

# PHOENIX

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# EDITORIAL

## JOHN SPENCE

Over the years I have watched friends and acquaintances design board wargames and, somewhere along the line, many have decided to produce their own game. Hindsight shows that most make that decision with a total lack of knowledge as to how to go about it and what problems they are likely to meet — or even what it might cost them. I thought I would spend a little time in this editorial skating (and I emphasise the skate) over some of the information I have gathered and to comment on amateur game production as I see it. An in depth cover of the subject would take a 5000 word article so don't look for the detail you want in this short note!

Let us assume that your design has gone through the production mill and now has the look of a real winner to you — smooth, interesting, balanced etc. etc. — is it publishable? Have you considered map size, colours required, complexity, will it be printable, are the counter sheets planned, rule length adjusted to standard length to fit into a reasonable rule book, etc.? O.K. — you have — well why are you wanting to print it. I suspect that most designers, though not all, believe that they will get a reasonable economic return for their hard work and, by producing it themselves, are maximising their return by cutting out the middle man or professional publisher. I suspect that this is the first big mistake the aspiring designer makes since I believe 90% of amateur producers can do no more than just cover their production costs — I am willing to wager that few get an economic return for their work (though am waiting to be corrected by those with more experience than I!). This must be a great disappointment.

What do I base my suspicions on? Well, experience and conversation shows that producing a game has many more costs to it than most people will believe — let us look at a few of them as examples. To get as wide a buying public as possible one must have a professionally produced product so will postulate the production of a single map, 200 — 400 counter game that comes boxed and has the

quality of a SPI game (one can always reduce quality later!) with a reasonable production run. First, when one splits the cost of the components, the map takes 31% of total costs, rules 12%, counters 24% and the box wrapping and plastic tray etc. up to 33%. These costs don't come as a single charge but rather a whole wriggling mess of smaller charges.

Using the counters to demonstrate the split in costs one can say that each step in the following series requires payment:

- 1) Original artwork — take your counters and convert them to a printable format.
- 2) Produce plates from finished artwork.
- 3) Proof the plates — check that they are O.K.
- 4) Correct and reproof until absolutely correct.
- 5) Set up printing machines, justify colours and print counters.
- 6) Diecut counters
- 7) Store until required.

Different companies will be used for each of these steps so transport costs for each step must be considered. Turning to maps for a moment to quote some actual figures at you I can report that a recent quotation for originating artwork for a three colour map was £900 whilst reproofing a similar map — just checking corrections — could put you back £80. Back to counters — diecutting is just a single step in the above list but to complete it you must purchase your own cutter (£200 at least) since no cutting company has them 'off the peg' for you, you must get the unmounted counters to the die cutter and then you must hope that you have approached a good company — the cutting has only a tolerance of 1/32" outside which you will begin to lose information off your counter (even SPI have problems with this one!). Mistakes at any point can mean extra costs for you — occasionally mistakes along the line may not come to light until your game is being sold and then try to claim the cost of the slip-up from the perpetrator!!

I think you begin to see the snags ... and I begin to see why so many games produced by individuals have one colour maps, thin counters to be separated yourself and no box! However I hasten to suggest that in the long run, cutting production costs may also be limiting your sales alternatives — fewer outlets will take a markedly amateur game and you

may well find the purchasers limited to the hard core gamer who is more interested in the concept behind the game than the pretty colours on the map and box. The less ardent gamer has grown used in the last decade to a colourful well finished game (I am not commenting on its design here) that has instant appeal and tends to steer clear of these less colourful offerings ... I have spent many an afternoon watching gamers in the local games shop sniffing around the AH products, SPI's games and GDW but flitting quickly by your ziplocked game that may play as well, if not better, than those just mentioned.

The other problem about cutting costs and producing a small run of your game is that the production run for each printing operation will be short. As I think I have mentioned in the past, most of the printing costs come from setting up the plates, justifying the colours etc. and very little comes from the actual printing of each copy. Similarly, transport costs tend to plateau out when you move stuff in bulk. All these sort of costs must be distributed between relatively few copies of your game so you have a high unit cost of production. This will make the game relatively expensive for what is in it and probably limit sales further. At this stage you begin to tear your hair and wonder why you ever considered game production!!!

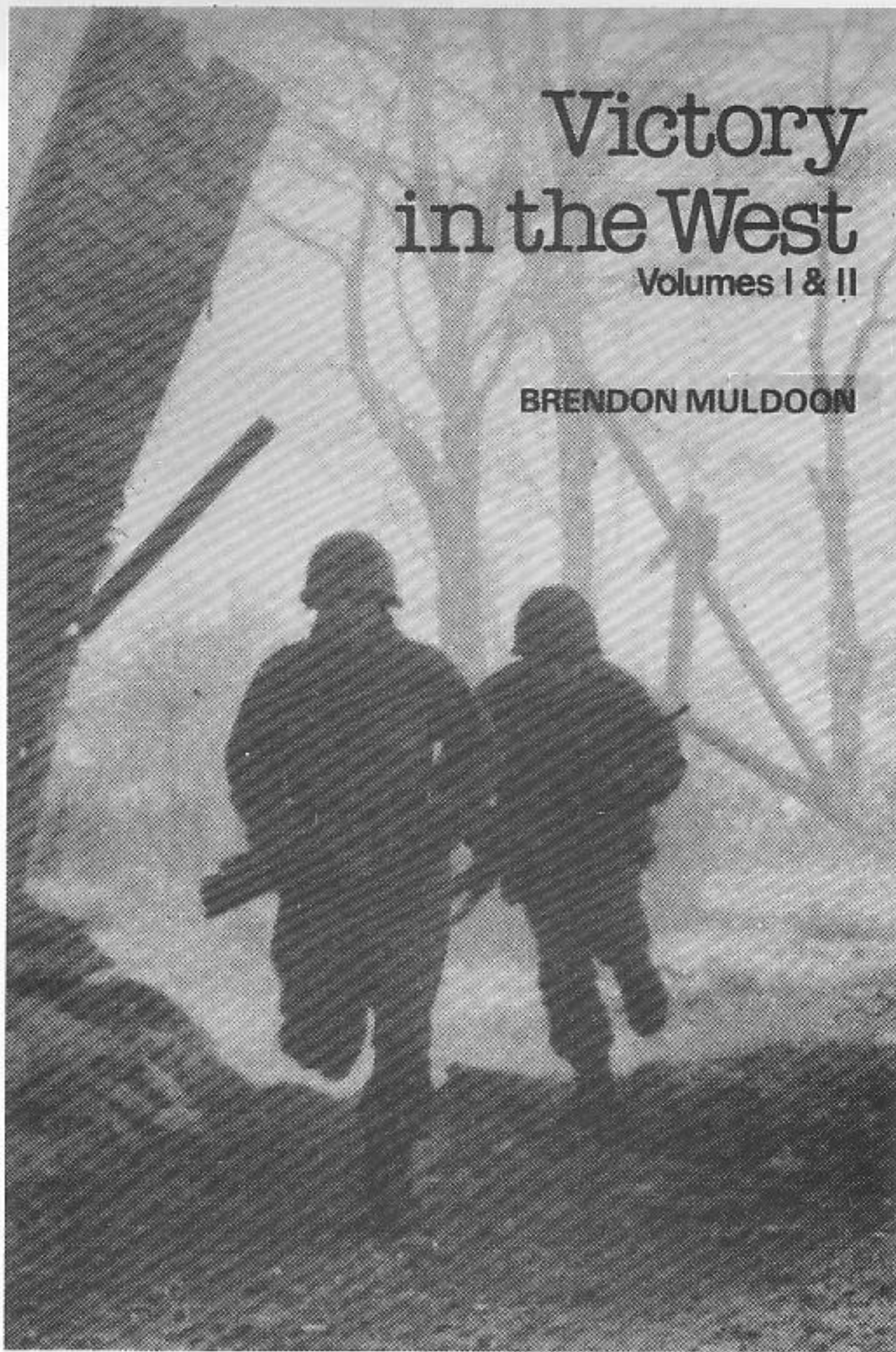
The converse of this sad tale is that it is the larger company, or individual with printing experience and a helpful bank manager funding his new profession, who is most likely to succeed — they have enough financial leeway to get over the hurdles without crashing and end up with a wide selling design — I won't discuss advertising and retail outlets that must increase your sales .. at a cost! I admit that though I think our hobby needs good new designers they must be on a poor wicket at the moment if they try to go it alone and I wouldn't recommend it — freelancing for a large company seems a safer bet though you may believe you are being ripped off for the hundreds of hours you have spent on your baby!

Enough of such musings, on to some housekeeping chores. After my rude comments last year about the tardiness of the Origins Awards Nomination ballot forms they have appeared well in time this

# Victory in the West

Volumes I & II

BRENDON MULDOON



Patton's 3rd Army and Operation Grenade are two recently issued S&T subscription games, both covering regimental/battalion operations between American and German forces, as World War II neared its conclusion. Patton's 3rd Army concerns itself with the investment of Metz and the liberation of Lorraine during November 1944 whilst Operation Grenade occurs much further North, in an area West of the Rhine near Duisburg and Dusseldorf, some two and a half months later. In between these two campaigns the Battle of the Bulge took place. This is reflected somewhat subtly in the quality of German troops available in "Grenade".

Both games are designed and developed by Joe Balkoski, a gentleman well known in the hobby and highly experienced in producing quality games. Each game, in this case, must surely have caused the designer a number of problems in order to come up with an end result acceptable to both sides. In both "3rd Army" and "Grenade", the German defends grimly throughout most game turns with little expectancy of even a modicum of light relief — a situation not to everyone's taste in entertainment and enjoyment, given that one's opponent is aware of what's what.

As usual the standard of map and counters is what we expect and take for granted with SPI — a professional job produced by professionals. The rules contain very little in the way of faults — an omission, which can very easily be remedied, and Victory conditions, particularly in "Grenade", that cause unrealistic conditions but more of that later.

The standard rules are, in effect, a continuation of basic Quad games, a touch of the 'Guderian's' for good measure and a topping off with a serious attempt to solve a long standing problem common to numbers of board war games — the over-abundance of information. Restrictions are also placed on both size and number of units allowed to take part in combat in any given hex. Whilst any system can usually be criticised and there are faults in the "Limited Intelligence" system — for example, to obtain accuracy a certain amount of bookkeeping is desirable — nevertheless, the results obtained are much superior to the old "I've got this, what have you got?". The CRT employs two dice. You work out the ratio (fractions to defender) with column shifts assisting in both attack and defense; factors such as Divisional Integrity, Aircraft, Artillery, Combined Arms, Surprise, Mud and Hill Top give Shift Bonuses.

The whole essence of Victory in the West is to be found in a combination of the rules relating to "Limited Intelligence" with those of combat. Whenever a unit of Regimental/Brigade strength has combat for the first time one first determines the number of column shifts for attacker and defender to give a net result. A strength chit is drawn at random from the morale pool that equals the unit's morale rating. The number shown after the combat class letter of the unit in question is that unit's initial strength. The combat result will require either attacker (A) or defender (D) to retreat a number of hexes and may also require a mandatory number of step losses. Step losses must be made before any retreats, but players have the option to take a step loss in place of a retreat. Retreating units are allowed to retreat through enemy ZOCs but in doing so must take a step loss for each hex in an enemy ZOC. When a unit with a strength chit is required to take a step loss, the strength chit is reversed. Should a second step loss be incurred, the chit is removed and the unit reversed onto its Cadre size. Some strength chits may show a reverse strength of Nil — in this case remove the chit and put the unit on its Cadre side. Obviously that unit has only two step losses before it is eliminated. When combat occurs involving units of Regimental/Brigade size, only one unit may take part in the combat in any single hex, although up to three units of this size may be stacked together. Those units not involved in the fighting nevertheless are affected by the combat results. This is a vital rule in Victory in the West, particularly in the early turns where the US player is concerned.

When you look into the "Limited Intelligence" system a little further one or two questions start to appear.

1) Limited Intelligence, as far as the enemy is concerned, is perfectly acceptable but at this stage of WWII it is somewhat peculiar that the friendly Commander has only a Limited Intelligence of his own troops. For example, US troops with Morale level 2 class A can, depending on selection of strength chit, vary from 5 to 13. The Germans can be even more unlucky as Morale 1 class C runs from 1 — 5. Naturally, all these strengths can be averaged but surely that isn't the point. One would naturally pick one's better troops for the more difficult tasks.

2) As only one Regimental/Brigade size unit may attack/defend in a hex, obtaining the maximum column shifts is important. To receive a shift for Divisional Integrity may require a 3 stack of the units in the particular division. If the division is having combat for the first time, it doesn't matter which unit receives the strength chit — but should it be the second or third combat then decisions have to be made, it is just like playing Pontoon — do I stick or twist?

3) If, through the result of combat, a player is required to take step losses which involve more than one Regimental/Brigade unit in a stack, but only one unit in the stack has a strength chit, are further strength chits drawn and put on their reverse side; or is the unit automatically put onto its Cadre side. The rules do not explain this entirely satisfactorily — but it is probably intended that a strength chit be drawn should this be necessary.

If the standard rules provide the basic ingredients for these two cakes, then the exclusive rules coat the mixture with a lush layer of icing, particularly in Operation Grenade. Before the game starts the German player has to blow up the Roer Dams. This is done to cause either a Gradual or Flash (tidal wave) flood in the Roer Valley. There are pros and cons whichever flood is chosen but the opportunity arises for both players to practice psychology should Gradual flood be chosen. Because of the possibility of a torrent descending along the Valley, the US player may put off the start of the game, trading modifiers to the die roll to determine the strength of the flood. A cautious American player could surrender half the game turns for an easy crossing. Alternatively, the US player, by guessing the German intentions, can completely wreck the ploy by starting on day 1 and gambling on a low die roll. This type of rule occurs very infrequently but the pleasure afforded is well worth the wait.



### Patton's 3rd Army

At best this could be described as a challenge, but it is more likely to qualify for colourful exclamations of wrath as the US player struggles to make headway in the early turns. Like it or not, initially the game will probably reflect what happened historically. That said, the game can easily delude players, giving the impression that failure was more due to bad luck than anything else. Keep playing as the Americans and eventually the penny will drop. The German 1st Army, what there is of it, is well dug in, either in entrenchments or improved positions and, in most cases, behind the Rivers Moselle and Seille. The defensive front covers 37 hexes of which only 21 are occupied – but, on turn 1, there are only 7 hexes where, forgetting other problems such as supply, movement, etc., the US can attack from two adjacent hexes in safety.

The rules relating to weather are, to say the least, irritating but if you wish to go to war around Metz in November it is unlikely you will suffer casualties from sunstroke. The lousy climate causes mud which lasts for at least 4 turns and this not only slows everybody to a snail's pace but gives the defender a column shift in his favour.

Because of Patton's breakneck advances in the preceding weeks, supply had become quite difficult – all units of 20th Corps are out of supply (OOS) on turn 1 and the units of 83rd Infantry Division, 20 Corps, are OOS throughout the entire game. This small matter is a pinprick when considered against the major supply restrictions. On turn 1 the US player is given 75 support points to be shared at the player's whim between 20 and 12 Corps. Each time an American attack is resolved, 1 Supply Point (SP) is deducted from the SP tally of the Corps

concerned – except if an attack obtains a breakthrough result, when no deduction is required. Should the US player allow the SP's total to reach zero, terrible penalties are imposed – as well as being reduced to half strength for future attacks, the column shifts for Divisional Integrity and artillery support are lost. Finally, to rub the US player's nose in the Metz mud for being so careless as to go into debt, the SPs become a minus figure requiring repayment to get out of the mud – sorry, the red.

There is a system for replenishing SPs – any Division which has seen at least one action may be pulled out of the fighting zone (10 hexes from nearest German unit) and, after standing inactive for a full turn, the die roll result gives the number of SPs to be added to the Division's parent Corps. The difficulty here is that exactly when you need replenishment SPs, the spare divisions to get them are usually at a premium.

Obviously, from the restrictions placed on the American units, any proposed offensive must be highly selective. Consequently some thought must be applied initially to the division of SPs between the two Corps. That 20th Corps is OOS on turn one and unlikely to be successful if used, should naturally be taken into consideration. Perhaps the safest way is to give 12th Corps 48 SPs, as the brunt of the attacks will come from them, and 20th Corps, 27. But a gamble on the German reaction, as the German player can see the split, might be to reduce 20th Corps SPs to as little as 8-10 SPs to tempt him to reduce his forces opposite 20th Corps. The set up for the Germans is obligatory but for the US it differs slightly. The regimental size units are given designated hexes but the tank and anti-tank battalions and artillery brigades may be stacked with or adjacent to regimental units of the parent corps – but must not be in a German ZOC. Obviously, the set up of the support units will vary to a slight extent depending upon the individual's choice of initial targets.

TABLE 1

Morale Level	Class	Average Strength	Maximum	Minimum
1	A	6	10	2
	B	4	8	1
	C	2+	5	1
2	A	9	13	5
	B	6	10	2
	C	4	8	1
3	A	12	16	9
	B	8	12	5
	C	7	11	3

Because of the variety of morale counters which will certainly affect the final attack ratios, it is simpler to use an average strength on the three types of morale counters, as shown in Table 1.

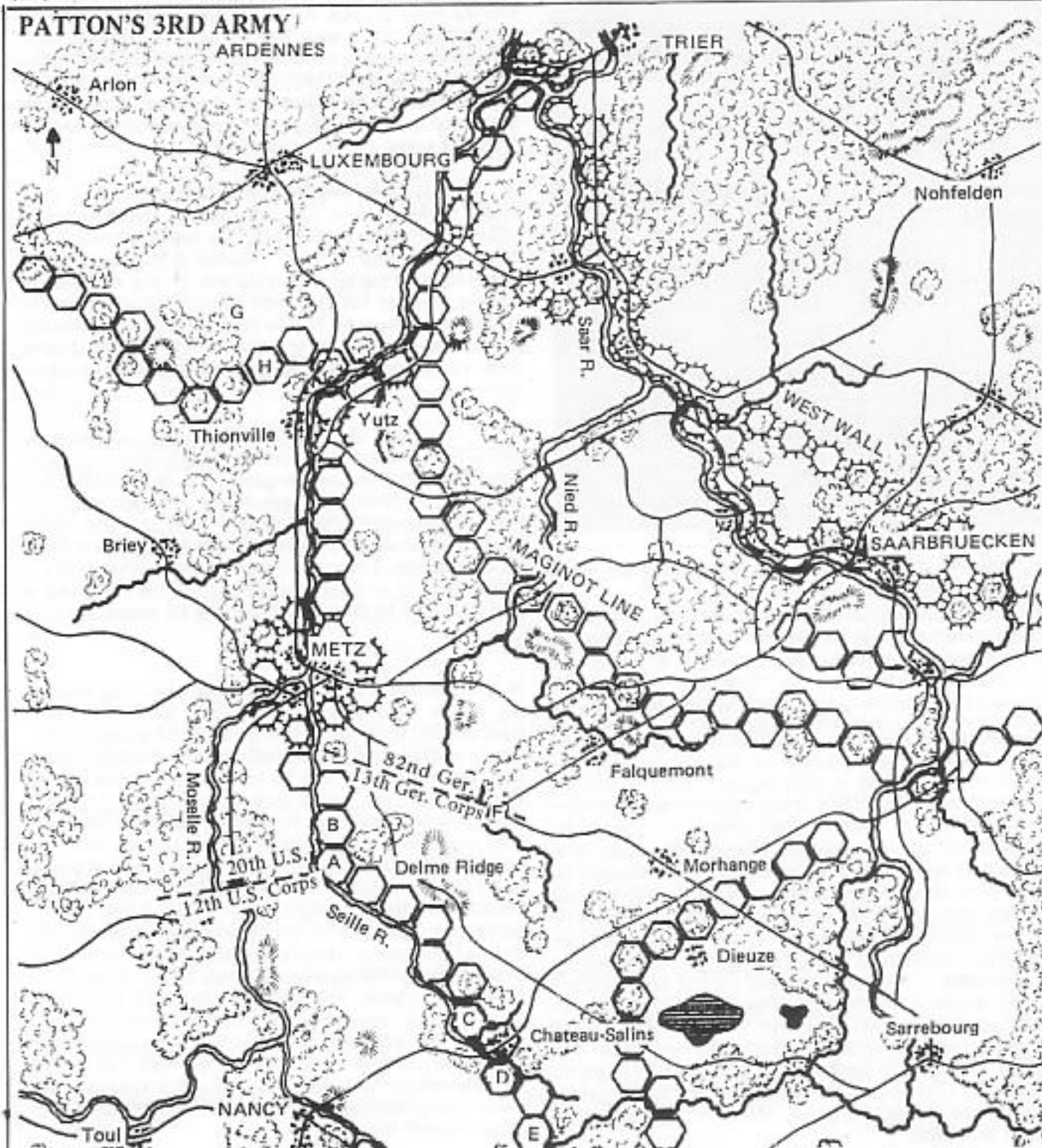
Given that both 20th and 12th Corps receive a sufficiency of Support Points to enable them both to contribute – the offensive, such as it is, may commence.

Though there are several tempting targets in 20th Corps sector, the 'Out of Supply' rule existing on turn 1 makes it highly speculative to risk any attacks and, consequently, the only activity is to advance some units into an attacking position for turn 2. The German 82nd Corps which defends Metz and North (see map) may not move unless any unit in the Corps is attacked. The entrenched hex 1010 (Yutz) has only the 485 anti-tank battalion to defend it with a strength of 2 (tripled behind river = 6). On turn 2 this hex may be attacked from two hexes in strength. A premature attack at half strength on turn 1 would almost certainly allow the Germans to get other units to assist in defence. In 12th Corps sector things look much brighter and a minimum of three attacks should be effected.

Hex 1022 (A) is a prime target. The River Seille bends eastwards here and consequently the American 12th Corps can attack from either one, two or even three hexes. A three hex attack, however, will require a soak-off attack on hex 1021 (B) and will involve units of 20th Corps. If units of both Corps combine, a support point payment from both Corps will be required. Hex 1022 has an improved position and is defended by the 128 Regiment 48th Division a C1 class unit, average strength 2 and the 1431 Battalion also strength 2. Double up for being attacked solely across the river and +2 for the improved position.

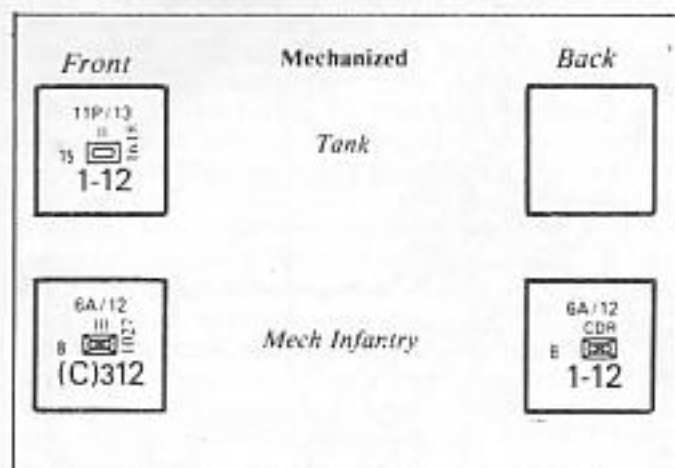
If the attack is from two hexes then the three regiments of US 80th Division will be used, two regiments and a tank battalion in one hex, the other regiment and another tank battalion in the second hex. This division is an A2 class with an average of 9, and the tank battalions have a strength of 1, giving a total strength of 20. The column shift bonuses are for US Divisional Integrity (1), Combined Arms (maximum 1 when attacking solely across rivers) and (2) Artillery Support. Germans have the weather (mud) bonus. This gives a final attack at 5-1 in clear terrain and should give the US player a good start. There are only two chances (18%) of the attack failing. Rolling a 2 or 3 (on two dice) brings trouble but a roll of 6,7,8 or 9 will give a result of either a D1 or D1(1). In either case, the German player will not vacate the hex, preferring to take one or two step losses. Any other result will allow the Americans to capture the hex and obtain the first foothold on the enemy side of the river. Should the remaining attacks also prove successful, then the German will have immediate problems on how best to deploy his available units.

The second and third attacks depend on players' selection but should occur from six to ten hexes south east of hex 1021. Three hexes 1426 (C), 1528 (D) and 1629 (E) are the targets and the US player should select either 1426/1528 or 1528/1629 depending upon where priority is put highest. 1528/1629 appears slightly easier (a fallacy) to attack but the rewards of capturing 1426 (C) and 1527 (one north of D) on turn 1 are greatest since one gains control of the only road bridge in the immediate area, so allowing the armour to be used at the earliest opportunity.



If the first choice is 1528/1629 (D/E) — then 1528 should be attacked first. If 1629 is attacked first, despite what looks like both a numerical superiority as well as higher morale units, the meandering of the Sielle River constricts the US attacks as much as the restrictions imposed by the rules. Using US 26th Infantry Division in both attacks, if a bad die roll is thrown calling for a retreat, this would then lose a Divisional Integrity bonus which is essential in the attack on 1528. The attack with maximum shifts on 1528 will probably be at 2-1 in woods and on 1629 at 3-1 in clear. Neither attack is guaranteed to do more than weaken German unit strength but this will certainly increase the chance of success with a repeat attack on turn 2.

Should selection be 1426/1528 (C/D) a wider choice of attacking units is possible. The choice of unit is best calculated by remembering that a bad result may require step losses. So wherever possible include a tank battalion. It will frequently carry a Combined Arms bonus — but if a step loss is called for, then using a tank battalion will be the most economical. With maximum artillery support both attacks can be made at 3-1, one in woods and the other in clear. The attack on 1426 has six chances of capturing the hex.



The attacks described are by no means the only ones which may be made. They are probably the attacks which afford the best opportunity, given a successful combat result, of exploiting the situation. German reaction on turn 1 is totally dependent upon the results obtained, or not, as the case may be, by the US player. But that said, there are three rules which the German should observe at all times when defending in entrenched/improved positions. They are:

- 1) Take step losses rather than retreat — provided at least a Cadre remains;
- 2) On the German player turn either reinforce weakened hexes with, wherever possible, units of the same division, or retreat out the weak units and replace with fresh units if available;
- 3) Do not attack, except for an essential reason.

If an improved/entrenched position has to be ceded, then try to get units into all adjacent improved positions forcing the US to attack into as many strong points as possible.

On turn 1, unless attacked, units of 82nd Corps may not move and the 11th Panzer of 13th Corps is also restricted. The two artillery units on hex 1521 (F) should use strategic movement (x3 on roads).

If, because of adverse die rolls, units have been compelled to retreat out of their original hexes, then every attempt should be made to get them first into other strong points and, if possible, next to a unit of the same division. Attacks should be avoided because at this stage it will be virtually impossible to win and a retreat will just throw away valuable defensive positions.

Before turn 2 commences, the US player rolls for weather. Because of the heavy overcast conditions with rain on turn 1, one is added to the die result. Rain brings mud and mud lasts for 4 turns irrespective of other weather results. Clear weather allows the US to use maximum Air points and light overcast reduces Air point availability by half.

The supply restrictions affecting 20th Corps are lifted, 83rd Infantry Division excepted. However, the movement restrictions to the German 82nd Corps and 11th Panzer Division are similarly negated. In view of this and because the 20th Corps is covering a greater area than 12th Corps, care

must once again be used in selecting where to attack.

If the hex 1010 is not attacked on turn 2 it will certainly be reinforced in the German movement phase. The attack must be considered in conjunction with an attack on hex 1011 (one south of Yutz). This hex is also entrenched with the Fort being called Illange. Unfortunately, Illange is occupied by a B2 class regiment plus an artillery brigade to give defensive support within three hexes.

The attack on Fort Yutz should use 3rd Cavalry Regiment (A3) and a tank battalion in 1009 (one north of Yutz) and an infantry regiment of 95th Division (A1) plus a tank battalion in 0910 (NW of Yutz). The infantry must be involved in order to advance across the river after combat. 2 Artillery Support Points and a Combined Arms Bonus minus the German mud bonus bring the final attack ratio to 5-1 in clear — any roll but 2 or 3 and the Fort is captured. Fort Illange is far more difficult. The attack is conducted by 90th Division — moved from 0708 (G) to 0809 (H) on turn 1 — in hexes 0911 (Thionville) and 0912, two of the regiments and a tank battalion on one hex and the other regiment and another tank battalion on the other hex. Support bonuses are 2 Artillery, Divisional Integrity, 1 Combined Arms and possibly, 1 Aircraft for the US (5 or 4) and mud plus 1 Artillery for the Germans. The average morale strength will make the attack a 1:1 so the final figure will be either 3 or 4-1 in the clear. Four chances of capturing the hex at 3-1 and five at 4-1 but also three and two chances respectively of an attacker retreat.

Dependent upon the result in turn 1 on hex 1022 (A) — 20th Corps may consider a support attack on the SS Mechanised Regiment in 1021 (North of A). If 1022 was captured in turn 1 then the occupying unit(s) would be required to attack defenders in both 1021 and 1123 (SE of A).

12th Corps is again committed to attacking the hexes which it tried first and it is likely turn 2 will see some of these now being attacked at greater ratios. It will now be possible to use the 4th and 6th Armoured Divisions. These two divisions should not be used just to make up strength as they cannot advance across rivers after combat and, whilst mud prevails, their movement off roads is very slow.

As in turn 1, German movement is a defensive reaction to the success or otherwise of US attacks. If by any chance it has become necessary to retreat out of the improved positions in any of the areas where the US have attacked and, as a consequence, the defence appears to be open — do not be tempted into a full scale retreat. Surrendering hexes unnecessarily can make all the difference between a hard fought game and a relatively easy US victory.

From turn 3, assuming some degree of success in the initial storming of the German positions — the US player should now keep four objectives in mind. (1) Some attempt can be made to capture Victory hexes (towns). In 12th Corps' eastward advance the towns of Dieuze (2125), Morhange (2022) and Falquemont (1819) are sited in areas not particularly abundant in defensive terrain. (2) Advancing east north east will probably cause the German player to re-evaluate his defensive line. Any retreat north east subtly shifts the Metz defences away from the centre and regular reinforcements (if desirable) will become progressively more difficult to get into Metz. (3) Seriously consider the merits of resting some divisions in order to stock up Supply points. (4) Consider whether an attack on Metz is desirable or, indeed, practical.

To assist the US player in making up his mind regarding Metz, during any clear or light overcast game turn before turn 8, the US is allowed two heavy bombing attacks. These attacks must both be made on the same turn against either Metz hexes (3) or entrenchment hexes — not improved hexes. The raids are made before US movement and thus, to exploit any success, the targets selected should be within movement range of American units available to follow up. Metz and its ring of Forts was a tough nut to crack and this is certainly reflected in the game. In clear weather the bombing has a two thirds chance of success, in light overcast, a half chance. Should the die roll come up trumps, the German player must either eliminate one unit or reduce a full strength regiment to Cadre level. Because of the obvious way in which the effects of successful bombing can be negated, the threat

of bombing is surely greater than the action unless Metz is cut off.

Victory in Patton's 3rd Army is obtained by capturing certain towns and /or putting units in Metz out of supply or taking the city. Cutting the supply route to Metz only applies in the US Marginal Victory but, in passing, it does create a peculiar situation. The three city hexes are surrounded by nine hexes all of which are entrenched positions (Forts). Rule 11.53 in the Standard Rules states clearly that German units in entrenched positions are always in supply. If a city, town, etc. is cut off for supply purposes, it is reasonable to assume that the defences are also out of supply.

The short game lasts 12 turns whilst the extended game is exactly double that number of turns. Given average dice rolling, the short game in "3rd Army" is a difficult proposition for any US player. But a hard game though it may be, it seldom fails to create interesting situations. Conversely, the game tends to be somewhat boring for the German player. When the opportunity of a limited counter attack does occur, the feeling of "Why bother — the US will probably beat themselves" is difficult to throw off.



## Operation Grenade

A maximum sixteen turn game, each turn representing one day, "Grenade" may start on 17th February 1945. By this time, the uncompromising struggle to take Metz is but a memory and the Battle of the Bulge, so beloved by game designers, has ended eight weeks earlier. "Grenade" is situated in Germany and the remnants of the Army of the Thousand Year Reich, selected to defend the Roer Valley, are a pretty poor lot.

What a build up to describe one of the best subscription games to appear in many a long year. Operation Grenade is a delight to play and, apart from a couple of somewhat unrealistic situations likely to appear which, unfortunately, can affect the result, the game is near perfect. As in "3rd Army", "Grenade" is won or lost by capturing towns. However, in addition to VPs for towns, there are ten bridges which cross the Rhine. Should the German fail to blow up any of these bridges and US unit(s) which may have crossed over remain on the eastern side of the river, then extra VPs will be gained.

After setting up, the German player must first announce how he has flooded the Roer Valley, either by a Flash flood, which is a once and for all saturation, or by a Gradual flood which may cause a nasty torrent unappreciated by GIs or anyone else in the near vicinity.

If Flash flood is selected the game must start on 17th February and the river is considered normal in all respects. The remainder of the valley becomes a swamp, passable only to non-mechanised units, except on roads. Hexes in the valley which were swamp before the flood use the Hill Top CRT in defence. Should Gradual flood be picked, the US player states when D-Day (Game Start) will occur and rolls a die to resolve the force of the river current. If D-Day is either 17th, 18th or 19th February = add 1 to the die result; 20th February = no modification to die roll, 21st February = -1, 22nd February = -2, 23rd February = -3 and 24th February = -4 from the roll. If the modified die result is either 5 or 6, then the Roer becomes a torrent and gives a unit attacked exclusively across the water the highly attractive defence bonus of having its combat strength multiplied 4 or 5 times, dependent upon which hex is being attacked. A modified roll of 2,3,4 and the river is now only Rapid. Rapids give a lesser bonus of increasing combat defence either 3 or 4 times. A result of 1 and the river is normal — this merely gives a 2 or 3 multiplication of combat defence strength.

To offset this defensive bonus, which is essential to the German the US can take a Surprise Combat Bonus (1 shift) provided the game starts no later than 23rd February.

The options available to the Germans to act and the Americans to react make for wonderful gamesmanship. There are arguments both for and against either type of flood but when flood and D-Day have both been settled it would be a very cautious player who would sacrifice half the game turns to avoid having a cold bath. The player's notes claim that in playtesting, D-Day was usually declared on either 22nd or 23rd February – but it is certainly worth starting a few days earlier and having faith in the die result.

The Support Point system of rationing supply used in "3rd Army" is discarded in "Grenade". There are, however, supply restrictions in the early game turns (not days). US 12th Corps is OOS for the first six game turns and US 16th Corps, for the first two turns. In addition, for the first three game turns, US mechanised units are unable to move. This rule must be carefully considered at the set-up – US self-propelled artillery may fire though not move, so they must be deployed within three hexes of a German target.

At this late period of the war one may have assumed that soldiers, knowing the war was lost, might totally disregard the steam of idiotic edicts from Berlin. This is not the case and German units of 2nd Corps may not move, unless they have either been attacked or a strategic withdrawal has been obtained. From turn 3, the German rolls once before movement and, if one is thrown, then strategic withdrawal may take place. If he has not obtained strategic withdrawal by turn 8, or the US have not attacked any 2nd Corps units, the die results are reduced by one. Rolling ones is rather important for the German player. The magic number is also required to procure reinforcements. Until the reinforcements have all entered the map the German is required to roll three times each turn, for South, East and North map edge reinforcements. A one releases South and East and a one or two for the North.

Some German towns have a number in brackets. This number is the Local secret weapon. Whenever a US unit moves into an adjacent hex, either as a result of normal movement or advance after combat, then the US units movement is temporarily suspended. The German player rolls a die and again, on this occasion as in earlier die rolls, the magic number is one. If the number rolled is less than the town number, then the difference equals the number of units of local "Dad's Army" available to the German. The Volksturm are picked at random, some units are twice as weak as others, and are placed in any hex of the town, subject to stacking. As the units are of battalion strength, they do not have a ZOC which allows the US to disregard them if they so wish and carry on movement. Obviously, Volksturm units will have little effect on the course of the game and as such may be described as gloss. However, situations can arise, given a moment's lack of concentration by the US, whereby a Volksturm unit(s) can be a damn nuisance!

As in Patton's 3rd Army, the initial German defence line is behind a river with units well dug in. In "Grenade", the operational front is approximately three quarters the length of "3rd Army" and covers only 29 hexes, of which 20 are occupied.

Despite the turbulent 'Water Margin' and the fact that there are considerably more entrenched hexes behind the River Roer than behind the Moselle and Sielle Rivers in "3rd Army", it is considerably easier to breach the main German defences even though it is always possible that bad CRT results will hold up progress. Once a toehold has been attained, the ability of the Germans to reinforce defence points held by Cadres, using switch tactics, will be quickly exhausted.

Whichever day turn 1 starts (Gradual flood), the weather role for that turn has one deducted – the only bad result being a 1 minus 1 = 0 which gives clear weather (6 air points) and a thaw, resulting in mud.

If the weather has not brought mud, the US player can start turn 1 by considering six attacks. Hex numbers 0110(A), 0310(B), 0709(Juelich), 0808(C), 0908(D) and 1008(opposite Linnich) are prime targets, particularly the last two hex numbers.

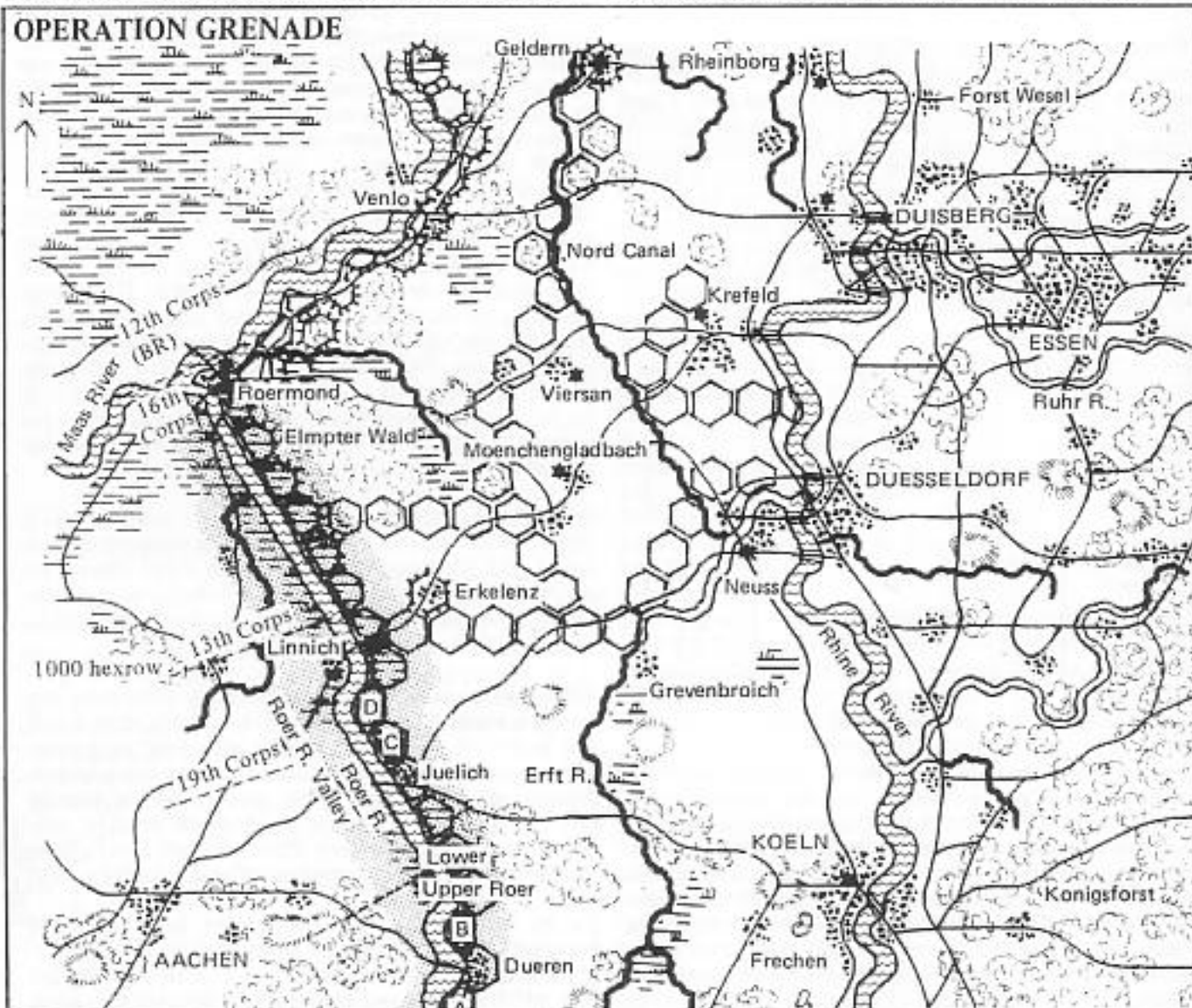
By capturing these two hexes, the German line will be fragmented in a vital spot.

German units deployed in hexes 0808(C) and South of it will be compelled to take a longer retreat route to reach the secondary defences which run east/west on hex row 1100 (Geilenkirchen to Solingen). That neither hex contains a road and bridge is of little consequence as US armour may not move until turn 4.

Unfortunately, mud has a chance of appearing and if it does then the attack on 1008 cannot take place due to movement restrictions. Also, the unit deployment to attack hexes 0110(A) or 0310(B) will

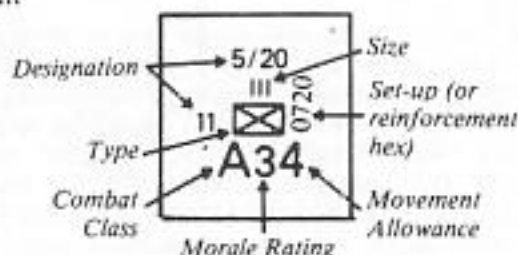
require a slight change. By using the maximum combat shifts and, irrespective of which type of flood, the attacks can be carried out at no less than 4-1 and at best 6-1. Though not one of the attacks carries a guarantee of success, it is reasonable to anticipate a one third success to capture two hexes.

Faced with so many American units, initial German objectives, whilst unchanged in principle, must be achieved in a different manner. The important areas of the map abound in improved positions but, such is the strength that the US can throw in to eject the Germans, that any attempt at rigid defence will merely create a situation of Cadre units attempting to hold up divisions in later moves.

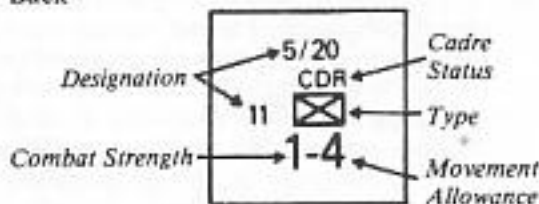


#### INFANTRY REGIMENT (US)

Front

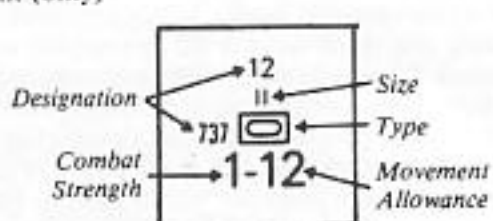


Back



#### TANK BATTALION (US)

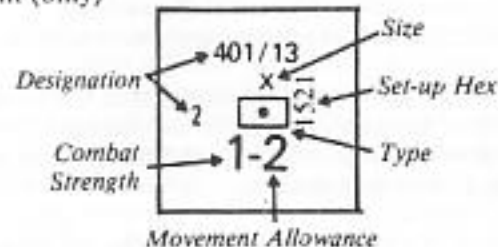
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#### ARTILLERY BRIGADE (GERMAN)

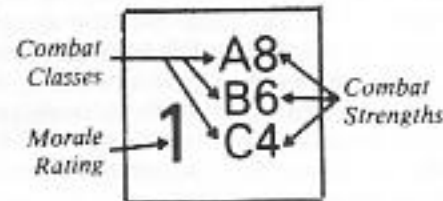
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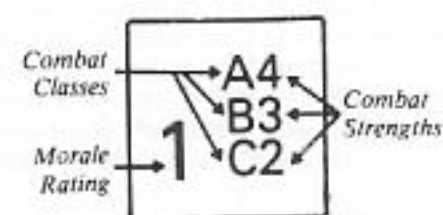
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#### STRENGTH CHIT

Front



Back



Rather than stand and reduce, stand until attacked then retreat if casualties are called for to the next improved position. Very easy to suggest but what do you do if the US keeps rolling a D1(1) or worse result. You heave a sigh, take a deep breath and remember this is February 1945, then run like mad, hoping that the American won't be breathing down your neck immediately.

The area of the map south of hex row 1000 is completely devoid of man made defences, other than the improved position on the east bank of the Roer. Consequently, it would appear that German units organised to defend in this area will be in for a real hammering. Fortunately, rule 19.32 goes a long way to solving the problem. The rule states that units of US 7th Corps may not move north of hex row 0900. As 7th Corps' initial deployment is in the first four hex rows on the southern edge of the map and this area contains no road system allowing exploitation of any break through — the absence of a linked defence may not be too disastrous. Certainly the US will try to take the city of Koeln and the towns of Grevenbroich and Frechen. Koeln carries 3 VPs and both towns might just produce a Volksturm unit.

Rule 19.32, with its movement restrictions on 7th Corps, may also give indirect assistance to the Germans if the Americans take insufficient care in the deployment of 13th, 19th and 7th Corps once the river defences have been pierced. It is not difficult, when trying to find enough strength to clear out an enemy strong point, to mix up divisions from the three separate Corps. Once mixed up, and one or two game turns have passed by, the US may find that the only available units to attack a particular improved hex are barred from moving into the area. Whether this occurs or not, it must be accepted that the area bounded from 0908 — 0919 — 0119 to 0110 — 0908 (southern area between Roer and Rhine rivers) cannot be held for very long and one can only try to ensure that the US are not given the area too quickly and/or too cheaply.

The area immediately north of this contains plenty of improved hexes, a stream which becomes a river during the mud turns, swamps, woods and a sufficiency of entrenchments on the east bank of the Maas River. The area also contains eight single hex towns which will lose the German player 16 VPs if lost. This is an area of prime importance to be defended. The task looks awesome but it can be achieved in a manner that is certainly interesting and may even be exciting. Even if the limited reinforcements are obtained early, and the reinforcements are generally stronger than the initial forces, the total German forces are too weak to have a stand up fight. Every scrap of defensive cover must be used and, in particular, improved positions should be utilised in order to get adjacent to US forces, but not to attack, and also as escape routes for the inevitable retreat.

If the US player shows little or no aggression in the sector defended by the German 2nd Corps, hold out as long as possible even if the strategic retreat has been obtained — as well as denying occupation of towns with VPs, it ensures that the US may only advance in a North and North West direction. This may well create an unrealistic situation, having units in supply in entrenchments by the Rivers Maas and Roer, whilst the US are trying to get across the Rhine well to the rear.

The Rhine River restrictions will likely create another unrealistic situation. German units may move and attack across the Rhine as though it were just any old stretch of water, paying 2 extra MPs to cross. US units may not move across the river except at unblown bridges. Standard Rule 5.25 allows a non-mechanised unit to move at least one hex even if it does not have the MPs to pay, providing the move is not from one enemy ZOC to another enemy ZOC. As artillery, other than self propelled, are non-mechanised with a movement of two, Rule 5.25 allows the German to bring artillery units across the Rhine — somewhat unusual.

Operation Grenade gives the early impression of a highly unbalanced game — if you like to attack and your opponent is playing the US role, you may feel disappointed. But the Victory objectives for the Germans have to be attained in a different way and, as the game is played, this is quickly realised.

The limited intelligence system is more than a step in the right direction and is to be encouraged and I would hope it will be used and developed further by SPI and others. Any method which stops an opponent, or yourself, from picking up a stack of enemy units and then saying "Right, I'm attacking that at ...." must have virtues. Whether or not SPI are tempted to use the system again remains to be seen but there must, surely, be any number of occasions available to allow development of a quad game on these lines.



STEPHEN DOIDGE

## „.BANDIT ON YOUR TAIL RED LEADER..“

"The ME109 is 450 metres from the Spitfire's tail, he opens fire. The Spit' goes into a steep dive, whilst banking to the right; the ME109 is close behind, still on his tail, his guns chattering the rattle of death. The bullets rip into the Spit', smoke appears and flames begin to lick the fuselage. Another burst into the dying Spit' and it explodes in a firey flash. The ME109 climbs away and heads for home."

If the Luftwaffe pilot could replay his role in Airforce (AH/Battleline) he would be interested to learn how hard it is to make a 'kill' after manoeuvring into the prime tactical position. How many times have you dived after your enemy, whilst he climbs away? How many times have you turned left after your enemy, whilst he turns right? How many times have you done both?!

Airforce is undoubtedly the best game of its type, but it does suffer from a total lack of incentive for players to gain the best tactical position in a dog-fight, viz: on the tail of your enemy!

I use a simple method of 'tailing', which does not alter the Airforce system but does allow players who work their aircraft into a 'tailing' position, some benefits.

### Conditions of Tailing

The following three conditions must be met for an aircraft to be classed as tailing.

1. The distance between the aircraft must not exceed 6 hexes. (Including the hex of the tailed aircraft.) The height difference must be 400ft or less.
2. The tailed aircraft must have the tailing aircraft completely within his 6 o'clock sector.
3. The tailing aircraft must have the tailed aircraft completely within his 12 o'clock sector.

### Effects of Tailing

The benefits of tailing is dependent upon the class of the pilots involved. In cases 1 & 2 which follow, the tailed player writes out his movement plot first, gives the tailing player the required information and the tailing player writes out his movement plot in the light of the information received.

1. The tailed and tailing pilots can be of any combination, except as noted in cases 2 & 3. Benefits: A. The tailed player must state if he is climbing or diving on that turn. B. The tailed player must state the 'expenditure' of the first 33% (Rounding up) of his speed/movement. e.g. the tailed aircraft has a current speed of 9 and his plot reads: N2L3L1PP. He would reveal N2L to the tailing player.

2. The tailed pilot is 'Green' and the tailing pilot is an 'Ace'. Benefits: The tailed player must state if he is climbing or diving on that turn. In addition, he must state in which half of the aircraft's capabilities he is climbing/diving. e.g. Ju87B at 7 000ft is being tailed, his maximum dive capability is 900ft, which divides into 1-500ft & 5-900ft. If he is diving 300ft, he would reveal the former half. If he is diving 500ft, he can reveal either half. (N.B. if the aircraft's maximum capability had been an even figure, it would have been divided normally. e.g. 800ft becomes 1-400ft & 5-800ft.) B. The tailed player must state the 'expenditure' of the first 50% (Rounding up) of his speed/movement. e.g. the tailed aircraft has a current speed of 7 and his movement plot reads: N2L3LPP. He would reveal N2L3 to the tailing player.

3. The tailed pilot is an 'Ace' and the tailing pilot is 'Green'. Benefits: None!

### Special Case

If the tailing aircraft's speed is 51%+ faster than the tailed aircraft, the benefits are reduced or lost. Viz: benefits of case 2 are reduced to those of case 1 and the benefits of case 1 are lost. e.g. a tailed aircraft has a speed of 6; if the tailing aircraft has a speed of 10, the benefits will be reduced or lost.

You may wish to use these suggestions as a basis for your own ideas, perhaps to the extent of having tailing differences for all types of pilots, but I found that these were the easiest to implement and had the best overall effect. Anyway, each to his own! What do you think Red Leader?

"...Red Leader, Red Leader, come in Red Leader, over? ....."

# Peace is Despaired for who can think Submission

ANDREW MCGEE

One of Game Designers' Workshop's 1981 releases is *Suez 73*, a treatment of the Battle of Chinese Farm, which took place in the period 15th-19th October 1973 during the Yom Kippur War. The basic system, as the box lid is careful to announce, is that of *White Death*, a matter to which it will be necessary to return. The package is fairly standard GDW — their usual cardboard box, containing a 22"x28" map, about 500 counters plus rules and scenario booklets and the charts necessary to set up the game. The map is a typical Paul Banner product with a naturalistic colour scheme, which I rather like, apart from the somewhat gaudy red markings for the SAM sites. If you have liked GDW maps in the past, then the chances are that you will like this one. The counters follow the *White Death* format, with identity, strength and movement class on the front and strengths for various kinds of combat on the back, so there will be a certain amount of turning counters back and forth until you become familiar with the different values. One interesting feature is the presence of "Brigade" counters, which can be used to substitute for a stack of units; this is described as purely a book-keeping device to avoid having large stacks on the board. In fact with 1/2" counters and 19mm hexes this is not all that much of a problem. Helpfully the Brigade counters are printed in white rather than the black used for their constituent units.

The rules are also presented in the usual GDW style. I have always found this rather casual, partly through long familiarity with the SPI style and partly because my lawyer's instinct leads me to prefer rules set out more formally. I believe that, in the hands of a competent writer, this really is the best way to ensure comprehensive rules. At the same time it must be admitted that the *Suez 73* rules are pretty good. I do have a few complaints, however. As in *White Death*, there is no explicit statement whether conventional fire may be directed against all the units in a hex. I deduce from certain passages that it cannot, but other people have come to the opposite conclusion, and an express statement that each unit must always be attacked separately would have been welcome.

Two other elements which did not appear in *White Death* are Opportunity Fire and Withdrawal, and the rules for both would benefit from a little tightening. For Opportunity Fire I reproduce the vital sections:

*"A. Which Units May Fire. Any unit of the non-phasing player may fire OF unless the unit is in an enemy ZOC at the time."*

*B. Which Units May Be Fired At. Any enemy unit or stack of units that enters a hex two hexes away from a non-phasing unit and which is visible to it, may be fired at by that non-phasing unit."*

Now this, if taken literally, means that it is never possible to fire OF at an adjacent unit, first since the firer would be in the ZOC of its target, second because it would not be two hexes away. In other words, it is not permitted to hold fire until a moving enemy comes adjacent; another interesting consequence of this interpretation would be to make OF virtually impossible at night, and I find all this hard to take. I would suggest that what is meant in part A is that a non-phasing unit may not fire at unit X while in the ZOC of unit Y; and that in part B, what is meant is "a hex not more than two hexes away."

In the case of withdrawal the confusion arises from the failure to rule on the order in which withdrawals take place, and the point is important because it is not permitted to withdraw into an enemy-controlled hex. This time I really cannot begin to guess at the

design intent, but I trust that the point will be cleared up in future games using the same system.

The set-up charts are competently done, and the historical notes are up to GDW's usual good standards, but I am less happy about the unit display charts. *White Death* players will remember the beautifully detailed (and beautiful) charts of that game, with a place for every unit, identified by name. In *Suez 73* all you get is a box for each brigade with no indication as to what it contains. Additionally, there are a number of divisional units which are assigned no place at all on this chart, an inconvenience to me as I like to save set-up time by keeping all the units in place on the chart (with Bluetak) when the game is not in use. The only other complaint about the components is that the movement chart fails to specify the effect of sand on movement. Otherwise the package is very well assembled and presented, and GDW are to be congratulated.

The ground scale is roughly the same as in *White Death* — 1500 metres to the hex as against 1 mile in *WD* but the time scale is radically different, being twelve hours per turn as compared with five days. Despite this, difference between the systems are surprisingly few. Each turn, each player is given a certain number of movement points, 10 in a day turn, 5 at night. The game-turn is divided into impulses, which alternate between the players, and at the start of each of his impulses the player must decide how many movement points to expend. This continues until neither player has any movement points left, when the turn ends. Thus in *Suez 73* a day turn could consist of anything from two impulses (i.e. one each) to twenty, depending on the overall strategic situation. In each impulse the sequence of movement and combat, considered in detail below, is carried out, so it can be seen that the amount of action in one game-turn can vary considerably. Let me digress a little, at this point, on the overall merits and demerits of this system.

It seems to me that there are two principal advantages. In terms of playing convenience it considerably speeds up any period of the game where not much is happening, and from the point of view of realism it is an interesting contribution to the problem of making the essentially arbitrary process of dividing time more naturalistic. In other words, it recreates well the choice between driving one's forces all-out in the hope of an early breakthrough, with the result that they become exhausted and the enemy can react freely, and surrendering the initiative by husbanding one's strength excessively. In practice I have noticed certain interesting trends in the use of this system. In *White Death* the Russians could never have more than four action impulses in a turn, and generally took three. The Germans were inclined to follow this fairly closely, not wishing to get too far behind. In *Suez 73* there is more freedom as to the number of movement points to be expended in an impulse, but the sides are locked at close quarters so that to expend more than three will almost certainly be wasteful, whilst a cost of one MP to assault often means that two, at least, must be spent if anything is to be achieved. Two important consequences follow from this. The first is that the amount of variety occurring in practice is less than might be expected. The second, more important in *Suez 73* than in *White Death*, is that a game-turn can take a very long time. Every unit can fire in every impulse, and may as well do so; without the same kind of supply restrictions as applied in *White Death* there is no reason to limit the number of impulses or the number of units firing. In my experience, a game-turn of *Suez 73*, at the height of the battle, can easily last six hours. From all of this I am driven to conclude that the practical advantages of the system are really not all that great.

That said, let me turn to look at the details of what goes on within each impulse. First, the Sequence of Play:

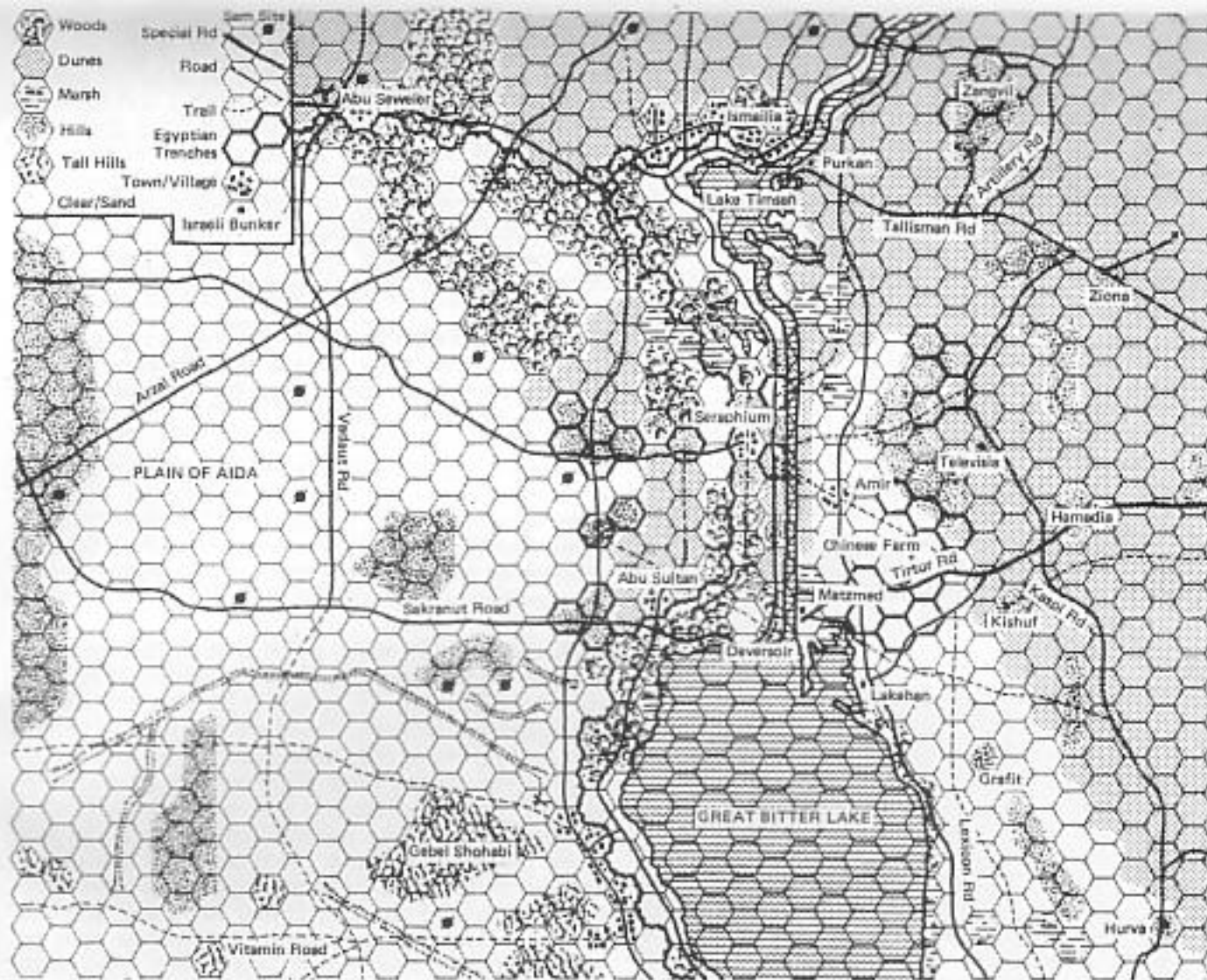
Decision Phase — Barrage Commitment Phase — Movement Phase — Barrage Resolution Phase — Defensive Fire Phase — Assault Decision Phase — Simultaneous Fire Phase — Withdrawal Phase.

The Decision Phase is where the phasing player decides how many movement points he will expend this impulse, from one to the number left to him for that turn. The way in which this, in fact, works in *Suez 73* has already been considered.

The Barrage Commitment Phase means what it says, i.e. that the phasing player decides which of his artillery units will barrage which targets; in this there are limitations as to how many units may barrage a particular hex, and for the Egyptians there is also a rule that the unit spotting for the artillery fire and the artillery unit itself must belong to the same formation. I confess that I am unable to work out what point is served by making this phase come before movement, but there may well be some reason too subtle for me.

The rules for moving units are fairly standard. GDW are keen on dividing movement costs into 1/2, 1/4 and even 1/8 movement points for certain types of terrain, rather than increasing movement allowances so as to keep all costs as integers, and I know that this distresses some of the less mathematically able among us. Movement is subject to Opportunity Fire, the rules for which have already been discussed. Movement ZOCs are exerted by all units and stop movement for the rest of the impulse. Non-Israeli units also pay one MP to leave a movement ZOC. It is worth mentioning that my interpretation of the Opportunity Fire rules does have the desirable effect of encouraging players to use their reconnaissance units in that role and as screening units, by sending them into a hex to draw the OF then sending in the main forces behind them; because fire must be split in OF when there is no more than one target, it is best to send in a stack of recon units, but these cannot always be spared. The rules require a minimum number of factors to be allocated to each target (unusually, a unit is allowed to split its fire between targets) and, in OF at a stack, players tend to put only this minimum number on the less important target. The result is almost always that no damage is done. Analysis of the CRT shows that the total number of casualties caused will be greater when the fire is split evenly, but of course circumstances may dictate the imperative necessity to get one particular target.

In the Barrage Resolution Phase the artillery fire at their previously designated targets. All firing is resolved on the same Combat Results Table, with die-roll adjustments for defence strength, terrain and combat proficiency. This last did not feature in *White Death*, and is, as its name implies, a measure of how good each unit is. In effect the Israelis generally have a slight edge here, although the Egyptian artillery is equal to that of the Israelis. All of this would, I imagine, fit in fairly well with the received view of the relative capabilities of the two sides. The end result of these adjustments to the die-roll is a number of steps which the defending unit must lose from its strength. This is handled by means of numbered markers under the units and, as usual in wargames, there are decidedly too few of these. As will appear, some losses can be recovered in the Withdrawal Phase, so it is necessary to have a separate marker for each unit for "New Losses", i.e. those suffered since the last opportunity to withdraw, and "Old Losses". This can lead to stacks of four units each with two markers, but in fairness I should add that this is pretty rare.



The most remarkable fact about the barrage rules stems, however, from the rule that each battalion-sized unit in the target hex must be attacked with at least 5 factors of artillery (the minimum with which an attack is possible). The rules do not explain what happens when this is impossible, but apart from that the rule has the curious consequence that the best way to protect any given unit from artillery fire is to stack it with other units — in other words to concentrate rather than to disperse. I do see the difficulties of allowing all the fire to be directed at one unit when in fact the chances are that there is really a good deal of intermingling among units in the same hex. Perhaps a better solution would have been to allow artillery fire to be directed against each unit in the hex in turn with, maybe, a reduction in artillery strength if this would otherwise make it too devastating.

After Barrage the phasing player decides which units he wishes to assault and, in the Defensive Fire Phase, these have the chance to fire at their prospective assailants, after which the phasing player may call off the assault. If he wishes to go on, then the assaulting units attack with their conventional fire and assault strengths. I can see no possible reason for calling off an assault once it has been declared, but the player's notes are certainly right to suggest that it is unwise to declare assault against a unit that is not already badly mauled. The victim gets the chance to fire first and if it is largely intact, considerable casualties must be expected.

The next phase is Simultaneous Fire in which all units which neither assaulted nor were assaulted nor barraged may fire even if they are non-phasing units which have fired Opportunity Fire. In *Suez 73* this tends to be a very long phase. Most units are committed to the front line, or at least near enough to it to be within range, and there is no good reason for any of them to withhold fire. At this stage I should perhaps explain further some of the intricacies of firing. Each unit has strengths for Anti-tank Fire, a 1-hex and 2-hex range, for Conventional Fire, at ranges varying from unit to unit and for assault. Each unit also begins with a certain number of steps, which may be lost in combat. To find a unit's value for a particular purpose multiply the appropriate strength by the number of steps remaining. This is cross-referenced with the CRT and with a die-roll, adjusted as mentioned earlier to give a number of steps which the target unit must lose. Artillery units may be used to support attacks in this phase instead of barraging, and this brings us to the requirement of spotting and the line-of-sight rules. These have a fairly unhappy history in wargaming generally, and the *Suez 73* rules are by no means perfect. There are five different elevations, from each of which maximum visibility in hexes is

given, subject to the intervention of blocking terrain, such as woods, villages and dunes. Blocking terrain is negated if the sighting unit is on a higher elevation, which is where realism has been sacrificed to simplicity, since there is in reality a dead area behind each piece of blocking terrain, the exact extent of this area varying with the relative heights of observer and blocking terrain, and the distance between them.

The CRT is fairly bloody, and if there were no way of recovering losses the game would be likely to grind to a halt fairly rapidly with both sides running out of units. The brake on this is withdrawal. In the Withdrawal Phase any unit may attempt to withdraw one hex and recover half the losses it has suffered in the present impulse. It is not obvious to me why an actual withdrawal should be necessary in the case of a unit which is not at the time in the ZOC of the enemy unit. To withdraw successfully requires a die-roll not exceeding the Combat Proficiency, with two dice. Israeli units are mostly CP 7, with a few 8's and even the odd 9. Egyptian artillery is 7, other Egyptian units are 6. Thus, in general, the Israelis are odds on to succeed, the Egyptians odds on to fail. A withdrawing unit is disrupted even if withdrawal is successful, doubly disrupted if it is unsuccessful (each disruption reduces CP by one and costs one MP to remove.)

This basically simple system has a few extra bits tacked on to meet the requirements of the particular situation. Thus there are special surprise rules for the first turn, rules for night turns and a section dealing with the effects of the Suez Canal, but none of this requires to be examined in detail.

In general the game system works well, if rather slowly. The battle is by its nature a slugfest, and this is well captured. Some of the elements of the system go together rather oddly, as we have seen, but the development has been fairly thorough and there is no reason even for a novice to fear getting lost.

Next I turn to the scenarios. There are five of these, two being only one turn long. One lasts two turns, another three, and the campaign game is eight turns. One-turn scenarios are often of dubious value for anything except learning the game-system, but with the prospect of several impulses you do get a lot of shooting for your one turn. There is one unfortunate matter concerned with one of the scenarios, namely scenario IV "Israeli Breakout". There is an order of appearance for the Campaign Game, showing the dates on which each unit arrived at the battle, and this fits in with the account given in the historical notes. Scenario IV

starts at the beginning of turn 4, but careful examination of the set-up shows that the units listed in the instructions as appearing on the west bank of the canal did not in fact, in certain cases anyway, appear until turn 6, 24-hours later. In other words, there is apparently a time-warp in the middle of the canal! I have not been able to discover similar errors in any of the other set-ups, which are pretty well up to the general standard of the game. The real fault which becomes apparent on playing the scenarios is that it really is not possible to get five good games out of the historical situation. In the first scenario, for example, it is virtually impossible for the Israelis to win, although the notes indicate that the historical result was an Israeli Minor Victory. The second scenario is fairly balanced, but the third and fourth favour the Israelis fairly heavily. These smaller scenarios also suffer, perhaps inevitably, from the "end of the world" syndrome where players are prepared to make desperate all-out efforts for two turns, knowing that there is effectively no tomorrow. It is admittedly difficult to see what could be done about this.

Of the Campaign Game it is more difficult to judge. I have to confess that I have not played it to completion. When I have attempted it, either both sides have collapsed in exhaustion after about three turns (this refers to the units and to the players) or else one side has tried to keep back its resources and has been rapidly overwhelmed. This leads me to the suspicion that firing is perhaps a little too effective, i.e. that the CRT is too bloody. Certainly losses in the Yom Kippur War were heavy but from the point of view of simulation it really should be possible to get the game to go the distance. Perhaps the answer lies in supply. The game does have supply rules, but their only effect is to penalise a unit which is isolated; there is no overall shortage of supply. Another solution might be to make withdrawal easier.

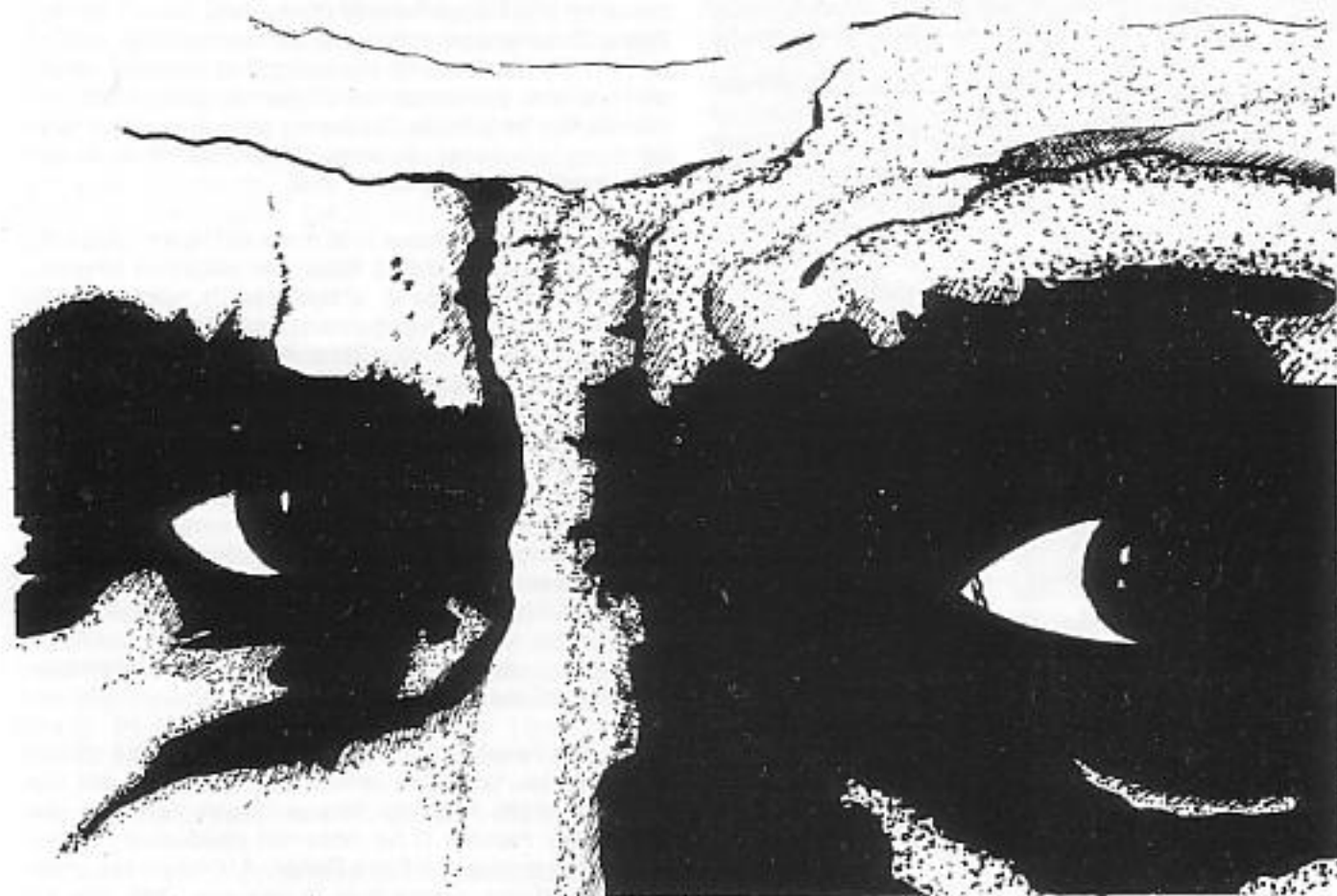
As to the balancing of the Campaign Game I would be inclined to agree with the statement in the player's notes that the Israeli Player can lose the game very rapidly if he does not assiduously guard his bridge across the Suez Canal. Although his army is qualitatively superior it is not easy for him to exploit this. Whatever he does, his casualties will be heavy, and this he cannot really afford, since he is outnumbered. Superior Combat Proficiency should of course allow him to recover more of his losses than will the Egyptian but the pressure is still on him. The Egyptian player of course sees the other side of the picture — an inferior army spread all over the West Bank, unable to make much reaction on the first turn and doomed to be cannon-fodder for those terrifying M48s and Centurions (which are indeed splendidly effective in the game). Between good players I should be inclined to think that the game is probably fairly balanced. If the players are rather less expert, then my money is on the Egyptian, for the game demands far less of him. This in turn leads on to the next criticism, which is that the strategic options available to the players are somewhat limited. Strategically, if not politically, the situation in this part of the world is pretty straightforward. Various bits of land, not least those immediately adjoining the Suez Canal, are coveted by both sides who at this time maintained an armed and pretty uneasy truce, which from time to time erupted in open war with two simple objectives: smash the enemy and grab a bit more land. In this game, the Israeli player must put a bridge across the Canal, and the rules severely limit his freedom to choose where to do this. When he gets across he must engage and destroy the Egyptian forces, and this will keep him busy for some considerable time. There is some choice as to where to try to break the Egyptian line and there are a few tactical wrinkles to be learned, though for the most part these can be gleaned from the player's notes, which are excellent, incidentally. The Egyptian can do little but hang on grimly and follow what the Israeli does, so for him too the options are pretty limited.

I should perhaps make it clear here that I am not criticising *Suez 73* very much as a simulation — certainly I think that the restricted choice in the game reflects accurately the strategic situation; but it does seem desirable to warn readers, who are presumably also prospective purchasers, that this is very definitely not a game of wide open desert spaces; it is a grim and bitter slugfest, and if you like such things, or are only interested in the simulation, then this could well be your game.



# SPIES!

RICHARD ALDRIDGE



When I was a member of Her Majesty's Armed Forces many years ago I was well aware of the great value of the chit. If, for instance, you just happened to turn up for a spot of square-bashing wearing shoes instead of boots and were promptly approached by an indignant NCO, the magic phrase "... gotta chit, Corporal ..." would turn away his wrath, provided you could produce said chit, of course.

The same thing can be said for *Spies!*, a multi-player game of espionage and intrigue recently published by SPI, if you have the right chit you will get away with it, for chits are vital in this game.

Set in the years 1933 to 1939 *Spies!* is a seven turn game — each turn representing one year — in which five European nations compete in a struggle to steal each others top secrets. It is best suited for five players, each controlling the police and spies of a single nation but it works as well with four or even three players. With only two, however, you have a situation where each controls the affairs of two nations all the time and shares control of the remaining nation with his opponent on alternate turns, which can lead to some strange happenings. You *can* have a reasonable game with just two players but it is not to be recommended, so try to scrape up that third player if possible.

Apart from the standard game there is an optional long game that I shall deal with briefly at the conclusion of this article, so until that time everything you read here will be about the standard game.

When writing about a game it seems to be traditional to give a description of the 'bits and pieces' and I am a great one for tradition, so here goes ...

Unlike many SPI games the rules are written in narrative form and are commendably brief and reasonably clear. Just a single sheet, they are simple and easy enough even for the proverbial twelve-year-old to learn in a short time. There are one or two doubtful areas but nothing that a little common-sense won't handle.

The mapsheet is 22"x34" and has a number of

tracks and holding boxes on it as well as the map itself, with a time and victory point record track, a starting set-up, a bank track, three holding boxes, and a couple of displays that summarise the play of the action chits that control all a spy's actions except that of movement. Why these displays should have been positioned to be readable only from the south edge of the mapsheet remains a mystery. Fortunately their contents are easily assimilated and after a couple of turns you are unlikely to need to refer to them again, but how nice it would have been if they had been in more suitable positions in the first place.

The map itself shows Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, with the five opposing nations — Germany, Italy, Russia, France and Great Britain, in order of play — clearly shown in brown, yellow, red, green and blue respectively. Major cities and ports are indicated with the capital cities of the opposing nations being further identified by an appropriate national flag.

In order to regulate the movement of the spies, the cities are linked by a network of rail and air routes while sea zones have been created to allow movement by sea. All movement is rather abstract of course, remember that the length of a turn is one year so there is no need to get bothered if you see a railway going across the Channel, nobody is going to worry about ferries on that scale.

There are only two disturbing features about the map, Coventry and Birmingham have changed places for some reason, and as a true Coventrian I cannot help feeling a trifle aggrieved by that, whilst the removal of Scapa Flow from its rightful home in the Orkney Isles to the far-off Shetlands can only be as a result of a cunning deception scheme. As it happens neither of these re-locations has any affect on play and can thus be ignored!

There are three types of counter actually used on the map; secrets, police and spies. All are normally deployed face-down and are back-printed to show type of unit and in the case of police and spies, nationality. There are forty secrets all told, ranging from the humble limpet mine (with a victory point

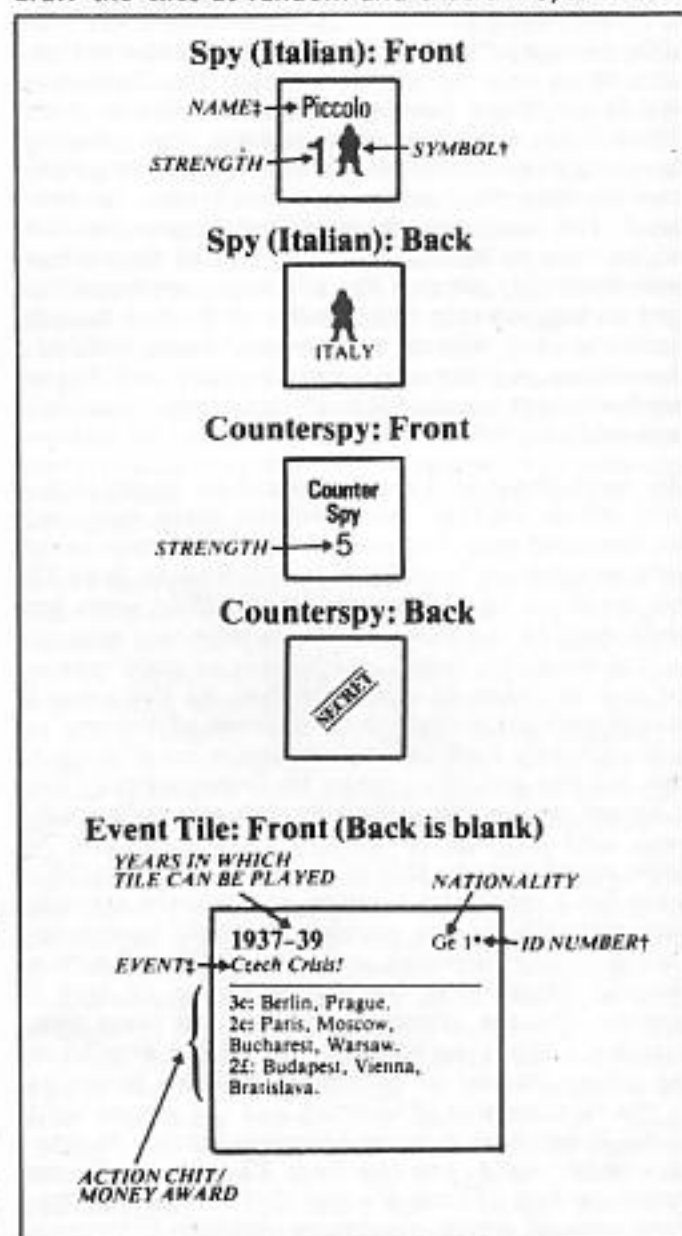
value of 1) up to the greatest prize, the atomic bomb (with a victory value of 5). Each of the opposing nations has a number of security police units with strengths varying between 1 and 4, these strengths normally being concealed from the other players. Likewise each country has a number of spies similarly possessing strengths of between 1 and 4 and they are given individual names as well, just to add a little flavour. If you want to see what the counters actually look like take a peek at the illustrations, one picture is worth a thousand words.

Counters that aren't used on the map include event tiles and action chits, plus a few markers, and it will probably be easier to describe the functions of these as we come to them.

The first thing to be done when setting up the game is to record each country's bank balance. Finance is as valuable as the possession of action chits in *Spies!* and each country starts off with a certain amount of money in the bank, as recorded on the bank track.

Each country has seven event tiles of its own, plus another three drawn at random, whilst they also have an allotment of action chits that have been distributed at random. There are six types of action chit and no more than seven chits may be held by any country at one time. Eight secrets are placed in selected neutral cities and the remainder allocated among the opposing nations, being placed in any home city providing that there are never more than one per city. Police units are placed, no more than two per city, in any city coded for them, and the spies are deployed anywhere on the map with no restrictions on stacking or positioning. And with that done, the game can commence.

The players' first action is to play, or discard, an event tile. This is a large counter with a list of cities printed on it together with a brief description of a historical or hypothetical event. As long as he is not in his home country any spy in a city on that list will gain for his country one or more action chits or a sum of money, as indicated on the tile. It is entirely up to the player whether he plays or discards a tile so no-one is forced to play a tile that will benefit an enemy more than it will himself. This gives rise to a bit of a puzzle; some tiles can only benefit an enemy and will thus be discarded, so why were they included in the first place? The only thing that I have been able to think of so far is that originally it was intended to have players draw the tiles at random and that the system was



later changed. To check on that theory I played a game doing just that, shoving them all in a stack and having each player taking one off the top in his turn, and in the event it made very little difference to the game.

Be that as it may, having done that the player can then move his police units. There are no restrictions on the move, he can put them where he wishes in his home country subject to the stacking limit, and as soon as he has moved them he may search for enemy spies in every city that contains enemy spies and his police.

The procedure is simplicity itself; if the police units are stronger than the spy then the spy is captured, no dice throw, a simple strength comparison. The spy goes into a box on the record track and the captor is rewarded with the handsome sum of £20,000 and a free action chit, it's as easy as that. Well, perhaps not quite so easy, because so far we have not taken into account the action chits.

One of these chits, 'Papers', is tailor-made for this sort of situation. 'Papers' will nullify a search immediately, before any strength comparison takes place. It will also cost £2,000 to play; espionage is an expensive business, so if you haven't got the money in the bank that's your hard luck. Of course, you don't *have* to play a chit, you might be one of those cunning types who send a low-grade spy into an enemy city with the deliberate intention of finding out how strong the police are, so that you send a top-grade chap in afterwards to sneak a secret.

Once the police have been moved, papers played, and the less fortunate spies thrown into the nearest cell it is the time to move the spies. They can move up to five spaces per turn, a space being defined as a city or sea zone entered, and any combination of land, sea, and air routes may be used as long as a spy doesn't end a turn at sea. Should a spy enter an enemy city that is occupied by police then those police may search for him — and he may evade — in exactly the same manner as previously described. If he should enter an enemy or neutral city containing a secret he can attempt to discover it, and by now you will not be surprised to learn that this will entail the expenditure of a chit, a 'Discovery' in this case costing £3,000. If the secret was unguarded it has been found and it only

remains for the spy to get it back to his home capital city for his country to receive £20,000 and a free action chit, plus a number of victory points according to the year of discovery. Had the secret been guarded by police then the spy would have had to have been stronger than the guard (and to have escaped capture) before gaining access to the secret. By the way, only one unit can guard a secret even though there may be more than one unit in the city, so it will be apparent that a strength 4 police unit will never lose a secret since the strongest spy is also 4.

It is of course possible for a secret to be guarded by a spy and in this case the intruder has another obstacle before him. A defending spy has the opportunity to play a 'Cover' chit to foil the attempted discovery, but at least in this case the intruder can have another attempt by playing yet another 'Discovery' should he have one. Since this is one of the situations where one chit can be used to counter another this can go on until one or the other decides to call it a day.

Thus far we have assumed that the secret has been a genuine one, but it so happens that a quarter of the secrets are not real secrets at all but nasty things called 'Counterspies' that come as a most unpleasant surprise to the spy who is unfortunate enough to come across one. Counterspies have a strength like any other unit and, if stronger than the spy, the latter goes straight into the slammer with no opportunity to play a 'Papers' chit. If the capture were to take place in a neutral country he would go into a holding box from which he could only be released in the same way as from a hostile jail, by playing an 'Escape' chit, and these are expensive, at £10,000 a time.

You will have noticed that *Spies!* is a bloodless game with captured spies merely being taken out of circulation until they can be released. There is, however, an ultimate weapon in a spy's armoury, the 'Sanction'. This chit has a picture of a Luger on it so you shouldn't need to have three guesses to know what that means, and it is in fact the only way in which spies can be killed off. It's not cheap, it costs £20,000 to use a sanction and tends accordingly to be used sparingly, but since this time there is none of that business about comparing strengths it means that even a low-grade spy can

'do in' the top enemy bloke without any trouble. It is true that there is a counter to a sanction in the form of the 'Escape' chit but there aren't so many of those around and they are usually reserved for releasing spies from jail. Victims go into yet another holding box and can be brought back into the game only by playing a 'Recruit' chit, which is quite cheap considering, at a mere £4,000.

You can see from this that a successful espionage operation is going to require a lot of money, the right chits, and a lot of luck. It is possible to negotiate with an opponent during your turn but it cannot be regarded as a reliable way to get the all-important chits and money. I have played a game in which I had only three 'Discovery' chits during the entire game — and they are among the most numerous in the counter-mix — and all three of the secrets I found were counterspies! Yes, there's a lot of luck involved.

That's about all there is to the standard game, easy to play but not at all easy to play well, it carries on until at the end there is a grand totalling of victory points to find the winner. It can easily be played to a finish within three hours, and although *SPI* recommend a time limit of five minutes per player there is no real need to impose one, it works very smoothly.

The long game is a different kettle of fish. For a start the rules are written in the familiar *SPI* case-number style. They are again simple, brief and clear. In addition, as well as having to expend action chits and money whenever they want to do something, spies now have to use up 'action points', of which each country receives twelve to last it for each turn. They have to be used when moving, conducting police searches, playing action chits, and initiating diplomacy. Surprisingly, it isn't as restrictive as you might think but it does slow you down a bit.

Event tiles in the long game take on a new importance in that certain of them can affect the neutral status of some countries such as Austria and Czechoslovakia. There is now no limit on the number of action chits that a country can hold and there are another four types to play with. There aren't many in the counter-mix, another fourteen — but they can change the complexion of the game.

'Double Cross' reverses strength comparisons and the effect of a 'Sanction' and can also be used to counter an 'Escape'.

'Source' enables a player to examine all the spies and police of another player, and just think what you can do with that sort of information, perhaps it is possible to win by negotiation after all.

'Drop' is expensive at £20,000 to £30,000 but it can establish an effective 'capital city' for the purpose of 'cashing in' enemy secret in any city on the map; you can nick a secret in Berlin, say, and drop it in the same place for your £20,000 reward, very satisfying.

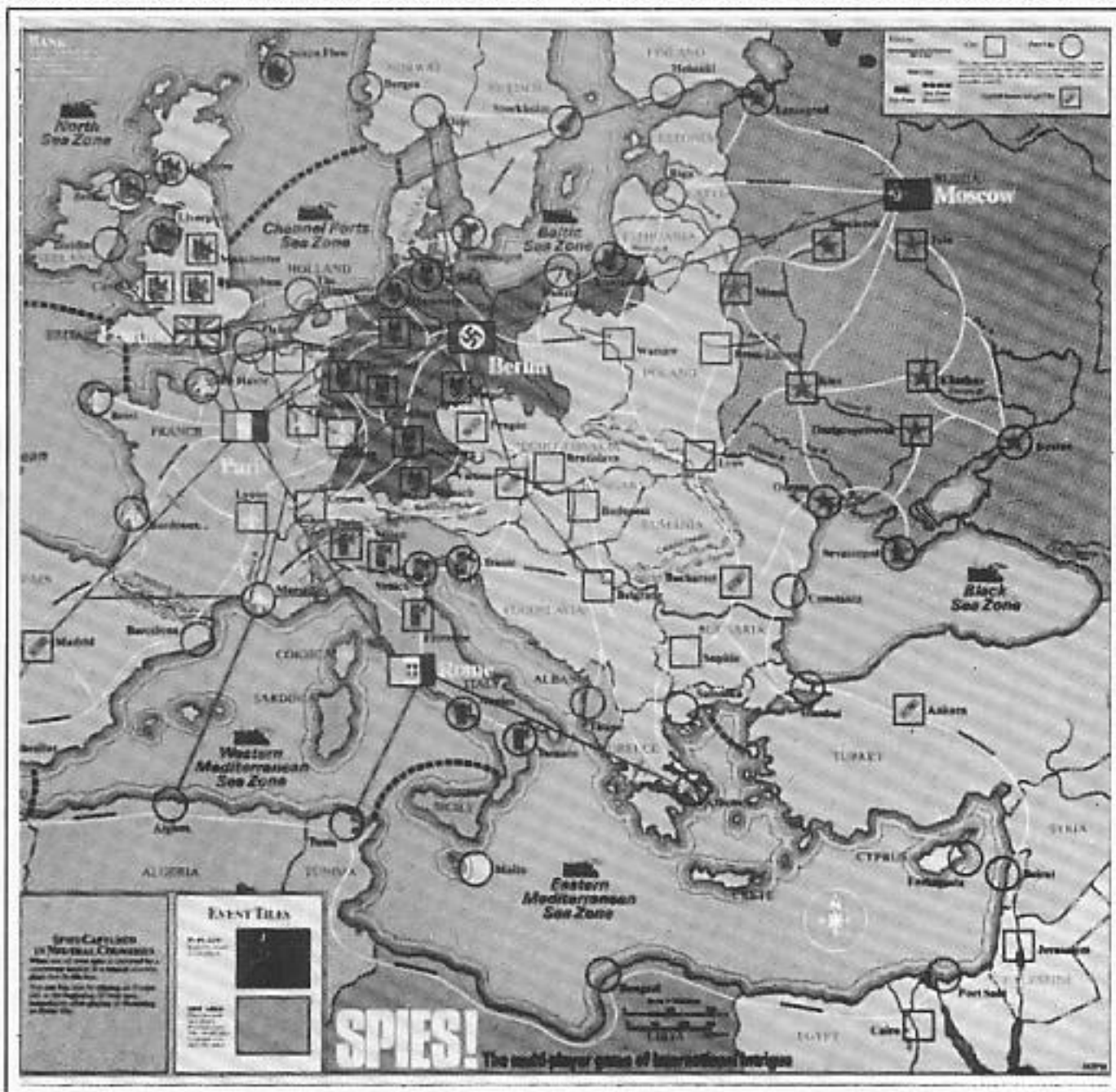
'Intercept', the last of the newcomers, acts as a counter to 'Drop' and 'Source' chits.

Istanbul, Tangier and Geneva are now 'spy havens' nice restful places where spies cannot do anything to each other at all and I'll leave you to think of the implications of that.

Each country has a top spy called 'Cousin'. In the standard game 'Cousin' behaves as a normal spy, but in the long game he (I assume that it is a 'he') has some useful attributes in that he can never be caught by a counterspy and can never be 'Sanctioned' unless it is by another 'Cousin'. Any other common-or-garden spy trying a sanction ends up dead himself.

And that's about all the difference between the two versions, the long game is no longer, you can still manage it in three hours or thereabouts and our twelve-year-old can still play it all right, there is just a bit more to think about.

*Spies!* makes a nice change from the run-of-the-mill wargame and there is always plenty going on. It's light-hearted, enjoyable nonsense but the more you play it the more you find out that it has hidden depths. All we need now is for someone to write an article on how to win it, because I'm hopeless!



# BOOK REVIEW

HAMISH WILSON

Arriving just too late for inclusion in this column in our Christmas edition, three books thumped onto my front door mat in quick succession and all of them dealt with aspects of the first World War. Dealing with them in order of chronology of their subjects I must start with Richard Holmes' biography of Field Marshal Sir John French, "The Little General". Published by Jonathan Cape at £12:50 this is the life story of the man who led the B.E.F. when the lights were going out all over Europe. It has been argued that French was one of the Donkeys of whom Hoffman spoke but that is not the impression that Richard Holmes allows us to retain for long. Enormously popular with the troops and, for the most part, with the French General Staff, Sir John found himself hampered and bedevilled by strategic and tactical debates which were going on back in Whitehall. Of course it is inevitable that the ossuaries of the Western Front should be picked over once again in this work, but for myself, I find the period, both before and after the World War more interesting. French was involved in the Boer war having won his spurs the hard way in the Light Cavalry. While fellow officers occupied their time in polo (a sport deserving approbation in those regiments) French was studying history and strategy. There are tales of the young subaltern which make him sound more like a Count von Schlieffen than a dashing light cavalry man .... and there are the dashing bits as well. A bit of a lad for the ladies was our John French! At the peak of his career French was involved in the Curragh mutiny (or what you will), not as a participant but as a senior officer who sought to prevent the loss to the British Army of talented officers who were going to be of value in the war which French saw coming as early as 1902. It was also to Ireland that he returned after he departed command in France, and in light of current troubles I find these periods of equal interest to the central part of the book. Richard Holmes has done us all a useful service by undertaking this biography of a man whose previous reputation has rested upon less closely reasoned and researched work. Seven maps and twenty three photographs support this text which ought to be read by anyone with an interest in the British Army of the first half of this century.

Also from Jonathan Cape comes a splendid anthology of prose, verse and poetry which has been compiled by Peter Vansittart. Far from being the almost cliched collection of anti-war poetry contrasted with the jingoistic speeches of politicians and newspapermen, this anthology takes words from contemporary writers and writers of the present day; letters from the front and tracts of wisdom with the benefit of hindsight; marching songs and the words of refugees; all these are here presented to offer insight on the personal aspects of the 'progress' of WW I from 1914 to 1918, and then follows the period between the wars, concluding with the awful quote from Hitler, "I .... am the only head of government in Europe who knows war as it really was, I mean for the front line crock." The intensity of the experience which is distilled within these pages does not make the book easy to read but as an antidote to campaign histories this is essential reading. At £7:95 this book is good value and will never fail to provide fresh food for thought on matters military, never mind the first World War.

From Messrs. Patrick Stephens Ltd., comes a chilling little work called "Wars to Come" by David Baker. When I tell you that it has a forward by General George Keegan then you will begin to see why I describe it as 'chilling'. Mr. Baker has been satellite gazing and to some considerable effect. Starting from the almost mandatory story of the V-2, he follows the development of rocket and,

especially, satellite technology from Sputnik 1 to the latest anti-satellite or 'killer' satellite systems. Never mind Big Brother — if Mr. Baker is right Uncle Sam and Ivan are watching us right now and in the kind of detail that seems, to me, quite astounding. But the core of Mr. B's thesis is that as all that exciting Shuttle and Soyuz stuff is going on in public the two super powers are actually practicing for the first war in space. All those high flown words about "for peaceful purposes only" are for the deception of the public and Russia has been playing with 'killersats' since 1967. It makes dismal reading and I wonder, upon reading the potted biog. inside the dust jacket of this volume and learning that Mr. Baker is employed by NASA, how much he is playing a game for them in trying to ensure the continued funding of both branches of the US space effort with these frighteners. It is always good news to the proponents of such funds when 'independent experts' say that the Russians are years ahead in a particular branch of technology .... However, regardless of the intentions of the author about political games, he has produced a most readable volume which is informative and richly illustrated. The combination of beautiful art work and real life stills of rockets in action reminds me of the fantastic books that Willy Ley and Werner von Braun used to write in the early 50's to encourage the boyish dreams of boys like me of the frontiers of space. I hope that David Barker's book is less prophetic than those. Patrick Stephens publish at £8:95.

Two volumes now which look at an aspect of war with which we rarely deal. Between 1940 and 1945 German troops were in occupation of a number of different parts of Europe where they had no right to be — other than the right of conquest. In "Paris in the Third Reich — a history of the German occupation, 1940 — 1944" by David Pryce-Jones we are able to see some of the larger issues involved in a major city being occupied and, thereafter, altered by that occupation. The politics and people, the attitudes and aberrations and the abject surrenders are documented here with a vivid set of pictures, expertly compiled and arranged by picture editor Michael Rand. It is frankly appalling and has, at times, a genuine feeling of an account of a new dawn of barbarism. This feeling does not merely relate to the accounts of German actions taken in support of their occupation, but also to the almost enthusiastic co-operation that seemed to arise from sections of the French population. The handing over of the Jews, the burning of pictures by Miro, Picasso, Max Ernst and others, the French volunteers for the SS — sufficient to form their own division and the PPF, the French Fascist party .... all this in the city that most Europeans would regard as the cultural heart of Europe. While it is true that much of this ground was covered in Marcel Ophuls' film, "The Sorrow and the Pity", it is good to have this book as a more easily accessible reminder of another aspect of French life under the Nazis.

For a more particular and personal look at the facts of living under such an occupation I must commend you to "War on Sark" by Julia Tremayne. It is compiled and edited from diaries kept by the redoubtable Mrs. Tremayne during the years 1940-1945 when the Germans were occupying that island. While there is much in this book that deals with the trifling incidents of day to day life, as opposed to the grand sweep of history and the ebb and flow of battle, political or military, it is this very fact which makes the book the perfect companion and compliment to the one above. The enormous preoccupation with food tells us more than the sometimes pathetic attempts at humour about the short rations the islanders were required to endure. There are moments of great courage, quietly related, and moments of terrible despair which are most moving, but it is the smallness of this telling of a story which is far from unique which infuses it with considerable strength and power and makes it a difficult book to forget having once read it. Two maps and fifty two photographs and reproductions of newspapers and documents support this text and Webb and Bower publish at £7:95.

Some time ago I reviewed a book in this column about the amazing Harrier VSTOL aeroplane. From Patrick Stephens comes another book on the same subject and it is, I'm afraid, not anything like as good. "Harrier" by Francis K. Mason does bring the Harrier story up to date in that it includes a lot

of information about the development of Harrier variants and the text, such as it is, is richly supported by photographs and line drawings of a very high order of quality. I am being, perhaps, grudging about this work since there is much merit in it, but I find it disappointing that the development of the story of VIFFing (thrust Vectoring In Forward Flight) has not been continued from the early stages in "Jump Jet" (which volume is not, incidentally, mentioned in Mr. Mason's bibliography), that the tactical considerations of Harrier against the fourth generation fighters are not really looked at and that the main axis of effort in the volume seems to be for those aircraft enthusiasts who wish to follow aviation history through airframe numbers and the histories thereof. For those people, and for the model builders, "Harrier" will be of inestimable value and will be seen to come cheap at £9:95. For those of us who want to play the Harrier scenarios .... or design some .... for 'Air War' there are better books.

From the above it may be seen that I do not write without prejudice. That is the writer's privilege and it is one which Bill Gunston exercises to the full in "Fighters of the Fifties" (Patrick Stephens at £10:95). It is a joy of a book, not least because of the way in which the author sets out his (almost) belligerent views on the aircraft, and the policies behind their development, of the period in question. Without doubt Bill Gunston is one of the most renowned commentators on aviation history in Britain, never mind the rest of the world, and it is a great joy to see such a grand senior member of this school of journalism without any editorial fetters to bind him, sounding off into the wild blue yonder and saying exactly what he thought then and *still* thinks. There may be bits of this book with which you will disagree but you'll never find it short on entertainment. F-86, Hawker Hunter, F-89, Lavochkin La-15, Gloster Javelin .... remember those .... share your memories with Bill Gunston in this book and you'll be joining the club which is peerless in nostalgic affection to no good end, the old 'plane buffs.

Before the Spitfire, was the S6B; before the S6B was the Schneider Trophy and the races for that ran from 1913 — 1931 and those races are the subject of a smashing wee book from Putnam Press which is written by Derek N. James. Apart from the stories of governmental jiggery-pokery which Mr. James tells with considerable relish, the details of the aircraft, successful and otherwise, are presented here in both photograph and plan drawing. Of course a work of this nature will find great favour with the aeroplane buff, but there is much of value for those who enjoy 'the history behind the history' as well. £12:50 is the steepish price asked for this work but when the large number of plans and photos which support this text are taken into account then the price isn't really too high.

Lastly let me deal briefly with the book which has caused all the fuss in the papers recently. "MI5 — British Security Service Operations, 1909-1945" by Nigel West is a fascinating volume and deserves more consideration than the simple 'uncovering of moles' which is the aspect of the work which has received most media coverage in this country. Nigel West has done a first class job of tracing the development of MI5 but the main bulk of the book is devoted to the internal security work which was done during the second World War, and in this area the book is splendid. I can't think how Mr. West has uncovered all the information which he deploys in this volume. He does say that many of the members of the department have been generous with their time in interviews and honest in their memories but he also admits that much of the linking of what he has been told has had to be done by intelligent deduction because he has never been given access to the files of the service. All this mystery could make for stodgy reading but Mr. W. manages to make the reader's voyage of discovery through the book a most enjoyable one and the astonishingly low price of £7:95 which Bodley Head ask for this book almost guarantees a high number of sales in hardback. As Nigel West points out, MI5 has fostered an aura of mystery about itself for a long time. In this book we come as near to piercing that aura as we are likely to do in this generation and for that reason alone I commend this one to you.

# THE FIRST COMPUTER WARGAME

MIKE COSTELLO

There are a number of software products on the market, advertised as wargames, but from the wargamer's point of view many of these games do not seem to meet his requirements. The skill they require in order to be played successfully may be the skill of fast reflexes rather than the mastery of tactical and strategic principles. Many are so simple that the question of learning the rules hardly arises, but where it does, the game does not seem to induct the player into the mechanics painlessly as should be the case with any computer-assisted learning process. The printed components are inadequate or poorly-planned, increasing playing effort rather than reducing it. Most of all, they are really solitaire games in which the player attempts to defeat the computer with any two-player option thrown in as an afterthought.

This article describes the development of a game intended to meet a different definition of what constitutes a computer wargame, and readers will have to decide on the accuracy of the title.

The first decision was the subject of the game; any subject in military history will do, and if we are starting out to develop a new type of game, we don't really need to feel inhibited by the existence of manual games on certain subjects. In order to whittle down the possibilities, I began to define the expected market for the game.

The most popular subjects are World War II and contemporary or hypothetical situations. There is also a growing tide of interest in fantasy/SF games, but this is an area in which I have little experience. Originally I planned to sell the game principally to hard-core wargamers, but further thought revealed the flaw in this idea.

If we are seriously intending to develop and market a computer wargame consisting of a map, counters, explanatory booklet and a computer program on cassette tape, which was the format I had in mind, then we have to think in terms of a minimum print run for all the printed components. It's very uneconomic to set up the equipment in a printing firm for a print run of a few hundred copies for such specialised products. The tape presents less of a problem as commercial duplicating devices can turn out copies 50 at a time in only a few minutes. We therefore need to identify a reasonable number of potential purchasers. My guess would be that no more than 10% of wargamers in the U.K. have computers, this is much more than the ratio of computers to the population of the U.K. would suggest, but it is based on my experience that wargamers and computer owners have much the same interests and outlook. It still isn't nearly enough, especially when we remember that there are now around 20 different brands of domestic micro on the market, and the program will have to be rewritten to suit the peculiarities of each one in turn.

If we start with the much larger number of micro-owners, we can say that we only have to persuade 10 or 20% of these owners to spend a comparatively small amount of money on our product to achieve our objective, and if the game sells fewer copies than we expected, we can always rewrite the program for the new models of computer now coming onto the market, without altering the other components, and thereby increase the number of possible buyers.

Unfortunately, the idea of producing a game designed to appeal to the micro market in general means that we have a much tougher selling job; we have to persuade people who have never touched a wargame in their lives to join that select band of monomaniacs. The next question, therefore, was: Why do people *not* become wargamers?

The answer seems to be: the rules. As far as can be established, non-wargamers have no objection to playing games as such, they don't have moral scruples about games on military subjects, and they like the idea of games with a greater level of realism than *Monopoly*, but they won't sit down and learn the rules. We might add that they dislike dirty mechanics in the sense that they don't want to spend ten minutes resolving each combat, and they get worried when they can't decide what to do at the beginning of each turn because the strategic situation facing them is too complex. If the projected game was to succeed, it had to be easy to get into, yet offer a depth of interest which would reward those who spent time studying it. Somehow the rules had to be forced into the computer, if only to get them out of the accompanying booklet, which would otherwise intimidate the prospective purchaser. The early Turns should give the impression of a quick, effortlessly playable game; by the time the player realised his mistake, the poor devil would be hooked, and find himself converted to wargaming without realising it.

Some readers may object to this approach, thinking that design compromises are bound to be made in order to make wargames attractive to those outside the hobby. The point of a computer wargame, however, is that it should no longer be necessary to make compromises in order to meet the needs both of the hardcore gamer and of the beginner.

## Parameters

Eventually it was decided to choose a World War II subject, since some people seem to find it rather alarming to play a game about some hypothetical future holocaust that we are all supposed to be trying to avoid. The choice of game scale, though, was not so obvious. In the early days of wargaming, *Avalon Hill* produced one big-name game after another, *D-Day*, *Waterloo*, *Stalingrad* .... everyone had at least some idea that a battle of that name had been fought. It seemed advisable to choose such a subject, but in practice this meant an operational-level game. It was not a good idea,

however, to give the purchaser five maps and 2,000 counters, since he would need hours just to set the game up, and this is the sort of thing only dedicated wargamers enjoy. A game like *"D-Day"* would therefore have to be on a scale of around five miles to the hex. Nothing wrong with that, but it turned out that it would be very difficult to justify the use of a computer at all in such a game, if it were to be regarded as some kind of game-assistance aid. The reasons for this are a little difficult to explain. In such a game, you might have regiment-level counters, or stick to Division- or even Corps-level. But at regiment-level, the players would be faced with large stacks threading their way through crowded hexes, together with a lot of complicated rules concerning multiple-unit-type attacks, stacking limitations, and so on. Not that the micro could not help with the problem of sorting out these situations but you would spend five minutes typing in a description of what each player had in a group of hexes before it could tell you who advanced, who retreated and how far, who became disorganised, and who fell off the edge of the map.

At Division-level, on the other hand, everything becomes so simple that it is not clear that a computer is needed to monitor the simulation; the play-interest largely derives from the players' perception of the overall strategic situation, and the computer will be quite unaware of this.

The problem of writing computer-assisted games on operational-level battles probably needs an entirely new approach. What a player is doing in such a game is deciding the broad sweep of the action, in so far as his opponent will let him dictate it; to implement his command decisions, however, he must move large numbers of units and make large numbers of minor tactical decisions about the best hex from which to launch an attack, the best combination of units to use in order to achieve a good combat result, and so on. If you were to ask him if he would be prepared to delegate these decisions to a computer procedure which could be relied on to use a set of simple rules for arranging units in the best way at the end of each turn, he might be enthusiastic, or might regret the loss of control over minor tactical matters that this would involve. At any rate, this sort of game, in which the player indicates to the program his general strategic objectives for the next turn, leaving it to the machine to dictate the exact movement of individual units, is probably the next step in computer-assisted gaming.

A much less ambitious objective was decided on for this first project, namely to develop a tactical-level game. It's much easier to see the advantages of putting such a game on the computer because the game mechanics are so repetitive and yet involve a much smaller number of variable factors. Consider a game like *October War*. The players spend most of their time during a game-turn resolving cases of individual combat, one tank

platoon versus another, using the same set of CRT's each time. They soon lose interest in the actual resolution procedure through sheer repetition, wanting to know instead what the overall effect will be, but they have to trudge through the set procedures to find out.

Other advantages are that aspects which greatly increase the realism of such tactical situations can be incorporated without increasing complexity from the players' point of view. For example, the initial strength of a unit can be stored in memory and reduced to reflect combat casualties as the game proceeds. If this initial strength is equivalent to the number of tanks in a battalion, the program can keep track of the loss of each individual tank; an equivalent manual system to do this would be unacceptably tedious. Supply rules can also be incorporated which are adequately realistic without requiring the players to do any bookkeeping themselves. All this makes the game more complex in the sense that it would get a higher complexity rating in the S&T ratings chart, but not in the sense that time taken to learn how to play the game is increased. Although this seems an elementary point, we are all so accustomed to linking the two concepts together that it requires a positive effort to distinguish between what might be called "inherent complexity" and "perceived complexity."

It was also decided to write the program in BASIC rather than Assembler. For those who are interested in such things, and to put a complicated situation briefly, the nature of the program makes it simpler to understand and debug if it is written in a high-level language rather than being compiled to machine-code from Assembly language. Assembler is supposed to have the advantages of speed and compactness. Certainly a machine-code version of the program would run enormously faster, but this would seldom be apparent to the players as an advantage, due to the way in which the game is played. It's unlikely that it would take up less RAM than the BASIC version, although this is due to the rather unusual environment found on microcomputers with BASIC interpreters; each keyword is really a call to a ROM routine of tens or hundred of bytes, and so the programmer can call up these routines with a one-byte keyword and thus avoid using up the available RAM.

The next decision concerned playing time and length of rules. A wargamer is generally prepared to wade through a miniature encyclopaedia of rules and regulations which teach him how to play the game correctly, but a beginner at the hobby would be somewhat disconcerted by a long rulebook; an arbitrary limit of 2500 words was set for the section of the rules booklet dealing with rules as opposed to setup instructions, etc. That still sounds quite a lot, but is only about a third the length of the PGG rules booklet. Playing time was to be around three or four hours, enough to make the player feel he was receiving something substantial for his money, but not so long that the game became an endurance test.

The next step was to choose suitable game mechanics. This may sound a little cold-blooded to

some readers, who may think that the best starting-point for a wargame is a few bold and innovative design concepts which embody the action being simulated. At this stage, the precise battle had not even been selected, although the shortlist had been narrowed down to about six titles.

There were, however, constraints on the type of mechanics that could be used consistently with the original concept of the game and its market. Certain rules concepts discourage the beginner player much more than others, the most obvious example being Zones of Control. There's something about the need to visualise an imaginary circle of ZOC hexes around each combat unit, before deciding which units can move and where, that puts the beginner player right off the whole idea, although other parts of the rules may give him no trouble at all. There was no way in which the computer could be programmed to take over responsibility for ZOC rules, since the map itself was not to be programmed into the computer, which would therefore not be aware of the dispositions of units on the map during the game. This is an important point which will be taken up later. The ZOC concept, therefore, was out, and the mechanics had to be arranged so as to avoid it. On the other hand, there was a tendency to include rules of a type which add a lot of detail to the game, so long as the computer could handle the legalistic side of them on the players' behalf, just to show the advantages of using a computer in the game.

At this stage it really became imperative to choose the exact subject of the game. A simulation on one of the World War II paratroop actions was considered, as was a squad-level infantry game with multiple scenarios, a game on the Arras counter-attack during the invasion of France, and a game on the capture of Antwerp after the Normandy landings. In the end it was decided to focus on one of the battles around Sidi Rezegh in 1941, during Operation Crusader, partly because the data needed for research was fairly readily available, and partly, in all frankness, because it is said that any game with tanks in it will sell.

There were a number of actions around Tobruk and Sidi Rezegh in November 1941, each with its own special circumstances. Rather than choose the obvious battle, which would be Totensonntag, the overrunning of the South Africans by the Afrika Korps, I decided on a simulation of the events of 21st November, a much more complex situation featuring deep penetrations of lines and unexpected shifts of attack frontages.

The British forces occupying Sidi Rezegh airfield at this time were considerably weakened by earlier losses, but were given the order to advance north-west to relieve Tobruk, this being timed to meet the breakout force from the fortress which would attempt to push through the Axis cordon encircling it. This attack was already under way when most of the Afrika Korps was sighted, unexpectedly charging on the airfield from the south, harried by flank attacks from two British Armoured Brigades. The interaction of all these formations on the battleground produced a fluid situation (to put it mildly) that took all day to resolve and one in which concepts of front lines,

flanks and rears disappeared altogether, all this is faithfully simulated in the game.

The idea was to make sure that the players were not presented with a dull situation at any time during the depiction of the day's events, but, as became clear during playtesting, I rather overdid this, and players tended to suffer from a kind of command paralysis in which they were afraid to do anything at all in case they were swooped on from an unexpected direction. The game isn't really like this, but one thing that seems to be a rule of computer gaming is that you have little chance of estimating what the game is going to be like before playing it; so many familiar concepts are missing from the rulebook, and some parts of the game mechanics, especially combat, involve so many variables that a player can't expect to be able to calculate the effects of his actions in advance in the precise way that is possible (though not necessarily desirable) in traditional games.

## Game Structure

It had been decided to keep to an A2-sized map and 100 counters, mainly to reduce the problems that would be faced by anyone who actually agreed to buy and market the game at a profit, so the map-scale more or less dictated itself. Game-Turns could not represent too short a period of real-time or there would be too many Turns for what was intended to be a fairly quick game. Unit sizes also had to be fitted into the chosen limits, and at this point it began to become clear what types of game mechanics would be appropriate.

A draft map was now drawn in three colours and rough versions of the counters made up — they show only unit designations, movement allowances and range together with some setup information. A very sketchy first draft of the rules was also produced. It was not too difficult to keep within the self-imposed limits on length because so much of the detail of the game could be left to the computer to take care of, but it did become clear at this stage that the rules would frequently be telling the players, in effect, "Don't worry about the exact circumstances when you can give such-and-such an order, because the program will tell you if you're not allowed to." The danger of an apparently patronising tone in such passages was clear, but seemed unavoidable if the neophyte player was not to be submerged in minor cases and exceptions before even starting play.

The structure of the game is as follows: in each Turn, there is a Command section followed by an Execution section. Commands typed in at the keyboard for each unit, first by the German player and then by the British player, are collected by the program and then executed, not in the order in which they were typed in but rather according to the type of command; all Reconnaissance commands, all Fire commands, and so on.

There are six commands:-  
MV, which tells the computer that the unit will move in the current turn, but does not specify in what direction or how far.

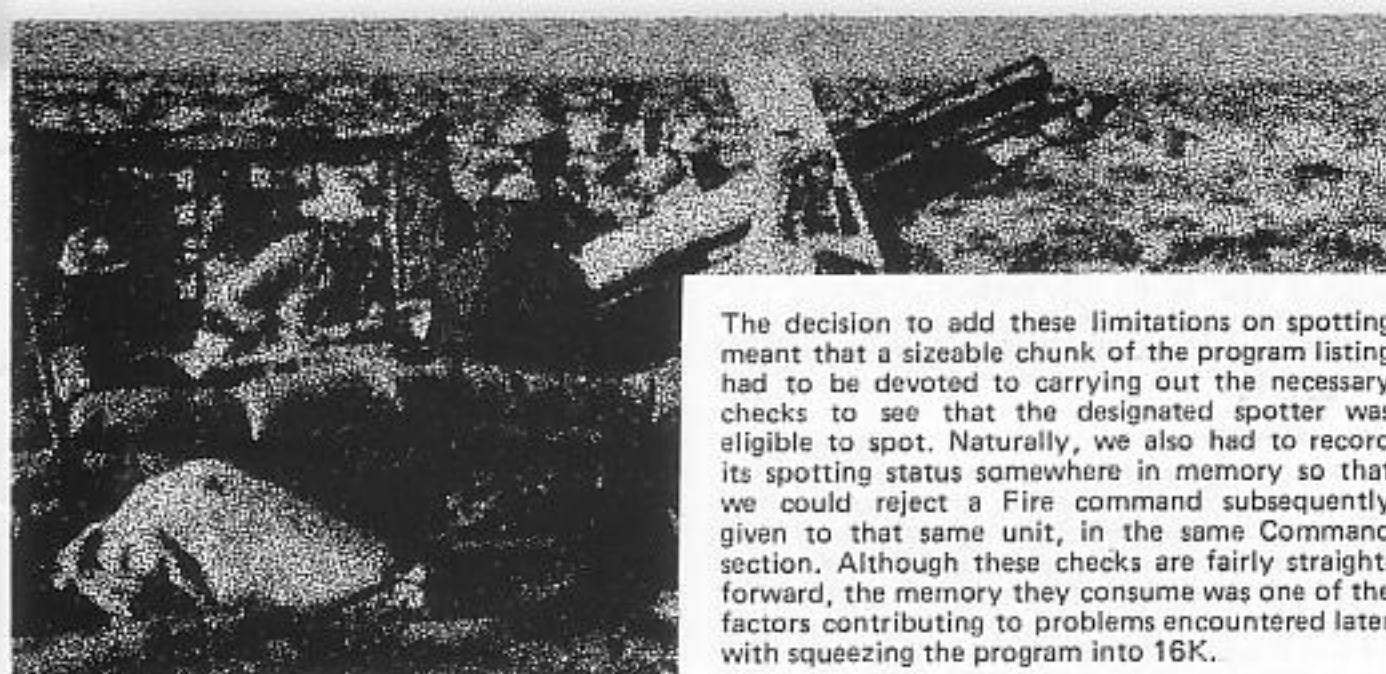
F, which instructs the unit in question to fire at an enemy unit, and which must include the designation of the target unit. F is direct rather than indirect fire, and is subject to range restrictions since no unit has a range greater than three hexes.

CO, which means "Carry On." The player doesn't want to give a specific command to a unit, but this doesn't mean that it will remain inactive during the Turn, it is still able to use Hostile Fire if the occasion arises, which is a form of Opportunity Fire, familiar to players of SPI tactical armour games.

IF, Indirect Fire. Artillery units have a discrete IF range (between 9 and 13 hexes) and can shell a target hex within that range, which must be specified when the command is given.

RECON, this command is available only to specialised Reconnaissance units (the British player doesn't have any) and is essentially a MV command. Its significance lies in the fact that it is executed before all Fire commands in the Execution section, effectively making Reconnaissance units much harder to hit than other types without the need to incorporate special rules to reflect this feature of the battle.





RES, this stands for Resupply and is one of the elements of the mechanics not normally found in tactical games. Armoured and artillery units are liable to run out of fuel, or ammunition, or both — other unit types don't need to worry about this during the 11-hour period we are simulating. Naturally we do not use the concept of tracing supply lines, which would put the burden on the players of following the supply rules and in any case has always been a rather poor solution to the problem of representing supply considerations. Instead, we say that supplies of fuel and ammunition are available from HQ and tactical HQ units which are included in the counter-mix; in order for a combat unit to re-supply, it has to be stacked with such an HQ at the beginning of a Turn, and the RES command can then be given. Players find that ammunition is subtracted from the total amount given to a particular unit whenever it fires, and fuel is subtracted whenever it moves; the computer keeps track of the various supply levels for all these units and of course refuses to accept a command if the current supply level for a unit is inadequate to allow it to carry out that particular command.

The rules for IF are a little complex because of the concept of Spotting. Artillery fire over all but very short ranges will Scatter, meaning that a percentage of the attack strength is applied to each of the six adjacent hexes instead of it being concentrated in the target hex. A player can designate a spotting unit and, if the unit is accepted by the program as an eligible spotter, the artillery fire will be concentrated in the target hex whatever the range. There are quite a few restrictions on spotting eligibility: the specified unit must be in the same military formation as the artillery unit, which generally means the same Brigade; it has to be able to see the target hex, so it has to be close enough, and its morale must also be high enough, this provision being intended to make the point that a fairly high level of Command organisation was needed at that stage in World War II to accomplish observation of artillery fire, although it is taken more for granted in modern armies; it can't be, for example, a tank unit, since spotting was not carried out by such formations at this stage in the war, and it can't be given a Fire command for that Turn, as this would give formations a greater amount of flexibility and response rate to orders than they were really capable of. All these restrictions were fed into the rules draft, and subsequently the program, to make artillery fire as significant to the course of the battle and as accurate to the historical events as possible, without actually creating separate counters representing FOO's, which would have been a nice touch but would have exceeded the counter mix limit. In retrospect, it turned out to be just as well that sufficient care was taken over artillery rules from the point of view of play-balance. More casualties were caused by artillery fire in World War II than by any other cause; at the same time, its effect was not obviously decisive in resolving particular cases of combat because the attritional toll taken by artillery was diffused over all the formations involved in a battle. Exactly the same thing happens in the game, and it has a decisive effect on the closing turns, but without this influence on the course of play, the game would become unbalanced at certain stages and this imbalance could only be corrected by fudging some other aspect of the mechanics, a dubious and unreliable practice.

The decision to add these limitations on spotting meant that a sizeable chunk of the program listing had to be devoted to carrying out the necessary checks to see that the designated spotter was eligible to spot. Naturally, we also had to record its spotting status somewhere in memory so that we could reject a Fire command subsequently given to that same unit, in the same Command section. Although these checks are fairly straightforward, the memory they consume was one of the factors contributing to problems encountered later with squeezing the program into 16K.

The player who uses the spotting procedure, however, doesn't have to worry about this; the program asks him if he is attempting to spot for IF, decides if his unit is eligible, tells him why it isn't if it isn't and gives him a chance to name another unit, or else notes the unit's spotting status. Strictly speaking, he and his opponent don't need to understand the spotting rules in order to use them — the program won't allow them to break the rules, and they could choose to learn the rules by a process of trial and error if they really don't want to read the rulebook first.

Since the characteristics of a unit can change during the course of the game, and since this information is recorded only internally as amendments to a table within the program, a means has to be provided for the players to get summaries of the current status of their units. Either player can type in "SR" during his Command section and obtain a Strength Return showing all the current values (morale, supply, combat strength etc.) for a given unit. By typing in the designation of the higher formation to which a number of units belong, he can get a series of Strength Returns covering the whole formation, giving him a picture of the overall situation. To preserve secrecy, the enemy player has to look away from the screen while this is happening, as the information is all displayed on the screen; it's likely that the players will arrange for all commands to be entered privately in any case, since this provides an element of limited intelligence in the game. Naturally, the German player is prevented by the program from obtaining information about British units while he is entering commands for his units, and vice versa.

As soon as all commands have been entered, the program will proceed to the Execution section. After dealing with movement of Recon units, all cases of direct fire are resolved. This is carried out according to full SiMov requirements, in the sense that all Fire is regarded as simultaneous, and losses are not subtracted until the end of the Fire sub-section. All the players do at this stage is sit back and watch the program calculate the combat results, according to a system explained later.

Next comes the Movement sub-section. Here we have a modified SiMove in which units move one after the other, but in a random sequence chosen by the program, giving preference to neither player. The section of the rules covering this part of the Turn is fairly lengthy, since it's up to the players to understand the Movement rules and follow them correctly while moving units; the program won't know whether they are doing this or not. If the program was more complex, and was aware constantly of the location of every unit on the map, it could monitor the movement of units and correct errors. But how is the program to know the exact path that a unit is to trace unless the player types in the number of each hex that it enters in the course of its movement? This would enormously increase the number of keystrokes the players had to enter during the game, although a bonus would be that the game could offer full SiMove, in which all units move one hex, the program decides what to do about units which have ended up in the same hex, then all units move another hex, and so on. In the event, the playtesters were quite happy with the movement mechanics as actually incorporated in the game, and found nothing unrealistic with them.

One complication which arises during movement is Hostile Fire. This prevents unrealistic situations such as a German tank unit moving past an enemy anti-tank troop with impunity. The British player is able to call Hostile Fire in such a situation, interrupting the movement of the unit while fire is resolved, this fire is similar to the normal fire resolution procedure, with appropriate adjustments to reflect the increase or decrease in the vulnerability of the target unit due to its movement.

Indirect Fire is then executed, impacting either on a single hex or on a rosette of seven hexes, depending on spotting. As with other tactical games, it's possible to hit your own units if you have forgotten that you booked fire for a hex, and it's surprisingly difficult to avoid doing this at some stage or another.

Finally, units with RES commands actually receive supply, and have their fuel and ammunition levels raised to 100%. In the event that the supplying HQ was wiped out during the current Turn, however, no resupply takes place. The effect of this and one or two other features of the Supply rules is to induce players to pull units back from the front to resupply, rather than bringing HQ's up to them and exposing them to fire.

At the end of the Turn the computer works out the cumulative Victory Point scores for both players and displays them — Points are scored for eliminating enemy units and occupying key hexes. The program then cycles round to the next Turn.

This outline of the rules and mechanics looked fine on paper, but the program that was to embody it hadn't actually been written yet, and indeed the research necessary to track down details like the number of tanks or infantry groups in each formation on the day in question hadn't been done. The necessary material was collected and arranged in tabular form to show how many items of information on each unit would need to be stored in memory by the program. Fortunately, orders of battle for Commonwealth units during this period can be found in the British Official History, and strength levels for German and Italian formations can be tracked down in a number of publications, although it is often a question of working through the campaign day-by-day, starting with the initial strengths of units and subtracting losses as they were experienced in clashes preceding the 21st November. Michael Carver's *Tobruk* gave particularly valuable information on the actual effectiveness of various weapon systems on the day in question, as opposed to the theoretical effectiveness of different calibres of gun, theoretical range of fire and so on.

## The Programme

A draft of the program could now be made up, and most of the rest of this article will describe the process of writing and debugging the program, which took a great deal longer than had been anticipated. Readers who are interested in computers only in so far as they help them to play wargames, and do not really want to know what goes on inside them, may wish to "switch off" at this point and rejoin the narrative at the stage of playtesting and marketing. However, any reader who wants to know why a particular feature of the battle was not included in the game should read the description of the problems that were encountered in attempting to force the necessary material into 16K, since the history of the development of the program became largely a series of strategies to compact the same amount of data or logic into less RAM. The experience gained will be very useful in future, but there is a limit to compaction, and not everything could be put in.

All development work on the program was done on a Model 1 TRS-80, but with the intention of re-

writing the program for other computers in due course.

The basic structure of the program is a large two-dimensional integer array called C, with 91 "rows" for the combat units, and columns for the values associated with each unit. Originally there were about ten columns, but as the sketch of the program (currently codenamed "W" which was its filename on cassette tape) began to fill out, it was necessary to add further columns. In the end this process had to be halted because we couldn't afford the drain on memory — each array element takes two 8-bit bytes and many of them were being used to store a number within a comparatively small range, for example 0 — 18 to represent the current combat strength of a unit. A system was worked out to compact this data into a smaller space and yet allow us to remain in the relatively human realm of BASIC and decimal arithmetic, rather than converting to binary storage and then using machine coding to get at it. Suppose we tell the computer that the value stored in a particular element of C is 9876, and suppose this really means that a unit has 98% of its fuel left, has a morale of 7 and has a special-status code of 6 (meaning, for the purposes of the program, that it is in the category of artillery units which need to worry about supply, but that it is self-propelled artillery which therefore doesn't need to expend Movement Points to limber and unlimber). We can get at the first two digits with  $X = V/100$  where V is the array element value, and, since X has been defined as an integer variable, it will chop off the unwanted decimal places. Now we can say  $Y = V - X * 100$  which will subtract 9800 from 9876 and give us the last two digits, useful wherever a single value is contained in the two final digits of an element. The morale is therefore the integer portion of  $Y/10$  and the special status code is Y minus morale times 10. All this is packed into a single subroutine line, line 2, which works out all these values and returns with them stored in a series of variables. This is horribly wasteful of processor time; it takes about  $\frac{3}{4}$  second to execute and so must represent tens of thousands of machine operations, and, after all, we usually only want one of the values, and ignore the rest. Nevertheless the BASIC coding is slightly shorter if we do it this way, so that's the way to do it. The processor may need over a hundred bytes of RAM to evaluate this one line, but that is re-usable allocation. Why, by the way, put a subroutine at line 2? Because there are over 200 calls to it during the text of the listing, and if we said GOSUB 50000 it would cost 7 bytes each time, one for the GOSUB token, one for the space, and one for the ASCII code for each of the decimal digits. GOSUB2 is only 2 bytes. By the time I had finished the program I had become an unwilling expert at this sort of cheeseparing calculation.

So we have stored every characteristic of every unit in C and can get at one of them easily, perhaps to decide whether or not to print a message on the screen during the Movement subsection, asking the player if he wants to unlimber his artillery or anti-tank unit. What about combat strengths? When settling on a combat system I suffered from a kind of conceptual blindness caused by years of conventional wargaming, in that I started looking for a nice neat system which would allow for the different effectiveness of the same weapons system against different types of target, and yet would not involve extensive reference to tables of data or extended calculations. It then dawned on me that this was one aspect of the designer's art that I could ignore; these values are stored in the computer which fetches them and performs the calculations. There is no need to worry about the unwieldiness of the system and we can concentrate on making it accurate and realistic. C contains, for each unit, a reference to the row it should use in another array EF if it's firing, and to the column in EF it uses if it's a target. Units are divided into fifteen types of attacker (Panzer II's, Panzer III's, Panzer IV's, British infantry, and so on) and thirteen types of target. Cross-referencing the two values gives the computer a unique value for the basic effectiveness of that firer type against that target type, which it then multiplies by the number of firing units. We then apply modifiers. Actually it is more complicated than that, because the game draws a distinction between targetted and distributed fire. If fire is targetted, as from an anti-tank gun, the number of tanks in the target formation will not really affect the number of tanks knocked

out by the firer. If on the other hand artillery fire is impacting in a given area, the number of enemy infantry platoons becoming casualties will depend very much on whether there were 12 of them in that area, or only 2; casualties will be a calculated percentage of the enemy force. There are two values squeezed into each element in EF, for the two types of fire, plus a marker which allows the computer to work out which type applies in a particular case, as this may depend on whether the target is firing during the current game-Turn. But all this information takes up only about 400 bytes.

## The Database

There is, of course, the question of how to get the values into the arrays in the first place. Storing them in DATA statements is out because it duplicates the same information, once in the program listing and once in the array space in RAM set up by the computer when the program is first run. In the end it was decided to use the INPUT-from-tape statement available in TRS-80 Basic, which allows us to compile chunks of raw data on tape immediately following the section of tape containing the program itself, and make the program load this data into itself and sort the values in it into the proper array elements, before it continues through the rest of its listing. Naturally a separate program had to be written which would hold its raw data in a form in which it could easily be amended (values needed to be fine-tuned during playtesting) and which would also punch out the chunks of data to tape in the right format. The story of the construction of this subsidiary program is a saga in itself. For example, it didn't occur to me for a long time that the subsidiary program could be used to verify that a good save of raw data had been made to tape and that no corruption had been introduced into it. Let us draw a veil over this period, after noticing that what we have ended up with is a monitoring program containing the necessary logic and an entirely separate database. This turned out to be of enormous value much later, when it was suddenly decided that the game needed two databases each of which could be used by the monitoring program.

Many other techniques for compacting data and indeed for condensing logic were used in the program; if they hadn't been, the listing would probably have occupied around 40K. This is something any prospective purchaser should bear in mind when deciding whether to spend £40 on a disc-based program proudly advertised as "requiring 48K." For a start, the DOS may rob as much as 14K of RAM for its own purposes. If in addition the program is in BASIC, uses short lines, stores single values in arrays and has the database in long DATA statements where each decimal digit needs one byte, then the purchaser may be getting the equivalent of a much smaller program, although still a substantial piece of work by most people's standards. It's only fair to point out, though, that a disc-based installation would allow the program to access multiple database during execution and even utilise virtual memory techniques.

In describing these memory-saving techniques I am not necessarily recommending them to others, for two reasons. Concerning the data, the method of working in base 10 is awkward and still wastes space. The CHR\$ statement in BASIC allows us to work in base 256 very easily, using all the values that can be held in one byte. The listing (A) in the panel shows how even a larger two-byte number can be converted to a two-character string ready for output to tape. Data values ought to be fitted into this number-base where possible; otherwise they should be fitted into a specific number of bits within one byte. For example, we can store a number in the range 0-15 in a nybble (four bits!) and still get at it using BASIC, either with logical operators or by converting the byte to a binary string (e.g. "11011001") and finding the numeric value of the first four characters. Using these techniques it should be possible to get at least 50% more data into a 16K program.

The other reason concerns the sheer incomprehensibility of the logic in a fully-compacted BASIC program. Structured, easily understood programs can be written in BASIC just as in other languages. When every effort is made to get a lot of work done in a small amount of RAM, however, the result is something like the listing in the panel (B), which is a genuine extract from the

program. What this section of coding actually does is check the eligibility of a spotting unit to spot for an artillery unit. Long multi-statement lines are used where possible (saves memory) and maximum use is made of GOSUB calls so that different parts of the program can share the same subroutine. The program works its way through the various alternative possibilities using the IF .... THEN .... ELSE construct and the possibilities are often nested within each other, two or three deep. With over 100 variables in constant use by the program, debugging was not a pleasant experience and I have since equipped myself with a number of utilities which should make the next program easier to deal with, principally a facility for giving GOTOs and GOSUBs a meaningful label-name rather than a line-number. This should allow the construction of easily-comprehended coding, but it will resemble source code in that it will itself take up a lot of memory and will have to be condensed to a normal BASIC listing to fit into 16K, rather like compiling a language to object code. This means going back to the source coding when you find a bug in the program, in order to understand where the fault lies, then patching the source coding and re-compiling so that your two versions of the program are still equivalent. It's time-consuming but it is really the only way with programs as complex as this.

Most of the program falls into this pattern of continual references to C and EF to find a numeric value which corresponds to a quantifiable characteristic of the unit being dealt with or is a code-number for its status. Problems arise when we need to "save up" several characteristics for each of two units, as when working out an instance of combat, but this is largely a matter of choosing variable-names which remind one what the values stand for and then tracing the flow of logic through the program.



## Combat Resolution

Having plotted fire from (say) a German tank unit against a British anti-tank unit, the player sees the resolution of this combat as a display taking up the whole of the VDU, showing him the sequence of calculations made by the program in working out the result. The program defines whether the fire is targeted or distributed and why, then prints the basic combat effectiveness multiplied by the number of firing units. It then decides which modifiers apply — perhaps the target is moving, the firer's morale is poor and dusk is falling, all of which will reduce effectiveness by percentages varying according to other conditions. The modified effectiveness is then shown, which now corresponds to the average number (or percentage) of enemy units eliminated. A random element is brought in which allows the actual result to be greater or less than the average, but weights the probability distribution so that very high or low losses are less likely than those near the average. The actual result is displayed and there may be special comments to put on the screen, as for example if losses exceed the current strength of the target which will then be removed from play at the end of the combat sub-section.

## Testing

There came a day when the counter-mix needed no further alteration, the map seemed adequate, the rules booklet was fairly complete, the data seemed to correspond with the event being simulated, and the program actually ran without either crashing or producing lunatic combat results. It was now time to lure several unsuspecting playtesters into my house with the promise of a brand-new type of

wargame, sit them down at the map and keyboard, and see what they made of it. Five conclusions emerged after many hours of testing:

1. The game seemed to work.
2. The players liked it.
3. It took a long time to get anywhere, much longer than had been anticipated.
4. It was unbalanced.
5. Even experienced wargamers were daunted by the need to absorb so many new concepts when playing. The fact that they were experienced may have counted against them; they didn't want to make mistakes, but they might have become familiar with the game faster by playing without worrying about tactical errors.

Back to the drawing-board. The solution was two additions to the game, which had to be crammed into the listing somehow. The first was a save-game feature allowing players to stop at the end of any Turn, dump the current state-of-play as data onto tape, and resume next time by loading the data back in, picking up where they had left off.

The other solution was an extra scenario, using part of the same map and some of the counters from the existing counter-mix, but of much smaller scope so that it could be completed in three hours or less, as an introduction to the game-system. Fortunately the many skirmishes and encounters in this region over the period in question did include such a battle, on the afternoon of 27th November when 15th Panzer attempted to return to the Sidi Rezegh area after Rommel's excursion to the British rear areas in the east. Finding their way barred along the Trigh Capuzzo by 22nd Armoured, they engaged in a combined-arms fire-fight until the arrival of 4th Armoured persuaded them to withdraw. Even more fortunately, it turned out to be quite easy to generate a new

database for the 31 units involved, and to modify the program so that it would load in whichever database the players needed for the scenario they wanted to play. The contrast between the length of time needed to create the main program and the much shorter period needed to make up the new database was so marked that this is clearly one of the ways that computer wargames will go in future; any number of databases can be provided as alternative scenarios to be used by the same monitoring program, giving the players better value for money without increasing development time very much.

### Production

Now the player introduces himself to Desert Armour, as the game was now titled, by playing this simpler scenario, which turns out to be quite a lively game in itself, with reasonable scope for tactical alternatives to be tried out during play. After some further testing, the package was finally ready and there arose the interesting question of who was going to market it. For the reasons explained at the beginning of this article, greater sales were likely to be achieved by selling the game to computer owners as a new type of software than by selling it to wargamers as a game they could enjoy if only they spent £300 on the equipment needed to use it. Unfortunately, it turns out that none of the software houses in the U.K. has the necessary experience of the specialised printing techniques required for such a package. There are some U.K.-based game publishers who are interested in computer games but at the moment they have no firm plans. In the end the game was sent to Avalon Hill, who have recently become interested in the idea of interfacing computer programs with conventional printed components, and at the time of writing, it was still being evaluated. It would be much more satisfactory for a number of reasons to produce games like this in the U.K.

and the idea of including a regular computer wargame in the magazine The War Machine is currently being investigated.

In retrospect, would I have designed the game differently? The problem of long playing time can be traced to the SiMov game structure which requires each player to consider each of his units twice, once when giving commands and once when executing a command (or watching it being executed). A radical solution to this problem may be tried in future games. The players have to familiarise themselves with the movement rules because, as mentioned before, the map is not "in" the computer in the sense that the computer would be aware of the type of terrain in each hex and the presence or absence of a combat unit in that hex. If it were, some very interesting effects could be achieved, but, again, only by making radical changes to traditional game-mechanics, and of course by figuring out how to compress all this extra information into memory.

The key point, however, is that here is a game with a level of complexity that would earn it a rating of about 8 on an SPI ratings chart, yet so quick to get into that it would also rate about 8 for ease-of-play, an unheard-of situation in the past. Freed of the need to burrow through endless charts and tables, the players can concentrate on evolving winning tactics, and indeed a grasp of combined arms tactics is essential for a player who wants to defeat his opponent. To come back to the title of this article, is it the first computer wargame? The reader will have to judge whether the design decisions discussed in this article were correct; the computer has been called upon to do what it can do better than any manual system, but printed components and manual systems have been retained wherever they represent the best solution to a design problem.

The Data Compaction Routine will accept a value between 0 and 65535, convert it to a 2-character string and add the string to a string K which is being built up as a chunk of "raw data" to save tape. If the program was loading this data back into itself it could use an algorithm which is the inverse of this listing to extract each such value, after which we would subtract 32768 from it if we wanted to store it in a 2-byte integer array on the TRS-80.

#### (A) Data compaction

```
10 CLEAR 1000 'STRING STORAGE
SPACE
20 DEFINT A-D,F-Z:K$="" 'INTEGER
VARIABLES TO CHOP OFF UNWANTED
DECIMAL PLACES
30 INPUT EXAMPLE
40 FIRST NUMBER = EXAMPLE/256
50 SECOND NUMBER = EXAMPLE -
(FIRST NUMBER * 256) 'HAVE TO
SPELL IT THAT WAY!
60 EIN$ = CHR$(FIRST NUMBER)
70 ZEI$ = CHR$(SECOND NUMBER)
80 K$=K$+EIN$+ZEI$
90 PRINT LEN(K$) 'JUST TO PROVE
IT'S 2 BYTES LONG
100 'PROGRAM CYCLES ROUND ADDING
MORE VALUES TO K$
```

#### (B) Incomprehensibility of compacted BASIC

```
62 PRINT@896,CHR$(210);:PRINT@89
6,"UNIT NAME?";:Z6=9:LT=L:L=987:
GOSUB27:L=LT:IFB$=""THENPRINT@89
6,CHR$(210);:RETURNELSEIFZ9=@THE
NSP$=RIGHT$(F$(R),2):GOSUB68ELSE
SP$=RIGHT$(J$(R-50),2):GOSUB67
63 IF05=1GOSUB69:GOTO62ELSEU=R:R
=G:D=6:GOSUB2:IFA2<80RA2>10THENL
T=L:L=960:GOSUB54:R=U:L=LT:GOTO6
2
64 D=3:GOSUB2:IFA6<6THENLT=L:L=9
60:GOSUB50:R=U:L=LT:GOTO62ELSEU=
1:GOSUB2:IFA6<7GOSUB52:R=U:GOTO6
2ELSEIFSP$<>RIGHT$(B$,2)THENPRIN
T@960,"WRONG FORMATION";:R=U:GOS
UB5:GOTO62ELSEX=R:D=4:B=2:GOSUB7
:R=U:B=1:GOSUB7:R=U:PRINT@896,CH
R$(215);:RETURN
```

#### Further information

I was pleased to get letters from a number of readers in response to the previous article in Phoenix. As before, write to: Mike Costello, 17 Langbank Avenue, Rise Park, Nottingham NG5 5BU; if you have queries or comments. A common theme of the letters is that people would like more information on the complex and expensive wargames and fantasy games for computers, now coming onto the market, before buying them. "The War Machine" is a new periodical that is intended to offer reviews of these games rather as Fire and Movement and Phoenix review manual games, and will pay for reviews on acceptance of material. Write to the address above for a list of games eligible for review, a set of guidelines for reviewers, and details of rates, as well as subscription information.

#### Stop Press

The Stop Press feature in Phoenix 29 is of course hopelessly out of date by now, but this information is thought to be accurate as at June 1981.

The price of a 16K computer fell from £450 or so to £120 with the introduction of the ZX81 together with more reliable cassette-loading arrangements which make it a feasible proposition for the development and running of reasonably complex programs. Both Tandy and Commodore announced new machines although it is less certain that they will be successful. The launch of the Osborne-1 in the U.S. is more significant, showing that 64K and two disc drives can be marketed for the equivalent of £850. Nascom lost its buyer and found another.

Some readers were confused by the references to SSI in the last article; my understanding is that this company produced its first two titles under licence from Avalon Hill but it is at any rate an independent organisation and has now produced at least half-a-dozen titles. Avalon Hill's own games are now on sale in the U.K. and they intend to produce Tanktics among other titles in future. Anyone wanting a rules booklet to go with his pirated copy should send them \$2. Several wargames by British designers are now becoming available in the U.K. and should receive more attention.



# ASTEROID ZERO-FOUR

RICHARD JORDAN

Asteroid Zero-Four is one of four 'Capsule' games published by Task Force Games, and is designed by Stephen Cole. Set in the not-too-distant future, it portrays the fate of two asteroids — supposedly colonised for mining purposes, but controlled by the Military — during some particularly effective solar storms. When you learn that the two sides are the "Yanks" and the "Ruskies" it won't come as a surprise to hear that both Station Commanders take the opportunity for some uninterrupted duffing over of the opposition. Anything to alleviate the boredom ....

## Hardware: (Alternatively, see S&T 77)

For your £3-odd you get a 17" by 22" three colour map portraying a scatter diagram, a turn record track, and the two rocks in question. The latter are bristling with prospective targets, (some of which fight back), and which include Ore processing plants, Missile silos, Command Bunkers, Laser towers, Tunnels, Landing strips and many more. (Note: both asteroids are 2D, and only have a top surface)

Two sets of counters are provided, one comprised of various missiles, Fighters, Bombers, Tankers, and Engineers, and the other consisting of about 150 damage markers. The rules are fairly extensive, running to twenty pages, and come in a rather impressive 8" by 5" booklet. The final equipment components are two 'Strategic Displays'.

Also needed, but not included are two dice and lots of paper.

## Software:

Play mechanism is quite straightforward, though looking at the Game Turn sequence you wouldn't think so — it runs to twenty-odd steps! In 'brief', each turn proceeds as follows:

Each side launches available spacecraft and missiles, the latter's targets being secretly assigned on launch. Once off the asteroid, the craft are given various duties such as 'Strike' or 'Combat Space Patrol', or are held over for the next turn. Final deployment is revealed by both players simultaneously; while it is being determined they use the lettered boxes on the Strategic Display. (In all, this has twelve boxes: six lettered ones and six for final deployment — 'Combat Space Patrol', 'Strike', 'Strike Escort', 'Strike Holding', Rear Area Bases, and 'Need Refuelling'.)

Spacecraft returning from Rear Areas, Combat Space Patrol, or the Strike are landed, rearmed, refuelled, and repaired. Repairs may also be made on the asteroid using the Engineer teams. These are crucial to victory, and the successful commander will take good care of them; left on the surface at the end of the Engineer phase, they make very worthwhile targets for marauding space craft.

.. So on to combat ... It starts with the Patrols intercepting the enemy Strike forces. Damage is usually small, and often only done to the strike escort, but you will occasionally hit the jackpot, especially if the opposing Commander has mis-assigned his resources. Long range defensive missiles come next, and usually destroy whatever they are aimed at. Many a potent missile strike has been annihilated in this way. They are most definitely a target to aim for with early strikes.

Strike Missiles hit the asteroid first and, after deciding whether the target hexes are the ones landed on, (Americans are 66% accurate, Russians 50%), damage is determined. Five types of warhead

are available: N-3 (The Big One), N-2, N-1, (Smaller members of the same family), MIRV N-1, and MIRV Fragmentation bombs, (Lethal to surface parked Spacecraft, and to engineers). All warheads are assigned explosion factors — high at the epicentre, but decreasing with distance which are dependent on explosion height, and installations are given defence values. Divide the former by the latter, and BINGO, you have the damage.

Spacecraft are armed with N-3, N-2, and N-1 bombs, small rockets for attacking surface installations, and lasers. Not all potential targets are pushovers though, and the asteroids are dotted with Laser towers which, though individually not over dangerous, are lethal in groups. Fortunately they have low defence values, and chains of towers can be unplugged by destroying power carrying connecting tunnels.

After the spacecraft have had their fun, the game-turn ends. Damage to the asteroids is recorded using the markers, which range from '1' (slight) to 9-'X' (unrepairable), and determines the ability of the installation to function. Subterranean units stuck underneath nuclear explosions are attacked on the Fragmentation table, corresponding to debris falling on them.

Victory is determined by the operability of the asteroids' 'Mining Tracks' at the end of the game. Each asteroid has twenty of these, and each track consists of a cargo landing strip, an ore pile, a processing plant and a normal landing strip.

## Notes and Conclusion.

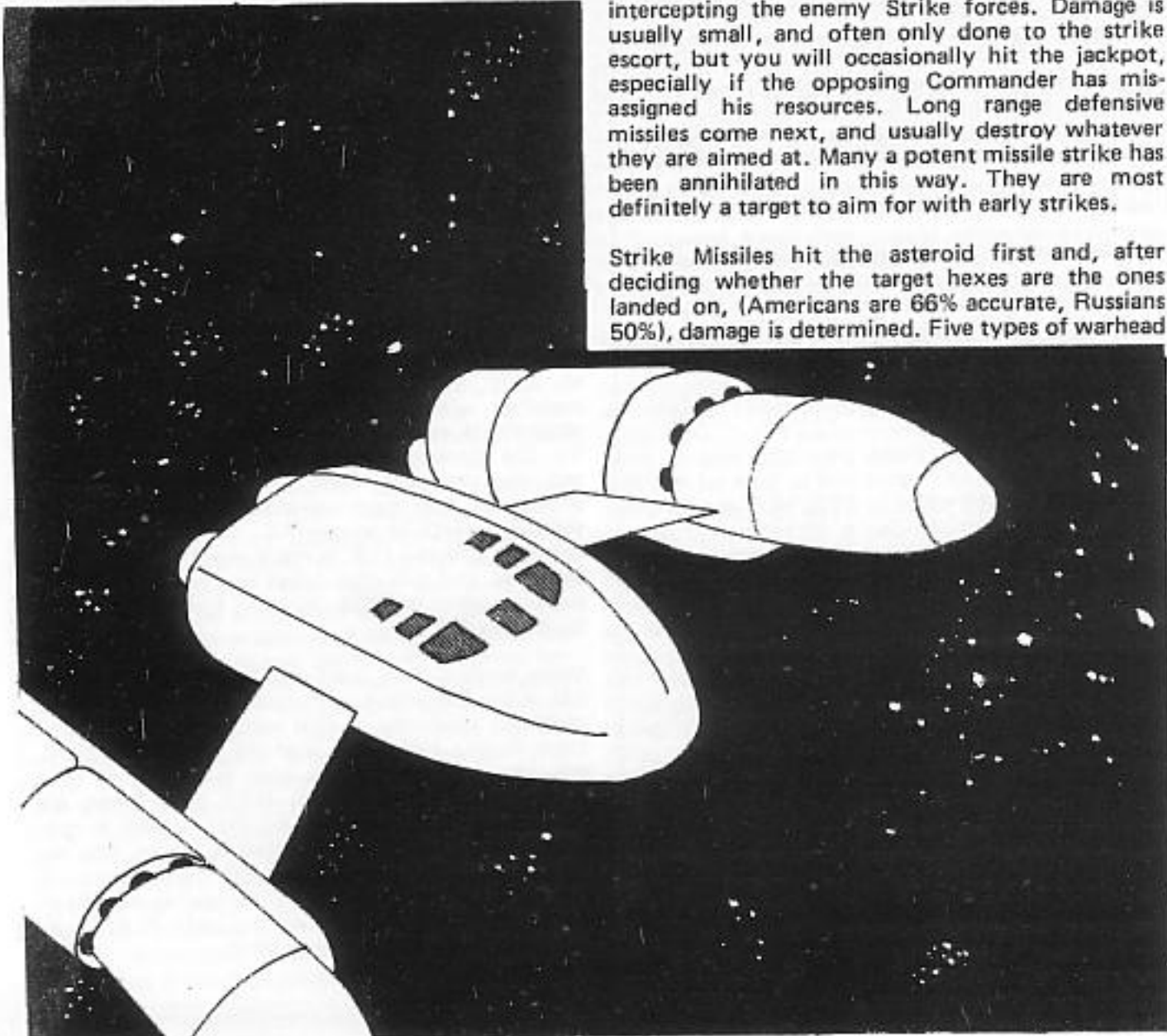
Cunning idea about the victory! It's all too easy to get engrossed in the military side of things and forget your objectives. Blowing up Missile silos will thwart the enemy's strike plans, and bombing his space defence missiles will enable your strike to get through, but at the end of the day it's his mines that must be smoking ruins.

Damage. This would be a lovely game for a computer. But manually? One single N-2 bomb covers 19 hexes! Working out damage is, to say the least, time consuming, especially where explosions overlap. And even the hundreds of markers provided tend to run out. To be fair, the Designer did spot this and suggests ignoring the outermost circle of hexes for each bomb, which halves the workload.

Space combat is very abstract, and involves lining up units on the table top and rolling dice. Personally, I think this a good idea. Tactical space dogfighting will be very time consuming in game terms, and would involve five times as many rules as the rest of the game put together.

## So to conclude.

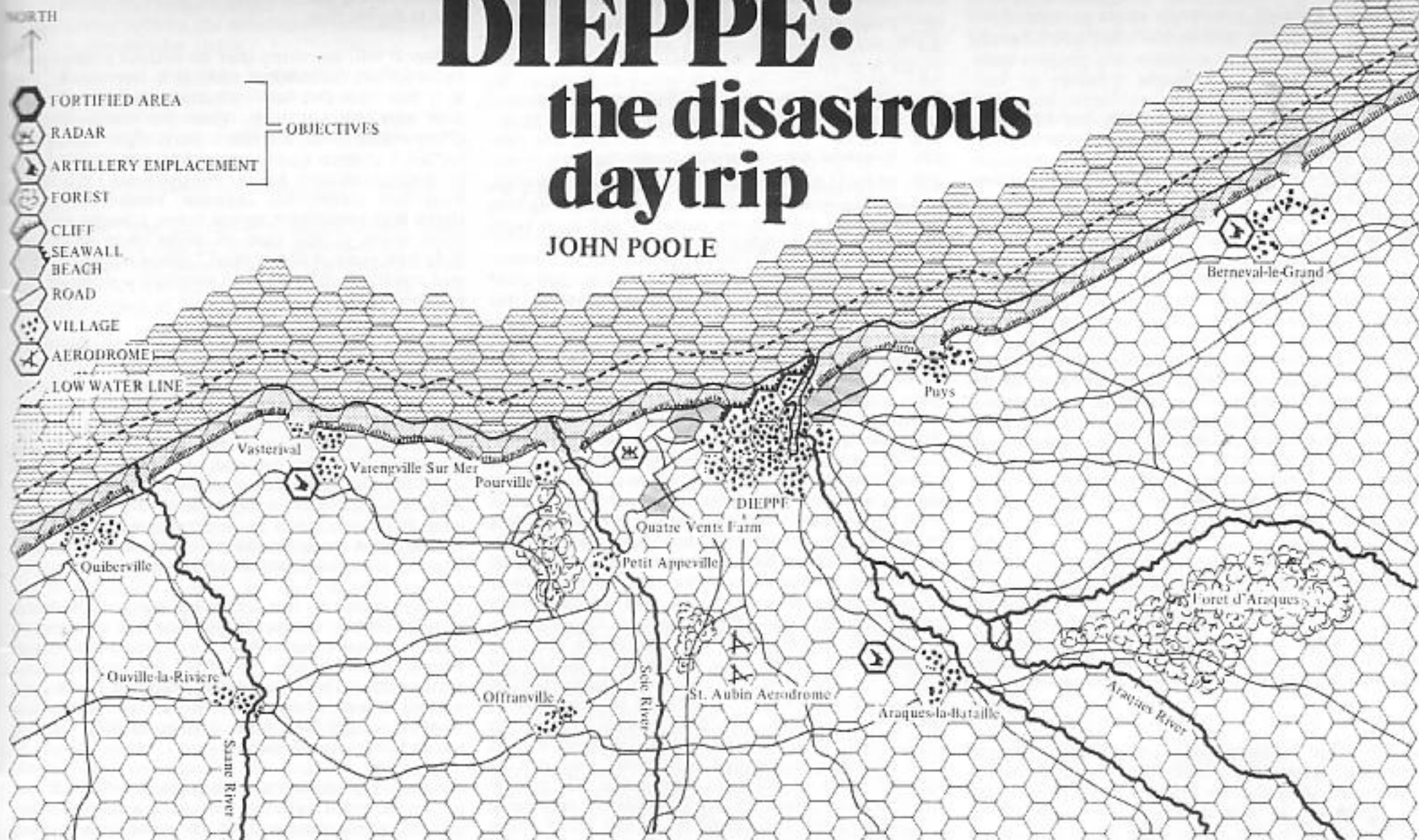
A good idea, though too much bookkeeping for my liking. Asteroid Zero Four is ideal for the computer Wargamer. For Sci-Fi buffs well worth looking at, and for Wargamers in general an excellent combination of Strategy and Tactics. (Sorry!!)



# DIEPPE:

## the disastrous daytrip

JOHN POOLE



Simulations Canada never appears to have been fully accepted by the fraternity as a wargames manufacturer. It rarely seems to be a topic for comment, unlike SPI or Avalon Hill, for instance, where comings and goings are widely reported and much pored over for what they may portend. Nor do its products seem to get much critical attention; again for instance, although Sim Can currently has about a dozen games in print only three of these have ever been reviewed in Phoenix.

Why is this so? Is it because the people in Nova Scotia have quietly gone about their business these last few years issuing two or three games a year without much fuss or excitement? Or is it — and I think this the more likely explanation — that they are regarded in some way as provincials? One is so accustomed to hearing that Canada is consistently overshadowed by the USA that one perhaps half expects it to happen in the wargaming business too. There is possibly an analogy to be drawn with the Australian firm Jedco (is it still going, by the way?): it too published a number of quite well thought of designs such as African Campaign and Russian Campaign, but those that were taken up by Avalon Hill were probably the ones, scarcely surprisingly, that did best. Is it again a tendency to assume that nothing of much merit is likely to come from such improbable places?

It has to be admitted that Sim Can games often have a rather starved look about them, as if their parents, having brought them to birth, are then unable to feed them properly. Dieppe is a case in point. Appearance may not be everything in a wargame but it surely counts for a great deal and it has to be stated at the outset that the playing surface, and to a lesser extent the counters, in the first edition game are frightful. The colours that have been used are not only unappealing in themselves, but to make things worse they are used in unpleasant combinations and sometimes in misleading and unrealistic ways. Leaving the white of the map stock aside, there are, in fact, only three colours on the map: a strident yellow, an acidulous green, and the blue so favoured by ladies of a certain age that my mother-in-law has usefully termed it 'menopause'. Thus with this restricted palette we have blue roads only slightly darker than streams, batteries and an airfield the same colour as the beach, although well inland, and forests and fortified areas both in green, the former being distinguished by overprinting in blue. All this, though

regrettable, is at least supportable, but one really must take exception to the combat tables which are in blue overprinted with blue; in anything but the best light these are most difficult to read.

With regard to the counters the difficulty is that the letters and figures are generally too small for visual comfort. British and Canadian units are pink or red with black or white printing; but the Germans are a dark gray with black printing. In reviewing Dieppe some time ago Roy Schelper described the graphics as 'outstanding' (1); I find this opinion quite inexplicable. To be fair to the designer, Stephen Newberg, he is clearly aware of the importance of graphics (2) and I am sure that it is economics that has largely determined that the game should look as it does. Nevertheless Sim Can games are not cheap, and look like being more expensive, and therefore one cannot help feeling that the purchaser has been somewhat short-changed. More recent games from the same stable do appear to be more attractive, but this merely serves to show to what extent SPI and the other big manufacturers have accustomed us to expect a visually appealing product.

This may seem a needlessly negative approach to the game, but it is not so intended. If the buyer can stomach the appearance of Dieppe he will find that he has an acquisition that I believe has been unfairly overlooked in the hobby's literature.

I propose first to describe the game and comment on its design and deficiencies and then to consider it as a re-creation of an event that is still a subject of controversy.

Dieppe, then, is a game modelled on the seaborne Anglo-Canadian landing at the port of that name in August 1942. The fact that the game originated where it did may be seen as an act of filial piety. This aspect of game designing is not met with often (Isby's *To the Green Fields Beyond* is an example that comes to mind) but I find it touching when one does and a useful reminder that we are dealing with reality at one remove.

In summary, one player controls the German forces, about half of them in place to begin with and the remainder arriving as reinforcements, and the other player handles the Allied ground and naval units and the abstracted air and naval bombardment forces. German forces are identical in all

scenarios but the Allied ones differ according to the scenario chosen.

The game is a short ten turns long, each representing an hour of real time. In whatever scenario is selected the Allied player has to get his forces ashore, accomplish his objectives, and then get them off again. It is this combination of requirements that gives Dieppe its distinctive quality: there is a clear shape and purpose to the game that accords well with historical reality.

In each of the six scenarios the Allied player has the same set of objectives. These will be clearer when the map is examined. He has to occupy each of the two airfield hexes for one turn, place a radar specialist unit in the radar installation for one turn, destroy each of the three German shore batteries, capture the German barge unit within the port by moving next to it either the gunboat or the chasseurs unit for a full turn and then moving both away, place the Free French group on a particular Dieppe town hex for a turn, and finally move a unit through the three hexes of Arques la Bataille and then spend a full turn in any one of them. Victory points are earned for all of these accomplishments and lost for the loss of Allied units, either by destruction or through their being captured, and also for each occasion that one of the shore batteries fires. Again, in each scenario the victory-point tally runs from +31 or more, an Allied decisive victory, to -31 or less, a German decisive victory. But, and this is another neat idea, the stronger the Allied forces are the fewer the points that may be earned from each objective, and conversely, the weaker they are the more points are gained. For instance, in the historical scenario the maximum number of points the Allied player could conceivably get is 285; the fact that this is so wildly in excess of 31 may be taken as an indication of how hard it is going to be for the Allied player to win.

The other side to all this may be thought to be a large measure of sameness between games, and there is admittedly some truth in this: the Allied player can only strive for his objectives, all known in advance, and the German player must try to frustrate him. On the other hand, this predictability makes Dieppe an excellent game for solitaire play. I shall return to this aspect.

To illustrate the pattern of play it will be convenient to describe a typical turn. The rule book — perhaps a somewhat too short one, as will be

seen — states that there are segments comprising a full turn. I find this misleading and therefore prepared a separate chart to record the sequence of events within each turn; this has 13 segments.

To take them in order:

i. The Allied player allocates bombardment points to the objectives he wishes to attack. Naval bombardment points are renewed each turn; air points may be used once only. Any hex may be attacked other than those occupied by or adjacent to Allied units. After these points have been distributed, deductions are made for the inherent strength of each hex under attack, a die is rolled and the result found from the special bombardment table. Results are in the form: number of units suppressed/number of units destroyed. Suppression results in a unit's being unable to move or to attack, although it keeps its zone of control and may still defend normally. Bombardment may be an expensive business; thus in order to achieve a no better than 50% chance of destroying at least one unit in a fortified hex the Allies must commit 40 points in attacking it. Annoyingly not quite enough air bombardment points are provided in the counter mix, although there are a good many blanks too — at least in my copy.

ii. Any German reinforcements due, arrive (arrival turn and hex are helpfully shown on the back of each unit; those there at the beginning have 'O' on the back). Allied units also land; most of these come in on beaches but in some scenarios airborne units appear (again the backs of the counters have been appropriately annotated).

iii. In this segment both the Allied units that have just landed (on beach hexes) and those endeavouring to withdraw (on low water hexes) may be attacked. As regards the latter it should be noted that whenever Allied units arrive back at the water's edge they are obliged to stay through this segment in the following turn before they finally leave. As a reflection of the Allies' vulnerability in these two situations, they defend when in them with a reduced strength of only two points per unit, irrespective of terrain. There is a separate table for attacks in this segment, the results appearing in the form: number of units turned back/number of units destroyed. Units turned back from an attempt to land are placed in a special holding area on the mapsheet; they may attempt to land again. Units getting a 'turned back' result when attempting to withdraw stay in place and are considered as suppressed. In each scenario the Allied player is allocated 50 landing-craft groups. Each group is capable of withdrawing one unit each turn. For each unit destroyed during either landing or withdrawal two of these groups are lost (markers and a scale are provided), and for each unit turned back or suppressed one group is lost. It should be noted that attacks in this segment do not preclude German attacks in the orthodox combat segments.

iv. First Allied movement segment: all units may move. The rules for this are conventional as are those governing the effects of enemy zones of control.

v. First Allied combat segment: all adjacent units and those ranged units capable of doing so may attack (in the Allied case the latter consist of small naval forces that move like other units, but they require other units to spot for them). Combat is not obligatory. There is a third results table for these types of action. Here again the rules are conventional.

vi. Allied tank, commando and armoured recon units may move again, as may also other units not in an enemy zone of control at the start of the segment.

vii. All Allied units, whether they were able to move in the preceding segment or not, may attack again.

viii. German bombardment: the three shore batteries (printed on the map) may fire. This is considered to be an attack on the Allied off-map naval force and for each occasion that it happens the Allied player loses five naval bombardment points. He also loses victory points for each time it occurs, as mentioned earlier. The shore batteries may be attacked in the Allied bombardment phase or in the combat phases and may in consequence

be either suppressed or destroyed (markers are provided to indicate which).

ix. First German movement segment: this and the following three segments are analogous to segments iv to vii above.

x. First German combat segment.

xi. Second German movement segment.

xii. Second German combat segment.

xiii. Suppression removal: all suppressed units are turned face-side up and any suppression markers are removed from shore batteries and such units function normally again.

A number of the interesting and unusual aspects of this game have been touched on already, for instance, the bombardment segment which seems to offer so much to the Allied player but is unlikely to deliver it in practice, and the exposure of the Allied units while they either try to land or try to get off again. This second point helps to bring out the great difference between the two players' aims. The German player has but to fight the invader. The Allies have to fight not only the Germans, but also the terrain and the clock. They will not win by gaining all their objectives and then failing to get their men away. There is a nice point of judgment to be weighed: when to conclude that one has achieved all that one is likely to do in terms of the stated objectives and that all that remains is to get out soonest — though that 'all' may well prove daunting enough in practice. Consider the terrain: as the coastline wanders across the map surface (and, incidentally, so far as I can tell the board is an unusually accurate representation of the actual area both in terms of terrain features, towns and villages, and their spatial relation to each other) it crosses 51 hexes. Of these all but nine consist of unbroken cliff; these may not be entered from an adjacent beach hex. Of the remainder six consist of broken cliff, in two cases these represent the points at which small rivers enter the sea, and the other three comprise the Dieppe sea wall (the eastern end of this is out-flankable, and, indeed, must be so overcome if the barge unit is to be captured).

The problems posed by the terrain should now be easier to appreciate. There are all too few points from which the beach may be left and equally few when it comes to the time to withdraw. Not only are there few points of entry to or egress from the interior but, since terrain costs are cumulative, when more than one type is present in an hex it can be a very slow business shifting units off from or on to the beach. For instance, where a built-up area abuts a break in the cliffs it would cost ten movement points (four for the declivity and six for the streets) to move a tank unit off the beach; but its total movement allowance is only eleven. Where a river passes through a break in the cliffs the movement cost is seven (4+3), which is actually more than many units have got. Fortunately the designer has confirmed that each unit may move to a legal, adjacent hex, even though such quirks of the rules apparently preclude it. Nevertheless the scope for congestion to occur will be obvious. The Dieppe esplanade is the longest, single break in the cliffs and it is therefore not surprising to find it defended throughout its length by the wall mentioned already. Non-mechanised units may cross this at a small penalty; but for the Allies' valuable tanks the movement cost is no less than 14 points (eight for the wall and six for the adjoining streets) — more than they are capable of without the qualifying rule — and they need an engineer unit with them to enable them to do so. It may seem that I have devoted an inordinate amount of space to a discussion of the coastal hexes, but their correct 'management' is one of the keys to this game.

It is appropriate at this point to mention one or two other peculiarities of the terrain effects chart. Thus on low water hexes the defender's strength is halved (whether one should round up or down is not explained), but we are not told how the attacker's strength is affected. On the other hand, on beach hexes, which are of course adjacent to low water hexes but nearer the coast, the attacker's strength is halved and nothing is said about defending in such terrain. Similarly defenders on unbroken cliff have their strength doubled, but it seems probable that this should apply only when attacks are coming from the beach and not from the interior. But this is not made clear. These may be trivial

matters to dispute but it will be necessary to make a local ruling about them in order to avoid arguments during play.

Below it will be noted that an official amendment has clarified the rules of combat in river hexes, but it is felt that this will not answer all the queries that may arise in play. Thus the terrain effects chart states that attackers from river hexes are halved, but once again nothing is stated about units defending on such hexes. Furthermore, the chart does not distinguish between movement along rivers and movement across them. Clearly no problem arises in the case of naval units (although only one river in the port of Dieppe is likely to see any naval movement), but ambiguity arises in the case of land units.

Yet another point of possible confusion relates to the rule governing the length of time Allied units must spend in particular hexes in order to be considered to have gained them. This is always 'one full turn'; if this is not accomplished no victory points are earned. But the significance of this phrase is not spelled out. Does it mean, for instance, from the Allied second combat segment in turn N to the same segment in turn N+1, or the next full turn, taken in its proper sequence, after the segment in which the objective was occupied? There is a great difference between the two.

Finally, a minor but irritating feature about the terrain effects chart: at its first use the words 'effect of other terrain in hex' are printed, but thereafter the letters 'E.O.T.H.' are used without explanation. This presupposes that one reads such a table as a piece of prose, which I greatly doubt. Nothing would have been lost by spelling out the words at each occurrence.

Schelper (1) comments favourably on the OB and one must agree with him. Units are for the most part company-sized and, at the appropriate points, the relevant HQ units are provided. Thus there is a detailed command structure built into the OB. This is another factor that makes for successful solo play (3), but, strangely, the rules make nothing of it. There are no rules relating to command, control or morale whatsoever; the player or players must devise them for themselves.

Another odd lapse relates to the proliferation of units and weapons types that comes with the game. There are no less than 16 of these, including motorcyclists and anti-aircraft, heavy weapons and anti-tank units. Yet nothing is done with them to bring out their individual characteristics and capabilities, apart from the ability of artillery to fire at range.

Schelper's article usefully includes a number of official errata. One of these, the one-hex move rule, has been mentioned already and it is convenient here to summarise the remainder of these amendments and corrections:

a. If units land in a hex occupied by units already landed do the latter add their defensive strength to the formers'?

No; the attack before landing or withdrawal procedure is intended to simulate attacks made while the Allies are still in their landing craft or about to either embark or disembark.

b. Do hexes with intrinsic defensive strengths (e.g. the shore batteries) have zones of control?

No; and neither do fortified hexes (unless, presumably, occupied by additional forces? JBP).

c. Do such intrinsic defences have to be eliminated before Allied units may enter the hexes possessing them?

Yes; an EX result in an attack on a non-shore battery hex, such as the radar installation, suffices to destroy its intrinsic defence.

d. Do the companies of the Royal Canadian Artillery have the capability to fire at range?

No; the Allies landed no artillery but hoped to capture German weapons; this did not happen in actuality; the RCA had only small arms.

e. May tank units advance after combat across the sea wall if an engineer unit is stacked with them and also advances?

Yes.

f. May one engineer unit provide aid to get more than one tank unit across the sea wall?

Yes.

- g. Are artillery units attacking non-adjacent units from river hexes halved?  
Yes; halving reflects the constraints imposed by the marshy ground near rivers.
- h. Are naval and tank units also halved when they attack from river and beach hexes?  
Yes; for reasons similar to those applying in g above, as a reflection of the difficulties imposed by the immediate terrain.
- i. May reinforcements be delayed by the owning player?  
Not in the historical scenario; in the others freely deployed units may be landed whenever the Allied player wants; the German player is allowed no freedom either in the deployment of his in-place units or in the arrival of his reinforcements.

So much for the game, but what about reality? Why was the landing made? What was it hoped to achieve? What was actually achieved? (Ref 4).

Although needling attacks on the continental seaboard began almost as soon as the Dunkirk evacuation was over, these were minor affairs compared to the Dieppe raid. Controversy has bedevilled discussion of the event during the whole 40 years since it took place: what was the purpose of such a raid at such a time — a very low point in the Allies' fortunes? Why was Dieppe selected as the place at which to make a raid? To what extent are the answers to such questions to be found in the psychology of the Allied leaders rather than in military needs?

The raid took place on 19 August 1942, when it was known as Operation Jubilee — an ill-chosen name if ever there were one. Planning for it began in April, when it was called Rutter. The installations and facilities in the vicinity of Dieppe, which feature as objectives in the game, were judged such as to make the port a worthwhile target, although the main intention was to test enemy coastal defences and discover what resistance would be met in an attempt to seize a port. This assessment, however, tended to make light of certain objections to this choice, in particular the near unbroken line of unscalable cliffs and the infrequency of favourable weather locally.

One needs to bear in mind how keen the Americans were in 1942, having newly entered the war, for a return to the continent (Operation Sledgehammer) and unenthusiastic about the proposed North African landings (Operation Torch). The outcome of Jubilee, to jump ahead somewhat, must have convinced them that such a return was not going to be as easy as they seemed to believe. There was also the problem of mollifying the Russians who were endlessly clamouring for the opening of a second European front to relieve the German pressure on them.

When planning began two approaches were considered: a frontal assault on Dieppe supported by sea- and air-borne flank landings; and as an alternative an attack excluding the frontal assault. The Army favoured a frontal assault as being the more likely to conserve surprise. The Navy were not happy about this approach although they thought that it was feasible. Another problem concerned the bombing and bombarding of Dieppe: the effects on the French had to be taken into account as well as the hazards the devastation would cause, and particularly to the free movement of tanks. In the event air attack was ruled out; attempts then to increase naval support also came to nothing since the RN were unwilling to risk their heavy ships in the Channel. There then followed a series of amendments to the plans and postponements of the operation; the game scenarios cover these earlier plans.

In the event perhaps the worst combination of forces and objectives was chosen: too little air and naval support and an over-ambitious set of objectives involving eight landings at five locations with untrained troops and no airborne component. Only the attack on the western battery was a clear success. The landing as a whole did come as a surprise, but the strength of the defenders was greater than had been expected. The Canadian Army provided some 82% of the landing force of more than 6000. Only 2210 Canadians returned — a total loss of 55%. In nine hours at Dieppe the Canadians lost more men as prisoners than in the eleven months after D-Day.

As a way, it almost seems, of disguising the size of the calamity Churchill referred to the operation as

a 'reconnaissance in force': the effects on the Germans seemed to be minimal and there was no consequential relief for the Russians. So what was gained? The main lesson was that unless powerful close support was available, assaults should be planned to develop around the flanks of strongly defended localities rather than frontally against them. In consequence no such raid as the one on Dieppe was ever again undertaken during the war. The Germans, on the other hand, seemed to have misread the signs, strengthened ports and garrisons but left beaches relatively undefended. Thus when D-Day came Allied casualties were much lighter than they might well have been. But, of course, harbour facilities were going to be needed for the invasion fleet and therefore the Mulberry concept may be seen as one eventual outcome of the Dieppe raid.

One may mention in passing that Dieppe also occasioned the biggest encounter between the RAF and the Luftwaffe since the Battle of Britain. This does not feature in the game at all, but the two events seem largely to have occurred independently so the loss is small.

To conclude then: in spite of a number of reservations that I have dealt with I recommend this game. A new edition, I understand, may have appeared by the time this article is in print that may clear up my criticisms — and others that I am unaware of. It is not often that one finds fault with a game because it is not complex enough, but I wonder whether Dieppe could not have been given some of what one might call *The Longest Day* treatment, while keeping the same format? There would surely be scope enough here for a more elaborate, tactical treatment of Jubilee that would, at the same time, preserve the playability and compactness of the original design?

**References**

1. Fire & Movement, no. 12, Aug-Sept 1978, p.10
2. Ibid., no. 24, Winter 1981, p. 30
3. Cf. Phoenix, no. 16, Nov-Dec 1978, p.18
4. The best single-volume account is J. Mordal's 'Dieppe: the Dawn of Decision', reprinted in 1981 by New English Library as a paperback.



GORDON PATERSON

At 2.15 p.m. on the 31st May 1916 German and British forces clashed in an action which was to become known to the Germans as the Battle Of Skaggearak, to the British and the rest of the world as Jutland.

The events, repercussions and personalities of that day have been the focus of continued study and debate, indeed more has been written about this battle than almost any other. For many the allure of Jutland can best be described as the 'romance of the battleship'. The battleship, particularly the Dreadnought, captured the minds of naval officers and planners until the rise of the carrier fleet. It was in WWII the epitomy of seapower. In many ways Jutland represented the zenith of the Dreadnought, for although bigger ships would be built they were to prove too vulnerable to air attack. Fleets of Dreadnoughts like those at Jutland would never be seen again.

For the naval wargamer Jutland is one of the great 'what ifs' of history. Most of us hanker to do a re-fight, this is the account of my attempt.

After reading several accounts of the battle I was struck by a paradox. To wield a large fleet effectively the admiral of the day had to have good communications. Unfortunately, the technology was not up to the task nor was there the understanding of how to use effectively what technology there was. This led to many missed chances and frustration. I decided that it would make a much more interesting re-fight if I tried to simulate this problem. It became apparent that to retain control I would have to sit this one out and be referee — cries of, "Cowardice" from my colleagues. Next I pressganged four unwitting friends to take the parts of the four main participants. To two players who can be aggressive I gave the roles of Beatty (John Lambshead) and Hipper (Ed Easton); to

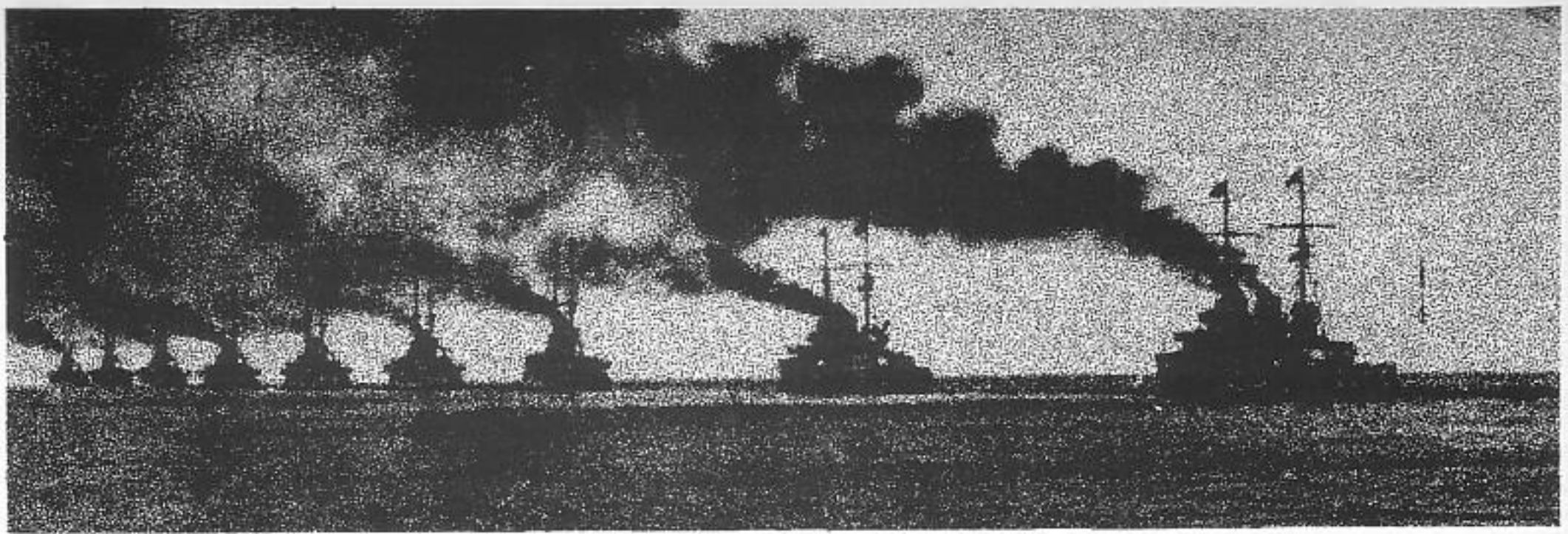
the more cautious players the roles of Jellicoe (Alex Muir) and Scheer (Les Jessop). Yes, folks, role playing! For the actual fight I used SPI's Dreadnought. Perhaps I should have used AH's Jutland but I decided against it mainly because we did not have the time. Unless you are an aficionado a long intricate game gets boring. As it was Dreadnought got a touch tedious for our admirals, involving, as it did, numerous dice throws.

Having established the game to be used the next step was the set-up. Figure 1 shows the opening positions of the two sides. Only Beatty and Hipper are on the board. Scheer and Jellicoe were in another room unable to see what was happening. Each commander was given a strategic map with his position marked and the approximate location of the other forces on his side. (See table 1). Each game-turn they up-dated their maps and the referee marked down the positions of all the players on a master map.

Table 1 : entry of main forces.

Die roll	High Seas Fleet	Grand Fleet
1	Gameturn 3	Gameturn 9
2	" 4	" 11
3	" 5	" 12
4	" 6	" 13
5	" 6	" 13
6	" 7	" 14

The starting positions of Jellicoe and Scheer was one of the few things I tinkered with. I drew up an entry table (given above). Each side rolled a die in secret. The referee consulted the table and found out how many game-turns away each fleet was from Beatty and Hipper. Neither side knew the time of entry hence the position of the other. In the re-fight, the Germans threw a six and were due to enter at the actual time Scheer did in 1916. The



British threw a two — they would be only two game-turns behind their actual entry.

Admirals of the same side were only allowed to communicate with each other by written signals passed via the referee. Not all messages were automatically passed on. I could if I so wished stop or alter them. However I usually worked to a few simple rules: 1) If signals were too long or complicated they got cut or stopped. 2) If something confusing happened e.g. changing flagships or extreme damage to a flagship the messages were somehow mislaid! This may come as a surprise to the players but I did not stop many messages out of spite and I even tried to be fair. As it was I hardly needed to stop many; more confusion was caused by letting them through.

The signals were one of the most interesting aspects of this game. The first series of messages that passed between the commanders were like the scribbled notes you get on post cards from your Auntie Mary on holiday in Blackpool; chatty but totally irrelevant. Take a look at the exchanges between Jellicoe and Beatty given in the account of the battle. Now lest you think that this is only to be expected of amateurs I should like to point out that many of the actual signals sent, such as the sub-title of this article, were certainly as bad if not worse. Many of the messages sent by our admirals assumed that the recipient had precognition or was psychic, resulting in much exasperation all round. I found it all hilarious.

So the stage was set. Each player was given a pep talk filling him in on the strategic part of the game and giving the sort of information they should already know — size of possible enemy fleet, etc. The account that follows is the authorised history of this epic re-fight of Jutland.

"URGENT HAVE SIGHTED LARGE AMOUNT

OF SMOKE AS THOUGH FROM A LARGE FLEET BEARING ENE." Galatea to Beatty (actual signal). This was the signal Beatty (John Lamshead) had been waiting for. Ordering an increase in speed he turned NW to close with the Hun. Unfortunately this change of direction was not passed on to the accompanying 5th Battle Squadron (5 B.S.) and they continued on their SW course for a further fifteen minutes. The 5 B.S. were four fast Dreadnoughts armed with 15 in. guns. As they were newly assigned to Beatty their unfamiliarity with his style of ship handling probably led to misunderstanding and their being left behind.

Hipper (Ed Easton) had, until then, believed he was engaging only light cruiser elements when, to the SE, the smoke of larger ships was seen, and quickly confirmed as the British battlecruisers approaching over the horizon. Without a moments hesitation he led his battlecruisers round to meet the threat.

Like knights at a joust, both forces rushed towards one another. Suddenly they were in range. Tongues of fire rippled out from the guns of the leading ships. The opening salvoes inflicted serious damage on Lützow, Hipper's flagship, reducing her speed, while the Von der Tann (VdT) was crippled by salvoes from the New Zealand and the Indefatigable. Lion, New Zealand and Princess Royal were hit by German salvoes but none too seriously. On the whole the British had the better of the exchange.

During these opening moves both sides signalled their respective C-in-Cs.

"LARGE ENEMY SHIPS WITH ESCORTS. 16 MILES. HEADING NE." Hipper to Scheer. Scheer was perhaps understandably nonplussed by Hipper's signal of the action. He knew the British were attacking but he had no idea of his sub-ordinates position.

"AM IN (map reference). SO FAR SO GOOD." Beatty to Jellicoe.

In response Jellicoe (Alex Muir) replied with his position. Quite unaware of the drama unfolding over the horizon, Jellicoe formulated a plan to rendezvous to the south of his position, some 20 miles to the west of Beatty, the aim of making a joint sweep to the SE. At 15.30 he signalled Beatty:

"RENDEZVOUS (map reference) WILL BE HEADING SOUTH REPEAT SOUTH.

Beatty, under heavy fire, replied:

"PRAT! AM IN (map reference) GOING NE."

Not the most tactful of replies and certainly one that gives no indication of why he should not rendezvous with his C-in-C.

So far the British and German are neck and neck in the incomprehensible signal stakes.

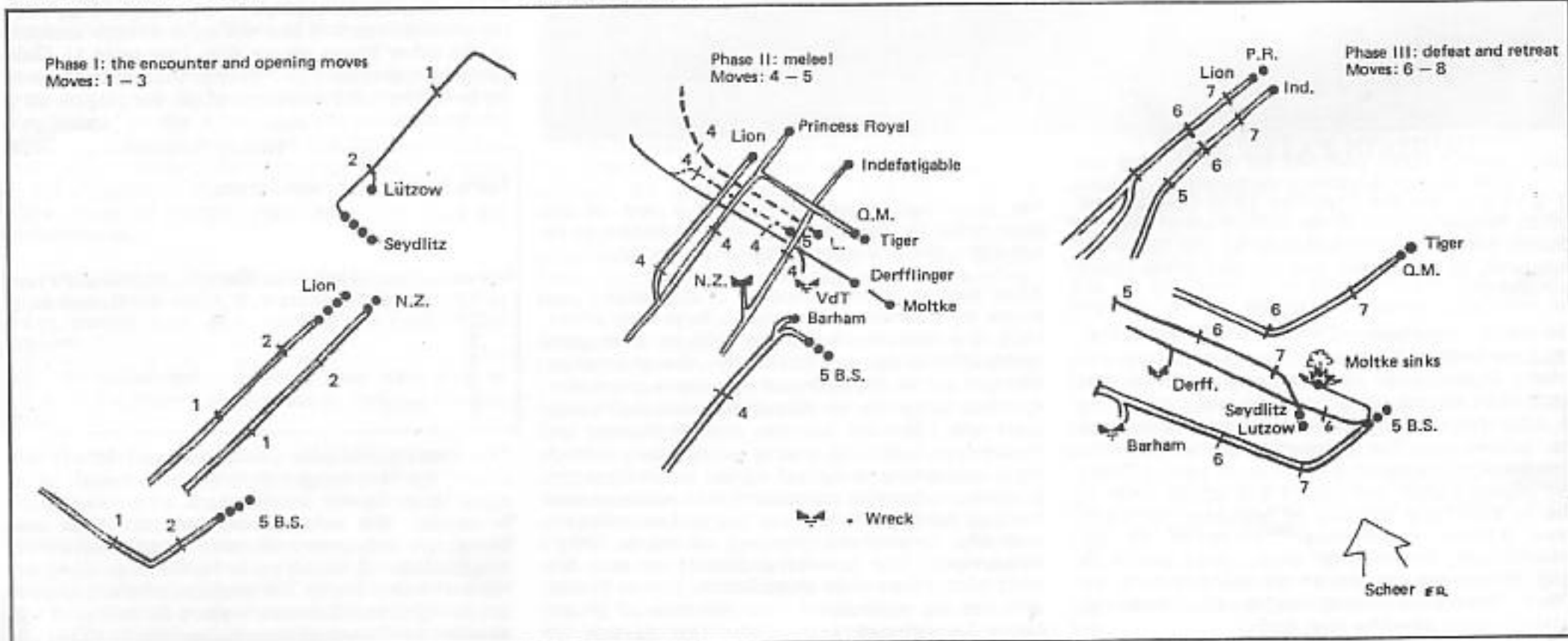
Meanwhile Lützow was almost stationary and Hipper was forced to change his flag to Seydlitz. During this transfer, Hipper missed some vital information. To the south elements of his light cruisers screen encountered a force of Dreadnoughts racing north towards the Germans. On closer investigation they turned out to be the 5 B.S. The cruisers were unable to escape and were annihilated. Things were not going well for the Germans. (Ed Easton's usually lucky dice rolling abilities had deserted him — much to John Lamshead's glee!)

Scheer, meanwhile, tantalised by Hipper's last message signalled:

"HAVE RECEIVED FIRST MESSAGE. PLEASE SEND YOUR POSITION. AM SAILING NORTH. EXPECT TO ARRIVE AT (map reference) IN 1½ HOURS."

Alas Hipper could only reply:

"ENGAGING 11 SHIPS. REPEAT 11 CAPITAL



SHIPS. TWO OF OUR SHIPS HEAVILY DAMAGED. HURRY!"

On the bridge of Iron Duke Jellicoe restrained himself from going to take a poke at Beatty. Calmly he asked:  
"WHAT IS HAPPENING?"

At last Beatty told Jellicoe what he wanted to hear: "HIPPER AND I ENGAGED (invite to wedding imminent — Ref. Could not resist putting it in.) IN (map reference). NO SIGN OF SCHEER."

Events by now were moving apace. The Germans belatedly turned away to the SE cutting through the oncoming British line. It was a manoeuvre that would have made Nelson proud. But this was not Trafalgar and as we shall see it proved to be the most decisive manoeuvre of the battle. Beatty was stunned (it left the referee speechless, for once). The Germans had delivered themselves up to the slaughter, mint sauce and all.

The pace of battle increased to fever pitch as the range closed to point blank. Seydlitz and Derfflinger bore the brunt of this new onslaught but surprisingly the others escaped with only minor damage. Their solid construction was an obvious advantage at this range. The Germans hit back and the British were to regret the lack of armour protection on their Battlecruisers. British battle-cruisers had been designed for speed and hitting power at the expense of armour. Fisher, the First Sea Lord at the time of their conception, considered that speed would be their best defence, thus the enemy they would not be able to defeat they could run from, while weaker enemies could be pursued and brought to battle. Fisher had obviously not counted on the suicidal tendencies of our Admiral Hipper!

Lion, Tiger and Princess Royal were seriously damaged. Lion so badly that Beatty was forced to change his flag to the Queen Mary. New Zealand slightly to the NE of the rest of the squadron was dueling with Derfflinger when she was smashed by a torrent of unbelievable accurate salvos and was left to drift, a blazing wreck. A sad blow for the British Empire. (Ed's lucky dice rolling returns!)

The Germans were not to cheer for long. The continued attentions of the Lion and Q.M. on the Seydlitz forced Hipper to transfer his flag, yet again, to the Moltke, the only intact ship in his fleet. German battlecruiser captains must have regarded Hipper raising his flag on their ship as the kiss of death.

Scheer, meanwhile, nearly apoplectic, tried to find out where his subordinate was:

"RECEIVED LAST MESSAGE. CANNOT GO ANY FASTER. SEND YOUR POSITION FOR GOD'S SAKE!"

Hipper safely aboard the Moltke finally gave his position:  
"POSITION (map reference). REPEAT (map reference). COURSE SE. ENEMY ALSO HEADING SE. ENEMY IS 10 BATTLECRUISERS. HELP."  
Help was far over the horizon. Scheer being 45 minutes away.

Beatty was now in the thick of a tremendous battle and with three damaged ships he was becoming slightly skittish:  
"AM IN (map reference) HEADING SE. ENGAGING HIPPER. SEND HELP."  
Jellicoe was still far to the NW of Beatty. He pushed forward the armoured (heavy) cruisers in the hope they would get to Beatty in time.

Hipper's force was not dispersed. Moltke led the bedraggled line of ships to the SE, followed by Derfflinger, Lutzow, Seydlitz, and VdT. Things may have been looking bad but they were about to get worse.

Shortly after 13.50 the 5 B.S. came into range of Hipper's line. Hipper's initial assessment that they were just another squadron of battlecruisers was about to be rudely shattered. VdT was the first to receive the dubious honour of being beaten into a blazing hulk for the Fatherland. The Germans were now caught between the arms of a U with Beatty's battlecruisers behind and to the north and the 5 B.S. to the south.

Barham, flagship of the 5 B.S., turned its guns on the good ol' Lutzow. However having got shot of Hipper, Lutzow had repaired much of the damage inflicted earlier and was now no pushover. The Barham received a distinctly unpleasant taste of German gunnery at its best (more lucky dice rolls from Ed). Seydlitz joined Lutzow and between them they hammered Barham until she was effectively destroyed. Revenge for the VdT.

Shortly after 16.00 hrs. Derfflinger, who had been trading shots with the Q.M., Tiger and Indefatigable, was finally overwhelmed. Hipper was down to three capital ships. With all hope of luring the British into a trap gone, Hipper's main concern was survival and escape.

By this time Scheer had received enough messages to get an inkling that all was not well with Hipper. There are after all, very few ways Hipper's signal: "HELP! HELP! HELP!" could be misinterpreted. Scheer could only signal back:

"HELP ON THE WAY, I PROMISE. SEND INFORMATION ABOUT STATE OF ENEMY IF POSSIBLE."

To his dismay the answer came back:  
"ENEMY BATTLECRUISERS IN (map reference). MOST UNDAMAGED!"

In contrast the British were cock-a-hoop, as this signal to Jellicoe suggests:  
"AM IN (map reference) GERMAN B.C. IN TROUBLE. COME AND GET THEM. GERMAN COURSE SE."  
Optimistically Jellicoe replied:  
"AM IN (map reference). HEADING TOWARDS YOU. HOW ABOUT DRAGGING GERMANS TOWARDS ME?"

Scheer realised that the battle was beginning to slip away from him. To save his battlecruisers, or what was left of them, he pushed forward a screen of light forces, hoping to mislead the enemy into believing that the main force was coming.

At 16.30 hrs. Hipper on the bridge of the Moltke, by now well in advance of his remaining ships sighted the first of these units. He must have thought that Scheer was not far behind because he turned his ship around and headed back into the fray. Why he did this heavens only knows. He said later that he returned with the intention of keeping the enemy in the area until the High Seas Fleet arrived and taking some of the pressure off his beleaguered squadron. Somehow I don't think this was what Scheer had in mind.

At 16.41 hrs. after a brief exchange with the 5 B.S. the Moltke was rent apart by a giant explosion and sank (a neat trick with a cardboard counter — but I claim poetic licence). Hipper's bane was obviously working well. Many Germans were by now asking themselves if Hipper was perhaps working for the British. Miraculously Hipper survived — he threw a six — more role playing, and was picked up by a destroyer. An act of supreme heroism considering Hipper's tally of flagships to date.

The game was in the bag for Beatty. He only had two problems to worry about: 1) Scheer's imminent arrival and 2) whether Jellicoe would arrive in time. About the latter he could do little except send messages but to forestall any surprise entry of the High Seas Fleet he sent out scouts to cover any likely areas. In the meantime he changed the fleet's heading to the NE. Whether Beatty was psychic or just lucky but 10 minutes later the most southerly of his light cruisers sighted the advance forces of the High Seas Fleet. This exciting news was passed to Jellicoe:  
"HAVE SPOTTED SCHEER IN (map reference). HEADING SOUTH. SCHEER MOVING NORTH."  
Jellicoe was closer than either Beatty or the Germans realised. He signalled Beatty:  
"AM IN (map reference). HEADING SE AT FULL SPEED."

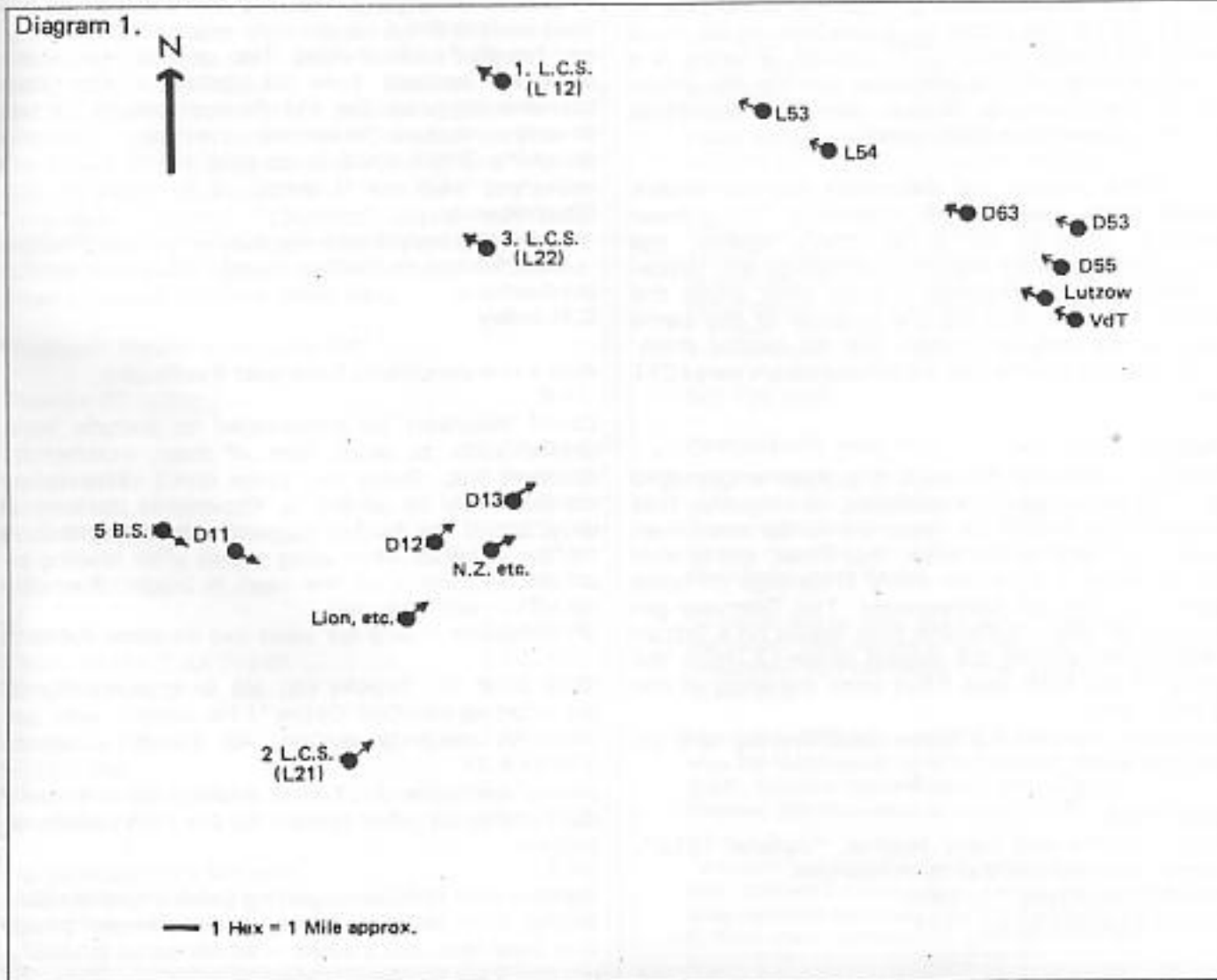
At about this time both sides seemed to have discovered the rules on smoke screens (no fault of mine — I told them all the rules at the start of the game). Both sides started to produce long trails, blocking off the firing possibilities.

The fighting effectively stopped which provided a welcome breather for the 1st Scouting Group or what was left of it. Ironically Lutzow and Seydlitz, all that remained of the five battlecruisers, managed to effect total repairs thus the two ships that Hipper had used as flagships but was forced to abandon ended the game in sound working order!

At 18.00 hrs. Scheer arrived and saw for himself the havoc wreaked on his scouting forces. When news came in that British forces were approaching from the NW he was in no position to take on what he suspected was the Grand Fleet. There was nothing to do but turn for home.

Jellicoe entered shortly after but in the failing weather conditions and the confusion caused by the smokescreens he decided not to risk a long stern chase.

I have concentrated my account on the action between the capital ships but the light forces were also in action. There were many acts of gallantry, particularly on the part of the German destroyer



flotillas who made repeated attacks against the British battlecruisers but to little effect. In the melee that formed after Hipper's Nelsonian manoeuvre, to press home a torpedo attack was to find yourself surrounded by enemy ships with little hope of escape.

With hindsight it can be seen that Hipper failed in his primary task of leading the British battlecruisers into the trap set by Scheer. He effectively sealed his fate by closing with the enemy. I was slightly surprised that the Germans did not do better against Beatty; I had expected history to repeat itself. Another interesting point to emerge from the refight was that unlike their historical counterparts both sides employed their light forces successfully in their proper role — scouting.

For Scheer and Jellicoe it was a frustrating game (how would you like to be stuck in another room waiting for your turn to play only to be told that the other side wouldn't play?). Both C-in-C's failed to direct the battle and lay down any overall strategy. This was particularly so in Scheer's case — he could only win by defeating the British peace-meal. But it must be admitted he was working under trying circumstances and was unaware of the position of his subordinate at critical stages in the battle.

So the British won decisively, this time.

### Jutland from the beginning: a scenario for Dreadnought.

Each player will need a map, about 10cm. x 10cm. divided into centimeter squares. The scale is 1mm. = 1 hex. In the middle mark the positions of Beatty and Hipper. The positions of the main fleets is worked out in secret. Each player rolls a die and consults table 1. This gives the distance away the fleet is; based on the assumption that the Grand Fleet moves at 5 hexes per gameturn i.e. 5mm on the map and the High Seas fleet moves at 4 hexes per gameturn — 4mm on the map. These speeds are based on the slowest ships in each fleet. Admirals can push forward faster units; the distance it travels on the map is the speed of the unit given on the counter e.g. a destroyer with a maximum speed of 7 hexes could move 7mm on the map.

For a 4 player game it is better to enlist a referee and proceed as described in the article.

#### British Forces:

The Grand Fleet, (Jellicoe). The G.F. was divided into 6 divisions each of four dreadnoughts. The ships of each division should be stacked together, flagship on top.

1st Division: King George V (071), Ajax (073), Centurion (072), Erin (101).

2nd Division: Orion (061), Monarch (063), Conqueror (064), Thunderer (062).

3rd Division: Iron Duke, Fleet Flagship (081), Royal Oak (142), Superb (023), Canada (102).

4th Division: Benbow (082), Bellerophon (022), Temeraire (021), Vanguard (033).

5th Division: Marlborough (084), Revenge (144), Hercules (052), Agincourt (092).

6th Division: Colossus (051), Collingwood (032), Neptune (041), St. Vincent (031).

1st Cruiser Squadron: (C11, C12), 2nd Cruiser Squadron: (C13, C14)

3rd Battlecruiser Squadron: Invincible (191), Inflexible (192), Indomitable (193).

4th Light Cruiser Squadron: (L11).

Destroyer Flotillas: 4th (DD16), 11th (DD14), 12th (DD15).

Setup: The Grand Fleet Divisions are deployed in 6 columns, each column 4 miles apart. The 1st Division is on the east wing, then in succession with the 6th Division on the west wing. The light forces can be deployed anywhere around the fleet but they were usually deployed in a large arc ahead of the fleet.

The Battlecruiser Fleet. (Beatty). The deployment is given in figure 1.

Lion (211), Princess Royal (212), Queen Mary (213), Tiger (221), New Zealand (203), Indefatigable (201).

5th Battle Squadron: Barham (115), Valiant (112), Warspite (114), Malaya (113).

Light Cruiser Squadrons: 1st (L12), 2nd (L21), 3rd (L22)

Destroyer Flotillas: 1st (DD11), 13th (DD12), 9 &

10th (DD13).

Heading & speed:

Lion etc NE 4

Barham etc SE 4

1st L.C.S. NW 5; 2nd L.C.S. NE 6; 3rd L.C.S. NW 7

1st D.F. SE 4; 13th NE 4; 9 & 10 D.F. NE 4

#### German Forces.

The High Seas Fleet. (Scheer). The H.S.F. was also divided into 6 Divisions. Ships of the same division are stacked together, flagship on top. The H.S.F. is deployed in line, in the following order:

5th Division: König (631), Grosser Kurfürst (633), Kronprinz Wilhelm (634), Markgraf (632).

6th Division: Kaiser (621) Kaiserin (623), Prinzregent Luitpold (624), Friedrich der Grosse (622)

Fleet Flagship.

1st Division: Ostfriesland (613), Thuringen (611), Heligoland (612), Oldenburg (614).

2nd Division: Posen (603), Rhienland (604), Nassau (602), Westfalen (601).

3rd Division: Deutschland (691), Hessen (701), Pommern (693).

4th Division: Hannover (692), Schlesien (694), Schleswig-Holstein (695).

4th Scouting Group (light cruisers): L51, L52.

Destroyer Flotillas: 1st (DD62), 3rd (DD51), 5th (DD52), 7th (DD53, DD54, DD63). Light forces are deployed as a screen around the fleet.

Heading & speed: North, speed 4.

Hipper's Cruiser Fleet. The deployment is given in fig. 1

1st Scouting Group: Lutzow (712), Derfflinger (711), Seydlitz (681), Moltke (671), Von der Tann (661).

2nd Scouting Group: (L53, L54).

Destroyer Flotillas: DD53, DD55, DD63.

Heading & speed: All forces NE, speed 6.

Special Rules (in addition to the rules and optional rules given in Dreadnought)

1) British forces may not fire their first salvos until the range is down to 10 hexes. After the first salvo they may use the range given on the counter.

2) The 5 B.S. must remain on the heading and speed given above for 1 move.

3) If the British forces have to take avoiding action due to a torpedo attack they must turn away. (The Grand Fleet Battle Orders laid down specific instructions on the manoeuvres to be used in the case of torpedo attack and Jellicoe believed that it was safer to turn away.)

4) The range of torpedoes is increased from 2 hexes as in Dreadnought to 4 hexes. According to Jane's 1914 the range of torpedoes varies from 2000 to 11000 yards (2-11 hexes). 4 hexes is a rough average of this variation. During the actual battle the destroyer Nestor launched torpedoes at the Lutzow from 5000 yards.

5) Light cruisers and destroyers may not attack capital ships except with torpedoes. The armour piercing capacity of 4 in. shells against the thickness of armour plate on battleships and battlecruisers is poor. Granted a lucky shell down the funnel etc., etc., but for the purpose of this game such forces may not open fire on capital ships. They may of course fire on armoured cruisers (C11 etc.).

#### Victory Conditions

Points are awarded for each ship sunk or damaged as in Dreadnought. In addition, during the first phase of the battle, i.e. from the initial encounter until the entry of the High Seas Fleet, the British get an extra 4 v.p.s. for every G damage inflicted against a German battlecruiser. The Germans get 4 v.p.s. for every G damage they inflict on a British battlecruiser during the second phase i.e. from the entry of the High Seas Fleet until the entry of the Grand Fleet.

Visibility: base of 12 hexes deteriorating to 6 on game turn 10.

#### References:

John Costello and Terry Hughes. "Jutland 1916". George Weidenfield and Nicholas Ltd.

Donald Macintyre. "Jutland"

"Janes Fighting Ships 1914"



Thank you for printing Donald Mack's reply (Phoenix 33) to my previous letter. I think it's what Pavlov called a conditioned response. Alas, it's what I expected from someone who has taken for himself the role as prima donna of the board-wargaming fraternity. It now seems that any attack on his beloved modern fantasies is seen by him as an attack on his very person!

Isn't there anyone else out there in wargaming land with strong and original views on the modern or future oriented game? Donald Mack appears to have cornered the market in this respect with views and reviews of unerring predictability. Consequently when good radical opposition confronts him, he is at a loss, and one receives only a storm of vitriol and abuse.

But wargaming is not about personalities, no not even you Mr. Mack, nor I, it's about good games and if there is any meaning in my last letter, it is that the NATO v Warsaw Pact/Central Front trash currently being churned out, is predictable and sheer moneygrabbing. The simple and obvious fact is that for such games to be realistic and dare I say it educational, the NATO forces must always lose, whether through destruction or surrender.

Yes I know Donald, what you're going to say, but let's give someone else a chance, eh?

Alan H. Wright.

*[Absolutely the last on this subject. Editor]*

With reference to N. Palmer's article "TITO The Anti-Wargame", I don't think I will let my opponents see it — I may have to play the Axis! More seriously, he has only given a good Partisan strategy, none for the Axis. That the Axis can and have won (in game terms) is a credit to SPI. In the final analysis the Axis can only win by luck finding, and hopefully eliminating, Tito, in this case — the odds are perhaps 1 in 30 against — the game becomes hopeless for the Partisan unless he has already reached divisional strength. Actually attacking Tito's stack is no problem if AGO's are conserved and use is made of Croatian and/or Chetnik units.

Finally may I add my support to Mr. Shelton — leave fantasy to "White Dwarf" and other similar publications.

C.N.Jolley

#### And a few comments from past Feedbacks:

Could reviewers be encouraged to include basic details such as price, size of map, number of counters etc. Some do, some don't. This information could be added by Phoenix at the end of an article if the former suggestion is impracticable. I often consider purchasing games after reading an article to find that the map is bigger than my room!

*[Point taken — will see what can be done. Editor]*

Does poor Mr. Brooks not get an opportunity to get a rating for "Air Cobra"? He doesn't even get into the contents section. Air Cobra — article quality = 7!

*[Many apologies to Trevor Brooks for this oversight and to all other readers for the inconvenience. Editor]*

Happier with articles suggesting game improvement/tactics than reviews. Most articles are on games that have been out a while — which we've probably bought if we are/were going to!

A difficult problem this — I believe that any article must reflect reasonable experience of a game so one must allow the reviewer time to achieve that experience. However I would agree that this means that there is a lag between game publication and review article — I still prefer it our way. I also accept that tactics/improvement articles have a place in our pages, in the future I would hope that more appear in our pages BUT as always I am in your hands, I can only publish what you supply me. Only a small proportion of the material you read is commissioned, the rest is from keen writers, lets see more of you! Editor]

Please feedback the concept of 'Book Review'. I would rather see the space used for wargame articles.

We regularly check on this column and I must report that it continues to get a reasonable rating and obviously is of use to a good proportion of the readership. It stays. Editor]

I fully agree with Mr. Jordan in a recent "Mailcall". Many strange figures have appeared in S&T's rating charts, i.e. in "Operation Grenade's" chart the playing time for "Wacht am Rhein" (not "Wacht am Rhien" as Simpugs Bargain Offers would have it) is nine hours, which barely gives you time to set it up let alone finish it. In the same issue we have the ultimate in fast playing games with "Starweb" taking 0 hours to play, i.e. no time at all. With charts like that we need something a bit more comprehensive. Imagine some beginner buying WAR which he thought was a medium sized game and ending up with a 4-map, 1600 counter monster.

## EDITORIAL CONTINUED

year to be included in this issue of Phoenix. I offer you this service though my reservations on the two tier system of voting that has been introduced still stands.

Over the last few issues of Phoenix the number of feedbacks coming in has fallen. This has reached the stage where the answers, when averaged out, fall below what one might call the credibility threshold. Thus, though I am reporting on the results from issue 33 below, I am not putting a feedback into this issue — it is no good asking in the feedback, what you feel about the concept of feedback since, oddly enough, we always get the answer that it is really great — if you go to the trouble of filling the form in it must be! If you feel strongly about its absence feel free to write to me, I would like to hear your views. Associated with this change, I intend to insert a feedback in each alternative issue, will be a change in the prize system for the three most popular unsolicited articles. Where no feedback appears I will take it upon my shoulders to decide on the two best unsolicited articles and each author will get an honorarium of £12.50 — my decision is final. Lastly, Eggcentrals list of gamers appears to be whittling away at the list of "Contact" gamers — they are doing too good a job! I therefore intend to amalgamate "Contact" and "For Sale" and print them every issue — "Contact" entries will now appear three times before automatically lapsing. If demand increases again I will have to revert to the present format of every other issue.

Feedback results from issue 33:

Phoenix 33 rating . . . . .	6.41
Tito . . . . .	6.88/6.07
Longest Day . . . . .	6.54/6.79
Nuke 'Em ... Glow . . . . .	6.39/5.14
First & Last . . . . .	6.21/5.83
	(First Prize — £10)
Origins '81 . . . . .	6.17/6.72
	(Second Prize — £7.50)
Raid on Iran . . . . .	6.14/5.14
Valley of the Four Winds . . . . .	6.14/4.50
Pickett's Charge . . . . .	5.86/5.08
	(Third Prize — £5.00)
Espagnol-Talavera . . . . .	5.74/5.61
Middle Sea . . . . .	5.61/5.52
Dimension Deamons . . . . .	5.21/3.80
Starfire . . . . .	5.20/5.52
For Sale/Contact concept . . . . .	7.48
Mailcall . . . . .	5.52
Book Review . . . . .	6.07

# CHRISTMAS QUIZ ANSWERS

## PART I

- Hof Gap (SPI)
- Crescendo of Doom (AW)
- Fighting Sail (SPI)
- Doctor Who (Games Workshop)
- Battle for Stalingrad (SPI)
- The Longest Day (AH)
- Robert at Bannockburn (SPI)
- Air Cobra (OSG)
- Pea Ridge (SPI)
- La Bataille d'Espagnol-Talavera (Marshal Enterprises)
- The Alamo (SPI)
- Suez '73 (GDW)
- Timetripper (SPI)
- Task Force (SPI)
- Stalins Tanks (Metagaming)
- Beda Fomm (GDW)
- Campaigns of Napoleon (West End Games)
- City Fight (SPI)
- The Sword and the Stars (SPI)
- Empires of the Middle Ages (SPI)
- Arab-Israeli Wars (AH)
- Armor (Yaquinto)

- NATO Divisional Commander (SPI)
- Pickett's Charge (Yaquinto)
- Anzio (original edition) (AH)
- Roark's Drift (Historical Alternatives)
- Drive on Damascus (Simulation Games)
- The Crusades (SPI)
- Amoeba Wars (AH)
- Fortress Europa (AH)

## PART II

- Hurricane.
- John Paul Jones to American Congress, "Give me a stout ship for I intend to go in harms way".
- Ramadan.
- The Great Patriotic War.
- F-105 Thunderchief.
- Battle of The Skagerrak.
- Cinque Ports.
- General O'Connor.
- Forward Edge of Battle.
- A sniper left behind by retreating army to harrass enemy's rear areas.

# Contact!

Contact entries will appear three times and will then automatically lapse. Please ensure that you contact me in good time if you want to continue or change your entry. No asterisk signifies last entry and as such will not appear in issue 36.

## CONTACT/FOR SALE ENTRIES ARE INSERTED FREE

\*ASHFORD WARGAMES SOCIETY, meets at the Youth Centre, Duncan Bower School, Stanhope, Ashford, Kent on the second Sunday of every month at 2p.m. The club wishes to encourage all forms of wargaming including figures, boardgames and role-playing in all periods. Anyone wishing further information should contact the organiser, David Short, 5 Knott Crescent, Willesborough, Ashford, Kent TN24 0UF.

\*EALING GAMES GROUP meets in the Northfield Community Centre, 71/73 Northcroft Rd., Ealing, London W13 every 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month, Sundays from 14.00hrs to 22.30. Tel.01-574-2709. Also have a "chip" section that meets at 82 Windmill Lane, to try their skill at a large no. of computer games. Ring above number.

\*MAIDSTONE WARGAMES SOCIETY, meets at the Manor Young Peoples Club, Shepway, Maidstone, Kent on the first Saturday of every month from 2p.m. to 8p.m. Members play all types and periods of figure and board wargames and role-playing games. Anyone interested will be made very welcome.

\*The West of Scotland Society for Board Wargames newsletter containing correspondence, opponents for F.T.F. and P.B.M., games for sale/swap/wanted, can be obtained by contacting P.Walker, 19D Stuart House, Burns Road, Cumbernauld, Glasgow. Tel: Cumbernauld 28679 or W. Finlayson, Polmont 711351 or I. Mackay 041 775 2189.

## OPONENTS WANTED

\*PLAY POSTAL DIPLOMACY and many other games. For an Introductory Package to postal Diplomacy send cheque/P.O. for £1 to: Postal Games Association, 35 West Park Street, Dewsbury, West Yorks.

\*I would like to play in a postal Dragonquest campaign. Can anyone offer me a game? Chris Steadman, 12 Freshwater Drive, Paignton, Devon. TQ4 7SB.

Wanted — FTF opponents in the Southampton area for Napoleonic or WWI period games. No D&D. Contact David Hulbert, 54 Burghclere Rd., Weston, Southampton or phone (0703) 434335.

\*Anyone interested in a campaign game of Longest Day, probably multi-player, taking place over a long weekend (or two). Contact Keith Walton, 8, West View, Lemington, Newcastle-u-Tyne, NE15 8DH. Phone (0632) 675091

# FOR SALE

FOR SALE: boxed at £5.00 ea. Panzer Leader, Assault on Crete, Russian Campaign, Victory in the Pacific (AH), Belter (GDW), Fury in the West (BL), Sword and the Stars (SPI). Boxed at £6.00, Blue and Gray Quad I (SPI). Ziploc at £6.00, Napoleon's Last Battles (SPI). Ziploc at £2.00 ea. 20th Maine, Robin Hood (OSG), Bloody Buna, Marston Moor (WWW), Armada, Crusades, Cassino, Wilson's Creek, Ney vs Wellington (SPI). Will swap any £5.00 or £6.00 game or any two £2.00 games for any of the following: Colony Delta (FGU), Alexander, Caesars Legions, Caesar Alesia (AH), Imperium (GDW), War of The Ring (SPI), Swashbuckler (YAO). Will swap any £2.00 game for any of the following: En Garde, Raphia (GDW), Hof Gap, Fred The Great, Fighting Sail, Fifth Corps, Citadel of Blood (SPI), Pieces of Eight (FGU), Melee, Wizard (MGC). Contact: Richard Smith, Jordaan 14, Laren P.C.1251, Netherlands, Tel: 02153-82558.

WANTED: La Bataille de la Auerstadt (Marshal Enterprise), La Bataille de Preussisch-Eylau (IDEM), Wellington in the Peninsula (Rand), Napoleon Last Campaigns (Rand), Leipzig (SPI), 1812 (SPI). Contact: Michel Lefort, Avenue Germinal 10, B-1420 Braine L'Alleud, Belgium, (LFTM81).

WANTED: Good, complete copies of: Campaign for North Africa (SPI), 3rd edition Third Reich (AH), Crescendo of Doom (AH), Flat Top (AH), Air Force (AH) and Belter (GDW). For cash or swap (Air assault on Crete, Caesars Legions). Contact: Carrick Richards, St Johns March, Mortimer, Berks RG73SY.

FOR SALE: all unboxed & including p&p. Mod Battles Quad — £5.00, NATO, Tank I + Expansion — £3.50 each, Paratroop, Conquistador, Operation Olympic, October War, Nap. at Waterloo + Expansion, Kaisers Battle, Berlin '85, Fighting Sail, Cedar Mtn., Fifth Corps — £2.20 each, Revolt in the East — £1.50 all SPI and majority little played (if at all) — Jim Sizer, 139A Chester Road, Greenbank, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 4AA.

FOR SALE (p&p included): Squad Leader (1st Edition), Napoleon at Bay (OSG), Blue & Grey II Quad, Wooden Ships and Iron Men (AH), Road to the Rhine (GDW): all at £5 each. North Africa Quad, Kasserine Pass (Conflict). £3 each. Normandy (SPI): £1.50. Battles of the Hundred Days (OSG), Road to Richmond (S&T): £1.25 each. Frederick the Great (S&T), Battle for Germany (S&T): £1.00 each. Bastogne (SPI), Napoleon at Waterloo Expansion Kit (+ Map): 50p each. Also, Phoenix Nos. 1-25: £6 the lot. Write to Chris Newey, 21 Calver Grove, Great Barr, Birmingham B449BE or phone: 021-360-3478.

WANTED: Most issues of S&T (with or without game) prior to issue 78. Also interested in other SPI games and also games and magazines by other publishers. Please send lists. John Wood, 18 Plymouth Place, Leamington Spa, Warks, CV31 1HN. Phone 0926-23646.



Games Workshop Ltd first hit the market with four boxed games all in the SF/F range. Perhaps the most striking member of the four, and the one which undoubtedly attracts the most attention, is *Dr Who*. Examining the box design alone leaves you in no doubt as to what the game is about — there is the good Doctor staring out from a lurid vortex, and backed up by three of his old enemies ..... the Daleks! Now if there is anyone in Great Britain reading this who has never watched BBC TV and has survived from the early 1960s without seeing a single episode of the *Dr Who* series or even hearing of him, I suggest you pack in your hermit life style and join everyone else in admiring what has become a cult figure. *Dr Who*, the Daleks, K-9, Tardis, Zarbi and Cybermen have all become household names. Children of all ages (including the adult ones!) will flock to buy this one; the question is, has Games Workshop delivered the goods or will those children be disappointed?

The game rationale is quite simple. At home in Gallifrey, the Domain of the Time Lords, an alien attack is expected. A defence is needed in the form of the Key of Chronos, but this can be built in many different ways, and the actual pieces are scattered through time and space. It is up to various projections of *Dr Who*, i.e. two to six players, to go out and find them. Nothing must stand in their way, neither the aliens they encounter or each other, for speed is vital in collecting the pieces of the Key. All this sounds like stirring stuff, so how is this translated into a game?

The mounted game map is in two folding sections and measures 22½" x 16½" approximately, so six players can easily sit around it on a table and have room for their own counter displays.

At the start of play a red alien and a blue item counter are placed inverted on each of sixty planets which are marked off in squares on the board. At the centre is Gallifrey where the Doctors set off from. Seventy-six aliens and seventy-six item counters are available thus giving a purely random set up. Added to this is the fact that some of the aliens are blank tokens, an important factor in play, for if there is no alien on the planet, the player can pick up any items and Key parts for free. Players select six Key mission tokens in secret — these provide a code which must be collected to make your own personal Key. Of the mission tokens not selected, matching green Key part counters are found and both sets are discarded. The remaining Key parts are placed on the map, inverted, along with blanks to make up a total of sixty. Now none of this is complex, but it is time consuming, so set aside 5-10 minutes for set up and keep all the different counter types in separate bags just to help speed things up. Finally, each player is given an assistant counter and we are ready to play, to go out into the unknown, fight the baddies (and each other) and find the Key.

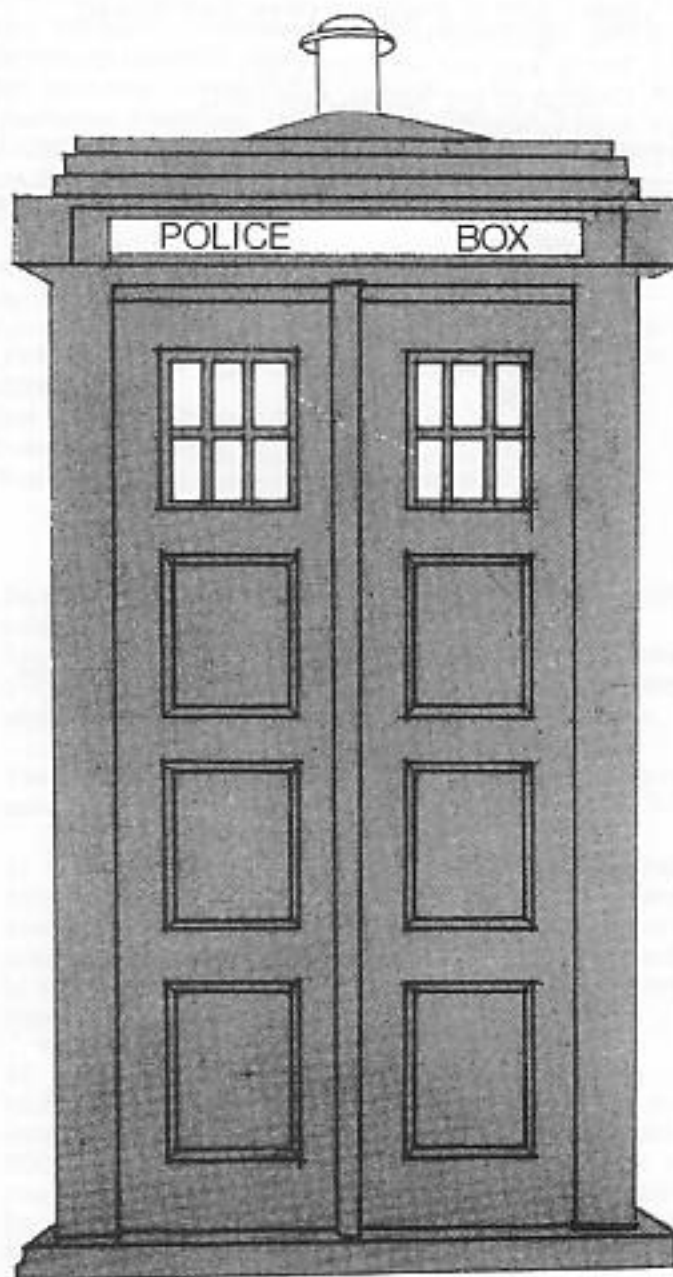
Each player's turn is quite flexible. There are three actions possible: move, search or fight, and a player can do any two in his own turn. Thus a player could move and fight a known enemy, or search a planet and move off elsewhere, and so on. Movement is easy, for players can move two squares in any direction, including diagonally, to help them get about. The squares around the edge of the map are special in that they have colour coded "space/time warps", which allow players to zap across the board and pop up on another map edge having the same coloured space/time warp. Searching allows a player to flip over the alien counter for all to see and secretly examine the Key part. The blue item counter is left undisturbed.

Items are collected along with Key parts when the alien has been destroyed. The value of the items is twofold, first of all to help increase a player's strength and hence his combat effectiveness, secondly to assist in foiling aliens and other players in their attempts to hold onto Key parts. Since there are many items and conditions under which they can be used, a separate booklet is provided for each player. These Item Files are very useful and can double as a screen behind which parts and items can be held in secret. Not only do they explain the use of items including Beams, Robots, Gloves and Warps, they also detail special features of the aliens like the Daleks, Davros and Cybermen who are known to us all, and lesser characters such as Kleptons (habitual thieves), Chronons (who first made the Key) and Vampires (need I say more!).

# DOCTOR WHO

## THE GAME OF TIME & SPACE

PAUL KING



Items are very important and may be used in other players' turns if you feel the need to assist another Doctor under attack, or help the poor aliens from the attacks of over-powerful Doctors.

Combat is very simple. On each alien counter is a strength number which the alien must throw equal to, or less than, on a twelve sided die to score a hit. Doctors follow the same lines, but strength may vary due to the addition of assistants, weapons, and the use of other items such as thermal lances, power gloves and Time Warriors. In a combat round each set of combatants throws the die to see how many hits they score. If an alien fails to hit, and a player scores successfully, the alien is wiped out and the Key part plus item can be picked up. However, if the opposite occurs then the Doctor is stunned for two turns and may lose some Key parts or items, depending on which monster he fought. Also being in a stunned condition leaves a player open to attacks by other players as he is in a weakened position and cannot fight back at his full potential. Hence a player may lose items and Key parts in this fashion to the Doctors!

Players are not restricted to collecting their own Key parts, they can collect others as well. However, a player can never hold more than six parts, includ-

ing blanks. This can lead to bluff situations as players collect blanks and unwanted parts, for if a combat follows a search, the Key part collected is not revealed. No one has any idea how close the other players are to winning. Key parts are revealed when a player leaves a planet without fighting the alien, for players may be unwilling to attack a strong alien and will seek pastures new. The action of moving off reveals the part counter. If it is a blank it is thrown away, but if it is a Key part it is left visible, and guarded. Players will then rush to the zone, to do battle and win the part.

The winner of the game is the first player to collect his code of Key parts and return to Gallifrey. However, even this can be fraught with difficulty for Gallifrey can only be re-entered from an adjacent square, not the normal two square move. So if a player moves into one of the squares surrounding Gallifrey, they tend to be the subject of desperate attacks by other players, from long range if they have the right items, or in personal combat by those others who can reach him in time. Tense moments occur as players, weaker than the defender, plunge in hoping for a good die roll. The other players often egg on the attacker in his attempt to stop the potential winner from getting home, yet hope the victorious assailant will not win the right Key parts by his actions and then sail home himself!

To illustrate how the game plays, here is a selection of events from a three player game which lasted 27 game turns — approximately an hour and a half of time including set up. The players are Yellow, Green and Red, playing in that order. Initially none of the players found blank alien counters, only strong monsters it would be suicide to attack. As a result some Key parts are left visible, dotted around the board and waiting for someone to gain strength and collect them.

**Game Turn 10.** Green has just removed his last stun marker from a fight with the Chronon on Ceti. He moves to Pavonis and picks up a Deflector Beam and a Key part as the alien counter is blank. Red uses a Space/Time Warp to reach Green on Pavonis and initiates a combat. He uses his Army Unit assistant, himself and a Booster Glove item to give a strength of 8. To ensure he hits, Red employs a Time Boost item which allows two die rolls for himself. Green appears to be in a weaker position, but uses a Partial Time Warp to bring in a Time Warrior who will fight separately from himself



and his assistant, Vicki. He too uses a Time Boost for the Warrior only, thus giving him three die rolls to Red's two. During the first two combat rounds both sides score two hits each, which nullify one another. Green scores three hits on the following round, Red cannot compete and is stunned. Green now picks up a blank and a Key part from Red. After the fight, both roll for retention of their items. Green is the only lucky one here, he keeps the Partial Time Warp.

**Turn 18.** Yellow has yet to find a Key! Realising he can reach Green via a Space/Time Warp he uses a Petrification Beam on Green, but he in turn counters with a Deflector Beam. Yellow is losing out and moves well away in case Green uses the same Warp to reach him. Fortunately his search of Ulson gives him a Robot Generator, but still no Key part.

Red is now back in the game, and how! Along the way Red has acquired a +6 Laser and a Tractor Beam. He uses the beam to lift a -4 Laser Screen from the Kleptons on Sontar, then moves on Farringer from Mondas to fight a Carrion Plant which he promptly defeats. This gives him a new Key and a new assistant, a +3 Space Marine. Red can only have one assistant, so he leaves his tired Army Unit on Farringer.

**Turn 20.** A now confident Red attacks Green once more on Wolf's Star. In a straight fight Green is stunned and Red takes four Key parts from him. Red has a chance to make a full set but prefers to lose his own blank counter and retain one of Green's H Key parts.

**Turn 24.** Red attacks an Astromancer on Telos, defeats it and receives a Petrification Beam plus a blank Key part. His set is now complete and he leaves behind the H Key part. Carrying the dead alien he moves to Capella, eventually to feed it to the Anti-Matter Monster on Xeros.

**Turn 26.** Red moves to Luyten, away from Yellow who has been acquiring a few Key parts and might be a threat to Red in a fight. Also he is now ready to move back into Gallifrey on his next move.

Green is on the far side on the board and is stunned in an alien attack.

**Turn 27.** Yellow realises that Red is ready to win and surprises him by flashing across to Luyten from Alell, by operating a Teleporter. However, Red counters with his Petrification Beam, to which Yellow has no reply. Green cannot help as he is still partially stunned. Red then moves into Gallifrey and wins.

From this playthrough one feature becomes obvious, the importance of luck. The placement of aliens and blanks is totally random, so landing on a square with no alien and picking up a Laser and Key part, as Red did, can happen. Die rolling is purely random also and can work against a player even if he is the stronger, as did happen to Red initially. Item play can be very useful, as Yellow found to his dismay on two occasions. There is always the chance of being stunned, or meeting up with a particularly nasty alien.

This random factor helps keep the game alive, for players do not know what the others have, what the next player's search will reveal, or how strong an opponent may be. Add to this a very simple game sequence and set of rules — only three sides of A4, plus an interesting subject to grab the imagination and this game just has to be a winner.

It's a game all ages enjoy, and can learn very quickly. However, it is aimed at the younger end of the market without a doubt, and is very successful in this aim. I have played this game many times with an adult wargames group (members of which helped me in the playthrough) and they had great fun. At the same time I used it with my own teenage wargames group in the comprehensive school at which I work; their response was overwhelming and the enthusiasm highly contagious.

So full marks to Games Workshop for this design at least, it lives up to all expectations and provides a fun game which can be played in less than two hours with six players.

A different point of comparison with White Death has been drawn to my attention and is, I think, worth examination. We have seen that the ground scales are very similar and the time scales very different. Yet in both games the basic Movement Allowance is 10 MPs, terrain costs being generally similar. This may seem odd, I suspect that there are two ways of explaining the apparent oddity. At the most concrete level it might be pointed out that in a fairly tactical game such as Suez 73 it is legitimate to expect a great deal of dashing to and fro, whereas in White Death many units spend a good deal of time out of contact with the enemy, I do not find this altogether convincing, and prefer a more abstract answer, concentrating on the overall effect achieved and on the fact that movement points can be expended for such things as Assault and Disruption Removal as well as for moving from A to B, in other words that movement points are about time and energy as well as about movement. Without going so far as to adopt the John Hill doctrine of "design for effect" I would point to the fact that the apparently exorbitant Suez 73 allowances certainly do not result in units dashing all over the map; indeed progress is, if anything, rather slower than in White Death and this is a function of the other things which cost MPs as much as of the "to-ing and fro-ing" argument. I do find this an interesting question, not least for the light it may shed on one of the most basic abstractions of wargaming, the movement rules.

Finally, then, it is necessary to make an evaluation of Suez 73. Can I, in good conscience, advise you to part with your money? Well, on the credit side we have good components, good rules and a reasonably interesting system. On the debit side the scenarios are not over-impressive and there is something of a playability problem. For accuracy the game rates highly — 7 or 8 out of 10, I should think. Overall I think this is a game for the aficionados of the Middle East Wars. It lacks the variety to be a classic and the novice might well have trouble with the slice-of-time system. But if the basic idea excites you, then it is worth getting the game, because the execution is pretty good.

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