating the other to 0505. It's a mess folks, but there is still a glimmer of hope glinting off the whirling props of the German airbase at Kairouan and all the lovely VPs it represents. However, down by Tebessa, things are beyond messy; they're downright grim. The US Rangers and British 3GG Gds at 1816 die in a hail of gunfire at 4 to 1 odds, trapped by a previous ENG result. The Tebessa defenders (a US 6-8 armor, 4-8 armor, 2-8 Engineers, and 2-6 British Gds) with artillery support are hit at 2 to 1 by that huge 40 point stack with a 2-4 Engineer helping out. This turn, it's an ENG. On an ENG result, the defender can't retreat—well, not Allied defenders anyway as the Germans have that tactical expertise rule to fall back on should they find themselves in a similar situation. Aside from an outright D Elim, this is the worst possible result.

Allied 21 February:

If I could retreat my forces at Tebessa, the mounting artillery forces I have moving into this area could combine with them to form a potent counterattack. In fact, the artillery factors alone will probably stabilize this sector of the front. But they're not here yet and, unless I get away from this death grip next turn with at least a few survivors, this front is pretty well lost.

Well, off and into it. The Allied forces slam into Sbiba (I bet the townfolks there are very tired of this property depreciation) using British tanks, US mech and AT, French infantry, and everybody's artillery that will bear. With a 3 to 1, we get a DR3 and Alan's off to Sbeitla.

The German 4-3 at 0505 gets B-25s (not intercepted this time, thank you very much), a 4-6 British tank bn, a 4-8 US tank bn along with a 2-6 US infantry bn and artillery support. At 4-1, we smoke him good.

German 22 February:

Weather: Clear

Things continue to deteriorate in my desperate defense of the Kairouan airfield. Still, I should have enough units to hold Gary off, despite losing my prime defensive real estate along Ejebelech Cherichera. Compounding the bad situation, Gary's tossed me out of Sbiba, a victory point city. He's rolling like a house on fire, so how can you stop that?

On the up side, even Gary admits that my getting Tebessa is likely in the next turn. If I don't get it by then, he's freed up a ton of reserves, including lots of freshly arrived artillery, to hold it at all costs. Looks like this turn is now-or-never time for all the glory.

It appears to be another good news/bad news turn, but with slightly more good than bad. I was able to infiltrate and maneuver to surround Gary's engaged hordes blocking my triumphal entry into Tebessa. By rolling up most of my boys in the neighborhood, I managed a 4-1 on the Allies and, with mercifully average die rolling for a change, get the DR2 which sent them to join the swelled ranks of the Allied dead pile. Tebessa fell, and while

Allied resistance in the area is hardly in disarray, there is little he can do with the boys in 1619 cut off and my 500 pound gorilla pressing against the high ground to the north of the air base.

In the center, I set up the strongest, lightest screening forces which I could leave in good conscience and headed every available "swinging sauerkraut" to plug the enormous hole at Fondouk. This time, however, the force was not with me. My counterattacks culminated in a 5-1 contact result and an A elim at 1-1; not good. Gary definitely has an opportunity here if he can muster the forces and has a little luck.

Allied 22 February:

Alan got his victory parade at Tebessa. Once that last ridgeline of the Djebel el Hamra was passed, it was near certain. Alan's DR3 result on turn 7 pushed me out onto the flats and that, as they say, was that. The Tebeesa defense forces were again hit, this time with 4-1 odds and my forces unable to retreat. While two 2-6 US infantry bns at 1619 had only an AR1 against them, moving them to 1520, these survivors are not in any shape to slow the Germans, except as speed bumps.

Allied artillery now moves into covering positions to the north of Tebessa to support the remaining defenders along the 12XX hexline. I now have enough artillery to provide every defender with at least 12 support points. Even the Thala area now has adequate cover. Both it and Le Kef should be safe from further German attacks. Unfortunately, they arrived a turn too late to save Tebessa.

Artillery IS the answer to the 40-point German tank stack. The Allies just get this antidote somewhat later in the game than I would have liked. Playing this again as the Allies, I'd treat my artillery with a lot more respect and care in handling than I did this time around. In fact, now that I'm thinking about it, I'll send another 6-4 artillery reinforcement up to road to support my drive on Kairouan.

The Allies attack a surrounded German on the heights at 0305 at 2 to 1. It's an EX, but we'll gladly lose a French 2-3 to get this point again. German units at 0304 and 0403 (a 4-3 and 4-8 respectively) are hit with B-25's (FW-190's missed again), artillery, and two Allied 4 point units at 4-1 odds. It's a DR4 and the Germans run, due to ZOC constraints, all the way back to the outskirts of Kairouan! However, a soakoff attack by a US 2-6 on an Italian 1-2-3 at 0204 ends up with an AR4. This leaves Alan an opportunity to exploit around my flank. Finally, a German 2-4-8 AT unit at 0603 gets hit by a US 2-6 Infantry, 4-8 US mech and a British 2-4-8 AT bn. An ENG results, which is not overly bad, but I wanted a hole or at least more room to maneuver.

I've got my long-sought breakthrough at last, but even IT is tarnished by that soak-off retreat. Still, there are only two turns left. Obviously, we must push on as opportunities are slim elsewhere. Even Faïd (1201), just a dream two turns ago, is now at least a glimmer just over the horizon. Alan has got to know this and will fight like hell to save Kairouan. Booty in the south is slim pickings with Tebessa all wrapped up like a German Christmas goose, but Alan may still try for Thala. Its light shines a wee bit brighter for him than Faïd does for me, so tomorrow should be an interesting day. I find out Alan's intentions soon enough!

No one can doubt that Fortune favors Englishmen after this turn! Since Alan failed to get the airbase hex proper adjacent to Tebessa, the last sortie of the B-25s was against the pivotal defenders in front of Kairouan. The Fw-190s completely missed their chance to bounce the Allied bombers (again!), and so Gary's risky 2-1 was instantly raised to a 4-1 attack. The ensuing retreat went all the way back to Kairouan proper and Gary advanced in warm pursuit (he doesn't have enough units in the area for a hot pursuit).

German 23 February:

Weather: Clear

Although the rest of the line is quiet, there is little I can do to save the situation at Kairouan in time. With two turns left, my 500 pound gorilla simply can't shift fast enough from Tebessa, which we must hold in the face of a counterattack. After all, Gary's got a slew of artillery units in position in the area now. This turn will be as interesting as it is desperate.

Rommel leaves behind the artillery and enough miscellaneous units to hold Tebessa from counterattacks (my preemptive strike in the area resulted in an engaged outcome). I break up the 500 pound gorilla and sent it northeast with all dispatch. The 3-6-4 flak units makes it to Kasserine, the 12-6 to Sbeitla while the 12-8 and 16-8 close in on Hadjeb el Aioun.

During the combat phase, however, everything turns out bad. My Stukas, back from their third resurrection, get bounced (suddenly the RAF can do no wrong!) over my measly 2-1 counterattack against the advancing armor rolling up toward Kairouan. With cruel disdain, the dice roll neither hot nor cold to decide the issue, leaving our forces engaged. Ultimately, I think that outcome will work to Gary's advantage next turn. My boys certainly don't have a lot of room for retreat!

As my Italians A-elim themselves into soak-off oblivion, easing the situation for Gary that much more, it's looking bad for the German airbase in the corner of the map. Still, after a quick count of victory points, it won't change the marginal victory I'll achieve even if he takes it. Small consolation, though, because the Führer will have my guts for the sausage factory if I lose that airbase.

Alan moves against the two 2-6's in 1219. Strange, does he think Gary will counterattack into the hornet's nest of Tebessa? The three big armor bns blaze north, headed for the Fondouk front. Kasserine and Sbiba stay quiet. Alan manages to surround the US 4-8 at 0202. The results are an ENG against the 2-6's in 1219, which ties up two 4-4 German units, a 2-7 armored car compnay, a 2-4 engineer, a 4-4 Italian armor bn and an Italian recon bn. At 0202, his Stukas are driven off again by my P-38's, so Alan's attack ends up being 2 Italian 1-2-3's, a 4-3 and 4-8 German bns. Soaking off on an adjacent 4-6 with an Italian unit, Alan comes up with an ENG.

Allied 23 February:

Brilliant, decisive planning on both our parts all hinging on a few die rolls! (Who invents these games, anyway?) Alan's pull out of the armor and shifting it north has squashed any hopes of capturing Faïd (hope sort of "faïded" away, you might say). Alan has also reacted more strongly than I might have guessed to this

drive. Anyway, on to Kairouan!

I move up another 6-4 artillery unit to attack the German 2-4-8 at 0603 along with two US 2-6's, a US 4-8 mech and a UK 2-4-8 AT bn. A DR moves Alan out. At the all-important outskirts to Kairouan, the two German 4 strength units are hit by two US 4-8's, a British 4-6 and US artillery. Allied Spitfires attempt to get in on the kill, but are driven off by the FW-190's once again. I roll an EX. The Allies are left again on the outskirts with Alan having a chance (though barely) to stop them. However, I'll stay put to avoid any 11th hour end run by that German 2-9 armor car unit (I hate those guys!) at 0601. So does Alan let this go or does he try to redeem this VP loss and maintain the "purity of his honor?" (Oh, brother!)

German 24 February:

CLEAR ("Again!" Gary groans. Hehehe.)

Gary continues to press around Kairouan. My two 4-factor defenders perish in the blazes of an EX result, so Kairouan will certainly fall during Gary's next move. He's got gobbs of guns shoring up his line along the 12XX hex row, but not too many elsewhere. I've been eyeballing Sbiba, however, and was thinking about hosting a 500 pound gorilla reunion in hex 1009. While one more victory point won't increase my level of victory, taking Sbiba may increase my satisfaction and save my hide with the boys at OKH if I take it. What the heck!

I now acknowledge that I'm too weak and Gary has too much artillery in the north for a proper attempt to relieve Kairouan, so I reassemble the 500 pound gorilla, complete with Tiger tanks, in hex 1009 and strike my way toward Sbiba. I managed to suppress Gary's only covering artillery unit to insure the odds, but wouldn't you know — a CON result! Sorry, kids, no soap. He may pull out during his turn, but I am sure that I can't go in, so Gary will control it when the points are counted. Well, in conclusion, it was worth a try.

Alan tries to redeem himself, at Sbiba no less! The attack consists of the Tiger company and the BIG 3 armor bns, the 16-8, 12-8 and 12-6. The odds are 3-1, but the results are a CON — the dice being fickle up to the end.

Allied 24 February:

With a small victory parade, I march into Kairouan with my 4-8 US unit. At Sbiba, if I stay I must attack Alan's forces. If I suffer a retreat, he can occupy it and gain the VP's for it. What if I retreat out of it and the game ends? If I am the last to hold it, do I get the points? The rules are a bit opaque: they say merely that the Germans get VP's for HOLDING certain positions. Since Alan doesn't literally hold Sbiba, we agree that the points go to me for being the last player to hold the little speck.

On Gary's last turn, he simply pulled back and didn't fire a shot. After moving into Kairouan and out of Sbiba, he didn't need to. Alan won a Tactical victory. Both players had plenty of opportunities to do better. This was the first time playing this game for all of us and, while not exactly a comedy of errors, it was definitely a learning experience.

GERMAN POST-GAME WRAP UP:

ALAN

I won this game by adopting a strategy of brute force and ignorance *grin*. It took a 500 pound armored gorilla to get where I wanted to go (Tebessa), but it cost me a victory level to let Kairouan fall. Even then, Gary's stubborn defense in the area should have given him better results, but my success early on made it harder for him to hold and counterattack. Once the game got into the later turns, when Gary's reinforcements should have helped blunt my southern drive, they could only defend, not attack, in the south.

What really decided the game, however, was Allied attrition. Wherever I could surround Gary's units and trash them, I did, even if it meant delaying the push a turn or pressing on to the next objective. Keeping the early losses grossly disproportional was probably the real secret of my success. Then again, that bad luck with Gary's fighting withdrawal from Sidi bou Zid made my task easier during the critical early turns.

GARY

Alan's victory by one VP was well earned. There are two points about this game worth noting, one dealing with strategy and one with tactics (hmmm, sorry for the unintentional shameless plug for that other magazine).

First, my original thoughts were obviously to conserve forces by adopting a tough defense on all the ridge lines. This is right and proper for the Allies, and will keep the German wolf at bay until the reinforcements pour in.

I changed this plan when the forces at Sidi bou Zid survived the first turn onslaught. I moved out to try and save them in order to have more forces early on to throw at Alan. In retrospect, the fact that they survived at all meant they were still a roadblock and delaying force, giving me another turn. Losing more troops to try and save them was a mistake I paid for on every remaining turn.

Second, Alan's "500 pound gorilla" was a nasty shock. A 40-point stack makes the Allied two and four strength units quail in horror. The answer is that Allied artillery can, once collected, pound the panzers into scrap or at least support these weak Allied units in selective attacks. Certainly, when my northern push towards Kairouan got going, Alan had to shift forces to meet it, which forced the gorilla break up accordingly.

In short, the Allies victory is highly dependent on their competent use of artillery in defense and their selective use of it in offense. By matching it up with a carefully husbanded armored force, they can create their own gorilla or two. Something, of course, that I wasn't able to capitalize on this game.

Overall, this is a fine system. It gives a good flavor of combined arms, tactical skills and various national capacities and capabilities without a lot of clutter or time drag. The system works; the players don't have to fight it, just each other. ■

Feature:

NACHALOS: Stalingrad Pocket Game Replay

by John Kranz and Stephen Baumann

In all the weeks of bitter door-to-door, brick-for-brick fighting, there was no quieter moment in the streets of Stalingrad than during the early morning hours of 19 November 1942. The sound of distant yet unmistakable thunderous gun-fire began at 6 a.m., and ushered in new hope for the defenders of Stalingrad. In Moscow, one word was spoken, "*nachalos!*"—"it's started". The Soviet Winter Counteroffensive, Operation Uranus, had begun.

An assessment of the military situation at the time is recounted nicely in the book, *World War II, Day by Day*, published by Dorset Press. "The German forces throughout the southern Soviet Union are

hopelessly overextended. Stalingrad has drawn German troops like moths to a candle [great metaphor!] while both on their left and right are unreliable allies [Rumanians and Italians]....The Soviets have assembled more than 500,000 infantry, 900 new T34 tanks, and have the support of masses of artillery and over 1000 attack planes."

Stalingrad Pocket recreates the events which transpired during November-December '42 on the Don Front, which many consider the turning point of the Russo-German War. The campaign resulted in the containment and ultimate destruction of the German Sixth Army. *Stalingrad Pocket*

also ushers in The Gamers' *Standard Combat Series* (SCS) of games, featuring compact and simple-to-learn rules. Although Dean Essig and company are better known for their relatively detailed and comprehensive treatment of battles, this game is reflective of the current trend in the hobby to provide veteran gamers with highly-playable games which are quick and easy to learn.

The game comes complete with two separate 8-page rule booklets, a single 22 x 34 inch map, and 420 counters. Game scale is two days per turn, with each hex spanning 5.5 kilometers. Unit formations range from battalion to division in size, and include special units from German Alert Battalions to Soviet *katyusha* (rocket) units. The rules are separated into Series Rules Folder, to be used as a basis for future SCS game designs, and the Exclusive Rules and Scenario Folder. While this replay focuses on the campaign game, two mini-scenarios are also included in the game. "Race to Kalach" recreates the initial stages of the Soviet attack in the North orchestrated by the Soviet commander Vatutin, and is only three game turns in duration. "Wintergewitter" recreates the attempt by German Sixth Army under Paulus to reopen the pocket and reestablish a line of supply, and is five game turns in duration. Both scenarios are quick-playing and can be easily completed in a single evening.

As mentioned, *Stalingrad Pocket* is a simple game using an "Igo/Hugo" move-fight-exploit sequence of play. Since the game has recently been reviewed in *Fire & Movement* No. 84 (Jan-Feb '93), I will reserve comments on game mechanics only where appropriate to this replay. Also,



SP Counter Information

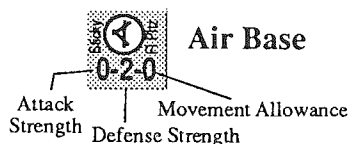
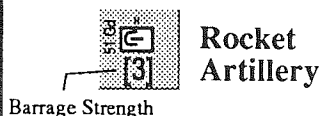
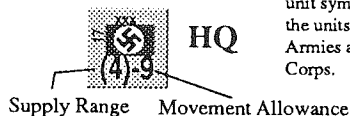
Unit Type Symbols

-  Infantry
-  Armored Infantry
-  Motorized Infantry
-  Armor
-  Assault Gun
-  Cavalry
-  Alert Unit
-  Motorcycle

Counter Colors

- Germans: Field Grey
- Rumanians: Orange-Brown
- Luftwaffe: Grey-Blue
- Soviets: Brown Drab
- Guard Units: Red
- Soviet Naval Infantry: Light Blue

The colors inside the unit symbols identify the units of Soviet Armies and German Corps.



due to the high-unit density in the campaign game, this article serves to provide a general narrative of the action which took place during the course of play. A detailed, step-by-step account of each maneuver is simply not feasible within the confines of these pages, nor would it serve the reader well in getting a sense of the wide-ranging and lightning maneuvers which can take place during play.

Maneuvering and Combat

Taking into consideration the non-locking zones of control (ZOC), liberal overrun rules, and exploitation movement phase, this is one of the most open-ended, see-saw games of bluffs, gambles, spearheads and wide-ranging flanking maneuvers that I have come across in recent memory. Translation: this is one hell of a fun—and tense—game to play. To illustrate this point, consider that the more

mobile units can easily cover no less than 18 hexes, or 90 kilometers, when moving along tracks. Add to this another 45 kilometers should they be conducting road movement!

Another key factor involves how combat is handled in the game. In a word, it's bloody. Furthermore, friendly units do NOT cancel out enemy ZOC's (EZOC) for purposes of conducting retreats, and EACH unit must absorb a step loss when retreating into an EZOC. The only saving grace is that one has the option to absorb retreat results by taking additional step losses instead. Taking the combat table and EZOC effects on retreats into account, not to mention the great mobility in the game, it is quite easy for one to transverse long distances and orchestrate a deadly and well-orchestrated attack. The defender is largely unable to react in such instances, at least until his Player turn comes up. In some instances this translates into watching single stacks of units conduct large sweeping maneuvers [40+ km], one overrun, one normal combat, more large maneuvering [40+ km], and yes, folks, yet another overrun! Okay, NOW try to do something... Well, actually I have overblown a situation that although plausible in theory will rarely occur in practice (see below). Nonetheless, the maneuverability in this game seems more reflective of desert warfare at times. I can't help but expect the Rommel counter to pop up unexpectedly during play. Speaking of North Africa, and while I am off on this tangent, this is an opportune time to announce that the next SCS game will indeed cover none other than the North Africa campaign. Seems that Rommel counter might show up after all.

Supply and HQ Units for the Soviets

The great mobility afforded in play does not necessarily translate into Soviet units resembling units swarming like fire flies around the helpless German, unless of course the German Sixth Army has been securely pocketed at Stalingrad. A key handicap for the Soviet player is to manage fragile supply lines by remaining in range of a Soviet HQ formation (units out of supply have their combat strength and movement allowance halved). Sounds simple enough at first glance. The Catch-

22 in all of this is that Soviet HQ units are restricted to movement along roads, tracks, or railroads, and their movement is normally no more than four to six hexes per turn at that! Thus, should any Soviet mobile units decide to venture off and form deep-penetrating spearheads, expect the German commander to prepare a harsh response for these exposed, often unsupplied, units. This helps check occurrences as outlined above, in which the Soviet player can maneuver units all over the mapboard without concern for reprisal.

One final word of caution for the Soviet commander: protect your HQ units! Despite having overwhelming combat superiority, guard against becoming careless and leaving any of your HQ units exposed. The German player will gladly send a mobile formation on a death mission just to eliminate one of your valuable yet unprotected HQ units. Loss of Soviet HQs will seriously impair your offensive capability as you try to shift HQ assets and reestablish a line of supply. This is easily the single greatest contributor to the German player obtaining victory.

German Defense and the Stalingrad Question

The German Player has three primary concerns as reflected in the game system; holding Stalingrad while keeping supply lines open, knowing when to release the German 51st Army, and keeping casualties down while blunting the Soviet encirclement. Before discussing these, however, let's first take a look at German supply considerations.

Unlike the Soviets, the Germans have great leeway in maintaining lines of supply. For all units with the exception of Alert battalions, formations may trace an unlimited line of supply to the western map edge. Thus, unless units are completely surrounded, these units will remain in supply. Now, a word about air supply. A key determinant of German success hinges upon receiving and storing up supply units that are brought in by airlift at either Pitomnik (38.27) or Gumrak (38.29) airfield. These supply points are needed to maintain the fighting effectiveness of units pocketed within Stalingrad. Airlifts are only possible by restricting the maneuver of German 51st Army units within the specially-designated Stalingrad area, while one or both

airfields are still in German hands. Thus, the German player needs to protect these airfields at all times. Should both airfields already be destroyed, no strategic decision remains in deciding when to withdraw the German 51st Army from Stalingrad as air-lifts are permanently suspended.

Victory Conditions strike a fine balance between military and political objectives. Political objectives force the German player to hold Stalingrad at all costs. Since unsupplied German units are considered destroyed at games' end for victory condition purposes, the German player must sacrifice as few units possible while still holding at least two of the four Stalingrad city hexes. German losses of 110 units or greater immediately results in a Major Soviet Victory, so the amount of losses the German player can absorb while holding Stalingrad comes directly in question. This becomes a double-edged sword as units located in Stalingrad are almost surely expected to be pocketed—so the question becomes, "How many units does the German player commit to the holding of Stalingrad?"

Furthermore, this sword gains a ragged edge when considering the added complication of deciding when the German 51st formation should begin pulling out of Stalingrad, as doing so immediately cancels all airlift efforts. Unless the Soviet player makes some major blunders, resulting in several HQs being eliminated, the German player will surely be facing a quickly forming pocket, particularly from the south. Does the German player fight from the beginning by releasing the 51st Army and bleed units to slow the pocket from forming, or does one let the pocket develop without interference in order to conserve units for a late attack to reopen the pocket?

Needless to say, although the German player is definitely on the defensive, this certainly does not translate into the German player having only limited decisions to make throughout the campaign. The German player needs to maintain mobile reserves in key areas to strike out and eliminate any exposed Soviet Army HQ units. This is, after all, the surest way of bringing the Soviet Offensive to a grinding halt.

Having touched upon various key fac-

tors to play for both sides, let's now turn our attention to the Campaign Game Replay which took place, appropriately enough, on 19 November—marking the 50th Anniversary of Operation Uranus.

Replay

THE GAME: Campaign Game scenario for Stalingrad Pocket (published by The Gamers, Series design by Dean Essig, game design by Masahiro Yamazaki).

THE SITUATION AND HISTORICAL OUTCOME: Soviet forces are poised to launch Operation Uranus in the early morning hours of 19 November 1992. The Soviet Winter Offensive leads to the containment and ultimate destruction of the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad.

THE GAME SCALE: Ground unit formations are battalion through division, including specialized units (Soviet katyusha, or artillery); One hex spans 5.5 km; each Game Turn represents two days.

THE PLAYERS: John Kranz, Soviets; and Stephen Baumann, Axis Forces (German/Rumanian).

OPTIONAL RULES: Soviet second echelon initial deployment restrictions, as published in the Fall 1992 issue of *Operations* (pg. 25 - Cracking the Code), published by The Gamers.

INTRODUCTION

This replay took place between myself as the Soviet forces, and my friend and fellow Zurich gaming buddy, Stephen Baumann. For those who own this game, please refer to the back cover of the *Stalingrad Pocket* Exclusive Rules which features a reduced copy of the game map. This will assist in following the action described below.

PREGAME PLANNING

SOVIETS

I already have the upper hand before play since the German Player must make their initial deployment prior to the Soviet Player. This allows me to better assess the situation and deploy my forces accordingly. It is worth noting that the Soviet Player is limited in deploying a second echelon of forces behind the front line, however. This is covered in the Fall 1992 issue of *Operations* (pg. 25 - Cracking the Code), the in-house magazine published by The Gamers.

My avenues of attack are clear cut,

although all Soviet units initially out of supply will not launch any attacks until an HQ unit becomes available to supply them. I will be extremely aggressive from the north with the powerful 5T Army. Here the Rumanian 1st, 2nd, and 5th Armies are strung out and very weak. These formations can be easily pocketed with some quick action - and they must be eliminated to ensure that my rear area is secure. Since units are not allowed to conduct overruns when beginning a movement phase in an EZOC, I will direct the initial artillery barrage of the 5T Army to eliminate Rumanian units positioned astride my first echelon motorized units. This will effectively free up these motorized units to conduct overruns during the initial movement phase, along with my second echelon forces. I will attempt to clean up the area as quickly as possible while advancing towards the juncture of the Chir and Don Rivers in the vicinity of Nizhne-Chirskaya (37.10). I plan to have lead units of 5T Army crossing the Don by the end of November, within six game turns, while the 1st Guards Army will be employed to secure the Soviet northern flank along the Chir. Remaining Soviet forces in the north, namely the 21st, 65th, and 24th Army, plan to wear down the Rumanian 4th, German 11th and 8th Army to advance on Stalingrad as quickly as possible. The Soviet 21st will focus on crossing the Don at Kalach-na-Don (34.17), while the 11th Army advances towards the Don River crossing at Akimovskii (31.25) with support from the 24th Army. Again, my time frame is set for the end of November to have units streaming across the Don towards Stalingrad from the north.

In the southern sector, the 57th Army plans to lead a spearhead in the Lakes Region towards Stalingrad and the German-controlled airfields. Since the Germans don't have any natural barriers to enhance their defensive line, my units should be able to advance quickly to the outskirts of Stalingrad. But first, however, the Soviets must secure the entire Lakes Region. This means mopping up the Rumanian 6th and 7th Armies presently located on my southmost flank. Once this area has been secured, I will advance towards the Stalingrad perimeter and begin to form a pocket from the south. My schedule is set to clear the Lakes Region and

begin to close on Stalingrad by 28 November (Game Turn 5).

Remaining Soviet formations poised outside of Stalingrad will largely remain inactive as part of a holding action, while I focus the bulk of my efforts toward forming a pocket around Stalingrad from the north and south. Once a pocket is formed, I will attempt to form a second ring to hamper any breakout attempts. Of course, this could all be for naught should the Germans decide to release 51st Army early enough to slip away before a pocket is fully formed. The trick will be to give the Ger-

mans the perception that Stalingrad will not be pocketed as early as they think, but then swoop in with surprising speed to close the gap when they least expect it. A final key during this offensive is to limit the Soviet advance in order to ensure my rear area is protected, thus keeping my HQ units secured and my spearheads in supply and intact at all times. Should any HQ units become eliminated or my rear area come under attack, this offensive could certainly lose some of its steam.

GERMANS

Looking at the initial unit dispositions, this

looks more like a France 1940 or Poland 1939 situation, with roles reversed and the Germans on the receiving end. Both the northern and southern flanks are thinly-held by Rumanian units, which are sure to be overwhelmed at the onset of play.

Although the Soviets have more weight to throw in the northern sector with the strong 5T Army, particularly with the initial katyusha barrage, it is the southern sector which concerns me most. There is no natural barrier to slow the Soviet advance from the southern flank once they advance beyond the Lakes Region, and they are an immediate threat to the 51st Army in Stalingrad. In the north, however, there is some hope of initially slowing the Soviet advance. First, the Chir and Don Rivers afford excellent natural barriers against the Soviet advance, and whatever remnants of the Rumanian army remain will fall back behind the Chir River to take advantage of them. Meanwhile, German reinforcements will be pouring into the northern sector as well to reinforce and defend against any Chir or Don River crossings. In the final analysis, however, it may well be the limited mobility and supply path of Soviet HQ units which will slow the Soviet advance. Strangely this is, perhaps the clearest advantage the Germans have going for them while stalling for time initially.

Now the \$22 question (that's what this game costs anyway)...what about the German 51st Army deployed in Stalingrad? Do I pull out early to avoid being pocketed at the expense of having the airlift suspended, or do I keep supplies coming in by defending to the last man, in the hopes of breaking out at game's end? My plan is to follow the historical approach and hold onto Stalingrad as best I can. Thus, the German 51st Army will remain in Stalingrad as long as feasible, in hopes that both flanks can stave off the Soviet advance without their assistance. In the final analysis, however, without eliminating several Soviet HQ units or disrupting their line of supply, there will be little hope for the Germans no matter what the 51st Army decides to do.

RUMANIAN WAKE-UP CALL: 19 NOVEMBER

A thunderous Soviet artillery barrage beginning at 0600 clears a portion of the northern front allowing several front ech-



The Soviets launch Operation Uranus in the north with a thunderous artillery barrage.

elon motorized units of 5T Army to conduct overrun attempts immediately during the initial movement phase. The 2nd Rumanian Army is hit heavily by katyusha fire, suffering five step losses. The 5th Rumanian Army is more fortunate, withstanding the initial shelling with but a single step loss. With the 2nd Rumanian already greatly weakened, the Soviets are poised to release their mobile formations in full force.

THE SOVIET BLITZ: 19-20 NOVEMBER (Turn 1)

Northern Sector. 5T Army easily finishes off the remaining units of 2nd Rumanian Army, with lead units just short of the road juncture at Perelazovskii (18.11) leading to the Chir River crossing at Surovikino (30.10). 5T Army has yet to turn its attention to the Rumanian 1st and 2nd Armies further to the south, which remain largely untouched in the face of the unsupplied Soviet 1st Guards Army. These Rumanian units will have to fall back immediately towards the Chir River or risk being pocketed and summarily annihilated. The Soviet 5T will remain largely uncommitted going into the third day of battle until it sees how the remaining Rumanian units on the extreme northern flank respond.

The 21st Army is also able to score several victories, badly mauling the Rumanian 4th Army. 21st Army uses the exploitation phase to consolidate its area and strengthen its lead units against any oncoming Rumanian counterattacks. The bulk of the 21st Army armor units are located at the northmost tip of the Kurtiak River (21.17) in the vicinity of Vlasov (21.16), 70 km northwest of the Don Crossing at Kalach-na-Don.

Southern sector. Surprisingly, only minor fighting with poor combat results for the Soviets in the Lake Sarpa area results in no major gains to speak of.

THE GERMANS REACT

Northern Sector. The Axis forces deliver a stunning blow to the Soviet 65th Army, by eliminating its unprotected HQ unit! The Soviets never expected the lone mobile Kampfgruppe Ludwig of 14th Panzer to penetrate deep into the Soviet lines to reach this newly-arriving HQ unit from entry area B. With the 65th Army without an HQ unit and destined to remain

out of supply, the German 11th Army decides to stand firm and hold its ground.

As expected, the Rumanian armies far to the north are falling back quickly. Likewise, motorized units have been dispatched and have quickly taken up positions at the Chir and Don River. Thus far, defensive positions are held along the Don/Chir River line at Kalach-na-Don (34.17), Nizhne-Chirskaya (37.10), and south of Surovikino (31.10). These units will be used as a mobile reserve to react to any oncoming threats from the north or south. Furthermore, lead units of 5T are now tied up by the 7th Cavalry Division, and the 89th Regiment of Rumanian 4th Army has moved in such a way as to leave itself effectively surrounded by all the motorized units of the 21st Army.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

With the help of effective katyusha fire, the Soviet Offensive is making great headway on the northern flank, albeit at a high cost with the loss of the Soviet 65th Army HQ. In the Lakes Region on the southern flank, surprisingly little has occurred and the Rumanian 6th and 7th Army are holding strong. The Soviets have to show more caution in protecting their HQ units at all times, or continue to suffer the consequences and see their offensive grind to a halt. In order to gain some time, several lone and weak Axis units have positioned themselves amidst clusters of strong Soviet motorized units of 5T and 21st Army. The purpose? This will negate any opportunity for the Soviets to conduct overruns during their upcoming Movement Phase. Now the Soviets will only be able to disengage with normal movement, with no overruns allowed until the Exploitation Phase. As the German player commented, "Since the unit is surely going to die, it might as well tie up the Soviet units in the meantime."

BREAKOUT IN THE SOUTH: 21-22 NOVEMBER (Turn 2)

Northern Sector. Soviet units advance with little difficulty as the Rumanian troops are severely beaten back. 5T Army has joined forces with 1st Guards Army to clear out the hard-hit 1st and 2nd Rumanian Armies on the northern flank within several kilometers of the Chir River line. Instead of proceeding directly to the Don

River crossing at Kalach-na-Don, 21st Army has shifted its attack northward in order to engage the German 11th Army and effectively link up with the HQ-less 65th Army currently out of supply. Realizing that the German 11th Army now faces the strong Soviet 21st Army and a rejuvenated 65th Army (with supply coming from 11th Army HQ), the Germans fall back towards the Don River crossings outside of Akimovskii (30.24 and 31.25).

Southern Sector. Although action remains quiet in the immediate vicinity of Stalingrad, action has picked up furiously in the southern flank as the Russian 57th and 51st Army have punched a gaping hole in the Lake Sarpa area. In contrast to the past two days, the Rumanian 6th and 7th Armies no longer look to be a match for the Russian troops massing in this area. Only four days after the initial artillery barrage, the Soviets are already threatening to invade Stalingrad from the south.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS. The Rumanian forces have been clearly overwhelmed by the Soviets on both flanks. In four days of fighting, no less than 29 Rumanian units, representing 81% of total Axis losses, have been destroyed. In contrast, only 3 Soviet combat units have succumbed to battle, not counting the loss of the valuable Soviet 65th Army HQ. Despite these high losses, the Axis forces are steadily consolidating the Chir-Don River line in expectation of the oncoming Soviet forces, particularly 5T Army.

The loss of the Soviet 65th Army HQ was certainly a setback for the Soviets, but they have adjusted nicely by sending the powerful 21st Army to reestablish supply for the 65th Army and challenge the German 11th Army now in falling back towards the Don. In the southern sector, there is deep concern the Rumanians can no longer hold the area southeast of Stalingrad, as there are few mobile reserves to commit to the area unless the German 51st Army is released.

SLOWDOWN IN THE NORTH: 23-26 November (Turns 3-4)

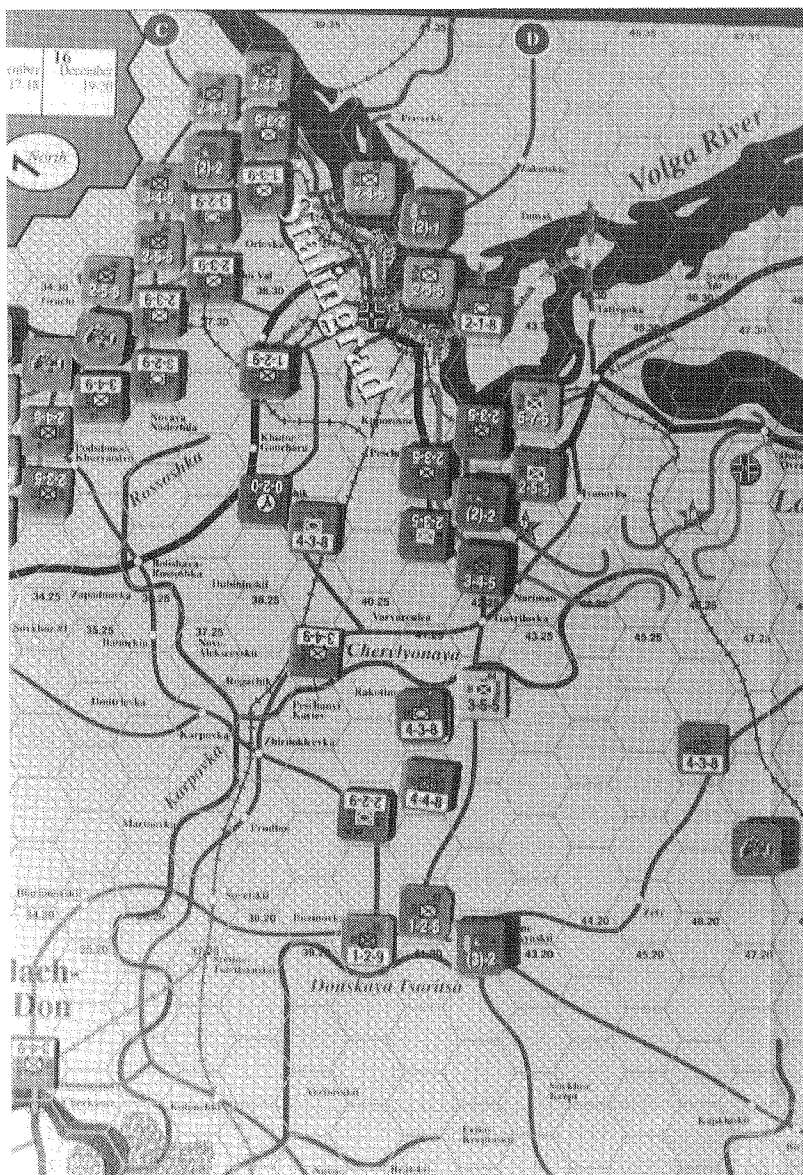
Northern sector. Two lone and unsupplied units of German 11th Army stubbornly held off continuous Soviet assaults for four days before finally being

overrun in the wooded area near Ventsy (22.21). The Soviet 21st Army has lost precious time while remaining units of the 11th Army have been able to carry out an orderly retreat across the Don at Vertyochii (32.25). In response to the Soviet threat from the south, 11th Army is now sending units across the Rossoshka River at Novo-Alekseevskii (37.25) to reinforce the German 4th Army, which has shown stiff resistance against the Soviet 64th and 57th Army. However, the German 4th Army is not expected to hold out much longer in the face of newly-arriving Soviet units streaming in from the southern flank.

Far to the south, remnants of the Rumanian 1st and 2nd Army have been largely effective in tying down units of the 1st Guard and 5T Army at several Chir River crossings. However, 5T Army has been successful in establishing bridgeheads across the Chir River at Pichugin (16.05/17.05) and Osinovskii (20.04/21.05). Various battalions have been placed on alert along the Chir River as to impede any further Chir River crossings, not to mention newly-arriving units of 62nd and 294th German Infantry Divisions as well. 5T Army and 1st Guards Army are beginning to show signs of getting bogged down in attempting to clear the remaining Rumanians and newly arriving infantry reinforcements. After eight days of fighting, the 5T Army spearhead has only reached Osinovskii (21.05).

Southern sector. The Soviet 57 and 51st Armies have made great gains resulting in the elimination of the Rumanian 6th and 7th Armies, thus securing the southern flank and Lakes Region. More significant, however, is the success of Soviet armored forces in penetrating the thinly-held German defense in the vicinity of Gavrilovka (42.25), leading to the successful overrun of Pitomnik airfield (38.27). The Germans retaliated by dispatching motorized units from 14th Army quickly to the scene and summarily eliminated the Soviet tank units at the airfield. Nonetheless, the damage had already been done. The Germans now only have the Gumrak airfield (38.29) to rely on for supply airlifts. Worse yet, after a full eight days of fighting, the German forces in Stalingrad have yet to receive any supply from the air. Although the German 51st Army remains in Stalingrad despite the threat from the south, they are con-

Left unprotected, Pitomnik airfield (38.27) is suddenly overrun by a Soviet armor brigade.



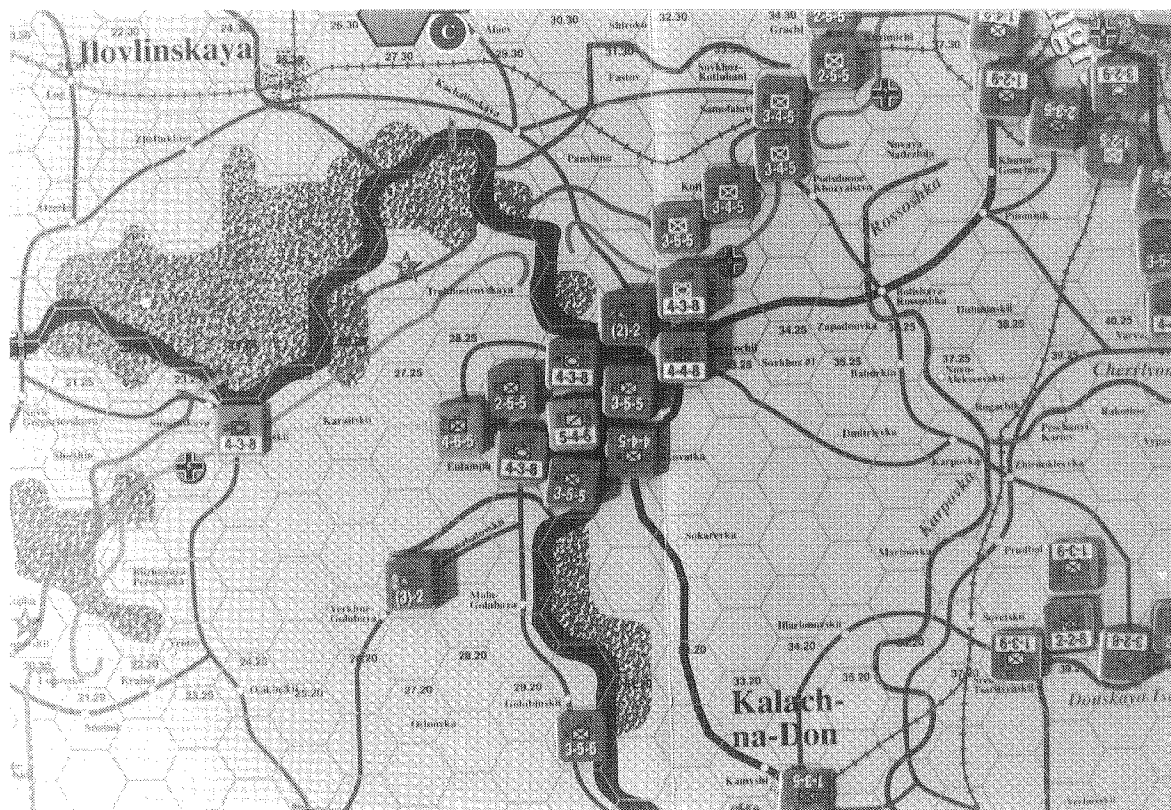
cerned about their supply situation and hope to receive supply points in the coming days.

Meanwhile, lead units of the 57th Army have already reached the track junctions north of the Donskaya Tsaritsa River (40.20) only thirty kilometers southeast of Kalach-na-Don. As these units present a great threat if left unopposed, significant German mobile reserves have been dispatched to the scene to blunt the Soviet advance threatening to cut into the underbelly of Stalingrad, as well as the vital Don crossing at Kalach-na-Don.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS. While the Axis forces have experienced significant success in the northern flank to

impede the Soviet advance, albeit at a great cost in equipment and troops, the southern flank has been completely shattered. The Germans failed to maintain a proper reserve at Pitomnik airfield, leaving it unprotected and open to attack. The Soviet player happily obliged by dispatching armored units to the area. The airfield is no longer operational.

As expected, the lack of any natural obstacles to impede the Soviet advance has resulted in the Axis forces being unable to provide a response in the face of superior Soviet combat strength. Whether units of the German 4th Army and the mobile reserve dispatched to blunt the Soviet 57th Army spearhead at Donskaya Tsaritsa



With the Don River crossing now firmly secured, units of the Soviet 21st and 65th Army plan to descend on Stalingrad from the north.

River are enough remains to be seen. If not, the German commander may have to release the 51st Army at Stalingrad, especially considering the Germans have yet to receive supplies via airlift. The German 51st Army elects to abide by Hitler's Directive and hold the city at all costs. While the Soviets are quite pleased with their progress on the southern flank, two bright spots for the Germans remain. Stalingrad has not been enveloped from the south, and units are being dispatched to the scene to slow the Soviet advance. All attention is on the southern sector, as Soviet forces in the north continue to struggle to make significant headway.

Overall, the picture looks as follows: While Axis losses remain high, with 25 units destroyed over the past four days of fighting, the Soviets have lost 10 units as well. However, considering overall combat losses for the Axis at 57 units in contrast to only 13 units for the Soviets, the Axis can ill afford such a high loss rate as the campaign continues. The Axis Player is certainly frustrated in being unable to penetrate Soviet lines to disrupt their supply line or threaten any HQ units. The Soviets have learned how to protect their HQ units quite well, which is unfortunate for the Axis forces.

ON TO STALINGRAD! 27-30 November (Turns 5-6)

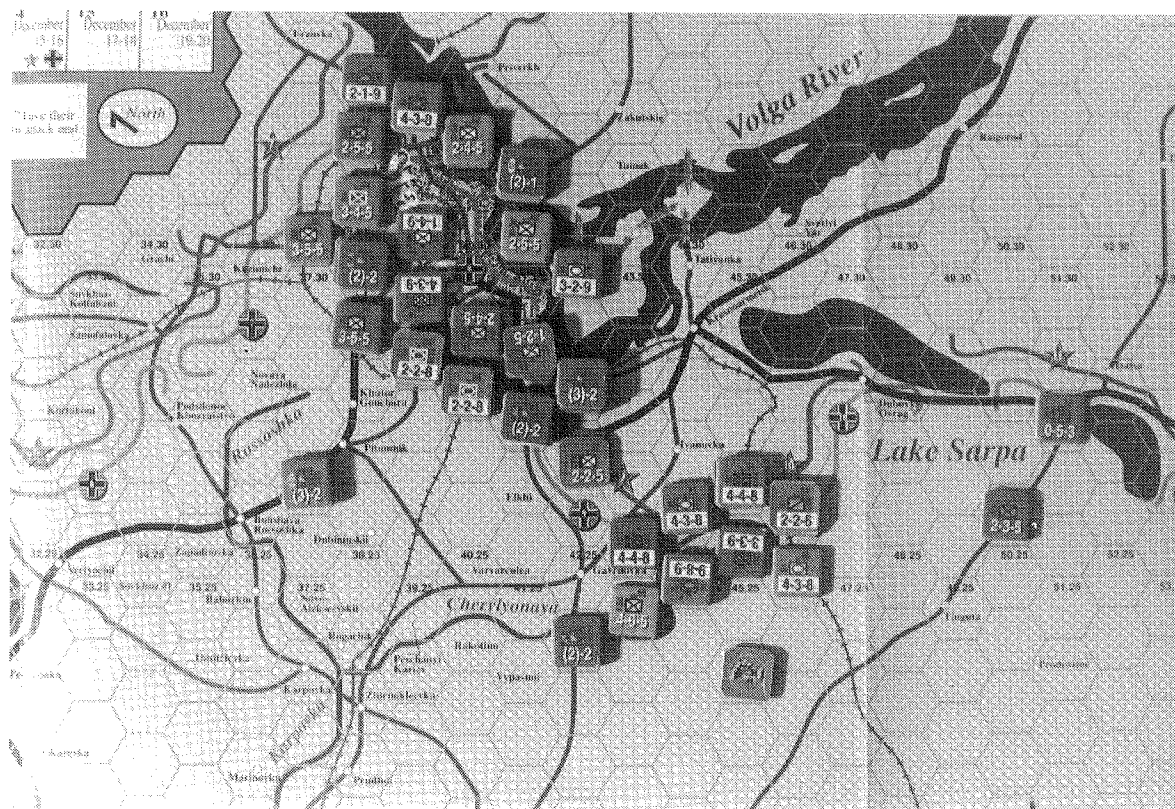
Northern sector. The Soviets have achieved a major breakthrough! Although the German 11th Army initially had a strong foothold on the Don Crossing at Vertyochii (32.25), the 24th Army suddenly unleashed its armor brigades to tear open a gap leading to the river crossing area. Mechanized units from 51st Army immediately followed up and successfully eliminated the remaining German units stationed at the Don crossing. Now the 21st and 65th Armies are poised at the Don and ready to pour in unopposed from the north towards Stalingrad, along with units of the 24th and 66th Army already in the general vicinity. As a result, the German 8th and 14th Armies have fallen back from their original deployment area to take up defensive positions within the Stalingrad perimeter itself, as they are not capable of countering the Don River crossing.

The extreme northern flank remains largely quiet, as Soviet 1st Guard and 5T Army continue mopping up operations and are now comfortably poised to force a crossing at the Chir in the vicinity of Surovikino (31.10) and west of Oblivskaya (30.04). The Germans have an ever-increasing number of infantry reinforce-

ments and alert battalions stationed to meet the Soviet threat, however. As for the remains of the Rumanian Army, only battered units of 1st Army are holding on for dear life at the Chir River crossings near Entry Area G. Nonetheless, the Soviets have not met their deed for crossing the Chir and Don Rivers. They wish to secure the entire northern flank before continuing forward.

Southern sector. The 64th and 51st Army have successfully engaged the German 4th Army and are on the brink of closing in on Stalingrad from the south. Meanwhile, intensive fighting spanning several days has occurred near the Donskaya Tsaritsa River. German motorized units and reinforcements have been successful in mauling the Soviet 57th Army to the point that its Army HQ unit came under direct attack as well. The Soviets need to secure this area since it represents the extreme underbelly where the Stalingrad Pocket is about to be formed. Should the Germans continue their spoiling tactics with continued success, they could launch an early counterattack on the Soviets preparing to encircle Stalingrad.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS. The loss of the Don River crossing 40 km due west of Stalingrad at Vertyochii (32.25) is a great blow to the German Army. If the



Little hope remains for the battered German forces as they are well contained within the Stalingrad perimeter.

Germans could have continued holding back the Soviets in the north, they could have focused on reinforcing their troops facing stiff resistance from the south. The synchronized attacks by the 24th and 51st Army came out of nowhere and caught the German forces situated on the Don completely by surprise. The German forces had little recourse but to fall back into the Stalingrad perimeter area itself. A sizable force is currently located within Stalingrad, including the German 8th, 14th, and 51st Army. Fortunately for the Germans, the first supply points to be airlifted into Pitomnik airfield, two to be exact, have also finally arrived. The airlift has succeeded just in time, as the Soviets prepare to encircle the Stalingrad perimeter.

Few bright spots remain for the Axis forces, although the success they've had at the Donskaya Tsaritsa River area should draw the Soviets' attention and force them to dispatch mobile reserves to the area. The determined defense being put up on the north extreme flank along the Chir River has also confounded Soviet efforts. The Soviet 5T Army now finds itself behind schedule with some sizable Axis forces remaining between itself and the Chir River bend leading upstream to the Don.

The overall situation for the Germans has clearly worsened. Total combat losses

through the end of November total 78 for the Germans compared to only 23 for the Soviets. With such high casualty rates, the Soviets are well on their way to capturing no less than a Soviet Minor Victory (achieved once the Germans suffer 90+ casualties). The first days of December should prove crucial as the Soviets begin their mass encirclement of Stalingrad.

THE ENCIRCLEMENT: 1-4 December (Turns 7-8)

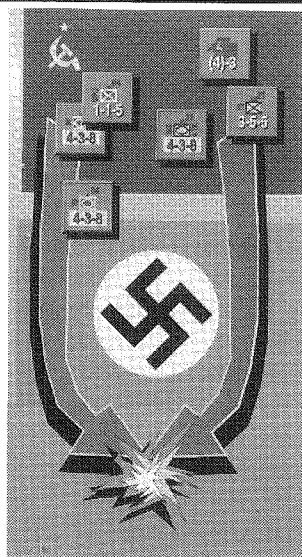
Stalingrad Sector. As expected, the Soviet armies have successfully linked up for the first time to surround the Stalingrad area, pocketing units of German 8th, 14th, and 51st Army. Several pinpoint attacks by the Soviets have resulted in modest gains within the Stalingrad perimeter itself. Gumrak airfield remains in German hands thanks to a determined defense in the face of numerous Soviet forces. Unfortunately for the Germans, with the situation as critical as it is, no supply points were airlifted into Gumrak.

Southwest of Stalingrad. Soviet forces were quickly dispatched to the Donskaya Tsaritsa River, but not in time to save the Soviet 57th Army HQ, which finally succumbed to repeated German attacks. The Soviet 24th Army HQ has been deployed in the vicinity to provide supply for the Soviet

troops which have finally gotten the upper hand on the Germans in the area, which are now in full retreat. The only pocket remaining that show the least resistance is the 132nd Regiment of 8th Army at the Don River crossing in Peskovatka (31.24). With no other German units in the direct vicinity, it's only a matter of time before the entire upper Don is secured.

Northern Sector. 5T Army has made little if any progress in crossing the Chir or Don River. Arrival of the German 11 Panzer Division and 336 Infantry Division has significantly increased the strength of German forces in this area. In fact, 11th Panzer has successfully counterattacked by overrunning a single Soviet tank battalion and punishing three tank brigades of 5T Army. The Soviets are regrouping in order to address the worsening situation which could potentially threaten the rear area of Soviet 1st Guards Army and 5T Army. Meanwhile, numerous Alert battalions and Field Divisions have amassed along the Chir/Lower Don River bend, and it will be some time before the Soviets can regain the upper hand in this area.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS. Despite the clear setback in the northern sector, the Soviets have conducted the campaign with great success. With a death grip on Stalingrad and several strong reserves



Combat Results Table

Dice	Odds									
	1:4	1:3	1:2	1:1	2:1	3:1	4:1	5:1 6:1	7:1 8:1	9:1 & more
2	A3r1	A2r1	A2r1	A2r1	A2	A2	A2	A2D1	A1D1	A1D1 2
3	A2r1	A2r1	A2	A2	A2	A2D1	A1D1	A1D1	A1D1	A1D1 3
4	A2r1	A2	A2	A2D1	A2D1	A1D1	A1D1	A1D1	A1D1	A1D2r1 4
5	A2	A2	A2D1	A2D1	A1D1	A1D1	A1D1	A1D2r1	A1D2r1	D2r1 5
6	A2	A2D1	A2D1	A1D1	A1D1	A1D1	A1D2r1	A1D2r1	D2r1	D3r2 6
7	A2D1	A2D1	A2D1	A1D1	A1D2	A1D2r1	A1D2r1	D2r2	D2r2	D3r3 7
8	A2D1	A2D1	A1D1	A1D2r1	A1D2r1	A1D2r1	D2r2	D2r2	D3r3	D3r4 8
9	A2D1	A1D2r1	A1D2r1	A1D2r1	D2r1	D2r2	D2r2	D3r3	D3r4	D4r4 9
10	A1D2r1	A1D2r1	A1D2r2	D2r2	D2r2	D2r2	D3r3	D3r4	D4r4	D4r5 10
11	A1D2r1	A1D2r2	A1D2r2	D3r2	D3r3	D3r3	D3r4	D4r4	D4r5	D5r5 11
12	D3r2	D3r3	D3r3	D3r3	D3r4	D3r4	D4r4	D4r5	D5r5	D6r5 12

situated to the south, it seems unlikely that any forces will be able to rescue the Germans trapped in Stalingrad. In fact, the Soviets have sufficient forces to prepare a second protective ring around Stalingrad to make any breakout attempts next to impossible.

Casualties in the meantime are steadily increasing for the Germans; no less than 93 units have been eliminated in the space of little more than two weeks. To add insult to injury, the Germans continue to have nagging problems in airlifting supplies into Gumrak airfield. Nonetheless, the Soviets have also suffered several losses, namely at the Donskaya Tsaritsa River due to the swift action taken by the German 11th Panzer Division on the northern flank. Although the Soviets have lost two Army HQ units thus far, the Germans are not well off in their present state.

BITTER END: 5-8 December (Turns 9-10)

Stalingrad Sector. The Germans continue to offer stiff resistance within the Stalingrad perimeter, and Gumrak airfield remains in German hands. This defiant defense has paid dividends for the Germans, as no less than four sorely needed supply points have been successfully airlifted into Gumrak airfield. Any hopes of a breakout attempt for the Germans have already been dashed, however, as the Soviets have amassed significant troops throughout the perimeter, not to mention several mobile reserve units as well.

Northern sector. The Soviets have dealt the Germans yet another death blow, this time in a sector where the Germans had been steadily gaining the upper hand. The

5T Army units which the German 11th Panzer engaged turned out to nothing more than bait. Various Soviet mobile formations swooped in and shut the trap on the Panzer forces, eliminating them with a single roll of the die. In the meantime, the newly-arrived 6th Panzer Division has also found itself heavily engaged several kilometers southeast of where disaster befell the 11th Panzer Division. Furthermore, Soviet mobile forces have departed from the Donskaya Tsaritsa River and have driven west to secure the Don River crossings at Kalach-na-Don (34.18) and Pervomaiskii (38.14). Shortly, the Soviets will be able to direct a two-pronged attack to eliminate remaining pockets of German resistance along the Chir/Don River bend.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS. Although fighting has lasted only three weeks, the German forces have been bled white and soundly defeated in all sectors. Meanwhile, the Soviets continue to tighten the noose around Stalingrad with increasing effectiveness. German losses are staggering at 107 units total, compared to 44 for the Soviets. Although play could theoretically continue, Stephen has been summoned by Hitler to Berlin where he will be shot by the Gestapo as a traitor. Theoretically, the Soviets need to occupy at least three of the four Stalingrad city hexes before a Massive Victory can be declared, but considering the worsening state of the German forces, it is only a matter of time. The German commander refuses to hold Stalingrad to the last man, and accepts the Soviet's terms for surrender (having committed himself to playing SPI's Campaign to North Africa solitaire).

20-20 HINDSIGHT

I will make a slight deviation from the After-Action format which normally accompanies a Game Replay. Instead of having each player critique their own play, Stephen and I will critique each other's play instead. After all, one can gain just as much insight, perhaps even more, by studying the strategy and tactics used by the opposing player. As my distant relative, Kranzfucias, friend of Suntzu, once said, "To know thy enemy is to know thyself more, dude"...or something to that effect.

Obviously, it is much easier to critique, theorize, and second-guess about a Game Replay having 20-20 hindsight. However, 20-20 hindsight does not necessarily translate to an increased likelihood of success in subsequent play of this game. Having played *Stalingrad Pocket* several times, one of its clear strengths is its replay value and diversity in outcomes. In other words, this is a tough system to crack. I have played games in which the Soviets achieved victory earlier than Game Turn 10, and others where the Germans eliminated several Soviet HQ units to win the game soundly. This is certainly no game in which one can uncover that golden strategy which assures success for either side. As is the case with AH/SPI's *Panzergruppe Guderian*, or most classic games for that matter, I have come across individuals who claim they have the perfect German or Soviet plan, only to discover it failed miserably in the face of new competition. Having said all this, however, it is certainly possible and valid to offer some observations about play for both sides.

SOVIET PLAYER COMMENTS ON GERMAN PLAY

Success for the Germans is closely associated with being able to eliminate Soviet Army HQ units. During the initial game turn, Stephen struck quickly and eliminated the Soviet 65th Army HQ—a great move invited by my carelessness. Although this could have easily been the initial sign of more bad news to come for the Soviets, Stephen knocked some sense into me and forced me to guard my HQ units more carefully. Considering only two Soviet Army HQ units were eliminated in total, not to mention the inability of the Germans to upset the Soviet line of supply, the Germans would have had to display some defensive wizardry to win this game. This is NOT to imply it is impossible for the Germans to win the game based on the above conditions, but it certainly didn't help matters for them either.

By far the single greatest mistake made by the German player was not only allowing the entire 51st Army to get pocketed in Stalingrad, but the German 8th and 14th Army as well. The Germans could simply not afford to let so many units get trapped, particularly when considering the relative strength of the Soviet advancing forces.

The more units trapped within Stalingrad, the less likelihood the Germans will have to maintain a broader front to frustrate the Soviet advance while conducting limited counterattacks at opportune moments (e.g. when a Soviet Army HQ unit or supply line is exposed). I can understand the sense of frustration Stephen felt when no supplies were being airlifted during the initial stages of the campaign. However, it seems this was a contributing factor for him deciding to stick it out in Stalingrad—he didn't feel comfortable pulling the 51st Army out without having at least one or two supply units available. Speaking of supply, the Germans were plain careless in allowing the Pitomnik airfield to get overrun as it did. They should have at least had one reserve unit stationed there to protect it.

In retrospect, the German 51st Army should have pulled out no later than Game Turn 4. By the time Game Turn 5 rolled around, the Soviets had achieved a major turning point in the campaign by securing the Don River crossing at Vertyochii (32.25). The Germans were careless in not providing better protection at the Don River crossing, as this was the only point the Soviets were immediately threatening from the north. The Germans simply didn't foresee the quick and decisive synchronized attack launched by the Soviet 24th

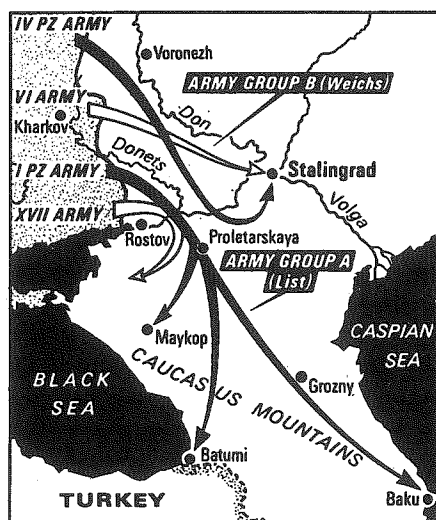
and 51st Army which exposed and overran the defenders. At this point, it was too late for the Germans to pull out and escape the advancing Soviet forces streaming in from both flanks.

Actually, the earlier the Germans would have deployed the 51st Army where needed, mainly in the quickly disintegrating southern sector, the greater likelihood the Germans could have slowed the Soviet advance. In this same vein, the Germans should have not began pulling back the German 11th Army prematurely towards the Don during Game Turn 2 once the Soviet 21st Army decided to link up with the unsupplied Soviet 65th Army in the north. The German 11th Army could have slowed the German advance significantly to the point that the events on 27-28 November (Game Turn 5) at the Don River would have not taken place for at least another week. This can be easily surmised based on the performance of two units of the German 11th Corps alone, which were successful in tying up the bulk of the Soviet 21st Army for four days. These two factors alone would have changed the entire complexion of the campaign, something that I know Stephen will keep in mind the next time we face off.

The number of casualties suffered at the hands of the Soviets was extremely high, and was a contributing factor to the German defeat. Stephen was a bit too forthcoming in throwing German units at the advancing Soviet forces in piecemeal fashion. Particularly the powerful 11th and 6th German Panzer Army reinforcements should have been grouped together as a considerable force. It certainly would have drawn my attention!

Regarding the hapless Rumanian units, Stephen conducted an orderly and effective retreat in the northern flank. Basically, he did about the best he could with the few Rumanian units which remained after the initial Soviet onslaught. In fact, the Soviets were unable to regain the initiative in the northern sector until 8 December (Game Turn 10). I found particularly clever his placing of several weakened Rumanian units amidst my numerous Soviet mobile formations, effectively taking away their ability to conduct an overrun attack during the Movement Phase.

Fall Blau: left Halder's version, right Hitler's version.



GERMAN PLAYER COMMENTS ON SOVIET PLAY

I'm biting my tongue here because I feel an urge to clear my name and explain why I made the decisions I did. Well, I'll give in to John's approach and limit my remarks to the Soviet performance in the game. In a nutshell, this was simply a case of the Soviets taking advantage of about every opportunity the Germans handed them. While I credit John for his play, it is easy to reflect on the errors I made which helped the Soviets achieve the smashing results they did.

Initially, however, it was actually the Soviets who miscalculated. By not protecting the 65th Army HQ, I was able to send a German Kampfgruppe on a suicide mission to eliminate the unit. Unfortunately, this was the high point of the game as far as the Germans were concerned. The Soviets quickly learned from their initial mistake, and the Germans found it next to impossible to find any openings in the Soviet line to disrupt a line of supply, or better yet destroy another Soviet HQ unit. In fact, the second and last Soviet HQ unit to be destroyed would not occur until 2 December (Game Turn 7), but even this came only after some of the fiercest fighting in the campaign at the Donskaya Tsaritsa River. Needless to say, the Soviets exhibited great discipline in protecting and staying within range of their HQ units, there was hardly a time that any Soviet mobile units advanced beyond their HQ supply range. This was one of the biggest contributions to Soviet success in the game. There were no simply unsupplied Soviet spearheads I could counterattack during play.

One final point. The Soviets did strike hard at times to catch me completely off guard, and I must credit them on taking the initiative here. Both the elimination of the Pitomnik airfield and securing of the Don River crossing at Vertyochii (32.25) caught me completely by surprise. The Soviets did the better job of making lightning thrusts during the game, not to mention the clever trap set in the northern flank which cost me the powerful German 11th Panzer reinforcements. I'm frustrated by my many errors in the game, but I faced a

sharper opponent on this day. One final word for the Soviets, "Just wait until next time!"

STALINGRAD POCKET: THE BEST INTRODUCTORY-LEVEL GAME AVAILABLE?

The search for the perfect introductory game continues. *Stalingrad Pocket* without a doubt ranks as one of the most popular games today—evidenced by the record sales this game has brought to The Gamers. With its wide open and fluid action, there is never a dull moment.

A successful introductory game inherently ushers in discussion of how well such designs serve to introduce newcomers, so-called "wargins" to the hobby as well. Although this is easily one of the most entertaining games I own, I still do have some reservations as far as using this game as a tool in introducing others to the hobby. Both the introductory scenario, "Race to Kalach" and the second mini-scenario, "Wintergewitter" are overly short in duration. This leaves only the campaign game to consider, which in conjunction with the fairly robust unit density and numerous decisions which need to be made each and every game turn, could easily overwhelm the beginner. To illustrate this point, consider other games available on the market today which might do a better job. GDW's *Bloody Kasserine* and *Race to Tunis*, with their low counter density, quickly come to mind as well as Decision Games's *Four battles of the Ancient World* and *Strategy & Tactics Case Green and White Eagle Eastward*. And of course, there's a multitude of Avalon Hill classics to draw on as well. I certainly expect that the second game scheduled for the SCS series, based on the North Africa campaign, will be an excellent game for beginners to try out as well. With a Rommel counter, how can you lose?

Well, needless to say, I'm just trying to play devil's advocate here. Considering some claim TSR/SPI's *Terrible Swift Sword* makes for an excellent introductory game, my argument is a wash from a complexity standpoint. Besides, the simpler the game system, the blander the gaming expe-

rience due to a lack of perceived flavor in the game. Thus, overly-simplified games can certainly backfire and fail to capture someone's interest in the hobby. I've seen it happen on numerous occasions.

In the final analysis, *Stalingrad Pocket* is one of the best all-round games to come out in some time. Whether it's the best introductory level game available today is yet to be decided. At least it's currently in print, which is more than can be said for the many other introductory games I've seen recommended for absolute newcomers to the hobby in the past.

Considering *Stalingrad Pocket* can be purchased for \$22, this is also one of the best bargains going around in the gaming market today. If you have an interest in the Eastern Front, or if you are a...ahem...newcomer to the hobby (there, I didn't say "war-gin"!) and are looking for a great game to sink your teeth into, look no further. Just don't forget to get the 51st Army out of Stalingrad before it's too late! Right, Stephen? ■

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1918: Storm in the West

by John Desch



It seems as though there is of late a rekindled interest in games covering the First World War. In casting about looking for interesting topics from this era, game companies have looked repeatedly to the years of 1914 and 1918, when the situation on the Western Front was most fluid. **1918: Storm in the West** (1918) by XTR is just the latest effort to bring some attention to this long neglected war.

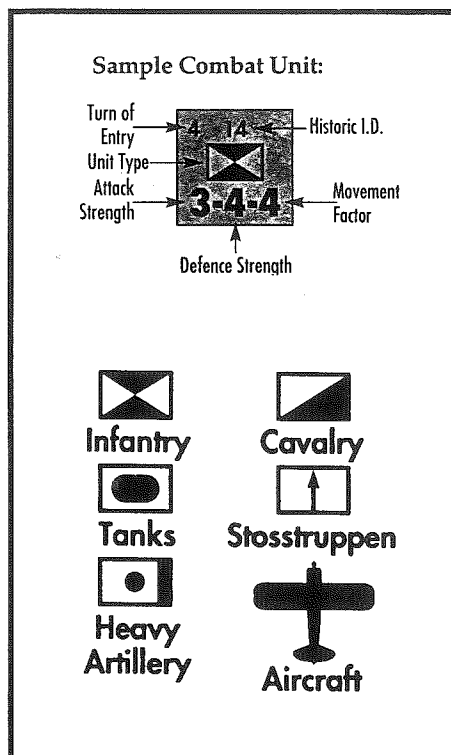
1918 is a two-player corps level game covering the last year of the war. Represented are French, British, and German corps-sized units and American divisions. The single mapsheet features a lot of maneuver space (from the Belgian border to Paris) and a little area to keep track of replacements, the game turn, and morale. All components are of excellent quality. The rules are easy to follow, complete and filled with design notes.

In the space of a few months, the

Germans went from near victory to total defeat. This shift in initiative is amply portrayed as the German replacements dwindle to zero and the Americans arrive to sustain Allied offensives. Most of the German replacements are available early in the game, while the Allies get theirs evenly throughout. Indeed, husbanding your replacements is a central issue in the game. Depending upon how many casualties the German takes in each attack, he usually has enough replacements for between three and five turns of full scale offensive action. After that, his units will simply melt off the map. The Allies collectively have twice the resources (a total of 103 against 49 German) throughout the game, especially as more American divisions arrive to help take up the attack.

When managing your replacements, you must remember that it is sometimes better to leave a few extra units in the dead pile and retain the replacement points than

it is to bring every dead unit back to life. The reason I say this is because lateral mobility is limited. Once you start an offensive, that's pretty much where you have to stay. You can expand a little to the right or left, but strategic realignment is extremely time consuming. Because the Allies are allowed to move six units by strategic movement and the Germans only four, you will find that some reinforcements will have to walk. For this reason, it is better to reduce a bunch of units on the map than it is to completely eliminate a few. It is wise to plan ahead when it comes to the utilization of replacements. If your battered defensive line can hold together for a few more turns, then replace a few more units for your upcoming offensive. As the German, if your attacks are not going well and you're running through a lot of points, then don't hesitate to call off the offensive early. You will need every point you can get before the



game ends. The tempo of the game revolves around the number of replacements available, and the player who keeps this foremost in his mind will have significant advantage over his opponent.

One of the finest aspects of 1918 is the number of strategies that can be pursued by both players. As the German, the strategy you choose will determine the course of the game. Basically, your geographical objectives should be one of the following: 1) Paris (a long shot), 2) Verdun (quite feasible), and 3) the Channel ports (hard). You need to gain three morale points and hold them for the Turn Nine morale check, or you'll lose automatically. In accomplishing this, you should strive to inflict as much damage on the enemy as you can, but you cannot afford to trade losses with the Allies on a one-to-one basis. Your offensive will necessarily be short, so your objectives should ideally be close to the front. Against a thin Allied line, you should be able to advance for several turns. As your opponent rushes reinforcements to the breakthrough area, the going will get tougher. Probably the most frustrating aspect of the game is to completely blow your enemy away along a six hex front and then not to be able to exploit it. But hey, this is World War I, not World War II.

A British strategy is worth consideration. The Brits have weaker

units, but more replacements. The coast is an objective that is relatively close but sure to be well defended. I have yet to see an all out German attack smash through to the coast and retain the strength to handle the upcoming Franco-American counteroffensive. The loss to Allied morale will not be that devastating unless you clear the entire area. It is nevertheless a viable strategy. With a little restraint, you can bring the British to their knees and shorten the front. The Belgians are tough nuts to crack initially, but they have no replacements and once they are killed, they're gone for good.

A stab toward Paris will win the game if you are successful. Unfortunately, the city is so far away from the front that it is difficult to take. You will have to contend with an ever lengthening front as the bulge gets bigger, thereby leaving you extremely vulnerable to an Allied riposte. But 15 morale points just might be worth it. If you gain all of Paris the Allies will be instantly knocked out of the war. The problem is that Paris is fortified and fortifications are very difficult to take unless they are surrounded. The frontage necessary to assail Paris from all directions is a lengthy one indeed, and may in the end be you undoing. Surprisingly enough, Verdun might just be your best bet. It's hanging right out there in a salient waiting to be chopped off. An experienced Allied Player will guard this area carefully, so the going will be tough. Verdun is a fortress so you will have to wait until it is surrounded (and cannot receive replacements) before you send your Stosstruppen against the walls. On the up side, however, you will probably do some serious damage to the French as they scramble to defend the place. They are a bit weaker than the British in terms of replacement points (33 vs. 36), but their units are better on the average. Attacking a double stacked French hex promises to be a bloody affair indeed. If you can decimate the French, your opponent will be hurting for units when it comes to starting his own offensive. Make damned sure that you don't strip the rest of your line to keep your offensive stoked. This gives the Allies too many opportunities to sneak in and grab one of those morale cities along the front line. One point is as good as a mile when it comes to the all important morale check midway through the game.

A viable course of action is to decide up front that you are going to conduct a limited offensive. The objective here is to punish the enemy, take a few morale cities, and have enough replacements to weather the Turn Nine Storm (you know, when your Stoss turn into pumpkins). Remember that the Allies have a much tougher time getting across your trenches, especially if they are caught short of tanks, so the more troops you have in the open, the greater the prospects for your opponent to do you some nasty damage. It might be a good idea to withdraw your troops back into the trenches if the enemy is massing against a specific front. Your Trench corps are good only for defense, so make sure you back them up with something that has a little more combat effectiveness or you'll find the Allies blowing through your front. In the end game, time is the most crucial factor on the battlefield. You must take advantage of every opportunity to delay the final advance. A central reserve of four capable corps is essential to plug up the gaps that will certainly appear. Don't worry about maintaining a continuous front line: Just make sure the key morale cities (e.g., Brussels and Antwerp) are defended to the last man.

One of the finest features of 1918 is that both sides get the opportunity to attack and defend. Unfortunately the Allied Player has to weather the storm before he has his chance to show his offensive prowess. For at least the first five turns or so its defend, defend, defend. Unless the German hands you something you can't resist, you should sit passively and block every enemy attempt to gain morale cities. The combat results chart demands a strong defense, but the German infiltration capability precludes an every-other-hex defense. Two units stacked together are far more resistant against attack by virtue of their increased defensive value and ability to absorb all but the most damaging casualties and hold the hex. Unfortunately you don't have enough units to man every hex of the line, let alone stack to protect the crucial sectors. Because you have to set up first, you'll be forced to leave part of your line weakly garrisoned. It is fairly safe to leave the area south of Verdun in charge of a cavalry screen simply because this area leads nowhere. The approaches to Paris and the British sector require careful

19.3 Replacement Chart

Game Turn	(24) Germany	(10) Britain	(12) France	(0) U.S.
2 (Apr I)	2	2	1	0
3 (Apr II)	2	4	1	0
4 (May I)	3	4	3	0
5 (May II)	5	3	2	0
6 (Jun I)	4	2	1	3
7 (Jun II)	2	2	1	3
8 (Jul I)	1	1	1	3
9 (Jul II)	1	1	2	2
10 (Aug I)	1	1	1	3
11 (Aug II)	1	1	1	3
12 (Sep I)	1	1	2	3
13 (Sep II)	1	1	1	3
14 (Oct I)	1	1	1	3
15 (Oct II)	0	1	2	3
16 (Nov I)	0	1	1	3

Replacement Table Notes

1. Replacements may be accumulated.
2. There is no inter-Allied replacement lending.
3. The Belgians never receive any new replacements after their initial allocation of 2.
4. Portuguese and Italian units never receive replacements.
5. Australian and Canadian units may never be reclaimed from the deadpile.
6. See 8.8 and 8.9 for details on German *Stosstruppen* replacement.
7. See 16.2 for the effects of the influenza epidemic on replacements.

§ 19.4 EZOC Summary Table

Friendly units negate EZOC for:

1. Supply line tracing (7.9).
2. Retreat after combat (13.28).
3. Strategic movement start/end (10.3).

EZOC are ignored for:

1. Advance after combat (13.31).
2. Infiltration movement (15.0).

deployment. If you have any troops left over, these areas are the best place to put them. Remember that one of the units in a double stacked hex can use strategic movement, so you won't need to keep a central reserve.

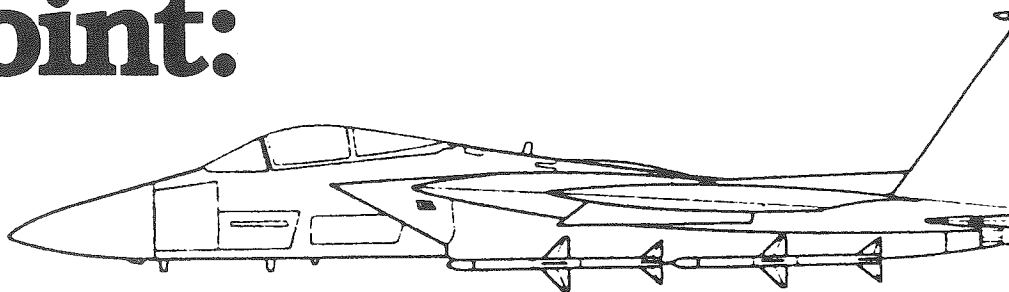
Once the German offensive opens up, you'll have your hands full rushing units into the breach. Great gaps will appear in your line, but don't worry. There are no panzers to exploit them. The best tactic is to keep throwing more troops into the fray until the Germans run out of steam (you will know this if you keep an eye on his replacement chart). You must keep one thing in mind, however. Generating your own offensive will take time, so start planning early. You don't have the strategic lift or the time to shift a lot of troops around the battlefield. Once you pick a spot, build up your assault groups and push forward with everything you've got. You'll need tanks to breach the German trenches. Because they tend to telegraph your intentions, keep them underneath another unit when your opponent is up getting some chips. The Fog of War rule will prevent him from riffling through your armies to find the tanks.

The initial going will be tough. Cracking the trenches will require all the aircraft, tanks and special units (e.g. the Aussi-Ami Corps). Inevitably, your attack will pick up momentum as the Huns run out of replacements and the Americans become available in greater numbers. Your first attack will attract a great deal of attention, but this will allow you to open up an offensive on another front. Distribute the Americans to the maximum extent allowed by the rules and have them absorb as many casualties as possible. Soon entire German units will disappear off the map and you'll be able to push on to victory. The most obvious place to send in your main attack is in the north where the Belgian cities yield a whopping 16 morale points. The central area is devoid of important objectives and the southern cities in Germany are tough to get at. Destruction of the German Army must be accomplished before you can seize morale cities, but remember that time is of the essence. Unless you are using the Super-High Odds Attacks optional rule, it doesn't make sense to jack up the odds any higher than you have to. Just figure out the right amount of combat power to throw against a hex to gain your objective. There is nothing more frustrating than to lose four points of Stoss just to force an American infantry division to take a loss and retreat. Subtractions to the die roll are killers. You must make every effort to attack the enemy in the open. Unnecessary attacks are worse than not attacking at all simply because they use up replacements. Since the attacker almost inevitably loses more than the defender, it is paramount to pick and choose your attacks carefully. Hit only those hexes needed to sustain your offensive and gain morale cities. Resist the temptation to expand your offensive just for the sake of attacking (Europa players will have a hard time with this).

I'm sure you will find 1918 to be an exciting game. I strongly recommend using all of the optional rules, especially the Super-High Odds Rule. 1918's replayability factor is very high as there are a number of strategies that you can follow. The trench mentality of the Great War does not impact too heavily on the course of the game, and there is a great deal of mobility on both sides. Both players get a chance to attack and defend in a game that can be completed in an evening without too much trouble. ■

Flashpoint: Golan

by Terry Rooker



Unit Type

This symbol indicates the type of troops which comprise the unit. The types are as follows:

	Armored (Mechanized)
	Armored Recon (Mechanized)
	Motorized Recon
	Infantry (Leg)
	Airborne (Leg)
	Special Forces (Leg)
	Marine
	Guerrilla (Leg)
	Mechanized Infantry
	Motorized Infantry
	Artillery (Motorized)
	Artillery (Mechanized)
	Multiple Rocket Launcher (Motorized)
	Attack Helicopter
	Headquarters
	Motorized Airborne

The "state of the art" is one of those concepts that everyone uses, but no one really knows what it is. The concept is particularly troublesome with wargames. It has been noted on many occasions that there are few genuinely new game mechanics. In most games there are just new uses of existing mechanics. So how can we discuss the state of the art in gaming?

It may help to remember what simulation games are. There are the physical components; maps, counters, charts, etc. There are the rules, i.e. the instructions for manipulating the components. Finally, there is the situation simulated. Components are important, but lately they may have been overrated. Poorly laid out graphics can make a game unplayable, but flashy graphics and packaging cannot turn a poorly developed design into a good game. As already discussed there are few genuine advances in game mechanics so it is not fitting to discuss state of the art in terms of the rules.

Eliminating these elements leaves the situation simulated. More properly, we should discuss how well the simulation fits the situation. A word of warning is appropriate here. Such a discussion could get dangerously close to the playability versus "accuracy" discussion (a game versus a simulation). I do not want to get sidetracked by this discussion. We go through great pains to wrap our games in some historical foundation, so claims that historical accuracy is sacrificed in the interest of playability do not make sense. This article is predicated on the idea that these games are designed to capture some element of an historical situation.

I will discuss the state of the art in how well the game design captures these elements. In this case, the game is **Flashpoint: Golan**. This game is based upon a design that was originally set in Western Europe. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union/Warsaw Pact has made such a situation not viable, the topic of the game was shifted to the modern Middle East. The designer mentions how little change was required to make the shift. If you think about it, there should be little change required. The Middle East is probably one of the few locations similar to western Europe. Both areas have large armor heavy forces facing each other. The major differences are the troop quality, the terrain, and sustainability.

These are only some of the elements that are deemed important to modern ground combat. The elements that will be discussed in

this article are troop quality, logistics (i.e. sustainability), command and control (specifically the command and control cycle), limited intelligence, technology (i.e. artillery, missiles, aircraft, and anti-aircraft fire), morale and elan, and electronic warfare (this is separate from technology because it can have such wide-ranging effects). Notice that some of these are inter-related, and these relations will be mentioned.

Sequence of Play

It is not the purpose of this article to describe the system in detail, or to review that system. The purpose is to discuss the game system/features as they may define the state of game design. To this end, I need to discuss some features of the sequence of play to provide a context for later comments.

FG uses an operation cycle type of sequence rather than a move-shoot sequence. The first part of the turn is the Strategic Cycle. The phases in this cycle are basically conducted simultaneously. The scenario may have possible political effects. During this first phase the initiative player is determined although this is simply a matter of which player has the momentum advantage. Air superiority is determined by rolling on the Air Operations Table. The players may attempt jamming. Reinforcements are received. Finally, supply status is determined, and players can replenish or reorganize.

The next cycle is the Operations Cycle. This cycle has no phases per se, just a series of Activation Segments. The players determine which formations are activated by drawing chits. There is one chit per formation. The initiative player can withhold one chit so he can automatically decide which formation activates first. When a formation is activated all subordinate units can conduct a movement phase and possibly an exploitation movement phase. During either phase a unit in an enemy zone of control can withdraw, hold, or conduct a set-piece attack. Other units can then expend operations points (up to 6 in the movement phase). In the exploitation movement phase, units that are not in an enemy zone of control, and are within 5 hexes of a breakthrough marker can expend 3

operations points. Breakthrough markers are placed as a result of successful battles. Operations points are functionally equivalent to movement allowances in other games.

During the segment, enemy units can react within specified limits. In addition, units may detect enemy units. As a result of successful detection, strikes (air, artillery, or set-piece) may be conducted. During each segment, each headquarters can use one of its capabilities.

Finally, there is an End Cycle. This cycle is primarily an administrative phase where various markers are removed from the board.

This sequence of play can be very interactive. One player does not sit passively while the other moves. Because of the detection and possible reaction, the non-moving player can greatly affect the units which are activating. Of course, the random order of activation can prevent either player from carefully calculating every attack to the last factor.

Troop Quality

When you discuss anything but the hard "data" (weapons penetration, armor protection, range, payload, etc.) in military operations you encounter difficulty in defining the situation. Troop quality may be one of the most difficult to define. Professional sports gives us many examples of this problem. The dominant team has a bad day and loses terribly, or the cellar team has a particularly inspired day and beats the league leader. This problem is probably worse in the modern middle east. Many of the articles/books about the situation give us a different information. In some accounts the Arab forces are barely able to do anything but herd camels and goats. Yet while others would have us believe that the individual soldier is quite able, it is other factors that prevent them from realizing their potential.

Examining the historical record does not really help. At a macro scale it is obvious that the Israeli military has out-classed their opponents. The contribution of the difference in troop quality is less obvious. There is some evidence that in general the Israeli formations were more coherent than the arab counterparts. There is also evidence that some of the Arab

formations were more coherent than their opposition.

Since this is a suitably grey area, FG takes the middle position. It is obvious that there are differences in troop quality, but it is equally difficult to make quantitative distinctions. In FG troop quality is a function of training. It is determined for each unit before the game, although game events can cause temporary or permanent changes. The troop quality rating is used to determine the unit's cohesion in combat, i.e. the lower the troop quality rating the more likely the unit is to receive an adverse combat result.

While this may seem to be a mediocre solution, it is a good solution to the problem. Remember, the value modeled is not easily quantified and any more accuracy would be wasted because the input could not be sufficiently measured. While the mechanic is not unique, it certainly works for the situation modeled.

Logistics

From a gaming perspective logistics is different from troop quality. For a particular situation it is usually easy to quantify each sides's ability to supply the combat forces. This is an area that lends itself to quantification (just look at all the operations research work done in transportation and supply). The problem is that most gamers find the details of logistics boring. It is certainly more exciting to push panzers than to calculate how many trucks you need to supply those same tanks.

AIR OPERATIONS TABLE

Die	Air Superiority Change
<0-2	Up 2 boxes
3-5	Up 1 box
6-7	No change
8-9	Down 1 box
10+	Down 2 boxes

Modifiers:

-2	Jordan only Arab nation at war
-2	US Aerial Intervention
+1	Soviet Aerial Intervention

Previous Air Superiority Level:

-2	Israel 2 or 3
-1	Israel 1
+1	Arab 3

The solution to this problem has been used in games for decades. If the gamer can maintain some abstract line of communication to his units, then it is assumed that the staff can fill the pipeline with the right amount of supplies. Over the years, the variation in game design has been in specifying the abstract line of communication. In some situations, it was nearly impossible for either side to affect the supply status of the other, so the designer rightfully opted to ignore supply considerations. In other situations, the line was more specific, possibly even including some notion of quantity.

In FG, the notion of a line of supply is also used. Unlike games where this line is simply traced to an edge of the map, this line is traced through a headquarters. For a headquarters to be in supply it must trace a line of communications to a map edge. For combat units to be in supply they must be in command of a headquarters and that headquarters must have a valid line of communications. A unit is in command if it is within the command radius of its headquarters. Keeping in mind the abstraction that the headquarters staff is maintaining the flow of supplies this supply rule makes sense. As long as the unit is within the command radius of the headquarters, then the staff can maintain supply. If it no longer under effective control of its superior headquarters, then the staff is probably not able to get supplies to it. Even more importantly this rule tightly involves the headquarters in the supply process.

Command and Control

After the previous discussion, it might be obvious that it is difficult to separate the command and control functions of a

ISRAELI / US HEADQUARTERS CAPABILITIES CHART

HQ Capabilities	Israeli HQ'S			U.S. HQ'S		
	North / Central Commands	All Divisions	Parachute Brigades	82nd Air Division	6th MAW	
Aerial Resupply	yes	--	--	yes	yes	
Air Defense Artillery	R36 S3	R10 S1	R3 S0	R10 S1	R10 S1	
Anti-Tactical Ballistic Missile	R36 S3	--	--	--	--	
Artillery Ammo Replenishment	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Battle Recovery	yes	yes	--	--	--	
Combat Engineers	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Cruise Missiles	--	--	--	--	R=SC	
HQ Detection	R25	R12	R12	R12	R12	
Jamming	R25	--	--	--	--	
Naval Gunfire Support	--	--	--	--	R5 S5	
Short-Range Ballistic Missiles	R25 SB	--	--	--	--	
Tank Transporters	yes	--	--	--	--	
Transport Helicopters	R32	--	--	R32	--	
HQ Capability Point Allowance	9/6/3/1	6/3/1/0	3/2/1/0	6/3/1/0	4/2/1/0	

Interpreting HQ Capability Tables	
yes	The HQ has that capability
--	The HQ doesn't have that capability
R?	Capability has a range of ? hexes (∞ = unlimited)
Sx	Capability has a strike rating of x (letter) or strength of x (number)
#/#/#/#	HQ Capability Point Allowance at Normal / Disorganized / Broken / Cadre

headquarters. Many games take the view that it is too difficult to separate these functions, and the relative abilities of staffs are simply included in the assessment of combat abilities of the individual units (i.e. it is reflected in the combat values of the units represented by counters). In reality a headquarters provides a variety of support to its subordinate units. In other games this support is represented by counters that represent these capabilities.

While these techniques work, they give the players too much flexibility. There is no restriction on how these counters can be used. Unrealistic groupings of units are possible. FG solves this problem through the mechanisms of subordination of units, and representing the support capabilities as abstract features of headquarters (figure 1). These capabilities include aerial resupply, artillery ammunition replenishment, battlefield recovery (this capability allows a victorious unit in a battle to ignore an adverse combat result), combat engineers, HQ detection, jamming, tank transporters, helicopter transport, air defense fire, anti-tactical ballistic missiles, cruise and short range ballistic missiles, and naval gunfire support.

There are certain restrictions on these capabilities, and not all headquarters have them to the same level. Basically, if any restrictions are satisfied, the headquarters simply applies the results of any capability. It is important to notice that most of these capabilities are those items normally referred to as "force multipliers". The difference between a good formation, and a poor formation is number and quality of these capabilities. There is also a more traditional command radius which determines how far from the headquarters the subordinate units can be located.

So what signifies a good formation in FG? The subordinate units can move farther afield (larger command radius, additional transport available, better resupply). The units have greater offensive punch (through attached fire assets, better resupply, and better detection of enemy units). The units are more resilient (better resupply, recovery, better engineering support, better troop quality reduces adverse combat results).

The treatment of headquarters is probably where FG stands out best from other games. It takes the middle ground between explicit representation of command and control features, and simply abstracting those capabilities into the combat values of the units. The restrictions on the capabilities and the command radius prevent the players from using the command and control effects in an unrealistic fashion. There is still enough flexibility that the players can prioritize these capabilities and use them to best effect. In addition, unrestricted use will leave the headquarters vulnerable, since they can only be detected when they use a capability. On the other hand the players are not burdened with excessive detail in the command system.

Limited Intelligence

Many gamers lament that the players in wargames have too much intelligence. Unfortunately, there is not an easy solution to this problem. In general there are two types of solutions to the problem (well three if you count simply ignoring it). The game designer can try to use some type of hidden counter rules, or he can use some limitation on how units can react to enemy units around them. Hidden unit deployment usually involves dummy counters

SIZE OF BATTLE CHART		MOMENTUM POINT TABLE		
Size of Battle	Size of Losing Force	Terrain Types		
		Town/City	All other	
Small	Less than 2 Brigades Set-Piece Battle, or any battle where the Attacker is out of Supply.	Small	1	1
Medium	2 Brigades (or equivalent) Set-Piece Battle.	Medium	4	2
Large	More than 2 Brigades (or equivalent) Set-Piece Battle	Large	9	4

and/or reverse sides of counters. These solutions usually make the play more cumbersome.

FG opts for restrictions on the unit activities. Units must be detected before they can be attacked, at least for strike combats (i.e. combat at a distance). Adjacent units can attack each other. Although there is not a specific statement, it appears that adjacent units are always detected. There is a detection table (figure 2) to resolve the detection range. The detecting unit type is referenced with possibly other factors (for example the level of air superiority). The result is a range in hexes. If the detected unit is within this range it is detected.

The detecting player then has the option to conduct a strike. This strike can be an air strike, or artillery strike. Of course the other player may be able to apply defenses against the strike. The result may be a rather involved series of events following the "detection" which makes for a very interactive game turn. In the case of artillery strikes, there is also the possibility of counterbattery fire. The result is that the players must carefully consider the situation and not simply conduct strikes because it is possible.

Technology

Technology could mean anything. I do not mean technology as a measure of performance of individual weapons. Rather, in modern combat technology is becoming a very important element in adding new capabilities to combat units. It is technology as these new capabilities that I want to discuss.

The recent adventure in the Persian Gulf has made the world aware of short range ballistic missiles (SRBMs), although ironically these missiles (the Iraqi Scuds)

were used as strategic weapons. In addition, cruise missiles made their large scale debut, with live coverage by CNN at the target zone. This class of weapons has not had good coverage in wargames, even games covering the modern period. In a certain view, SRBMs are nothing more than artillery. If you ignore their nuclear/chemical capability this view is probably correct. Their advantage over conventional artillery is their range. In addition, it is also possible to shoot them down, at least in theory. In FG, U.S. headquarters have limited anti-tactical ballistic missile capability. This capability probably reflects the U.S. Patriot missile system.

Cruise missiles at a tactical scale are also mostly like artillery. Many of the main advantages of a cruise missile are not relevant to a wargame (i.e. no pilot so they can be used in dangerous situations). Another advantage is that they are difficult, if not impossible, to shoot down. FG comes in on the latter side of this debate. Cruise missiles are treated the same as SRBMs, except they cannot be shot down.

Stealth technology also makes an appearance. There is a F-117A unit representing the stealth attack planes. The stealth technology makes this unit more difficult to attack. It can only be fired on if there is Arab air superiority. There is not any justification for this rule. I guess the assumption is that the opposing side would not have the excess resources to go look for these planes unless they already had some advantage. Even then, there is a still a combat modifier in favor of the F-117's. Even though this rule is topical, and is probably needed because of media coverage from the Gulf War, it adds little to the game. After all, it is just one unit.

One of the biggest areas that has been affected by technology has been

communications. The miniaturization of modern electronics has made possible near miracles. The amount of data available to unit commanders is almost staggering. This revolution has also an equal effect on the commander's ability to direct his units. At an operational scale the effects of this revolution are very difficult to model. FG takes the safest course, and appears to include these effects in the troop quality and command/control rules. With any capability there is going to be some reaction to it. In this case the counter to this data flow is broadly included in the umbrella of electronic warfare.

Electronic warfare is included as two rules. First, there is jamming. If an headquarters has a jamming capability, it can attempt to jam an enemy headquarters that is within that range. The attempt involves a simple die roll. If it successful, then the target headquarters is disrupted. This greatly inhibits that headquarter's ability to use its capabilities. There is a catch. There is an additional modifier for each time a "nationality" successfully jams an opponent. This modifier makes it more difficult to successfully jam. This modifier represents the opposing staff and units overcoming the jamming. There is a "surprise" aspect of jamming. Once you suffer from jamming you take steps to avoid it. Sometimes these steps are inadvertent. I remember one exercise where jamming was so bad, that a communications circuit was simply shut down. Obviously the jammer would then have to start over searching for the replacement circuit.

The other electronic warfare rule is HQ detection. I mentioned the increased reliance on electronic communications. Every time a headquarters uses one of its capabilities, it is most likely using one or

DETECTION TABLE						
DETECTING HQ's / HELICOPTERS / STRIKES				DETECTING GROUND UNITS		
Detecting Asset = Headquarters				Detecting Asset = All Ground Units (including HQ's)		
Target Unit / Strike	HQ Capabilities			Target Unit	Air Superiority Level	
	EW	Air Defense	ATBM		Arab 1-3	Israel 1-3
HQ Using Capability	R	--	--	Israeli / US unit	15 hexes	7 hexes
Air Strike / Moving Helicopter	--	R	--	Arab / Soviet unit	5 hexes	15 hexes
SRBM Strike	--	--	R	Firing Artillery	7 hexes*	7 hexes*
R Range of capability (detection automatic if within range)				If the target unit is within the indicated distance of the detecting asset, it is automatically detected. The A is to remind you that only artillery units can detect firing artillery units.		
-- Detection impossible						

Notes:

- Units in certain types of terrain can have longer detection ranges than listed here (see 12.1, Impassable & Mountain = 8 hexes, Mountain Hexside = 6 hexes, Hill or Tel = 4 hexes).
- The ranges listed here apply to moving units. If detecting stationary units, use one-half the listed range (round down).

more of these communications circuits. These communications make it possible for the opposing side to detect the headquarters. If it is successfully detected, then a strike can be conducted against it. This capability presents a tradeoff for the players. Their headquarters can conduct command and control functions with the combat units and never be susceptible to counter fire. If those headquarters want to use the "force multiplying" capabilities, then they are exposing themselves to enemy fire.

Morale

Morale is another of those elements that is difficult to quantify. There is a long standing technique that uses step reductions to represent the degradation of combat effectiveness, a technique that FG uses. Of course this brings us back to discussing exactly what morale is. This degradation is not what many people mean by morale. To most people, the gradual reduction of ammunition and materiel, the loss of effective personnel, and the wear on equipment is usually considered separately. Morale more typically is a measure of the spirit of the personnel involved.

If you think about it, there is a rough correspondence between morale and the readiness of a unit. As the readiness increases, the morale usually improves. Conversely as the readiness decreases, morale declines, even if part of this decline is caused as much by fatigue. So combining the two into a single mechanism is a nice simplifying feature.

There are two other aspects of morale that are not covered by the explicit morale rules. There is the esprit caused by training and clan. In general, high quality units know that they are high quality, and this

knowledge is reflected in their performance. Usually, this quality comes about by training and exercising small unit cohesion. The other factor reflects how well the battle/operation is progressing (or at least how each side perceives that progression). In sporting events this phenomena is usually called momentum, and that is the term used in FG.

The unit training/esprit in FG is represented by the troop quality ratings that were discussed above.

Momentum is a difficult factor to measure. This difficulty is probably why most game designs ignore it. In general, there are two solutions to the problem. The designer can attempt to establish some type of quantitative measure of the progress of the operation. The alternative is to use some type of challenge mechanism. In this case, the players are allowed to determine when a momentum check is tried. Then the result is determined randomly with a die roll. Of course there are some subjective modifiers to the roll, and other limits on the process. The most common example of this type of check is in the *Brigade Series* rules by The Gamers, Inc.

FG uses a quantitative measurement. This technique avoids the obvious difficulties of the challenge system, but substitutes the equally difficult problem of measuring such intangibles. FG uses a very simple measure; winning battles. The amount of momentum gained is a function of the size of the battle, and the type of defending terrain (figure 3). If one player wins a large battle, digging out the opposition from a city, then he gets a correspondingly large increase in momentum. The momentum points yield that player more initiative, and also allows bonus activations. The latter may seem out of place, but the designer points out that

momentum is more than the lift from winning. There is also a disruption in the losing player's plans that the player with the momentum can exploit. This is a brilliantly simple mechanism for capturing both effects.

Is This State of the Art?

In our high-tech society state of the art has become mixed with the vision of technical solutions to problems. Actually, it might not even be a solution, just a bigger, faster, gizmo. Any design involves a large element of art. The art is the intuitive element of the design. In some cases, the simplest mechanics can be used to great effect to solve a problem. FG is an excellent example of this type of design. There are not any revolutionary mechanics in the game. Most of them are tried and true, if not traditional.

This gets us to the heart of the matter. FG uses an innovative combination of techniques to great effect. In this regard it is very much state of the art. Earlier in this article I discusses various parts of the game design. To understand the art you must look at how the elements work together. Subordinate units cannot go racing around the map, they must remain in range of their headquarters, not only for command, but to receive supplies as well. Those same headquarters are very busy. They are controlling their subordinate units as well directing supply. In addition, they are providing a whole range of combat support. Of course, to do all of this they must expose themselves to the enemy. It requires a lot of communications to bring all the pieces together.

Then as the battle goes well, things seem to get a little easier. Your plans seem to come together better, and your opponent seems to be reacting less quickly. All of this

comes from the relatively simple rules.

If FG has a failing, it is in the lack of doctrinal differences. The various militaries of the world have radically different doctrines. The Gulf War was an excellent example of this phenomena. Even though the Iraqi military relied heavily on Soviet equipment, they did not adopt Soviet doctrine. Soviet doctrine emphasizes constant mobility and concentration on points of maximum importance. The Iraqis developed a very static doctrine during the Iran-Iraq war. This doctrine was developed to oppose the largely infantry forces they opposed. When this doctrine was used against a more able opponent, it failed miserably. In part this failure occurred exactly because the Soviet equipment was designed to exploit a radically different doctrine.

There is no mechanism to capture this type of difference. In fairness, I have only seen two game systems that could do it. FG uses the more traditional approach of giving one side lesser capabilities of the same type. For example, the Israelis generally have better command and control ratings, and more and better capabilities. This mechanism captures some of the differences but not all of them.

This failing should not belittle the design. FG still offers much. I would say that it is the best of the current batch of modern period games. Unfortunately, there are no modern period games currently published, if you discount the rash of Gulf War inspired games. FG provides an opportunity to understand how the various elements of modern war work together. ■

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The Role of Hobby Clubs in Game Development

After taking a hiatus from the hobby for most of the 1980s, **John Kranz** re-entered wargaming with a vengeance. He founded the Phoenix (AZ) Historical Simulations Group in 1990 "just to see if there were any gamers at all left in the area." The rest is history; the Group now has well over 100 members. John also was the main inspiration behind the club's newsletter, **The Phoenix Historical Gamers Journal**. He is currently living in Switzerland, where he is Country Manager of Apple Computer Imaging Products. He can be reached via GENie (his address is, appropriately, SWISS.GAMER) and on AppleLink under KRANZ. In the past few months he has forged ties with the European wargame community, the fruits of which have already begun to appear in *MOVES* and will continue to be found in these pages and in *Fire & Movement*.

Ulrich Blennemann's contribution to the topic is one more indication of the bridge John is helping to build between the Old and New World in wargaming. Ulrich is completing a Masters degree in history at Ruhr University-Bochum in Germany, and has become John's firm and fast ally in playing and writing about games. He is president of the Gesellschaft fur historische Simulation—GHS (Society of Historical Simulation), the German board wargaming association. This organization has 130 members located in Germany, Austria, France, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. Mr. Blennemann is also a game designer (his *Verdun* is scheduled for publication in *Command* magazine) and a veteran game developer and playtester.

Back on this side of the Atlantic, club notable **John Leggat** offers a third perspective on the topic. John is editor of *Lines of Communication*, official monthly newsletter of **Le Marshalate**, a game club celebrating its fifteenth year of operation and headquartered in southern New Hampshire. A charter member of **Le Marshalate**, John moved to California, but is still active in the club and can be reached at 1222 Calle Las Trancas, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360. He can also be contacted on the GENie computer network at J.LEGGAT1 or CompuServe at 74716, 1106. Although Mr. Leggat concentrates on the club's experience with the late lamented Simulations Publications, Inc. (SPI), his observations and criticisms remain very relevant to board wargaming in the 1990s.

All three articles explore how club playtesting is currently structured and how it can be improved upon. All the authors are refreshingly clear and to the point. You will note that at times the authors seem to be talking directly to one another. This is due to the fact that drafts were passed between the authors to allow them to respond to the others' thinking. This is something I will continue to experiment with in *MOVES*, to provide more pointed, in-depth discussion of issues and games. I also urge all those involved or interested in playtesting to pay close attention, and to comment freely. Your letters will be published in *MOVES*, probably as an Editor's Roundtable on the subject.

UNSUNG HEROES WAITING IN THE WINGS

by John Kranz

There is an overlooked aspect of the game industry which has had an impact on many of the boardgames we own today that goes far beyond the small numbers of people involved in the process. This could refer to game designers and developers, of course, but it does not. During various stages of game development, these creative people turn to this often underutilized yet valuable resource when it is time to put a game under design to the test—or rather, the playtest.

This resource is the various game clubs across the United States and internationally which have conducted in-house or “blind” (remote-location) playtesting for game publishers, a trend which began in the 1970s during the boom-years of the gaming industry when SPI was king. Today game clubs can fill the void left by SPI’s demise as an excellent source of experienced gamers for playtesting purposes.

Common Pitfalls to Playtesting

From its inception, playtesting has fallen into two standard formats. “In-house” playtesting normally occurs under the direct guidance and supervision of the game publisher. [*The term “publisher” covers game designer, game developer, or both for purposes of this article - ed.*]. “Blind” playtesting is conducted by the playtesters themselves or a designated third party and is not under the publisher’s direct control. The amount of in-house or blind playtesting will vary depending upon the tastes and resources of the individual publisher. For the sake of convenience and cost reduction, many publishers will often bring playtesting in-house within a closed circle of gaming acquaintances developed over the years. Of course, publishers lacking sufficient local gaming contacts or those

located in geographically remote areas will naturally tend to place an emphasis on blind testing.

There are clear dangers with both approaches. In-house playtesting places the publisher right in the middle of the playtest process. This gives him enormous power to influence the process, which will actually hinder honest and adequate playtesting. For example, the publisher should not be there to “hold the hands” of playtesters while they attempt to understand and apply the game rules. Otherwise, rules completeness is not being properly measured and ambiguities will persist right through to the final product. Of course, once a rules problem or ambiguity exists, the publisher should clarify such instances, *but only after taking notes to make sure the ambiguity is actually corrected in print and not overlooked.*

The Global War playtest conducted by SPI in the mid 1970s provides an ideal object lesson to those who think in-house playtesting is a cinch and involves little or no organization. During in-house playtesting, the developer noted that everyone really was enthusiastic and excited with the overall game. It looked like a winner. Unfortunately, the developer did not realize that many of the playtesters were adding their own rules to improve the game—rules which were never incorporated into the final published game! The lack of attention and detail on the part of the developer (as well as the playtesters for not keeping the developer informed), serves as an example of how improper playtesting can impair the final product. Thus, in-house playtesting can offer a clear advantage for the publisher, but only when approached with great care. Whenever possible the publisher should remain in the background as an “observer” who

takes notes and only rarely asks questions or umpires disputes.

The obvious disadvantage or danger of blind playtesting, on the other hand, is the potential for a lack of communication between the publisher and group conducting the test. Obviously, the publisher will not be present to view the playtesting, so it is the playtest group’s responsibility to keep the game publisher informed of the proceedings at all times. I gather that some blind playtesting has amounted to little more than the publisher sending out a game to be tested and never hearing anything back of significance regarding the playtest. The old saying “no news is good news” has absolutely no place in playtesting! Several games collecting dust in my closet are testimony to this fact. This is why well-organized game clubs should prove superior to casual players in the blind-testing process.

Clubs And Testing: New Recipe Needed

How has club playtesting been structured since the 1970s, and has it always been a recipe for success? As far as structure is concerned, an individual member of a game club will commonly approach a game publisher offering assistance for playtesting of designs currently under development. Sometimes the offer is reviewed and approved by the club, sometimes it “signs on” if the publisher responds favorably. Rarely if ever do game companies approach clubs. When the publisher accepts the offer, it sends out the playtest materials, generally consisting of a single map copy, counters (many times uncut and unmounted), and rules manuscript. During playtesting, the game club will often contact the publisher when rules ambiguities exist, including further input at times regarding various aspects of the game.

Although this is often the standard practice followed today, it is no recipe for success. This process has many shortcomings which need to be studied and improved upon if the game publisher wishes to raise the quality of the playtesting being conducted, something that will certainly have a major (even

decisive) impact on the overall quality of the game.

What the Publisher Can Do

As touched upon earlier, the game publisher certainly needs to do more than simply send out playtest materials. Getting playtest materials out the door is no time for the publisher to pat oneself on the back, thinking that the primary job has been accomplished and the rest is up to the game club to accomplish. If anything, the publisher's work has just begun.

Rarely do I hear of game publishers sending out a playtesting "packet" consisting of more than just the nuts-and-bolts of the game to be tested. This certainly lends the term "blind" to blind-playtesting. In this case the game club will lack an understanding of the designer's intent in the game under review, and how they should approach the testing as a group. The publisher needs to include, *at an absolute minimum*, the following materials from the onset:

- The overall design philosophy of the game
- Notes on particular rules cases or game situations which need special attention, with reasons why.
- Historical references used and recommended readings for the playtest group to develop a better understanding of the historical situation concerning the game.
- A simple check-off list or form to be completed and submitted by the game club to make sure certain key items are not overlooked during the playtest.

Now, how many game publishers out there have provided any of these materials? How many game clubs out there would like this type of information before venturing into playtesting a game for a publisher? This is simply a case of a lack of information and structure which can limit the effectiveness of any club playtesting conducted. Sure this may sound like a lot of work, but since when has club playtesting ever been otherwise. More importantly, without sufficient investment in every step of game design and development, how can the publisher rest assured that the game is the best it could have been? To me, it is simply a matter of getting something out

of an entire process that reflects what has been put into it. For those publishers who have created some truly unplayable dogs who still do not get the point, simply remember the following bit of wisdom from the computer world: "Garbage in, Garbage out."

Of course, this only begins to scratch the surface of the problems and challenges involved here, and I hope that other commentators will discuss this further. The main point is that there is certainly more the publisher can and should do to help improve the overall club playtest process. For instance, the publisher should get to know the make-up of the game club doing the playtesting. Who are the individuals? What is their overall gaming experience? (Some game clubs have a combined gaming experience of 300 years or more among their members!) What games have they played which may cover the same topic as the game being playtested? Answering these questions is vital to maximum two-way communication, and communication is most definitely the key to playtesting of any kind, particularly the blind variety.

Today's personal computing technology can also play a role in club playtesting, if it is available to the parties involved. The game club and publisher may consider communicating to each other via electronic mail using any of the popular Consumer Electronic Bulletin Boards, such as GENie or Compuserve. 3W's *Arabian Nightmare* published in *S&T* No. 139 is a prime case in point. Practically all communications among the playtesters and the publisher were conducted via GENie. Although this first plunge into doing game development by network was not a total success, it remains a fine testament to how today's computing technology can enhance communications and improve the blind-playtesting process, particularly when the aggressive deadline set by the publisher and the events of Operation Desert Shield are taken into account. [*The game was conceived in late August 1990, just days after the invasion of Kuwait, and completed in late October, with publication just after Christmas - Ed.*]

I pity the publisher who dares to blame playtest groups or individuals for contributing to faulty game design or

incomplete rules. A quality product is a direct result of quality control, which simply must be left in the hands of the publisher. Often publishers do not provide sufficient time for playtesting their designs. In some cases, they knowingly set deadlines too short to allow for proper development, thus treating the complete exercise as a ritual that must be endured instead of mastered.

Rules of Thumb for Game Clubs

Having climbed on the backs of publishers for lack of quality when it comes to playtesting, it is time to examine the other side of the equation. What about the responsibilities of the game club to provide the appropriate setting for giving a game the most thorough playtest possible? Here are some ideas for the game clubs to consider.

Rule #1: If, FOR ANY REASON, you feel your game club may not have the resources or sufficient interest to conduct a thorough playtest which will span several weeks to several months; do not bother approaching the publisher. Any reduction of participants during the course of playtesting would likely produce an incomplete playtest.

Rule #2: Make the playtest an ENJOYABLE undertaking for all members involved, because it's going to entail a lot of work for all the club members. Try to arrange some extra social gatherings to allow players to step away from the intensity of the playtest maps and to discuss the design in general.

Rule #3: Assign someone to record or collate all rules questions, observations, and comments which need to be addressed by the publisher.

Rule #4: Hold a General Meeting in which the various playtest participants can voice any general concerns they have or gaming situations they would like to experiment with. Other club members not directly involved in the test can ask questions and make comments, which will give the testers a chance to respond to "outside opinions" and perhaps shake them out of any ingrown thinking and conceptual barriers that might have developed within the dynamics of the test.

Rule #5: Focus on play balance in regard to scenario victory conditions. If a trend

is emerging in which one side seems favored, be sure to make the publisher aware of this. Either the rules, the victory conditions, or both must be changed.

Rule #6: Provide input on needed playing aids. Not only the publisher but the gaming public will be thankful. More needs to be done to make boardgames user-friendly. Recent S&T magazine games are good examples of how well-thought out play aids can enhance a games' overall playability.

Rule #7: If you have some ideas regarding game design or rules mechanics, don't be shy—feel free to submit them. However, keep in mind that the rules provided by the publisher need to be carefully studied. Your game club hasn't been asked to design a game; but rather to playtest the rules as originally conceptualized. How involved the game club gets in incorporating their own rules and presenting them to the publisher will simply become a matter of give-and-take between the publisher and game club.

Rule #8: Allow members to provide

input on ways to improve the playtest underway. There should always be time and room for improvement during the actual playtesting process.

Rule #9: Submit a mock game review of the game as if it had been already been published. Try to predict the various complaints and concerns the consumer will have with the game. Play devils' advocate for the game publisher. While definitely an optional feature of a playtest, this could be an interesting project for club members, and may prove to be an invaluable "reality check" for the publisher.

The Final Analysis

It is the publisher's duty to provide a quality product, as they are the ones ultimately cashing in on consumer dollars or suffering the consequences of failing to give players their money's worth. Publishers should not bother trying to pass the buck by blaming playtesters or the strange alignment of the stars for one's own failure to take full charge of the production process. It comes

down to Quality Control (QC) and investing the time and effort needed to improve the currently shaky playtesting process. Many game companies have shown great initiative in improving the graphic design and quality of their games. Now it is time for all publishers to understand that other aspects of game design of equal or greater importance should be improved upon as well. Even the most visually stunning game that cannot be played is like a turkey dressed up in peacock feathers.

There are a wealth of game clubs out there which have an interest in conducting playtests and are fully capable of doing so under the proper circumstances. It is my hope that publishers will not turn their backs on this excellent resource for effective playtesting, and that attention will be placed on making improvements to the overall process by both sides. In the end, the publisher and game club playtesters are not the only winners when working well together. When a gamer can purchase an excellent game design, everyone becomes a winner.

GAME CLUB PLAYTESTING: THE VIEW FROM EUROPE

by Ulrich Blennemann

First, let me tell you a little bit about game clubs in Germany as compared with those in the United States. Since there are simply too few gamers in Germany to justify local gaming clubs, the Society for Historical Simulation (GHS) caters to gamers across Western Europe. One does not find biweekly or monthly meetings going on in a group this widely dispersed! Instead, we hold regional gaming conventions twice a year, including "Hexacon," our annual GHS gaming convention. These events are well-attended since it's the only opportunity for all our members to meet for a weekend of intensive gaming and to manage organizational affairs.

Our first game club playtest occurred in 1987. At this time, Ty Bomba was stationed with the US Army in Germany, and he attended our first annual Hexacon game convention. Since he needed playtesters for his soon to be published game for *Strategy & Tactics* magazine number 118, *The Tigers Are Burning*, he asked our group if we would like to become involved in playtesting. We were eager to do so. Initially, Thomas Scheben and myself were selected as game developers. We received two playtest copies of the game and recruited several GHS members who were residing near our homes, in order that we could also arrange face-to-face playtest gaming sessions. We recruited those

members who expressed a strong interest in playtesting, and who also had an interest in the topic which the game covered. Being a World War II Eastern Front game, a popular gaming topic in Germany, we were able to recruit several experienced gamers.

With *Tigers*, we balanced the two basic types of playtesting described by John Kranz in his article. Each playtester would spend some sessions playing the game "blind" outside of our direct supervision, and some "in-house." In the latter type of test, Thomas and I would either playtest the game with our club members or simply watch a game under progress and take notes as questions arose. Our playtesters were asked to submit written reports to us detailing the blind sessions they had played and what areas of the game, in their opinion, had to be revised. Every two to three weeks, Thomas and I would compile these reports as part of our "developer's reports" that we sent to Ty Bomba. This format seemed to work quite well. The designer was not only kept up-to-date regarding the playtest under progress,

but we as playtesters could expect regular communications with the designer on various points we had raised. Our first taste of group playtesting has proven quite addictive since we now enjoy receiving playtest projects on a regular basis.

Based on my own personal experience with the GHS, game clubs are certainly well suited for playtesting purposes. Nowhere else can you find so many dedicated and interested gamers. However, it is important that game publishers organize some blindtesting of their games to avoid any nasty surprises when the game finally finds its way to print. Otherwise, a publisher could fall victim to a similar fate as described in John Kranz's accounting of the in-house playtest for SPI's *Global War*. It is nice when the designer and/or developer is available to answer questions immediately for playtesters, as long as they also remember to keep notes on points raised during playtesting that will be addressed before the final game is published.

What Needs to be Done?

In a standard playtest, one receives a rules draft, map, and counter manifest. When I begin a playtest, I expect to receive reasonably complete rules from the designer. I do not view my job as playtester as including the role of rules editor, and it is important for publishers to keep this in mind. The rules certainly do not need to be a work of art, since this is the rules editors' job anyway, but without a working set of rules, there is not much that a playtester can do. I consider rules completeness one of the most important aspects for proper playtesting. Getting playtesters bogged down in trying to help a designer complete the rules to a game certainly does not make for a very effective use of playtesting. If the rules are not ready, then the testers should send them back to the publisher with their comments and questions for more work. Only when this situation does not occur is it time to begin actual playtesting. The other playtest components (maps, playing aids, counters, etc.) don't have to be of extraordinary quality; functionality is the key.

The game publisher or designer must give each playtest group sufficient time

to study and playtest the game enough to solve questions and problems that appear rarely during unusual game situations. I like to see playtest groups receive at least six months for playtesting purposes at an absolute minimum, although more time would be of even greater benefit for everyone involved. I do understand, however, that most publishers are under pressure to release new titles for cash flow reasons. Balancing playtesting against the race to get games published is a difficult task for most game companies, particularly when one considers the pressure on publishers to release a product at key times when consumption is highest (Christmas, the summer ORIGINS national game convention). There's nothing more frustrating than receiving an underdeveloped game which was rushed through simply to benefit from direct sales to the consumer. In the end, both the consumer and ultimately the game company will suffer when releasing underdeveloped games for such reasons.

Contact Means Everything

Communications between publishers and playtesters are critical for proper playtesting. The playtest groups should feel welcome to send as many playtest reports as they wish to the publisher—a common occurrence when the publisher seems responsive to a playtest groups' comments. The publisher or designer must be sure to provide sufficient feedback regarding playtest reports submitted by playtesters. Not doing so needlessly decreases the potential results and effectiveness of the work performed by the playtest group.

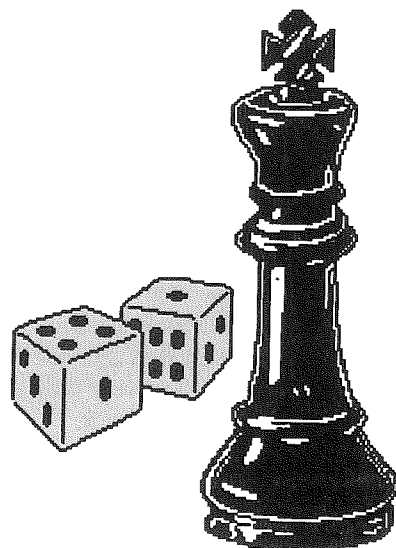
Quality Before Quantity

One does not need a lot of playtesters to have a game playtested extensively. Quality not quantity of playtesters is the key. Players should not be too impressed if they see ten to twenty names listed as playtesters in the game credits. Nothing is guaranteed. Two to four quality playtesters who are really devoted to their work and invest a lot of time to good effect should suffice. Moreover, it is much easier to communicate with just four gamers rather than twenty. I know that it is very difficult for publishers to determine which players are the really

devoted ones, although this will become fairly apparent as the playtesting process proceeds.

I think John Kranz is absolutely correct that publishers/designers not only should send out the rules, maps, and counters but also include some design notes describing the "philosophy" of the designer and a short bibliography. A detailed description of how the playtesting process should proceed, a deadline, and how often reports have to be submitted is also a must. Finally, I find John's idea of writing a "mock game review" of a playtest game an intriguing one. In my opinion, such a review could really point out the strengths and weaknesses in a game design currently under development.

Although I believe that the quality of playtesting has increased in the last few years, it can still be improved. If publishers and designers take a close look at John's article and really try to incorporate some of his observations into their playtest practices, we can all benefit.



Doing It Right With Game Clubs

by John Leggat

"Le Marshalate" of southern New Hampshire undertook its first official playtesting in 1979 for Joe Balkoski, designer and developer of SPI's *Patton's Third Army*. The initial outing was probably our club's best for SPI: the game had no errata, and I still rate it among my all-time favorite games. The seven-member playtest group also worked on two sequels in what became known as the "Westwall Series," *Operation Grenade* and *Sicily: Race for Messina*. Then came the *Battle of Monmouth*, the one truly set-piece battle of the American Revolution, and *Task Force*, the precursor of the "Fleet Series" published by Victory Games. Finally, the club participated in the development of Victory Games' *Cold War*. All the games we tested were published by SPI or VG between 1979 and 1981.

Although our club was relatively successful in serving as a playtester for these SPI games, the process was characterized by a single and unfortunate recurring theme: rushing games into publication. Around the time of the Iranian hostage crisis and the deep economic recession that followed, SPI entered a period of financial crisis that ultimately led to its collapse. Flat or declining sales due to hard times (plus the advent of video and computer games) led the company to emphasize cash flow and speed things up dramatically. The high ambition of the mid 1970s steadily turned into mounting desperation. This caused those in charge to confuse quantity with quality, or at least to ignore the issue in order to get more games on the market. Designers and developers came under severe pressure to increase output. The crush of SPI's game schedule resulted in poor planning, not enough time for effective development, and very little attention to our playtest feedback.

Despite these problems, it was a fascinating experience and one from which my fellow club members and I derived much benefit. We did most of our testing

for Joseph M. Balkoski and Eric Lee Smith, and it was a great experience working with two such top-notch designers. The experience and insight we gained in these years form the basis for most of the observations which follow.

What is a playtester?

Simply put, it is a gamer who volunteers time to play and provide feedback on various aspects of a game under development. For the most part, the publisher values the playtester for gaming experience and objectivity, not historical competence, although most of those involved like to think of themselves as experts on one or another aspect of military history. Club members naturally tend to form sub-groups with particular interests, and it is one or more of these that forms the core of any playtest. Ideally, each playtest session should have a leader who can organize the players and fully document the results for the designer and/or developer. This is especially important with "blind" testing which is done in a remote location where the designer or developer is unable to witness or monitor the testing. Since the collapse of SPI, "blind" testing seems to have become more important in the hobby as publishers have become scattered across the country, sometimes in relatively inaccessible locations when compared to the "good old days" when most of the action took place in mid-town Manhattan. Although no statistics exist, it may well be that blind testing has pulled even with or perhaps even surpassed the "in-house" variety.

A good playtester is one who understands his role and stays within the boundaries set by the higher powers that be. Working as a subordinate part of a team with the designer and developer can yield an exciting product of high quality that will be a commercial success. A good playtester responds to the needs of the designer/developer and supports the total effort on a committed and timely

basis. For their part, good designers and developers recognize the value of playtesting and work diligently to make it a key part of the development process. Within the general framework of playtesting, there are four major responsibilities or functions, which are covered in descending order of importance in the sections that follow.

I. Play Acceptability and Balance

The single most important function of a playtester is to play the game and provide objective criticism and subjective opinions about the completeness, excitement level, feel and balance of the game. Good playtesting involves extensive play and, where possible, this play is conducted by a number of different playtesters over a four to eight week period, depending on the project schedule. It is especially important that the playtesting is carefully and meticulously recorded and sent to the designer/developer in accordance with the agreed-upon schedule. Written feedback should document each game played and include:

- Dates of Play
- Opponents/Sides
- Scenarios and optional rules
- Set-up (if not completely set by scenario)
- Strategy for each side
- Tactics of play
- Turn-by-turn details - the more, the better!
- Outcome, compared to Victory Conditions
- Time required to play each turn, plus total per game
- Summary comments and recommendations

Each tester needs to make every effort to communicate all issues and concerns to the playtest leader. For this reason alone, the leader should not be an actual player. The leader in turn must absorb as much detail from the course of play as possible. Unusual situations such as special battle situations and outcomes,

table results which lead to unusual conditions, and the like must all be noted down. This makes keeping a written record an absolute necessity. In some cases, where the playtester has a good grasp of the historical situation, input may include comments about the historical accuracy of the simulation. Usually, however, a competent designer has conducted research that takes him far beyond the understanding possessed by playtester. It is the playtest leader's job to note down all the comments made by self-proclaimed "buffs" and let the designer/developer make the final judgment. Once the session is over, the leader should review and rewrite the material as soon as possible, so that it can be rendered as accurate and informative as possible for the designer/developer who must interpret and apply the results.

II. Rules Editing

The second most important function of a playtester is to serve as an independent checker of the rules of the game, including charts, tables and other play aids. The best rules critics meticulously read and re-read the rules, looking over all details, checking for completeness, and noting any ambiguities or contradictions. Also, they may suggest ways of simplifying the explanation of a rule. Editing can be done early in the playtesting, since it often precedes play of the game. The more "eyeballs" that can be put on the rules early in the playtesting, the better. It is important to have somebody willing to organize rules feedback so that it can be clearly understood by the developer. The playtest leader ought to do it, or delegate the task to someone else and make the fact known to all the testers. Feedback should be positive and action-oriented, as in the following format: "Rule 4.2 seems to contradict itself. Should be changed from [X]... to [Y]....". Avoid comments like "Rule 4.2 makes no sense and must be in error. Fix it." Why make this the second priority? Because even the best "rules lawyer" will surely alter the comments made once play actually begins. The feedback ought to be withheld from the designer/developer until actual testing begins. This reduces the risk of confusion within the rules, and renders the

playtest groups' report clearer and more decisive.

III. Check Scenarios

In most cases, a new game has a number of scenarios, frequently ranging in difficulty and size from introductory to tournament/campaign level. Oftentimes, it appears that scenarios in published games have been constructed without any prior testing, leaving it for the customer to discover what is going on. In the worst cases, incomplete scenarios can make a game unplayable due to "showstopper" errata, or not worth playing because they completely favor one side over the other. To prevent such disasters, the playtesters must endeavor to play all the scenarios (or at least the ones specifically assigned by the designer/developer) as much as possible, and assemble the following checklist:

- Setup complete and correct
- Victory Conditions properly defined
- Balance of play reasonable
- Strategies used by players, including those that did not work

IV. Recommend Design Changes

Usually, the last thing that the designer/developer is interested in is another "expert" giving advice about game design. However, a playtester who has done a good job of performing the first three functions is entitled to make recommendations for the designer's consideration.

Why Can Game Clubs Do It Better?

Playtesting is a worthwhile and enjoyable experience that can lead to the publication of a great game when it is done right. The process demands the closest possible teamwork and communication between designer, developer, and testers. This is where a game club can offer publishers a big advantage. Since club members usually know one another and are frequent opponents, they are familiar with their respective skills and interests. For example, in our club, I was the playtesting recorder who had the responsibility for organizing the testing, writing the reports, and communicating with the designer and developer. Others in the club performed essential support activities like rules reading and

interpretation to make sure that every aspect of the simulation made sense. Other club members specialized in trying out various strategies. Still others just played like crazy to get a statistical representation of playability, balance and outcomes. This varied mix of talents and preferences is a tremendous asset when it is important to accomplish a great deal on a tight deadline. By spreading the work around, a club with five to ten members devoted to a game can accomplish in a few weeks what it could take a couple of independent testers months or even years to do.

Despite the inherent advantages of clubs, human nature and busy schedules require that sufficient time must be allowed for the testing to be completed. This is a hard nut to crack for the game designer and developer, who are almost always under the gun to meet deadlines, let alone wait patiently for the results of playtesting to roll in. For that reason alone, playtesting is usually seen as being at the end of the chain and outside the control of the designer/developer. All the more reason why playtesters must execute well and meet their commitments on schedule. If either side does not keep up its end of the bargain, the inevitable result is a product that is not fully developed and is likely to have errors and play balance problems.

The cash flow problems mentioned earlier in connection with SPI may prove to be unavoidable in the board wargame business. If so, then it becomes imperative for publishers to take the fullest possible advantage of those game clubs across the USA and Canada which are willing to playtest games. By spreading out the burden, it may be possible to keep the hobby well stocked both with quality wargames and with publishers who can realize a profit from tight production schedules. Clubs and publishers need to be on closer terms, and it will take efforts by leaders on both sides to bring this about. If this is handled correctly, everyone involved in the process and the players themselves will come out "ahead of the game."

"The Hills of Stanley": A Game Inspiration Nearing Reality

by Mark H. Walker

[We begin an occasional series that takes a behind-the-scenes look at the game design process for what is usually dubbed "Third World" or independent publishers. Others, whether great or small, new or experienced, are encouraged to relate their own stories about designing and developing games. Simply send them to (or call) the Associate Editor of MOVES magazine at the address provided in the Editorial.]

In October 1991, the Walker family set out on a short vacation to a small lakeside recreation facility northeast of Charleston. My wife, one-year-old daughter, and I settled into a cheap waterside cabin for the weekend. Friday night, following the daunting task of bedding down the baby, I sat down to play the "Tank Duel" scenario in GDW's *Battlefield: Europe*. A company of Russian T-80A's were attempting to delay a Leopard II company driving across the board. This is an interesting situation, except for the bland sameness of the tanks. Instead of T-80's, how about two companies of T-55s or T-62s? None existed in the counter mix, but designer Frank Chadwick had supplied the unit values in the back of the *Battle Manual*. Here was an open invitation to do something more than just play by someone else's rules. *I could make them myself.*

Those words started a domino effect which in just over a year's time has brought me to the brink of becoming a game designer. I settled on T-55s and wrote the scenario, then expanded it into a campaign game [see "*Kampfgruppe Pfeiffer*" in *MOVES* 73]. Then I did a Fire Team scenario for *Line of Departure* #4, and a Squad Leader/MBT conversion with scenarios for *The General*. All of the sudden, I was up to my keyboard in this designing and writing stuff!

By now you are probably saying, "Who is this guy and why should I care about his life story?" Well, if I had just started pontificating on the trials and tribulations of wargame design, you probably would have said "Who is this guy and why should I care what he thinks?" I have been around the hobby awhile (about 20 years), but many of you reading this can claim a term of service at least as long. Am I a design pro? Nope. But what I hope to do in this and subsequent articles is share the thoughts and frustrations of a rookie war game designer and provide a working outline of how to design and develop a wargame.

Until recently, my game was unnamed. I toyed with calling it "Falklands Land Battles." I know just what you are thinking: "that's a very catchy title!" Believe me, I shared your impatience and frustration! Those feelings gave me the incentive to keep on racking my brains for a better one. So what do you think of *The Hills of Stanley*? Well, that will do for the time being, anyway. Let's call it Stanley for short. (If you have a cousin by that my name, then you have my apologies ... and pass along my sympathies to him as well!)

Finding a topic

This is the obvious first step, and it shouldn't be too hard. I had several ideas floating around in my head. I made a list of possible topics and then investigated which ones had sufficient material written about them to support research for a wargame. Don't forget that your resources should include a map to serve as a foundation for the playing surface. If you can't find a book with a suitable map, maybe you can find one through the Defense Mapping Agency. I wrote directly to the Falklands and still haven't received one, but I will be able to get along fairly well with substitutes. I chose the 1982 Falkland campaign because it interested me, there was plenty of re-

search material, and it fit into the design parameters I had in mind. Which brings us to....

Defining Goals and Parameters

This involves basic things like:

- How complex do I want this game to be—small and simple or large and involved?
- Who am I targeting—experienced players, beginners, or (somehow) both?
- How long do I want a single match to take—a couple of hours, an evening, a week, half a lifetime?
- What facets of the conflict will I abstract—must the Falklands include sea and air units?
- Which aspects will I present in detail (i.e. what is the desired scale of activity)?
- What are the points or "lessons of history" I am trying to get across?

Before you can answer any of these questions, you must first resolve one other matter that is even more fundamental: the position the game will occupy on the "art vs. science" design spectrum. Those who lean toward game design as a science tend to place more emphasis on empirical data like muzzle velocities, caliber, penetration, range, armor thickness, rounds per minute, etc. Designers who favor "art" emphasize the other side of the coin, the less well documented subjective or "soft" data: psychological weapon effects, morale, leadership, training, chance, and the like. Tobruk (AH) is a good example of the "scientific" approach. *Up Front* from the same company is more "artsy." Most games of course incorporate elements of both styles. You have to understand both the weapon systems, the capabilities of the troops employing them, the effects of fate on those involved, and the quality of leaders present at the battle in order to produce a good, reasonably accurate de-

sign. I look at game and scenario design as similar to writing an interactive novel. The most important criteria of any game I play is, "Does it feel right?" Another way of asking this question is, "Can the game capture the players and propel them into the game/situation/scenario?"

I personally lean toward the artistic side of the spectrum. I feel gun velocities, armor penetration, and so forth do not represent the critical dimension that decides the outcomes of engagements between reasonably well matched opponents. How these and more subjective factors work together to create that all-important "feel" is what matters. Research is certainly important, but intuition and focusing on what you are trying to portray are the key factors to creating a game that others can enthusiastically relate to and profit from.

In Stanley I want to display fundamental differences in unit morale. The Argentines had good weapons, although I am not totally sold on the idea that they had superior firepower. In any event, they certainly outnumbered the British. Yet the British won decisively. This is the key issue that I believe my game should address. The answer appears to lie in the realms of superior leadership, training, and morale. Simply put, when the order was given to fire, more "Brits" squeezed the trigger than "Argies." In Stanley each unit is rated for firepower (both anti-personnel and anti-armor), movement, and morale. Morale represents the sum of a unit's leadership, training, physical and mental conditioning, as it does in real life. Prior to combat, each unit will roll a die cross-indexed against its morale on a "pre-combat morale check table" to determine any modifiers applied to the attack. In other words, the lower a unit's morale, the larger the negative modifier reducing the effectiveness of its offensive fire. This die roll will also be affected by such situational considerations as whether the unit in question is firing from fixed position, assaulting, etc. Hopefully this will show that the Argentine rifle companies seldom put out firepower commensurate with the capabilities credited to them "on paper."

Now that Stanley is firmly placed in the realm of "art" rather than "science," I can begin to answer the other basic

questions. I want to create a fairly simple game with about six pages of rules and playable in one night. By "one night" I mean the few hours between dinner and the local news that a married person with kids thinks of when he hears that phrase, not the endless "all-nighter" in which a college student or convention-goer might indulge. The primary focus of the game will be the land war; naval and air power will be abstracted as support points. In this land war I believe the key factor was the difference in leadership and morale of the two forces, not the technology at their disposal. Most of all I want the game to feel right, be fun to play, and work properly for all but the rawest new recruits to gaming. Are you all tired of errata books longer than the original rule book? I don't think there's an excuse for it—at least none that a little attention to detail and development would not cure.

Formulating the Game Concept

After you decide what the goals of the game will be, you naturally need to figure out how to get there. What will be the vehicle you use to propel your design? This is what I call the basic game concept. It is the blending of a multitude of ideas into a rules skeleton, to be fleshed out as we proceed with additional conceptualization and receive playtest feedback. This framework will include initial parameters such as unit size, map scale, turn length, Combat Results Table (CRT) structure, stacking limits, and the nature of unit interaction (e.g. ranged vs. adjacent or same-hex combat, effect of unit integrity, headquarters effect, unit differentiation, etc.).

What type of CRT will be employed—odds ratio, combat differential, or firepower factors? Will the CRT be bloody or not? Stanley utilizes a firepower CRT similar to Squad Leader (AH). Units can be disorganized, reduced a step, forced to retreat, or a combination of the above. How serious the results of the fire directed at a unit will be often depend on the unit's morale. Hopefully the CRT will demonstrate the differences between the two nationalities. The British in general will be able to absorb much stronger attacks without detriment due to their higher morale.

Units represent rifle and headquarters companies, Milan, MG/Heavy weapons platoons, mortar platoons, howitzer and AA batteries. I'm frankly not sure that I need the AA batteries. With very abstracted air rules they probably won't be necessary for air defense. However, there is documented evidence that some batteries were used in a ground support role. I'll put them in the initial playtest version and let the playtesters decide whether and how to use them.

Game scale is one kilometer per hex and three hours per turn. The scale puts this game into a unique category (I hope). It is not another in the plethora of platoon sized tactical wargames. The majority of combat will take place between adjacent units. The typical rifle company's range is only one hex. I hope this gives the game a classical "move-fight" sort of feel. However, with one kilometer hexes there will still be ranged combat and thus the need for discriminating among unit capabilities. For example, a Milan platoon will have a range of two, allowing it to sit back and provide support for the maneuvering rifle companies. In this way I am aiming for a tactical "feel" in an operational setting.

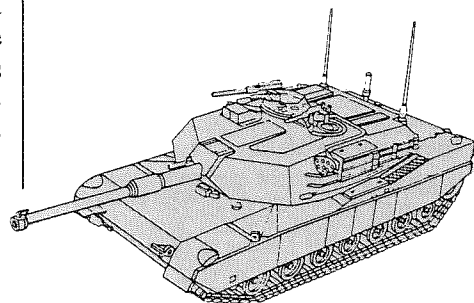
One kilometer hexes do not come duty free! Initially I wanted to put all of East Falkland on the game board. But with one kilometer hexes that would have made a map over 180 hexes long. Two kilometers per hex would still yield 90 hexes. But if I just portrayed the northern area of East Falkland from Goose Green to Port Stanley I might just fit 2km. hexes on a single map. Then the problem of preserving distinct unit capabilities reared its ugly head. Utilizing two kilometer hexes a Milan platoon would have the same range as a rifle company, and a M1A1 company would have the same range as a T-72 company (just thinking ahead here!). My solution (at least so far) is to abandon the idea of depicting the entire campaign and dispense with the map of East Falkland. Instead the game will feature four scenarios (Goose Green, Opposed San Carlos landing, Battle for Stanley, and Counterattack at Fitzroy), each with its own map.

Establishing a "Cornerstone" Unit

A cornerstone unit is the unit that all other unit strengths are based on. There has got to be a baseline, right? At Goose Green 500 British Paras defeated about 1500 Argentine soldiers. How many of these Argentines were maintenance or Air Force personnel? Let's say it would take about three Argentine rifle companies to equal one British Para or Marine company. The typical Argie rifle company should have one third the firepower of a Brit company, right? NOT SO! They actually had more raw firepower. So I decided to give them higher firepower and make the law of averages on the pre-combat morale check table dictate that they rarely would ever use all of it.

My baseline unit became a British para rifle company. All other units would be compared to this one to determine if it

had greater or lesser firepower, morale, anti-armor firepower, etc. The para company was given eight firepower factors, a morale of seven, anti-armor factor of two, and movement of six. The typical Argentine rifle company (due to their superior FN/FAL rifles) had slightly better firepower at ten factors. However their morale is usually only four or five so the effective firepower is normally significantly less than ten. Their anti-armor factors are zero, and movement of five. The lower movement factor is due to poorer physical conditioning and motivation. The Argentine 5th Marine battalion, which gave the Scott Guards such a hard time at Tumbledown mountain is rated higher in morale and movement.



The Hills of Stanley

Goose Green Scenario

British Full Strength											
British Half Strength											
British Cadre											
Argentine Full Strength											
Argentine Half Strength											

Ranged Fire Factor

Close Assault Factor

Range

Morale

1

(4)²

7

Milan

2nd Para

8

Anti-Tank Firepower

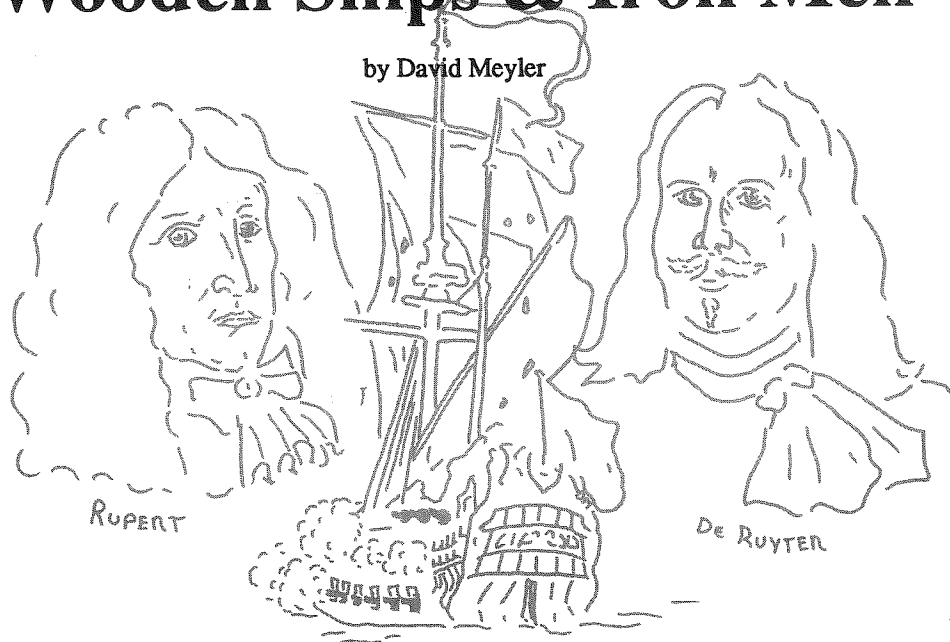
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Movement

Scenarios & Variants

Anglo-Dutch War Scenarios for Wooden Ships & Iron Men

by David Meyler



The two large battles of Sole Bay and the Texel have been split into a number of separate scenarios to allow these battles to be fought on one board, and to obviate the need for restrictive command control rules. With fleets as large as the ones represented, about 200 ships of all sizes on both sides, it was rare for a commander-in-chief to have strict control over more than his own squadron. Indeed, it was not rare for whole squadrons to disappear out of sight, much less out of effective signal range.

Also for playability, all ships of less than 60 guns have been deleted. The focus here is on the development of line ahead tactics, and ships smaller than 60 guns rarely held a position in a line-of-battle. The only exceptions are those when light ships played a distinctive or unique role, such the Spanish galley squadron at Agosta.

The main role of light ships was to screen damaged vessels and tow them out of harm's way. Thus, in the scenarios losses will appear higher than occurred historically, but the overall nature of the battle is not affected. Where a ship is sunk

in the game, in real life it has likely been towed away, but with such heavy damage it will be out of action for some time in any case. (Option: Before rolling on the Destroyed Hull Table, roll one die. On a result of 1-3, the ship has been successfully towed away—remove from the board. On 4-6, procede as usual with the DHT roll. Ships which are towed away count half victory points.)

Lastly, the scenarios cover only the period of heaviest fighting, ending when the historical fleets had exhausted the bulk of their ammunition. Battles often went on for several hours after this, but with much reduced rates of fire and little chance of altering the outcome.

Sole Bay, June 7, 1672: Fighting began shortly after 7:00 AM. The combined Anglo-French fleet was surprised by the sudden appearance of Dutch sails on the horizon. This war was characterized by consistently bad scouting on the part of the allies. Typical practice was to divide a fleet in three squadrons—van, center and rear. In the English fleet these were color coded white, red and blue respectively. Each squadron was usually subdivided into three divisions.

The allied fleet was not in particularly good order, and the sudden onset of the Dutch caused further disorder. The French formed the van or white squadron, under Jean d'Estrees, and he headed southeast for open water, fully expecting the rest of the fleet to follow his lead. The English made up the red and blue squadrons. The latter, under the Earl of Sandwich, made sail for the northeast. The Duke of York (the future James II), commander of the red squadron and overall commander, followed Sandwich. The battle then, broke into two distinct actions.

D'Estrees was held by the Frisian-Zeeland squadron under the redoubtable Adriaen Banckert. He did not close, but was satisfied with conducting a cannonade at relatively long range, while De Ruyter fought the decisive action against the English. D'Estrees, with the wind against him, could not or would not move up for close combat. The firing was intense and losses were not negligible. Superior Dutch gunnery gave them a decided advantage.

Out of sight to the north, the main action took place. The Amsterdam-

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Noorderkwartier squadron under W.J. van Ghent faced off against Sandwich. Shortly after these combatants opened fire, De Ruyter closed with York. The wind stayed light, and with the English coast nearby, there was little chance for maneuver. There was no hesitation to shorten up the range here, often muzzle-to-muzzle and the result was a bloody slugfest.

Van Ghent tried to take his ship, the *Olifant* across the bow of the *Royal James*, Sandwich's flag, to give it a raking broadside, but failed. The *Olifant* was heavily damaged and Van Ghent was killed in a broadside from the *James*, but the English vessel was itself so badly shot up that it fell victim to one of De Ruyter's special fire-ship squadrons. (While still frequently taken into battle, line ahead tactics made it comparatively easy to avoid fire-ships. They were generally only of use in harbors, and their success at Sole Bay owed much to the congested and restricted nature of the fighting here.)

The *Royal James* burned to the water line killing Sandwich and most its 700-man crew. Overall, Dutch gunnery proved decisive. The fighting ended with the onset of darkness and mutual exhaustion. Both fleets reunited during the night and headed back to their respective anchorages. According to contemporary reports, this battle was one of the worst in memory. Human casualties bear this out, even though losses in ships were relatively minor (typical of this time period). The Dutch lost two light ships but suffered 600 killed and 1200 wounded. The Anglo-French's most serious loss was the *Royal James* and its 700 men. Additionally, the allies lost another 700 men killed and 1000 wounded. Allied ships were so damaged that further naval operations that year were not feasible.

The Texel, August 21, 1673: The Anglo-French fleet was now commanded by Prince Rupert, an experienced and competent commander if not particularly lucky. Edward Spragge took the blue squadron, while D'Estrees and the French again formed the white. Rupert thought it prudent to leave his invasion barges in harbor so as not to encumber his war fleet, which sailed for the Dutch coast to seek out a decisive confrontation with De Ruyter.

The Dutch commander, meanwhile, was sheltering his fleet in shallow waters (the aggressive Cornelis Tromp succeeded Van Ghent, and Banckert still commanded the Frisian-Zeeland squadron in the van). Rupert found the Dutch off Kijkduin not far from the main naval base at Texel. It was too late in the day to attack, so Rupert waited for morning.

However, during the night the wind changed in favour of the Dutch, and De Ruyter did not let the chance slip and attacked, in spite of odds of 3-2 against. Rupert, frustrated by De Ruyter's spoiling tactics at the two earlier battles of the Schoonevelt, made sail for open waters hoping to draw De Ruyter far enough away to prevent an easy retreat behind the treacherous shoals of the Dutch coast.

Rupert was not to be disappointed, and De Ruyter pursued hotly with his own squadron of the Maas and supported by the Frisian squadron. This gave De Ruyter a local advantage in numbers. Meanwhile, Banckert, with only the Zeeland division, held off the entire French squadron and for most of the battle prevented D'Estrees from re-joining Rupert. D'Estrees eventually managed to sail through Banckert's line, but by that time the fighting in the center had largely ended, and Rupert had taken a heavy beating.

Neither commander was well served by their rear squadrons. Cornelis Tromp, in command of Amsterdam-Noorderkwartier squadron, was as undisciplined as he was skillful. He was on no good terms with De Ruyter, having been removed from senior command in 1666 due to gross insubordination in the St. James's Day Fight, a chief cause why De Ruyter lost that battle. Spragge, Tromp's English counterpart, was a bitter personal enemy of the Dutch officer from the 1664-68 war. Spragge had boasted he would take Tromp back to London in chains or die in the attempt. The two captains fought a bitter, personal duel, toe-to-toe, ignoring any signals from their respective commanders as they moved farther out to sea. Spragge was forced to abandon his flagship and moved to another vessel, which in turn was so pummeled it had to

SCENARIO CHARTS

The Battle of Sole Bay (also Solebay), June 7, 1672

Scenario 1a "De Ruyter vs. York"

Weather Conditions: Wind Direction 3, Wind Velocity 2, Wind change 4.

Board Edges 5-6 and 4 are considered land and any ships forced to move into the edge are run aground and considered sunk.

Ship Name	Guns	Class	Bow Hex#	Dir Nr	Hull	Qual	Crew 123	Guns L R	Rigg 1234	Pt
English:										
<i>Blue Squadron</i>										
Triumph	74	SOL2	I30	5	12	Cr	444	7 7	777-	25
Unicorn	64	SOL2	K29	5	10	Av	333	5 5	666-	15
Royal Sovereign*	100	SOL1	M28	5	16	El	777	9 9	888-	32
Plymouth	60	SOL2	O28	5	9	Av	333	4 4	666-	14
Mary	62	SOL2	P26	5	9	Av	333	5 5	666-	15
Edgar	72	SOL2	S26	5	12	El	443	7 7	777-	27
Henry	82	SOL2	U26	5	13	El	544	8 8	777-	28
Royal James**	100	SOL1	V24	5	16	Cr	776	9 9	888-	20
Montague	62	SOL2	X24	5	9	Cr	333	5 5	666-	18
Rupert	66	SOL2	Y23	5	11	Cr	433	6 6	777-	20
Warspite	66	SOL2	BB22	5	11	Cr	433	6 6	777-	20
Gloucester	62	SOL2	DD22	5	9	Av	333	5 5	666-	15
Saint Andrew*	96	SOL1	EE21	5	15	El	666	9 9	888-	31
Saint George	66	SOL2	GG20	5	11	Av	433	6 6	777-	17
French Ruby	80	SOL2	II19	5	13	Cr	444	7 7	777-	25
<i>Red Squadron</i>										
York	60	SOL2	KK19	5	9	Av	333	4 4	666-	14
Royal Charles*	96	SOL1	LL17	5	15	Cr	666	9 9	888-	28
Rainbow	64	SOL2	NN16	5	10	Av	333	5 5	666-	15
Dreadnought	62	SOL2	LL20	5	9	Cr	333	5 5	666-	18
Royal Katherine	82	SOL2	MM19	5	13	Av	544	8 8	777-	20
Fairfax	60	SOL2	OO19	5	9	Av	333	4 4	666-	14
Monmouth	66	SOL2	QQ17	5	11	Cr	433	6 6	777-	20
Cambridge	66	SOL2	SS17	5	11	Cr	433	6 6	777-	20
Saint Michael	90	SOL1	UU16	5	14	Cr	554	8 8	888-	27
Prince***	100	SOL1	VV14	5	16	El	776	9 9	888-	32
Victory	82	SOL2	XX13	5	13	Cr	544	8 8	777-	26
Resolution	66	SOL2	TT19	5	11	Av	433	6 6	777-	17
London*	96	SOL1	UU18	5	15	Cr	666	9 9	888-	28
Old James	68	SOL2	XX16	5	11	Cr	443	6 6	777-	20
Dunkirk	60	SOL2	VV19	5	9	Cr	333	4 4	666-	17
Monk	60	SOL2	XX18	5	9	Cr	333	4 4	666-	17
Dutch:										
<i>Amsterdam-Noorderkwartier (Rear) Squadron</i>										
Oisterwijk	60	SOL2	C24	4	9	Cr	322	4 4	666-	16
Amsterdam	60	SOL2	E23	4	9	El	322	4 4	666-	18
Rotterdam	26	FS5	C22	4	4	El	1—	1 1	4444	0
Draak	20	FS6	E21	4	3	El	1—	1 1	4444	0
Wapen van Enkhuizen	72	SOL2	W13	4	12	Cr	433	7 7	777-	24
Olifant*	82	SOL2	I20	4	14	El	544	8 8	888-	30
Justina van Nassau	64	SOL2	K19	4	10	Cr	332	5 5	777-	18
Woerden	68	SOL2	M18	4	11	Cr	333	6 6	777-	20
Pacificatie	72	SOL2	O17	4	12	El	433	7 7	777-	26
Dolfijn**	84	SOL2	Q16	4	14	El	544	8 8	888-	30
Noorderkwartier	60	SOL2	S15	4	9	Cr	322	4 4	666-	16
Komeetster	68	SOL2	U14	4	11	El	333	6 6	777-	22
Gouda*	72	SOL2	G21	4	12	Cr	433	7 7	777-	24
Akerboom	60	SOL2	Y12	4	9	Cr	322	4 4	666-	16
<i>Maas (Center) Squadron</i>										
Groot Hollandia	60	SOL2	W17	4	9	El	322	4 4	666-	18
Provincie van Utrecht	60	SOL2	Y16	4	9	Cr	322	4 4	666-	16
De Vrede	26	FS5	W15	4	4	El	1—	1 1	4444	0
Wapen van London	20	FS6	Y14	4	3	El	1—	1 1	4444	0

be abandoned. While moving to a third vessel, the ship's boat carrying the Englishman was hit, and Spragge drowned.

The battle ended shortly after 7:00 PM. De Ruyter re-united his fleet and withdrew to home waters. The Anglo-French ships were so scattered and shot up, especially the rigging, that the fleet could not re-unite until well after dark. It then limped back to England. The allied forces were too damaged to sail again for some time, De Ruyter still patrolled the coast and there would be no invasion. Unable to maintain such a large fleet, Charles II would leave the war and enter a profitable neutrality. Losses in the battle are not known. The Dutch lost an estimated 500 dead and wounded, with Anglo-French losses considerably higher.

Agosta, April 22, 1676: A French threat against Sicily, then held by Spain, led the Dutch government to send a squadron under De Ruyter to the Mediterranean to support the Spanish. Several indecisive actions were fought, with the French under the able leadership of Abraham Duquesne. The decisive battle took place off Agosta. The Spanish admiral, Corbete, insisted on taking the center of the allied line. However, when De Ruyter closed up to the French, the Spanish ships failed to follow up. The Dutch squadron, outnumbered and split into two, bore the brunt of the fight, with the French gaining the advantage. Due to damaged rigging, however, the French vessels could not prevent the Spanish galleys from towing the disabled ships to safety. Casualties on both sides were about 500 killed and wounded. The Dutch suffered an irreplaceable loss during the fight when De Ruyter was mortally wounded, his legs smashed by a cannon ball—the first and only wound in his long career.

Oland, June 1, 1676: The Danish fleet, under Admiral Juel,

Ship Name	Guns	Class	Bow Hex#	Dir Nr	Hull	Qual	Crew 123	Guns L R	Rigg 1234	Pt
Reigersbergen	72	SOL2	AA14	4	12	Cr	433	7 7	777-	24
Maagd van Dordrecht*	68	SOL2	CC13	4	11	Cr	333	6 6	777-	20
Gelderland	64	SOL2	EE12	4	10	Cr	332	5 5	777-	18
Wapen van Hoom	62	SOL2	GG11	4	9	Cr	322	5 5	666-	17
Westfriesland	78	SOL2	II10	4	13	Cr	443	7 7	777-	25
Zeven Provinciën***	80	SOL2	KK9	4	13	El	544	8 8	888-	30
Eendracht	76	SOL2	MM8	4	13	El	443	7 7	777-	27
Stad Utrecht	66	SOL2	OO7	4	11	Cr	332	6 6	777-	20
Delft	62	SOL2	QQ6	4	9	Cr	322	5 5	666-	17
Waesdorp	68	SOL2	SS5	4	11	El	333	6 6	777-	22
Ridderschap v Holland*	66	SOL2	UU4	4	11	El	332	6 6	777-	22
Alkmaar	62	SOL2	WW3	4	9	Cr	322	5 5	666-	17
Deventer	60	SOL2	YY2	4	9	Cr	322	4 4	666-	16

The Battle of Sole Bay, Part Two

Scenario 1b "Banckert vs D'Estrees"

Weather Conditions: Wind Direction 3, Wind Velocity 2, Wind Change 4.

Ship Name	Guns	Class	Bow Hex#	Dir Nr	Hull	Qual	Crew 123	Guns L R	Rigg 1234	Pt
French:										
<i>White Squadron</i>										
Illustre	70	SOL2	DD13	1	12	Av	444	7 7	777-	19
Terrible*	70	SOL2	DD15	1	12	Av	444	7 7	777-	19
Conquerent	70	SOL2	DD17	1	12	Av	444	7 7	777-	19
Admirable	68	SOL2	DD19	1	12	Av	443	6 6	777-	18
Foudroyant	70	SOL2	FF21	1	12	Av	444	7 7	777-	19
Saint Philippe**	78	SOL2	FF23	1	14	Av	544	8 8	777-	22
Grand	70	SOL2	FF25	1	12	Av	444	7 7	777-	19
Invincible	70	SOL2	HH27	1	12	Av	444	7 7	777-	19
Superbe*	70	SOL2	HH29	1	12	Av	444	7 7	777-	19
Sans Pareil	66	SOL2	HH31	1	11	Av	433	5 5	777-	16
Fort	60	SOL2	HH33	1	10	Av	333	4 4	666-	14

Dutch:

Zeeland-Friesland (van) Squadron

Steenbergen	68	SOL2	S9	2	11	El	333	6 6	777-	22
Zierikzee*	60	SOL2	S11	2	9	El	322	4 4	666-	18
Groningen	70	SOL2	S13	2	11	Cr	433	7 7	777-	24
Oostergo	62	SOL2	S15	2	9	Cr	322	5 5	666-	17
Pro Patria	24	FS5	Q10	2	4	El	1—	1 1	4444	0
Schiedam	24	FS5	Q16	2	4	El	1—	1 1	4444	0
Sevenwolden	76	SOL2	R17	2	13	Cr	443	7 7	777-	25
Walcheren**	70	SOL2	R19	2	11	El	433	7 7	777-	26
Prins Hendrik Casimir	72	SOL2	R21	2	12	El	433	7 7	777-	26
Kalandsoogh	68	SOL2	R23	2	11	Cr	333	6 6	777-	20
Oudshoorn	70	SOL2	Q26	2	11	Cr	433	7 7	777-	24
Oranje*	70	SOL2	Q28	2	11	El	433	7 7	777-	26
Schieland	60	SOL2	Q30	2	9	Cr	322	4 4	777-	16
Wapen van Nassau	62	SOL2	Q32	2	9	Cr	322	5 5	666-	17

The Battle of the Texel (or Kijkduin), August 21, 1673

Scenario 2a "Banckert vs D'Estrees"

Weather Conditions: Wind Direction 1, Wind Velocity 5, Wind Change 5.

Ship Name	Guns	Class	Bow Hex#	Dir Nr	Hull	Qual	Crew 123	Guns L R	Rigg 1234	Pt
French:										
<i>White Squadron</i>										
Foudroyant	70	SOL2	X28	5	12	Av	4444	7 7	777-	19
Terrible*	70	SOL2	Z27	5	12	Av	444	7 7	777-	19
Excellent	60	SOL2	BB26	5	10	Av	333	4 4	666-	14
Invincible	70	SOL2	DD25	5	12	Av	444	7 7	777-	19
Tonnant	64	SOL2	EE23	5	11	Av	433	5 5	777-	16
Reine**	104	SOL1	GG22	5	17	Av	877	10 10	888-	27
Illustre	70	SOL2	II21	5	12	Av	444	7 7	777-	19
Pompeux	70	SOL2	EE20	5	12	Av	444	7 7	777-	19

Grand	70	SOL2	KK20	5	12	Av	444	7 7	777-	19
Sans Pareil	64	SOL2	LL17	5	11	Av	433	5 5	777-	16
Glorieux	64	SOL2	NN16	5	11	Av	433	5 5	777-	16
Orgueilleux*	70	SOL2	PP15	5	12	Av	444	7 7	777-	19
Fortune	60	SOL2	RR14	5	10	Av	333	4 4	666-	14

Dutch:

Van Squadron (-)/Zeeland Division

Eenhorn	70	SOL2	BB32	5	11	Cr	433	7 7	777-	24
Zierikzee*	60	SOL2	DD31	5	9	El	322	4 4	666-	18
Justina van Nassau	64	SOL2	FF30	5	10	Cr	332	5 5	777-	18
Prins	64	SOL2	HH29	5	10	El	332	5 5	777-	20
Wapen van Enkhuizen	72	SOL2	QQ21	5	12	Cr	433	7 7	777-	24
Walcheren**	70	SOL2	SS20	5	11	El	433	7 7	777-	26
Westfriesland	78	SOL2	UU19	5	13	El				
Domburg	60	SOL2	WW18	5	9	Cr	322	4 4	666-	16

The Battle of the Texel, Part Two

Scenario 2b "De Ruyter vs Rupert"

Weather Conditions: Wind Direction 1, Wind Velocity 5, Wind Change 5.

Ship Name	Guns	Class	Bow Hex#	Dir Nr	Hull	Qual	Crew	Guns L R	Rigg	Pt
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English:

Red Squadron

French Ruby	80	SOL2	X15	6	13	Cr	444	7 7	777-	25
London*	96	SOL1	+	6	15	Cr	666	9 9	888-	31
Old James	68	SOL2	+	6	11	Cr	443	6 6	777-	20
Royal Katherine	82	SOL2	+	6	13	Av	544	8 8	777-	20
Triumph	74	SOL2	+	6	12	Cr	444	7 7	777-	25
Royal Sovereign***	100	SOL1	+	6	16	El	777	9 9	888-	32
Henry	82	SOL2	+	6	13	El	544	8 8	777-	28
Victory	82	SOL2	+	6	13	Cr	544	8 8	777-	26
Resolution	70	SOL2	+	6	11	Av	443	7 7	777-	18
Edgar	72	SOL2	+	6	12	El	443	7 7	777-	27
Charles*	96	SOL1	+	6	15	Cr	666	9 9	888-	28
Warspite	70	SOL2	+	6	11	Cr	443	7 7	777-	21
Rupert	66	SOL2	+	6	11	Cr	433	6 6	777-	20
Mary	62	SOL2	+	6	9	Av	333	5 5	666-	15

Dutch:

Maas Squadron + Friesland Division

Prins Hendrik Casimir	72	SOL2	O17	6	12	El	433	7 7	777-	26
Groningen*	70	SOL2	+	6	11	El	433	7 7	777-	26
Oostergo	62	SOL2	+	6	9	Cr	322	5 5	666-	17
Gideon	62	SOL2	+	6	9	Cr	322	5 5	666-	17
Steenbergen	68	SOL2	+	6	11	El	333	6 6	777-	22
Maagd van Dordrecht*	68	SOL2	+	6	11	El	333	6 6	777-	22
Ridderschap v Holland	66	SOL2	+	6	11	Cr	332	6 6	777-	20
Spiegel	70	SOL2	+	6	11	Cr	433	7 7	777-	24
Zeven Provinciën***	80	SOL2	+	6	13	El	544	8 8	888-	30
Eendracht	76	SOL2	+	6	13	El	443	7 7	777-	27
Vrijheid	80	SOL2	+	6	13	Cr	444	8 8	888-	27
Waesdorp	68	SOL2	+	6	11	El	333	6 6	777-	22
Stad Utrecht	66	SOL2	+	6	11	Cr	332	6 6	777-	20
Voorsichtigheid*	84	SOL2	+	6	14	El	544	8 8	888-	30
Alkmaar	64	SOL2	+	6	10	Cr	332	5 5	666-	18
Gelderland	60	SOL2	+	6	9	Cr	322	4 4	666-	17

+ : ships set up directly behind the lead ship in the direction and order indicated.

had just managed to elude a much superior Swedish force under Admiral Creutz. A Dutch squadron led by Tromp then arrived and united with Juel. The combined fleet offered battle to Creutz on June 1. The Swedish fleet, due to an unknown cause, was caught in some confusion. Early in the battle, the flagship *Krona* blew up throwing the Swedes into complete disorder. Thereafter the *Svard* and *Apple* were sunk. It was a crushing defeat, with Swedish casualties at about 1400. The Danish-Dutch force lost about 500 men. For the remaining two years of the war, Denmark was free from the threat of an amphibious invasion.

Victory Conditions

Victory is determined as under rule section XI B. To win a strategic victory, one side must gain one quarter more victory points than the opposing side. (Multiply the lower VP total by 1.25 to determine this victory level.) Otherwise, the player with the most points wins a marginal victory. For the Texel scenario 2a, the French must gain 1.5 more victory points than the Dutch for a strategic victory and at least 1.25 more for a marginal victory. The Dutch win a strategic victory if they simply have more victory points than the French, and a marginal victory if the French have less than a 1.25 advantage in victory points.

For Sole Bay and the Texel, results for all the individual scenarios can be played and compared to determine an overall winner for each battle. For all the Texel scenarios and Sole Bay 1b, a strategic victory is worth 1 point. A marginal victory is worth no points. Sole Bay 1a earns 2 points for a strategic victory and 1 point for a marginal victory.

Flagships are worth bonus points. Divisional flagships (indicated by * on the fleet lists) are worth 5 extra points, squadron flagships (indicated by **), are worth 10 extra points, and the fleet flagship (indicated by ***) is worth 25 extra points.

General Special Rules

- A. Anchoring: allowed in all scenarios.
- B. Reduced Range: Ships at this time carried a wider variety of different sized

cannon than ships of the Napoleonic era. This effectively reduced overall range, thus maximum range is reduced from ten to eight hexes.

C. Korps Mariniers: In 1665, the Dutch created the marines regiment, the first modern body of naval infantry. Thus, all Dutch crews melee at a morale level one higher than current morale. As well, all non-Dutch ships except Spanish galleys must add one to grapple attempt die rolls to represent the otherwise general reluctance to board. Ungrappling is unaffected.

D. Loss of Flag Officers: If a fleet or squadron flagship is demoralized (Critical Hit #7 H) all ships under its command are also demoralized. Fleet flagships command all vessels that appear in a scenario, while squadron flagships command the squadron as indicated (division flagships have no morale effects). If a flagship strikes, is captured, surrenders or is otherwise destroyed, all ships under its command are demoralized as above. A single flagship can cause only one mass demoralization per game, i.e. a flag officer can only be killed once (note this on the ship's log).

For example, the *Prince* is captured, causing a general demoralization. The English recapture the ship, but later still it suffers critical hit #7 H. The *Prince* is demoralized, but no other English ships are affected by the critical hit. If the ship first received the critical hit, this would cause a general demoralization, but its subsequent capture would then have no morale effect.

Note that fleet flagships are also squadron flags, and thus cause the loss of two morale levels to their own squadron (one level for losing the fleet flag and a second for a squadron flag). For all scenarios where a fleet flagship is included, except 1a, this effectively means all the friendly ships on the board will lose two morale levels for the loss/demoralization of the fleet flagship.

E. Maximum Scenario Length: 40 turns.

The Battle of Texel, Part 3

Scenario 2c, "Tromp vs Spragge"

Weather Conditions: Wind Direction 1, Wind Velocity 5, Wind Change 5.

Ship Name	Guns	Class	Bow Hex#	Dir Nr	Hull 123	Qual	Crew	Guns L R	Rigg 1234	Pt
English:										
<i>Blue Squadron</i>										
Cambridge	70	SOL2	R16	5	11	Cr	443	7 7	777-	21
Dunkirk	60	SOL2	S14	5	9	Cr	333	4 4	666-	17
Royal Charles*	100	SOL1	T15	5	16	El	776	9 9	888-	32
Unicorn	64	SOL2	V14	5	10	Av	333	5 5	666-	15
Dreadnought	62	SOL2	X13	5	9	Cr	333	5 5	666-	18
Rainbow	64	SOL2	Y12	5	10	Av	333	5 5	666-	15
York	60	SOL2	AA11	5	9	Av	333	4 4	666-	14
Saint Michael	90	SOL1	CC10	5	14	Cr	554	8 8	888-	27
Prince**	100	SOL1	EE9	5	16	El	776	9 9	888-	32
Saint George	66	SOL2	GG8	5	11	Av	433	6 6	777-	17
Gloucester	62	SOL2	II7	5	9	Av	333	5 5	666-	15
Henrietta	62	SOL2	KK6	5	9	Cr	333	5 5	666-	18
Swiftsure	70	SOL2	LL4	5	11	Av	443	7 7	777-	18
Saint Andrew*	96	SOL1	NN3	5	15	El	666	9 9	888-	31
Lion	62	SOL2	PP2	5	9	Cr	333	5 5	666-	18
Monk	60	SOL2	RR1	5	9	Cr	333	4 4	666-	17
Fairfax	60	SOL2	NN1	5	9	Av	333	4 4	666-	14

Dutch:

Amsterdam-Noorderkwartier (Rear) Squadron

Kalandsoogh	68	SOL2	S20	5	11	Cr	333	6 6	777-	20
Olifant*	82	SOL2	U19	5	14	El	544	8 8	888-	30
Delft	62	SOL2	W18	5	9	Cr	322	5 5	666-	17
Noorderkwartier	60	SOL2	Y17	5	9	Cr	322	4 4	666-	16
Amsterdam	60	SOL2	CC15	5	9	El	322	4 4	666-	18
Akerboom	60	SOL2	EE14	5	9	El	322	4 4	666-	18
Gouden Leeuw**	82	SOL2	GG13	5	14	El	544	8 8	888-	30
Pacificatie	80	SOL2	II12	5	13	Cr	444	8 8	888-	27
Schieland	60	SOL2	KK11	5	9	Cr	322	4 4	666-	16
Komeetster	68	SOL2	OO9	5	11	El	333	6 6	777-	22
Hollandia*	80	SOL2	QQ8	5	13	El	444	8 8	888-	29
Provincie van Utrecht	60	SOL2	SS7	5	9	Cr	322	4 4	666-	16
Wassenaer	60	SOL2	UU6	5	9	Cr	322	4 4	666-	16

The Battle of Agosta, April 22, 1676, Scenario 3 "De Ruyter's Last Fight"

Weather Conditions: Wind Direction 5, Wind Velocity 2, Wind Change 5.

Ship Name	Guns	Class	Bow Hex#	Dir Nr	Hull 123	Qual	Crew	Guns L R	Rigg 1234	Pt
French:										
Pompeux	70	SOL2	DD19	6	12	Av	444	7 7	777-	19
Lys*	74	SOL2	FF20	6	13	Av	444	7 7	777-	20
Magnifique	70	SOL2	HH21	6	12	Av	444	7 7	777-	19
Parfait	60	SOL2	JJ22	6	10	Av	333	4 4	666-	14
Eclatant	60	SOL2	LL23	6	10	Av	333	4 4	666-	14
Sceptre	84	SOL1	NN24	6	15	Av	555	8 8	888-	23
Saint-Esprit***	70	SOL2	PP25	6	12	Cr	444	7 7	777-	23
Saint-Michel	60	SOL2	RR26	6	10	Av	333	4 4	666-	14
Fier	60	SOL2	TT27	6	10	Av	333	4 4	666-	14
Sans Pareil*	64	SOL2	VV28	6	11	Av	433	5 5	777-	16
Grand	70	SOL2	XX29	6	12	Av	444	7 7	777-	19

Spanish:

Neustra Senora d Pilar	64	SOL2	RR15	6	10	Gr	333	5 5	666-	13
Santa Ana	60	SOL2	TT16	6	9	Gr	333	4 4	666-	12
Santiago*	32	F3	VV17	6	5	Gr	222	2 2	5555	9
San Bernardo	20	GY5	PP12	6	3	El	211	1 1	333-*	11
Concepcion	26	GY5	RR13	6	4	El	221	1 1	444-*	12
San Ignacio	9	GY6	TT14	6	2	El	111	1 1**	222-*	8

Dutch:

Spiegel	70	SOL2	II14	6	11	Cr	433	7 7	777-	24
Bendrecht***	76	SOL2	KK15	6	13	El	443	7 7	777-	27
Oosterwijk	60	SOL2	MM16	6	9	CR	322	4 4	666-	16
Gouda*	76	SOL2	TT19	6	13	El	443	7 7	777-	27
Provincie van Utrecht	60	SOL2	VV20	6	9	Cr	322	4 4	666-	16
Steenbergen	68	SOL2	XX21	6	11	Cr	333	6 6	777-	20

*use rowing only, **for basic game fire one broadside every other turn
and for advanced game do not double guns.

The Battle of Oland, June 1, 1676, Scenario 4 "Denmark Strikes Back"

Weather Conditions: Wind Direction 3, Wind Velocity 4, Wind Change 6.

Ship Name	Guns	Class	Bow Hex#	Dir Nr	Hull	Qual	Crew 123	Guns L R	Rigg 1234	Pt
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Swedish:

Cesar	60	SOL2	NN23	3	9	Av	332	4 4	666-	14
Drake	66	SOL2	LL22	3	11	Av	333	6 6	777-	16
Svard*	94	SOL1	JJ21	3	15	Av	766	9 9	888-	25
Sol	74	SOL2	HH20	2	12	Av	443	7 7	777-	18
Saturnus	64	SOL2	FF21	2	10	Av	333	5 5	666-	15
Hieronymous	64	SOL2	P23	5	10	Av	333	5 5	666-	15
Viktoria	80	SOL2	R22	5	13	Av	444	8 8	777-	21
Krona***	124	SOL1	T21	5	18	Cr	877	12 12	999-	35
Apple	86	SOL1	V20	5	14	Av	544	8 8	888-	23
Jupiter	70	SOL2	X19	5	11	Av	433	7 7	777-	17
Carolus	60	SOL2	Z18	5	9	Av	332	4 4	666-	14
Wrangel	60	SOL2	E28	5	9	Av	332	4 4	666-	14
Merkurius	64	SOL2	G27	5	10	Av	333	5 5	666-	15
Nyckel*	84	SOL1	I26	5	14	Av	444	8 8	888-	22
Mars	72	SOL2	K25	5	12	Av	443	7 7	777-	18
Venus	64	SOL2	M24	5	10	Av	333	5 5	666-	15

Danish:

Gylden Love	60	SOL2	FF7	2	8	Av	222	4 4	666-	13
Churprinds*	76	SOL2	DD8	2	13	Cr	444	7 7	777-	25
Christianus IV	60	SOL2	BB9	2	8	Av	222	4 4	666-	13
Anna Sophia	60	SOL2	Z10	2	8	Av	222	4 4	666-	13
Enigheid	62	SOL2	V12	2	9	Av	333	5 5	666-	15
Christianus V***	86	SOL1	T13	2	14	Cr	544	8 8	888-	30
Tre Lover	60	SOL2	R14	2	9	Av	332	4 4	666-	14
Fredericus III	60	SOL2	P15	2	9	Cr	332	4 4	666-	16

Dutch:

Oostergo	60	SOL2	X11	2	9	El	322	4 4	666-	18
Justina van Nassau	64	SOL2	N16	2	10	Cr	332	5 5	777-	18
Akerboom	60	SOL2	L17	2	9	Cr	322	4 4	666-	16
Delft	62	SOL2	J18	2	9	Cr	322	5 5	666-	17
Waesdorp*	68	SOL2	H19	2	11	El	333	6 6	777-	22
Gideon	60	SOL2	F20	2	9	Cr	322	4 4	666-	16



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Playing Your Cards By the Book: Scenarios for Modern Naval Battles

by James E. Meldrum

Since 1980 there have been a number of novels known as "technothrillers" published dealing with hypothetical conflicts between the United States, Soviet Union, and their allies. All of these novels are technically realistic and provide excellent scenario material for wargame scenarios. One of the first authors to write a technothriller was Charles D. Taylor. Five of his novels dealing with modern naval warfare—*Show of Force*, *Sunshine Patriots*, *First Salvo*, *Sunset Patriots*, *First Salvo*, *Silent Hunter*, and *Coke Point*—provide excellent gaming situations for 3W's card game of contemporary naval warfare.

Modern Naval Battles treats modern naval engagements as an abstraction and resolves them as a card game. Use of cards for simulating naval warfare is a perfectly valid idea, since battle line tactics are largely obsolete given developments in modern naval weaponry. In the past naval artillery and torpedoes have been used at medium and short ranges, respectively; these are now becoming secondary weapons, supplanted by aircraft and long-range missiles.

Players using **Modern Naval Battles** as originally published receive their ships in a random manner with the ship cards being dealt from a deck. Naturally, the Russian player will receive only Soviet ships but the U.S. player may receive a mix of U.S., British, or French naval units. While vessels of these different nationalities would probably cooperate, the chances are greater still that all vessels of a particular nationality would continue to operate together. Unfortunately, the game does not include scenarios reflecting this fundamental fact, or simulate specific situations that could be encountered during a hypothetical east/west conflict.

The scenarios included in this article are intended to simulate contemporary naval conflicts portrayed in Charles Taylor's novels. No attempt has been made to duplicate these actions exactly

with respect to the names of the ships taking part, but efforts have been made through the use of special rules to simulate the types of ships participating. Existing game equipment and rules will be used wherever possible. Players will, however, be required to make additional ship cards for simulating Chinese naval shipping.

In these scenarios ship cards will not be dealt from a deck; instead, players will receive specific ship cards from the card mix. Any additional ship cards will be discarded unless otherwise mentioned in the special rules. Depending on the scenario, at the end of a round, players may receive specific ship cards as "reinforcements," simulating additional ships entering the battle zone. All rules from the original game still apply, and additional special rules are used to deal with situations not covered in the regular game rules. Unless otherwise mentioned, all victory conditions remain the same.

The Silent Hunter

One recurring theme in technothriller literature is the idea of a "super submarine." In **The Silent Hunter**, the U.S. Navy develops such a vessel. This super sub is drawn into a clandestine conflict with Soviet forces beneath the Arctic ice cap as the result of an international crisis. The entire scenario takes place beneath the ice.

Ships:

U.S.—Use all U.S. and British submarines (total 3)

Soviets—Use all Russian Subs (total 3)
Special Rules:

- 1) All Soviet subs are Alfa class and all U.S. subs are Los Angeles class.
- 2) The HMS Swiftsure is the U.S. "super sub"; it has all of the same characteristics and values as the Los Angeles except that all ASW rolls made by this ship receive a die roll modifier of 2 and the passive modifier is 2. This ship is worth 28 victory points.
- 3) Any Soviet sub eliminated in combat reappears at the start of the next round as an Alfa class sub. No more than 6 Soviet subs may enter play.
- 4) The U.S. player receives no additional ships.

Victory Conditions: Victory is decided on

the basis of victory points.

Choke Point

Soviet naval forces attempt to enter the Caribbean to aid a pro-communist revolt in Panama while a U.S. Navy task force attempts to thwart them.

Ships:

Soviet—2x SSGN, 1x SSN, 1x CG (Slava), 1x CVHG (Baku), 1x FFG, 6x DDG

U.S.—1x CV (Constellation), 1x BB (Iowa), 3x FFG, 1x CG (Vincennes), 6x DDG

Special Rules

1) As soon as the first Soviet submarine is sunk, it may appear at the start of the next turn as a reinforcement. This is the only ship available to the Soviets as a reinforcement. No further sunk subs may reenter play.

2) The Soviets begin the game with one land based air strike. Victory Conditions: Standard (11.4)

The First Salvo (I)

This scenario is presented in two separate parts which may be played individually or together as a single game. The novel *First Salvo* takes its name from a massive Soviet air attack made on the U.S. 6th Fleet in the Mediterranean at the start of an invasion of Europe. The Soviet fleet in the Med will deal with any survivors. The main problem is that while the initial Soviet attack hurts the 6th Fleet, it is still full of fight. Meanwhile, a U.S. SEAL team kidnaps the commander of the Soviet rocket forces, preventing them from using nuclear weapons. This maneuver, coupled with the U.S. naval presence in the Mediterranean Sea, allows the U.S. and NATO to reinforce Europe and eventually defeat the Warsaw Pact.

Ships:
Soviet—1x CVHG (Baku), 2x CG (Kronstadt, Kresta II), 9x DDG, 1x FFG (Krivak I), 2x SSGN (Charlie cl.), 1x SSN (Alfa cl.)

U.S.—2x CV (Kennedy, Constellation), 3x CG (Ticonderoga, Vincennes, Wainwright), 5x FFG, 6x DDG, 4x CGN (Virginia, Texas, California, Mississippi), 2x SSN

Special Rules:

- 1) On turn one the Soviet player re-

ceives 4 land based air strikes and 2 bomber strikes. On turn two the Soviet player receives 2 bomber strikes.

2) Advanced rule 12.1 must be used.

3) Both U.S. carriers and CGs Ticonderoga and Vincennes must be placed together in the center of the U.S. task force.

Victory Conditions Standard (11.4), except that the Soviet side must also sink both U.S. carriers in order to claim victory; any other result is a draw.

First Salvo (II)

While fighting rages on in the Med, a British task force and a group of Russian submarines fights a battle in the GIUK gap. Ships British player uses all British ships in the game and the Soviet player uses all of the Soviet submarines in the game.

Special Rules:

1) The Russian player receives two bomber attacks on turn one and one bomber attack on turn two.

2) Each Russian sub has a point value of 10 in this scenario.

Victory Conditions: Standard (11.4)
Note: This scenario may be played in conjunction with the first scenario as a campaign game. Play each scenario separately, then total the number of victory points. The player with the largest total is the winner.

The Sunset Patriots

A Soviet plan to seize oil rich areas off the coast of China, together with attempts to decoy the U.S. 7th Fleet into a position where it cannot intervene, is the subject of this novel. The Chinese, however, suspect what the Russians are doing and resist with all available means. U.S. forces manage to intervene successfully to prevent the Soviets from capturing the Chinese oil fields.

Ships:

Soviet—1x CGN (Kirov), 1x CVHG (Baku), 1x CG (Kynda), 1x FFG, 9x DDG, 1x SSN or SSGN

U.S.—1x VN (Nimitz), 3x CGN, 3x DDG, 3x FFG

PRC—2x DDG, 3x DD, 3x FF, 5x SS

Special Rules:

1) The U.S. player controls both the

U.S. and PRC vessels.

2) The U.S. player receives 3 (Chinese) land based air strikes on turn one. Subtract one from all "to hit" die rolls for these air strikes.

3) U.S. and PRC ships may not attack the same targets together; ships of both nationalities must resolve their attacks separately.

4) Players are required to make additional ship cards to represent the Chinese ships and submarines. See the data on Chinese naval shipping at the end of this article.

Victory Conditions: Standard (11.4)

A Show of Force

This novel deals with the consequences of the establishment of a U.S. cruise missile base in the Indian Ocean. The Soviets consider this to be a provocation and send a fleet to eliminate the base. Elements of the U.S. 5th Fleet enter the area in order to prevent this from happening and a gigantic naval battle results. Ships:

U.S.—All ships except BBs Iowa and New Jersey, and CVs Constellation and Kennedy.

Soviet—All ships and subs

Special Rules:

1) Neither side may use either land based or bomber air strikes.

2) The Soviet player receives 40 victory points for sinking the Nimitz instead of 22.

3) (optional) The Soviet player may elect not to use the CVHG Baku and may instead use the U.S. carrier Kennedy to simulate the new Russian carrier Kremlin. Use all values for the Kennedy except for air defense, which is reduced to 3.

4) Both sides may receive reinforcements. All DDG, FFG, SSN, and SSGN units may enter play one turn after they have been sunk.

5) The U.S. player receives the British submarine Swiftsure which is considered to be a Sturgeon class SSN for this scenario.

6) If play proceeds to the fourth round, the U.S. player receives the BBs New Jersey and Iowa, and the CV Constellation as reinforcements.

Victory Conditions: Standard (11.4) except that play ends when players accumulate 240 victory points.

Chinese Ships

There is one navy that figures in Charles Taylor's novels which is not represented in *Modern Naval Battles* as currently published: the Chinese Navy. In order to play the scenario depicted in "The Sunshine Patriots," players will be required to make extra ship cards representing ships of the Red Chinese Navy. Players could use the silhouettes found in books dealing with ship recognition, and follow the format used on the ship cards in the regular game. Players may make up to six cards for each class of vessel.

Chinese Ship Values

Luta Class DDG: Gun = 5"; Missile = B; Point Value = 6

Kiang Hu Class FFG: Gun = 3"; Missile = B; Point Value = 4

Kiang Tung Class FFG: Gun = 3"; Missile = A; Point Value = 3

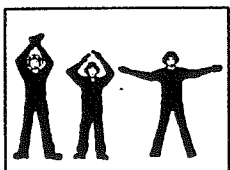
ROMEO/WHISKEY/ESSE Class SS: Torpedos = Yes; Subtract one from all ASW die rolls; Value = 5

Han Class SSN: Torpedos Yes; Point Value = 7

ES5G Class SSG: Torpedos Yes; Missiles = B; Subtract one from all ASW die rolls. Point Value = 7

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Carrier Crew Efficiency



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The Boer War:

Variants and Scenarios

by James C. Gordon

Starting the War in October

The Anglo-Boer conflict began in October 1899, when the Boer commandos laid siege to Mafeking, Kimberly, and Ladysmith. Play begins on turn one instead of turn two. All forces are considered in supply.

Boer deployment at start precedes the three sieges. Place Joubert plus half of the Ladysmith besieging force in Harrismith. Meyer plus the rest of the Ladysmith besieging force deploy in Volrust. Cronje, de la Rey and the Mafeking besieging force start in Klerksdorp. Prinsloo and the Kimberly besieging force begin in Paardeberg. Olivier and Ferreira deploy as per the standard rules.

British forces deploy as per the standard setup with the following exception. The Ladysmith garrison is divided among Ladysmith, Dundee, and Newcastle at the discretion of the British player. All three towns must be garrisoned by at least 5 SPs. The leader White deploys in Ladysmith. No British forces are entrenched at start.

The Boer player can attempt a surprise attack against Kimberly, Mafeking, and/or Ladysmith in October 1899 using a maximum of two-thirds of the SPs which would ordinarily lay siege to the city plus any leaders within reach. Alternatively, the Boers can elect to deploy smaller besieging forces. Roll the die twice. The total indicates the maximum number of SPs which may be removed from the besieging force and still maintain the siege. Those SPs may deploy with any Boer stack. If the Boers do not attempt a surprise attack, the British forces in Mafeking, Kimberly, and Ladysmith automatically defend against a siege when the first Boer force moves adjacent.

Transvaal and Orange Free State Mobilization

The two Boer Republics operated in unison against the common enemy, the British Empire. But the Boers by their nature were independent-minded people and the personalities of the leaders involved were far from united on the conduct of the war.

In October, 1899, the Transvaal had the capacity to field approximately 31,000 mounted troops and 800 artillerymen. The Orange Free State could contribute about 22,000 riflemen and 400 artillerymen. The total artillery force included 75 pieces of various calibre, including many of the most modern German designs. An estimated 4000 Cape Boers rose to support the cause and there were about 4000 foreigners in the Boer ranks. The total force pool numbered about 62,000 men although the Boer commanders rarely had that many in the field at any one time. Approximately 40,000 men went on commando at the outbreak of hostilities.

If the Boers had been a more organized and disciplined military force they might have achieved greater mobilization at start. Prior to the initial deployment in November, 1899, the Boer player rolls the die three times and draws SPs from the Reserve Strength Point pool. These initial reinforcements may deploy with any leader but they may not be deployed anywhere else.

Alternatively, the decentralized authority in Boer society might have delayed the early mobilization of the commandos. After the initial deployment in November, 1899, the Boer player rolls the die three times and must demobilize a number of SPs equal to the combined result. These SPs are returned to the Reserve Strength Pool track and are available for mobilization at a later date according to the standard rules.

Boer Guerrillas in Cape and Natal Colonies

Prior to invading the British colonies during the Conventional War phase, the Boer player determines guerrilla activity in the Cape and Natal colonies. Roll the die once each turn during the reinforcement phase. The result equals the total number of strength points recruited as guerrillas in the Cape and Natal colonies. These SPs cannot deploy in any towns and must deploy within five hexes of a railroad. No more than 3 SPs may deploy together at any time. Once the Boer conventional forces invade either colony, these early guerrilla forces must join with a conventional force stack. Also, no further die rolls are made.

Boer Reinforcements

The Boer player draws reinforcements from the Boer Reserve Strength point pool each turn. The number of SPs drawn depends on the number of die rolls allowed by the strategic situation and control of key cities.

Allow the Boers to roll one die each turn. If the die result is a 6 the player makes twice the number of die rolls for reserve SP allocation for that turn. The Boer player can attempt this doubling die roll each turn but a successful result can only be used twice per year. The player makes the die roll before deciding whether he will use the result that turn.

Boer Guerrilla Leaders

A variable die roll may activate the Boer guerrilla leaders earlier than expected. On game turn 9, the Boer player rolls one die for each guerrilla leader who arrives late in the campaign. The result indicates the number of turns before that man deploys. If guerrilla leaders arrive before the end of the Conventional War they operate as regular commando leaders with stacking limits of 20 SPs.

Boer Attrition

The Boer citizenry were prone to taking unauthorized "French" leave whenever they felt the urge although many returned to the fighting again. Each Boer force is liable to lose SPs unless they engage in a successful attack.

When the Boers suffer a Minor or Major defeat in combat they use one or

two die rolls, respectively, to determine attrition losses. When the Boers score a Minor or Major success in combat they use one or two die rolls, respectively, on the attrition table to add the indicated number of SPs to that force as new recruits.

British Reinforcements

Reinforcements had to travel a long distance before arriving in Cape or Natal colonies. Then there could be a long train ride to the battle front. The exact turn of arrival for British reinforcements is determined by a die roll. On the turn before Strength Points, leaders, and armored trains are scheduled to arrive, roll one die. A result of 1-2 means those forces arrive one turn early, a result of 3-4 means those forces arrive as scheduled, and a 5-6 delays their arrival by one turn.

Supply availability was a constant problem for the British. Roll once each turn to receive supply wagons. A die result of 6 provides one supply wagon. A failed die roll adds 1 to the die roll on the next turn and these modifications are cumulative until the next successful die roll. On the turn following the next deployment of a supply wagon there is no modifier.

Ordinarily, SPs which are lost for any reason return as replacements after four turns. The timetable for replacement arrival can be made variable by a die roll which indicates the number of turns before they become available. Roll separately for each SP.

British Leader Promotion and Demotion

Any British officer who lends his combat modifier to ten combats which result in a Major victory is raised one rank. This promotion can occur only once during the game. Any British officer who lends his combat modifier to five combats which result in a Major defeat is reduced by one rank. If the same officer is involved in five more defeats he is removed from play permanently.

Naval Movement

When British forces are moving by sea they may be delayed by bad weather. Roll one die for each strength point, leader, or supply wagon. On a result of 6 the unit must return to the port of embar-

kation and may not move again that turn. Any sea movement attempt on the following turn is automatically successful. Otherwise, the unit can use regular land movement without restriction.

Artillery Units

The Boer forces included a trained professional artillery corps of 1200 men and about 75 artillery pieces, including the deadly Naval Pom-Pom weapons and the 6-inch "Long Tom" siege guns. A few pieces were acquired in battle and through Portuguese Mozambique. British Royal Artillery forces totalled about 300 guns, in 42 field batteries, 9 batteries of horse artillery, 3 garrison batteries, 2 volunteer batteries, several armored trains, some naval guns, and other units.

Add seven counters to represent Boer artillery. No more than two artillery units may stack with any single leader but multiple leaders may stack together. Artillery units are lost when they are stacked with Boer forces which surrender or are totally eliminated in battle. Guerrilla forces may not use artillery and any remaining artillery units are eliminated at the conclusion of the Conventional War.

British artillery is integrated within forces without the use of individual counters. Each British leader automatically commands artillery points equal to his rank (i.e., the number of stars on his counter). In addition, every multiple of 10 strength points in a force is worth one artillery point. Any British force which is entrenched or occupies a town and includes at least 3 strength points has one artillery point.

Artillery factors add a die roll modifier on offense (+1) or defense (-1) during combat. Both sides may use artillery DRMs. Neither side gains victory points for eliminating artillery. The cumulative modification for all participating artillery units is limited to +2 or -2 before combat resolution.

Leader modifiers

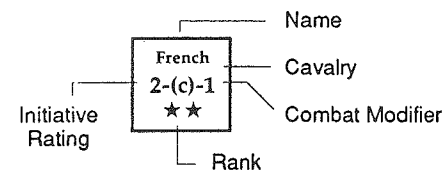
All leaders stacked with strength points may participate in any combat by adding their modifiers. If more than three leaders are involved the player rolls one die after combat resolution. On a die result of 6 any one leader is considered a casualty and withdrawn from play. A second die result determines the length of

time for the withdrawal; #1-5 equals 1-5 turns and a roll of 6 means the leader is killed and may not return at any time. ■

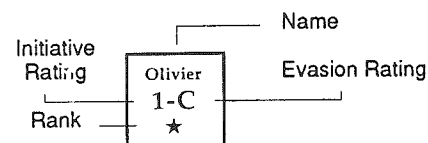
1.6 COUNTERS

Sample Units:

British Leader:



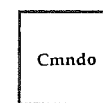
Boer Leader:



Cavalry



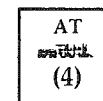
Infantry



Commando



Detachments



Armoured Train



Besiege

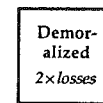


Besieged

Sample Markers:



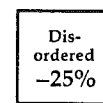
SP Markers



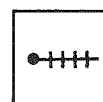
Demoralized



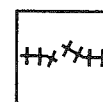
Supply Wagon



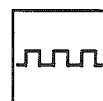
Disordered



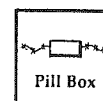
Railhead



Interdicted



Entrenched



Pill Box Limit

FEEDBACK RESULTS: MOVES #69-71

Well, as they say, enough is enough. Feedbacking will return to every issue beginning with a catch-up this issue and then ongoing from here. Obviously, a lot changed from the last review of feedback in MOVES #71 to now so let's take a look at the high and low points, and what conclusions we're drawing.

Our average responder still continues to be in his mid to late 30's, and working in the professional or management areas. He still owns well over 100 boardgames, and is more likely to play computer games now than in the past although, interestingly, it appears that he may be playing computer games less than previously. Average wargaming time still hovers in the 15-20 hours a month range.

Our average responder has continued to increase in optimism about hobby growth and his satisfaction with the hobby is the same. In looking at MOVES, he is very satisfied (a 7.5 approval rating!) with the diversity. Individual articles and their ratings are listed in Table 1.

MOVES #71 was the highest rated issue of the group, although there was a great outpouring of ideas about what could have been done to make it even better. My own feeling is that the next Special Edition should be tailored to some of these ideas and interests so look for feedback questions concerning the next Special Edition. Among the articles, the Basic Wargame Library was the highest rating, despite several responders pointing out that it would have been an even better article if it had been limited to in-print games. From the ratings, it appears readers liked the replays best and so we'll continue to have one every issue, although we have been discussing having the replays be less of a blow-by-blow account and more of discussion of strategies and tactics employed and results.

On the boxed game proposals, everything did well except for The Napoleonic Wars (a series based on Friedland). I'm hoping Joe will do another Napoleonic game in S&T and streamline those rules and charts. Then we'll try again on the boxed game idea. In the mean time, Joe is finishing the World War One Quad (now titled "Over the Top!") and will be doing the French Foreign Legion, 18th Century (co-designed with Larry Baggett), and British Empire groups for our 1994 line-up. John Desch is busy with the Korean War group and Hitler Moves South.

That's it for this time. Thanks for all the feedback and comments. We appreciate your input!

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Clubs

CONFLICT SIMULATIONS CLUB OF CAMP PENDLETON CA
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619/966-1822

Attention all San Diego area gamers! We meet the second Saturday of each month in the multi-purpose room of the Cam Pendleton mainside bowling alley, from 10am to 10pm. All military and civilian personnel are welcome. We play all types of wargames, role playing and even computer games. Contact Bill Howard (President) at 619/439-6782 or Jan Howell (Secretary) at 619/966-1822.

THE EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA GAMING SOCIETY

This club meets on the third Saturday of every month at the George Washington Lodge, Plymouth Meeting, PA from 9am to 3am. We play all kinds of two player and multi-player military and political board games along with the occasional tournaments and auctions. Contact Joel Ferich at 215/825-6969 or Anthony Toglia at 215/853-2671.

THE PENN-JERSEY GAMERS

This club meets on the fourth Saturday of every month at the George Washington Motor Lodge in Willow Grove PA. Call Jim Vroom at 215/245-1580.

Conventions

WINDS OF WAR 93

APRIL 3-4, 1993

This annual event will held at the Airport Ramada Inn at I40 and Rt 68, in Greensboro, NC. Events include 5th annual ASL tournament, 1st annual NC Commander's Call. Contact: Raymond Woloszyn, 7162 Mantlewood LN, Kernsville NC 27284 or 919/996-5677 or GEnie E-mail R. Woloszyn.

HAVOC IX

APRIL 17-18, 1993

This annual event sponsored by Battle Group Boston will be held at Matignon High School. Events include historical miniatures, boardgames, science fiction games, etc. Contact: BG Boston Inc., c/o Harry Carter, PO Box 528, Somerville MA 02143.

HEXACON VII (GERMANY)

MAY 14-16, 1993

This annual event held at the Marksburg Castle in Braubach, Germany is the biggest board wargaming convention and is hosted by Gesellschaft fur historische Simulation (GHS). Events include tournaments in UP Front, Victory at Midway, World in Flames and more. Also featured is a game auction, Dealers Room, open gaming and a guided tour through the Castle. Contact: Ulrich Blennemann, Rosental 76, D-4320 Hattingen, Germany or 02324/24049.

MADISON GAMES CON 93

MAY 15 & 16, 1993

This annual event (formerly Madison Games Day) will be held at the Quality Inn South in Madison WI. Events include wargames, miniatures, boardgames, role playing games and the Great Central Wisconsin Games Auction. Contact: Pegasus Games, 6640 Odana Rd. Madison WI 53719 OR 608/833-4263.

GAMEX 93

MAY 28-31, 1993

This annual event will be held at the LA Airport Hyatt in Los Angeles, CA. All types of family, strategy and adventure board, role playing, miniature and computer gaming. Bargains at the Flea Markets, Auction and Exhibitor area. Also seminars, demonstrations and special guests. Contact: STRATEGICON, PO BOX 3849, Torrance CA 90510-3849 or 310/326-9440.

ORIGINS 93

JULY 1-4, 1993

The annual National Gaming Convention comes to Ft. Worth. It will be held at the Tarrant County Convention Center. Over 200 exhibit booths, hundreds and hundreds of gaming events to chose from, seminars by the industries notables, giant auction and lots more. Write to: GEMCO, PO Box 609, Randalltown, MD 21133.

FEEDBACK QUESTIONS

MOVES

#74

How to use the feedback response card:

Please read the following Feedback questions and give us your answers in the form of letters or numbers. We appreciate and encourage you to make further comments about *MOVES*, specific concerns about the hobby, or gaming in general.

1. What is your age?
2. Do you own or have access to a computer to play computer wargames (0=No, 1=Yes)?
3. How many computer wargames are in your collection?
4. Are you interested in a line of Game Assistance Programs (GAPs) that would manage the bookkeeping aspects of wargames (like resolving a combat in Tobruk at the touch of three keys)?
5. What is your average gaming time per month in hours?
6. Did you obtain this issue by subscription (0) or buy it at a store (1)?
7. From your perspective, is the number of people in the hobby increasing, decreasing, or staying the same (0=steeply decreasing, 5=staying the same, 10=steeply increasing)?
8. How do you rate your satisfaction with the

hobby as a whole (0=worst ever, 5=neither happy nor unhappy, 10=best ever)?

9. Has *MOVES* improved or declined in the last year? (0=significantly declined, 5= stayed the same, 10=significantly improved) Please provide specific comments on how we can improve in the space below.

Please rate the following issues as a whole and then rate the following individual articles (0=terrible, 5= average, 10= excellent).

10. *MOVES*#72 as a whole
11. Combat Resolutions
12. Franco-Prussian War (replay)
13. Napoleonic Battles System
14. Thunderbolt+Apache Leader
15. Thunderbolt+Apache Leader (replay)
16. Freidland Design Notes
17. Scenarios and Variants Section
18. Hobby News: Clubs and Conventions
19. *MOVES*#73 as a whole
20. The War to Prevent All Wars: Case Green
21. Its More Real...Sands of War
22. I Am Spartacus!-CMD #15 (replay)
23. Russo-Turkish War S&T #154
24. Scenarios and Variants Section
25. *MOVES*#74 as a whole
26. Race for Tunis & Bloody Kasserine
27. Stalingrad Pocket Replay
28. 1918: Storm in the West
29. Flashpoint: Golan
30. Theory
31. Scenarios and Vairants Section

Please rate these magazine format options (as mentioned in the editorial) according to the traditional 0 to 10 scale (0=absolutely don't do

this option, 5=neither happy or unhappy about this option, 10=this is absolutely the best option). Shades of dissatisfaction are indicated by using 1, 2, 3, and 4 and shades of happiness are indicated by using 6, 7, 8, and 9. With options #34 & #36, there would be no immediate price increase for the additional pages; we would see if the circulation increased sufficiently to cover the costs.

32. Stay the course. Locate a writer who will be a long-term editor and keep *MOVES* focused on the whole hobby with some alliance to *S&T* and *DG* games.

33. Find a long-term editor, but drop the frequency to quarterly and emphasize *S&T* and *DG* games (half the magazine) with the other half design theory and scenarios and variants (about 12 pages each).

34. Return to the TSR version of *S&T* with a *MOVES* section. 16 more pages would be added to *S&T* with 8 devoted to *S&T* games and 8 to *DG* games.

35. Fold *MOVES* into a monthly *F&M* review and analysis magazine. Continue to coordinate independent writers for the analysis articles.

36. #35 plus add 16 more pages (80 total) to *F&M* devoted to game support material (scenarios, variants, replays, etc.) provided by the game companies. This would be especially valuable to those companies (and their customers) which do not have their own house organ magazines or newsletters.

Please note your comments about what articles, lists, game topics, etc., you would like to see in our 1994 Special Edition.

FEEDBACK RESPONSE • #74

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Further Comments

Please use additional paper or the back of this photocopied form for further comments.

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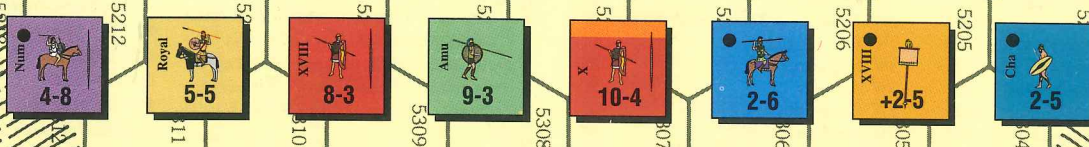
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