

PHOENIX

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EDITORIAL

JOHN SPENCE

Phoenix is dead, long live Phoenix!!

Sounds dramatic doesn't it but at the time of writing things are that way inclined in the wargames field and I couldn't resist an over-the-top comment to start this editorial. Whilst it is literally true, the practical changes are not nearly so far reaching. Let me elucidate.....

Most of you will be aware by the time you read this column that TSR took control of SPI in April and that the New York company as we have known it for the past ten years no longer exists. Due to their premier position for so long this is a deep shock for most wargamers and throws us all into a little confusion - the members of the industry as well as the gamers. The situation is such that there are still a number of doubts as to what this will lead to and what portions of SPI will survive. Thus, many of the design staff have left SPI to set up their own company called Victory Games with possible design problems to the new owners.

Amongst other items in a state of flux is the future of S&T and, though I am in no position to state exactly what will happen, one could consider future publication frozen for the time being following the appearance of the issues already physically in existence. S&T has been a king-pin in Phoenix's costing and circulation 'package'; up to now the UK Phoenix mailing schedules have been closely linked with S&T appearances and this accounts for the erratic appearance of our own magazine in the last few months - nothing else.

Couple this with the new stance that Simpubs must take now and you can see that Phoenix must change - thus the first sentence! Simpubs have decided to take a much more active part in game production with the formation of a special company to handle their product. As part of this re-organisation (c.f.

the statement from Malcolm Watson on page 3 in this issue on the up-to-date situation) we have decided to revamp, renew and change Phoenix - this issue you now have is the last of the old style magazine.

Before you fuss too much, we do not intend to throw the baby out with the bath-water, we will retain much of the best of Phoenix, alter our present basic philosophy and even add to the new package. We will not be able to hide our ties to the new game lines nor would we wish to - Phoenix must and will be used to bring the new products to your attention. It is intended that one of these products will become part of the annual subscription but rather than go down the S&T path of a game in every issue we hope to supplement the rest of the subscription with some sort of discount offer on a number of in-house games. The details of this arrangement have yet to be finalised and these will be announced with the first issue of New Phoenix once we have had a chance to assess the situation. I believe that this will give you both a quality magazine and cheap games without the problem of being limited to what the publisher inserts in the magazine for you.

We will continue to run a mixture of review and critique material which could lay me open to the criticism of being biased in favour of the home grown product. I assure you this will not be the case - I intend to tread this difficult tightrope as fairly as is possible. Those people supplying material (and new authors and material are always welcome) are never influenced in their judgements by myself unless I know that what they have said is incorrect and I would hope that you would agree that most reviews that appear are fair. I admit that some mistakes have slipped through the net but I also add the rider that anyone has the automatic right of reply to reset the balance - I consider that right and proper too.

In-house material, on the other hand, will not appear in straight reviews in New Phoenix. What we will have is background information on the games that does not appear anywhere else, its design, its historical background and even game replays but nothing that is primarily aimed at putting a subjective assessment on the worth of the game. May we hope that our present reasonable record of fair-

ness will continue in future. I would like to hear your views on this dichotomy!

Having laid some groundwork for future issue I would like to turn now to another situation close to my heart namely historicity.

Military history is one of the lynch-pins of our hobby - anyone with any interest in historical to near future board wargames will have some reading on some aspect of military history under his belt (which may be quite extensive if some of the discussions I have had with gamers is anything to go by!). It is the historical component of the wargame that first attracts the potential gamer and, hopefully, keeps them with us. I thus thought that I would share some of my current views on this subject with you and would like to hear your views in return.

Any game review worth its salt will try to relate a historical game and its design to the action or campaign that it is meant to represent, the pages of this magazine are, I hope you will agree, well graced with such critiques. The rationale behind such an approach is, of course, that most purchasers wish their game to faithfully represent reality and be a model, however dim, through which they can study some of the significant factors that went in to moulding the actions, and their results, of the opposing armies (or whatever).

This does not necessitate games in which every possible factor is represented. As I have said in the past, I believe that the designers' requirements may be fulfilled in any number of design philosophies ranging from the broad brush approach (in which such factors as unit uniqueness are sacrificed to produce a feeling of the battle e.g. *Battle for Stalingrad*) to the draftman approach (every i and t dotted and crossed - *Airwar '80* would be a good example of this approach).

Such diversity of approach makes critical dissection of historical aspects of some games difficult. Who is to say what aspects of the battle have been factored into the combat sequence and tables or whether supply is reflected in apparently simple move rules apart from the design team itself (and

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The King is dead.... Long live the people!

In April of this year it was officially announced that TSR Hobbies Inc, of Dungeons & Dragons fame, had taken control of Simulations Publications Inc publishers of Ares, Moves and Strategy & Tactics magazines. A second announcement followed this to the effect that SPI had been put into liquidation and a decision had been made to move the corporate corpse up to the TSR HQ lock, stock and staff. The staff, however, were apparently not consulted about these plans and in a fit of uncertainty the ex SPI designers used their good 'ole American initiative and slipped out from underneath the magic umbrella to form their own games company which they have called Victory Games.

I flew out to speak to TSR Hobbies Inc about our future plans as soon as their position vis a vis SPI was made official and I came home with the distinct impression that we would continue to function as the distribution centre for their games and magazines here in the UK. Unfortunately since then I have been unable to get any concrete proposals from that company and I do not believe that I can wait any longer to make our own plans known to the public.

One of the first subjects to which we have addressed ourselves has been the future of Phoenix. Since we are not certain when TSR will be able to get future issues of S&T out we feel that the time has come to cut the Phoenix loose from that magazine. The issue you are now reading will be the last of the Phoenix as you have known it to date, issue 37 will be called the New Phoenix and this will be the first in a series of quarterly magazines with which we intend to fill the current void. The New Phoenix will have 36 pages with a maximum of four pages of advertising. A four issue subscription will sell for £5.95 and the New Phoenix will be available through our mail order service only.

Those of you who have sent money in for Phoenix will find a credit note enclosed for those magazines outstanding after issue 36. We would like to invite you to reinvest this in a subscription to the New Phoenix in the knowledge that response to this move will determine once and for all whether or not we at Simpubs will continue to publish a UK orientated Board Wargamers magazine. If we find that we cannot support such an operation based on the UK circulation then we will stop chasing shadows and acknowledge the fact by winding up the New Phoenix.

We are holding money paid to us by Ares, Moves and S&T subscribers pending a decision by TSR on their plans for this country. I realise that this may not be satisfactory to many of you and should you decide that you would like to use your balance towards the purchase of other goods that we carry then we will be happy to accommodate you where possible. I do know that a letter was drafted out in April giving an assurance to US subscribers that TSR would honour SPI's commitments and I do know that I was given a verbal assurance that the same would apply in this country, however action speaks louder than words and I, like you, am still waiting for some action. In fairness to TSR I should point out that they did inherit a very messy situation but then they are big boys and one must assume that they knew what they were getting into.

As soon as we know for certain what plans TSR have for this country we will circulate the information to you in the meantime please be aware that we have your best interests in mind.

Malcolm Watson

Managing Director
Simpubs Ltd

WANTED



Game Designers

The demise of SPI New York has, not surprisingly, left a rather large hole in the wargames scene. We at Simpubs believe that our 10 years experience in this highly specialised hobby leaves us well placed to fill at least part of the void by introducing our own line of games internationally. The factors contributing to the SPI crash are varied and numerous, but one which may have been significant was their insistence on maintaining a substantial full time design staff. With this in mind we are following the Avalon Hill example and encouraging free-lance designers to submit their talents to our scrutiny. If you would like to work with Simpubs to establish a Great British Wargames Line then write today sending full details of your experience in this field, your historical/gaming interests in order of priority and, where possible, a sample of your design work. When sending samples we recommend that you use recorded delivery to ensure that you have a record of your submission.

Ray Smith
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Drive on Damascus

Where have all the hexes gone?

PAUL KING

You would be forgiven for thinking, from the title that this was a modern Arab/Israeli conflict. In actual fact it covers an unusual campaign during 1941 in which Vichy and Free French fought one another.

The game is a recent offering from W.W.W. and is included in issue 15 of *The Wargamer*. Briefly the history behind the game is as follows: the British were concerned over the presence of Vichy held territory in Lebanon and Syria. The area could provide a "backdoor" for Axis forces to the African Campaign. Iraq was won over to the Axis cause, so the British attacked Iraq. Germany was desperate for air bases to help Iraq and began using the Vichy held air bases. British empire forces therefore attacked Lebanon and Syria hoping to catch the French off guard, and also expecting mass desertions to the Free French cause. Unfortunately neither happened. The fight involved a hotch potch of units on both sides, and a month was to elapse before the British forces were certain of victory.

Turning to the game itself the components are of a good standard of quality and one or two features bear special mention. Included as a rules centrefold is an organisation chart depicting all the two hundred and odd counters. For set up all the counters are initially placed on this, and very quickly for they are all numbered and easy to place. From here units can be placed in initial map deployments or left as reinforcements providing an

easy reference chart for future events. Perhaps the most striking feature is the map — there are no hexagons! Instead they are substituted for by tiny dots, each dot being the centre of a hypothetical hex. Units move by covering dots instead of hexes. The result is exactly the same and, I must admit, I favour this method if only for a change. Added to this is the fact that it is a desert warfare game and the use of tiny dots enhances the effect of the "wide open spaces". The map has a 3D quality to it due to shading of mountain ridges, and during play one gets the feel of viewing a situations map at H.Q. However, the result is that more than one brown shade can mean the same thing. Fortunately few hazy areas exist and commonsense will see you through these. There are other minor quibbles, perhaps the worst being the fact that after going to all the trouble of producing an organisation chart which pulls out, all the other charts and tables are spread through eight pages of rules; thus it is necessary to photocopy to be able to use some charts and the rules at the same time. Firms such as S.P.I. could certainly have gained from some of the leads in this game — by the same token W.W.W. still have things to learn from the games of S.P.I.

The sequence of play is simple with reinforcement, movement and mandatory combat for both players. Reinforcement is rather more complicated for the Vichy player as he must decide on whether or not to accept German intervention, and how to get his units from Greece i.e. by limited air passage, unpredictable sea transport or even more unpredict-

Perhaps the limited space makes this necessary, but at first reading it can be highly confusing:

—If a BCPC attacks a TB (PTA RBs) and rolls an AR on the CRT, do you treat it as NE? (Yes!)

The rules are varied, ingenious, and simple to apply: the unmanoeuvrability of missiles is simply and effectively dealt with by a neat facing rule, and rules for rocket fire, air movement, different types of unit (there are twelve types in all, each with a special idiosyncrasy of some sort), unit production, 're-programming', neutral factory complexes, and so forth, mean that despite its small size the game is one that can be played repeatedly without boredom setting in. It could be said that some rules are rather simplistic, as in range attenuation of rocket-fire: Range=1, power=5, Range=2, power=4 ... Range=5, power=1, for example, but as we are considering weaponry of which we know very little this rule is perhaps as good as any other, and it has the convenient advantage that it should save time that would otherwise be spent flicking through the rules as opposed to actually playing the game.

I find that the particular advantage of *Rivets* as a game over others in my collection lies in its 'solitaire' possibilities, due to the 'Programming' rules. Each of the six main types of BOPPER (Dive BOPPERS, Tiny — pronounced 'teeny' according to the rules — BOPPERS, Big BOPPERS, Jack BOPPERS, Rocket BOPPERS and Light BOPPERS) can be programmed to attack any single class of the other side's robots, and will hence ignore other classes. Tiny BOPPERS alone have sufficient computer power to recognise all types of enemy. Hence if the programming is anything other than mirror-image for the two sides it is possible for each to use an 'optimum plan' and yet the styles of play of each side must be different, even if only one person is playing. This means that 'deliberate mistakes' to prevent an impass can be avoided.

In the two-player game programming is carried secretly by each side, and obviously this is impos-

able — Turkish land passage. Added interest is provided by various terrain modifiers, artillery fire, armoured units with their advantages/restrictions, plus special forts for the Vichy player which are often difficult to destroy. Possibly the most attractive feature of the game is that whilst it is an operational level game of battalion/company sized units it does not occur in a vacuum. Political considerations are important, especially in the usage of German intervention as this can elicit a powerful response from the British player in terms of reinforcements. Turkish agreement is an important feature and as a result of this the game is rather open ended providing different victory conditions on the "what if" scenario.

All in all *Drive on Damascus* is an interesting simulation. Terrain and its usage is a key factor for both players — the long impassable mountain ranges cut the map lengthways into three strips. The British player's initial deployment is critical and his plan of action must be well thought out to gain any real success. Does he take the historical route along the coastal strip with its many defensible rivers in an attempt to capture Beirut, or try and crack the heavily defended fort of Mardjayoun to gain rapid access up the Jordan valley, or risk the Syrian Desert and the direct route to Damascus with the threat of Vichy fortress garrisons to the east ready to cut supply lines?

I must admit to being no great player of desert warfare games, but this one proved most enjoyable and instructive. Why obscure villages with dirt tracks through them were important becomes clear when trying to keep up a rapid motorised thrust, and why solitary mountains become of strategic value is all clear after playing the game only a few times.

In conclusion then *Drive on Damascus* is a game well worth trying. The designer, Vance Van Borries, has certainly done his homework to provide a gripping, as well as obscure, topic — his historical article in the rules shows this. At the same time the dot idea makes a pleasant change from the usual map layout and I would expect to see other games use the same idea in future, but I doubt if it will ever replace the hexagon.

sible for solitaire players. The chart shown can be used to decide on programming for each side — simply roll 1 die for each side — the top row says which type of robot is referred to as programmed to attack the type found in the particular row selected by the die roll. Do not roll separately for each type as this could easily result in a rather uneven distribution.

Overall the game is apparently bug-free from a rules point of view, and although £2 for an item so small may seem a waste of money I find that *Rivets* is quite exceptional value in terms of its sustained interest value. The budding designers among you may like to transfer the game to improved counters and a larger board — it is certainly worth the effort, as these are probably the worst features of the game. Both are clear and well-printed, but hopelessly small for sustained, e.g. Club, play. Even if you don't like SF, for £2 why not give this one a try?

NOTES:

TB = Tiny Bopper JB = Jack Bopper
BB = Big Bopper DB = Dive Bopper
LB = Light Bopper RB = Rocket Bopper

Roll 1 die for each side's programming.
Tiny Boppers are automatically programmed to attack anything.

| DIE ROLL | TB | JB | BB | DB | LB | RB |
|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | A | RB | BB | JB | TB | LB |
| 2 | | BB | JB | RB | TB | LB |
| 3 | L | RB | JB | BB | LB | TB |
| 4 | | TB | RB | JB | LB | BB |
| 5 | L | JB | BB | RB | TB | LB |
| 6 | | JB | RB | BB | LB | TB |

Solitaire Programming chart. (See text.)

S.N.GOODWIN

RIVETS

Rivets is a science-fiction game of robotic battles, published by the American 'Metagaming' company. The assumption is that during the Nuclear/Biological warfare of the late 21st century the people on Earth did an efficient job of systematically exterminating one another, leaving gangs of semi-intelligent mass-produced war-robots roaming the countryside (or desert) looking for something to attack.

Although possessing the average intelligence of an electric can-opener the robots, or BOPPERS (Battlefield Orientated Pre-Programmed Eradicator Robots ...) managed to more or less fend for themselves after the humans were gone — they could live off the land, just so long as there were a few used-car lots on it — and they soon began to fight amongst themselves over the resources available...

The game costs around £2 in the UK, and is stocked by most major suppliers, notably excluding Simpubs. For your money you get a polythene folder containing a 17 page rules booklet, sized about 4¼" x 7", with an attractive full colour cover, plus a small (foolscap, 8" x 14") game map printed in blue on cream, and 118 partially-cut thin card counters, rather smaller than SPI size. It was designed by Robert Taylor, who lists among his sources of inspiration various SF books and "a real smooth bottle of Bourbon."

On reading through the rules the first impression is that, unlike most game rules, in this one the 'chrome' is divorced totally from the rules-mechanics, which produces a clear result, although one feature does stand out as a problem at first: this is the ridiculous extreme to which the current US penchant for abbreviating the names of units and other game features to initials is carried.

Hitler's War

The Strategist's Masterpiece

NICKY PALMER

A good game review, I've always felt, should be like a Social Democratic manifesto: on the one hand this, on the other hand that, and no obtrusive recommendations to make up the reader's mind for him. There are very few games which everybody or nobody will enjoy: the reviewer's job is to steer players to the games which will meet their tastes, rather than to impose his own. The reader is going to buy the game, not marry the reviewer, so who cares what the reviewer likes?

I propose, however, to forget this policy in reviewing *Hitler's War*. This is a very good game indeed, possibly the best to appear on the market for several years, and unless you are totally uninterested in strategy you will be cheating yourself of a real treat if you don't shell out the six pounds which it costs in this country. I should like to balance this unseemly fervour with warnings and reservations, and one or two will appear below, but by and large the praise is going to be thick and unstinted. Take a seasickness pill and read on.

Hitler's War covers the same ground as *Third Reich*: World War II from Poland 1939 to Berlin (perhaps) 1945. There, however, the resemblances end. *Third Reich* takes a week or two to play through to the end; it is highly complex; it contains strong operational elements as well as strategic considerations; it has numerous artificial rules to keep history on track; the first edition of the rules were riddled with ambiguities. Its saving grace is the depth of play: there are so many strategies to pursue that players will put up with all the rest to explore all the fascinating possibilities.

Hitler's War can be finished in one day's play. The 16-page rulebook is almost entirely free from ambiguity, thanks to numerous examples of play and good writing. The emphasis is strangely strategic — and the range of strategies on offer is even greater than *Third Reich*. What is "missing" compared with *Third Reich* is the intricate quasi-operational detail, but instead the players have a tremendous palette of high-level decisions to make.

The basic structure of the game is easily explained. There are three protagonists (with rules for 2- or 3-player games): the Axis, the West and the USSR. Each has a dozen armies, plus fort counters and various specialised units discussed below. These are deployed on a map scaled at 300 km to the hex so the French eastern border is 4 hexes from the Channel to the Med, while the Russians start with an 8-hex western border. The game thus has rather low unit density, because the army counters are simulating the main effort being deployed each turn; in addition, every hex is deemed to have a 1-point garrison.

Turns represent 4 months, and this time scale allows a simple movement system: movement across controlled land areas is infinite! No more fiddling with units to achieve the precisely optimal positioning: you are the C-in-C, and your job is simply to decide where the main offensives are to

be this turn and what forces are to be committed to them. Each Army corresponds to an off-map display showing its strength in five departments (up to a maximum of 10 strength points per hex): one army may be assigned 6 infantry and 3 mechanised; another may be 4 paratroop and 5 air, and so on. Army counters are just shells to represent these force commitments, and can be deployed and removed at will.

Combat proceeds in three steps: first the defending army fires; then the attacking army; then the attackers can attempt to overrun the enemy hex with an "advance". One can continue to advance with each army, adding 1 to the die roll for each time to reflect progressive exhaustion until it grinds to a halt. Firing, however, only occurs once, so one may decide to try for a quick blitzkrieg by advancing first and saving one's fire for targets behind the front (but if one fails to advance it is then too late to fire). Garrisons have no defensive fire but resist advances, so that even against undefended territory one will probably only penetrate a few hexes each turn, depending on the amount of armour present (see below).

This somewhat elementary combat system is brought to life by the subtle differentiation between each type of strength point:

(a) **Infantry**: the basic workhorse, cheap to produce and as effective as anything else in defence. However, infantry points do not count for the advance die-roll.

(b) **Mechanised**: more expensive than infantry, but counted for advances. Cannot use offensive fire against mountain hexes.

(c) **Paratroops**: much more expensive than infantry, but able to assault neighbouring hexes across sea passages (e.g. the Channel!) and count *double* for advances — with the snag that they are eliminated if the advance nevertheless fails.

(d) **Tactical air**: cheap and *not* subject to stacking restrictions; in addition, if an advance succeeds, the defenders can only retreat if they either have an equal amount of air or they roll a die greater than the enemy air point total. Tactical air is therefore excellent in the attack; it does not, however, count against advances in the defence.

(e) **Amphibian**: invasions can be made by armies with at least 50% of points amphibious.

(f) **Forts**: expensive, immobile, but each point reduces losses to enemy fire by 1.

The uses of these different types will be demonstrated by the game following this review, but we can already note here that a clear idea of the strategic plan is essential to decide on force allocations. The most flexible offensive weapon, if no amphibious assault is involved, is a para/air army, but infantry is needed to take defensive fire

losses and stiffen the defence against advances. Because of the expense and vulnerability of paratroops, mechanised points form the backbone of most offensives. I personally favour a 10-point-per-army stacking limit for air, to keep within the counter limitations and avoid huge air stacks in the later part of the game, but even with this limit the extra punch supplied by air power is often vital in overcoming a fortified defender. Standard tactics are to soften up an enemy position with an infantry army attack and then to follow through with a mechanised advance.

We haven't yet reached the heart of the game, which is the production system. 107 Industrial Units (IU's) are shown on the map or in connected off-map boxes (USA, Canada, India and African colonial boxes, all of which are at least theoretically liable to invasion by the Axis if they can get over the problem of the Allied fleets! (In practice this is unlikely). These centres serve as supply sources — units unable to trace a path to one are moribund, and dead in one turn — and to provide production points each turn. When you conquer a country or an individual IU hex, the IU's are knocked out, but for a price of 3 production points you can rebuild them and add them to next turn's total.

After each turn, you can build new strength points according to the current cost of each type, assigning the new points to armies in your homeland. In addition to the forces listed above, you can have submarines (for Axis strategic warfare: Allied IU's are reduced), ASW points (to counter submarines), fleets (to intercept enemy invasions — these can unrealistically be produced in 4 months), strategic bombers (to strike at enemy IU's and morale), fighter escorts and air defence (to escort/attack bombers), strategic missiles (an alternative to bombers, with shorter range but unstoppable) and, late in the game, atomic bombs for delivery by bombers or missiles. At the start of the game, all these things are quite expensive and some are impossible, including most of the strategic weapons. By spending 2 production points on a category, however, you have a 1/3 chance of improving your technological level and in future producing that type of unit more cheaply. Some weapons can only be produced at a certain level, the extreme case of course being the atomic bomb, which requires level 6. At a 33% rate the bomb will therefore take the full game length of 18 turns or 6 years, though the Americans enter the war in 1942 with level 2 technology in this category. The trick is to start with a wide range of research and then to specialise in the



departments which you most need and/or are showing the most progress. Technology has a slight tendency to leak to the other side: if another player has a level higher than yours, you have a 50% chance of moving up yourself.

Production therefore offers three choices:

- (i) Repair captured IU's to have more production next turn
- (ii) Build more units to prosecute the war effort and capture new IU's
- (iii) Do research to get more mileage from your existing IU's and gain new weapons.

How to distribute the available resources between these choices is an always-fascinating dilemma. For example, the Axis will certainly build a lot of infantry during the full campaign, so perhaps an early research effort should go into this department? But then the Russians may get cheap infantry earlier (by copying your new rifles), and this will pose a serious threat to Barbarossa.

Reference was made above to morale: this applies to the Axis and Britain only. National morale starts at 10 and varies between 19 and 0: below the level of 5 offensives become harder, and at 0 the country surrenders. Morale mainly varies as territory is conquered or lost, and an evil player will pace his campaign with a view to delivering a fresh blow to morale every turn. Atomic bombs, in addition to knocking out IU's permanently, send morale plunging by 4 per bomb, so if one gets the weapon the war will end rapidly.

Note that nothing has been said about political restrictions. There aren't any, except that a pre-1942 Soviet attack on Germany delays the time when the USSR can get its full wartime production capacity, resources presumably going on the early war instead of the economy. This does away with Third Reich's artificial East Front garrison rule, and replaces it with the realistic constraint that Stalin doesn't want an early war but will certainly walk into Berlin if he is given the chance! Similarly, Germany and the Allies are quite free to attack different neutrals from those historically involved if it seems a good idea: an Axis capture of Gibraltar through Spain is one attractive possibility.

Various special rules emphasize geography: the fall of Gibraltar prevents the Allies from using their usual 2-point Med. naval transport capacity (they still have a 1-point route round the Cape); the fall of Malta boosts Axis Med. capacity from 2 to 3; the fall of Suez cuts off Indian production and hits British morale; Lend Lease is possible (I suggest only after the USSR is at war) through a northern and a southern entry point to the USSR which can be taken by the Axis; the Axis is crippled in the attack by Russian winters (progressively less each year).

There are at least 8 plausible Axis lines of play, not necessarily mutually exclusive:

- (1) keep initial forces low with a "phoney war" and plunge resources into research for a massive cost-effective build-up by early 1941
- (2) launch a blitzkrieg on France
- (3) maximise IU capture by mopping up every neutral in sight
- (4) attack through Spain and take Gibraltar, then seize Malta and overwhelm North Africa
- (5) make an early offensive against Russia before she gets cheap infantry, perhaps supplemented by a thrust through Turkey
- (6) build a substantial paratroop force to threaten Britain and Malta, and then use it (if the Allies cover these possibilities) against Russia
- (7) try to research fleets to the point where you can catch up with the 6-point Allied lead at the start, protecting yourself against the US in the middle-game
- (8) research the A-bomb and a delivery system every turn with a view to turning the tide late in the war.

The Allies have corresponding counter-strategies: early crucial decisions are how hard to fight for France and North Africa, and whether to send maximal Lend Lease to the USSR.

So far I've played the game four times without feeling that I've more than scratched the surface of the problems: each game brings new ideas to try out next time. I defy anyone to "crack" it quickly,

though the basic historical problem of the two-front war possibly weights the balance slightly to the Allies given best play. Unfortunately, the physical production is rather uninspiring: a small and flimsy folded map in an easily-bashed cardboard box. Don't let the appearance put you off: this is, quite simply, the game that Third Reich should have been.

Hitler's War: Sample game

Winter 1939

Axis: At the outset, Germany starts with enough mechanised forces to be sure of taking three neutral hexes. Strategy (3) above would suggest an attack on Poland and Denmark or Yugoslavia, leaving the Low Countries as a neutral buffer. However, the Axis are going for a blitzkrieg on France in this game, so they take out the Low Countries to provide a broad front for a spring offensive, while an infantry/air army makes an unsuccessful attempt to take Copenhagen without mech (can be done if the garrison is destroyed). A few points stay in Berlin, reinforced by the builds, to deter a Soviet attack.

Production/research: 1 paratroop point, 1 mechanised, and successful research on mechanised (to level 2 from a starting level of 1), tactical air (to 2) and submarines (to 1). Morale rises to 12 due to conquest of at least 6 hexes.

USSR: The possibility of enveloping Germany's minor allies with their production centres has its attractions, but the German counterstroke would be too strong. Instead, the Baltic States are briskly absorbed and their IU immediately repaired; 1 infantry is built and research goes into infantry (fails).

Allies: An attack through South Germany against the Ruhr is feasible but unwise: all the efforts of the Allies must be devoted to securing Paris. The British move their infantry across the Channel to stiffen French defences, keeping mechanised and amphibious points at home to ward off the possible paratroop landing.

Production/research: Build 7 infantry in Paris (to join 3 already there) and do successful infantry research.

Spring 1940

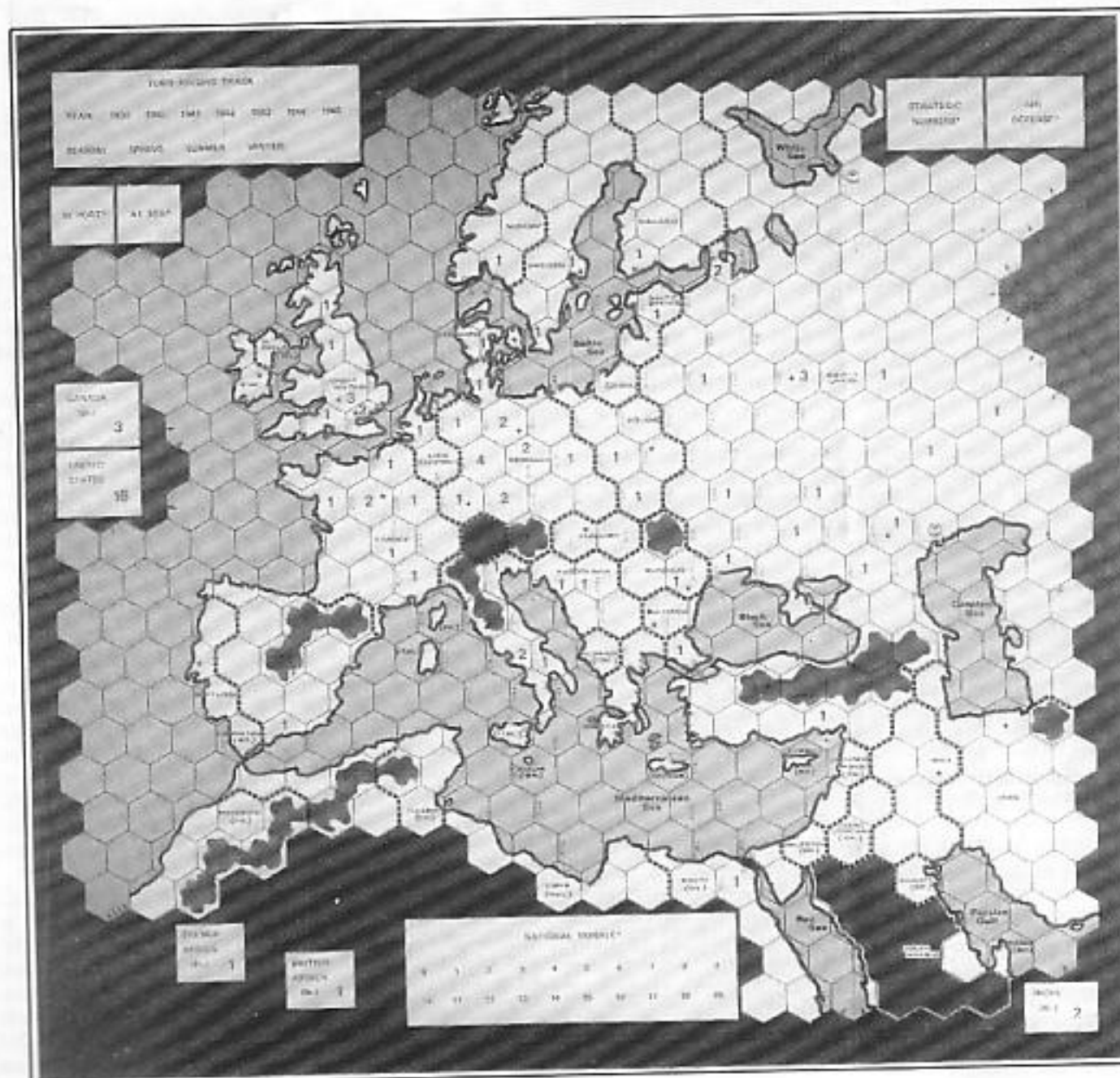
Axis: Italy comes in, boosting production to 23. The Axis mass their forces for the Blitzkrieg. A 10-point infantry-armour assaults the front-line French at the Channel, who consist of 3 infantry and 1 air point. The French knock out two attacking points and take only 1 loss (the air point, to maximise defense against mechanised advances). The Axis has two mechanised armies which were planned for use against Paris, but 3 defending points are a bit too much to brush aside, and, gritting his teeth, the Axis player uses the firepower of the first one in reducing the border force (who cannot fire again this turn). This Axis army now wheels about and "advances" to Berlin to avoid the need for heavy building to keep it safe. The last Axis army now advances successfully into France; despite 2 air points in this army, the French manage to escape to Paris (2/3 chance). The army now attacks Paris, but loses 4 points to 2, and cannot hope to overrun the city. An expensive offensive!

Production/research: Repair two captured IU's, build 4 infantry, 1 mechanised, and research mechanised (fails), air (succeeds, level 3 — so air now just costs 1 per strength point) and submarines (fails).

USSR: Production/research only: build 1 fort point in Moscow, research infantry (succeeds, level 1) and mechanised (fails).

Allies: Since the Axis have left Africa alone so far, the Allies do as well, preferring to concentrate on the battle for France. Once again the Ruhr is vulnerable, and this time it seems feasible to launch a counterattack without weakening Paris. The British mechanised move over to France and join Allied infantry striking across Belgium into the Ruhr. 4 Axis IU's are devastated, whereupon the Allies wheel round and "advance" back to Paris.

Production/research: 3 infantry to top up Paris, and research into infantry, mech, amphibians, air,



SEA TRANSPORT CAPABILITIES

Axis: Baltic: 1 SP/turn
 Mediterranean: 2 SP/turn if Italy is Axis (3 if Malta is Axis)
 Soviets: Black Sea: 1 SP/turn
 Caspian Sea: 1 SP/turn
 Allies: Atlantic: Unlimited (but only 3 SP from US/Canada)
 Mediterranean: 2 SP/turn if Gibraltar or France is Allied
 Unlimited if, in addition, Italy has surrendered
 Indian Ocean: 1 SP/turn

RUSSIAN WINTERS

| Year | Modification to Axis FP and Advance Die Rolls |
|-----------------|---|
| First | 4 |
| Second | 2 |
| Third and Later | 1 |

STRENGTH POINT CAPABILITIES SUMMARY

| SP Type | Offensive Firepower (Land Combat) | Defensive Firepower | Can be Lost From Enemy Fire | Advances (Land Combat) | Defend Against Advance | Counts Towards Stacking |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Garrison | No | No | Yes | No | Yes | --- |
| Inf | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| Mech | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Amph | No | No | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| Fort | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| Air | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No |
| Para | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes/doubled | Yes | Yes |
| Missile | No | No | No | No | No | No |
| Sub, ASW, Bomber, etc. | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

Special Capabilities: Amph: Amphibious Assaults
 Fort: Decrease Firepower losses
 Air: Prevents retreats
 Missile, Bomber: Industry/morale attacks

GAME-TURN SEQUENCE

- I. Axis Player-Turn:
 - A. Movement
 - B. Combat
 1. Attacker announces all initial attacks.
 2. Naval Firepower and Coastal Airpower for each Amph attack.
 3. Initial Defensive Firepower against each attack.
 4. Initial Offensive Firepower for each attacking army.
 5. Initial Advance and Continued Advance for each attacking army, doing Defensive FP and/or Offensive FP as necessary.
 - C. Strategic Warfare (Advanced Game only)
 - D. Production
 - E. Tech Level Advancement Attempts (Advanced Game only)
- II. Soviet Player-Turn
- III. Allies Player-Turn

ADVANCE TABLE

| Attacker's Mech SPs | Friendly Hex | Defender's SPs | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|---|---|
| | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10+ | | |
| 0 | 1-4 | 1-4 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 1 | 1-5 | 1-4 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 2 | 1-5 | 1-4 | 1-2 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 3 | 1-6 | 1-5 | 1-3 | 1-2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4 | 1-7 | 1-6 | 1-4 | 1-3 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 5 | 1-8 | 1-7 | 1-5 | 1-4 | 1-2 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 6 | 1-9 | 1-8 | 1-6 | 1-5 | 1-3 | 1-2 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 7 | 1-9 | 1-8 | 1-7 | 1-6 | 1-4 | 1-3 | 1-2 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 8 | 1-9 | 1-8 | 1-8 | 1-7 | 1-5 | 1-4 | 1-3 | 1-2 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - |
| 9 | 1-9 | 1-8 | 1-8 | 1-8 | 1-6 | 1-5 | 1-4 | 1-3 | 1-2 | 1 | - | - | - | - |
| 10 | 1-9 | 1-8 | 1-8 | 1-8 | 1-7 | 1-6 | 1-5 | 1-4 | 1-3 | 1-2 | 1 | - | - | - |

Numbers shown are the die rolls needed for the attacking army to Advance into the defending hex. One is added to the die roll for each hex that the army has already advanced that turn. Modifiers also apply for mountains and Russian winters.

available against London. Ironically, North Africa is still quite peaceful, but even if Suez survives the fall of Gib. it will be a beastly nuisance when the Americans arrive and want to move on Italy.

Production/research: In this situation, research draws the short straw again, giving way to the construction of 7 infantry in London and another fort point in Gib. The IU reduced by submarine warfare is "repaired" (presumably this is simulating the loss and replacement of merchant shipping).

Summer 1941

Axis: More crucial decisions. The German minor allies have joined up, and the Axis now have enough forces to take Gib. or launch a respectable offensive against Russia. If the latter is delayed, the whole outlook will be clouded by the Russian winter (next turn) and the US entry into the war (the turn after). On the other hand, unless the main Soviet production centres can be quickly enveloped, their capacity will leap to 25 as soon as war breaks out (a Winter Barbarossa is therefore a particularly silly idea, since virtually no production can be taken on that turn). In this game it was decided that Lend Lease could only start once war has broken out, and this tips the scale of the Axis decision: go for Gib! Three armies with a total of 36 points move up. The first wave reduce the fort by 4, the next wave by 2, leaving the defenders vulnerable to the final assault with 18 points (including 8 air). Two defending points hold out, but now the tanks roll forward and it's all over ... by a narrow margin.

Production/research: Preparations for the war with the USSR (building 4 mechanised, 20 air) shoulder aside the research effort (just infantry and mech, both failing).

USSR: Production/research: Build 4 infantry and a fort point in Leningrad.

Allies: The paratroops can now take Malta if they like, but the more worrying threat is to Britain herself. A token infantry point is moved to Africa round the Cape, but the main preparations are at home.

Production/research: Build 2 fort points London and 4 infantry; air research fails.

Winter 1941

Axis: Now what? Malta is a sure thing, and in due course Suez should follow. But although London is safe from direct assault, Plymouth can be taken with ease, giving an even chance at the Midlands. The chance is just too tempting to resist, and the paras seize the southwest and its airfields, enabling the Luftwaffe to fling in a massive attack. Birmingham falls as the paras advance overland. Meanwhile, a panzer army (not usable against Britain because of the absence of amphibians and presence of the British fleet) takes Greece, completing the conquest of continental Europe west of the USSR and Turkey.

Production/research: Repair Birmingham and another IU, build 15 air and 1 para.

USSR: Build 1 fort point Leningrad, 2 infantry, and research mech (fails).

Allies: the crisis is at hand although Roosevelt is poised to come in next turn. And now, with the clarity of hindsight, the Allied player sees the enormity of his blunder in sending his mechanised troops to France and not replacing them, as he could easily have done instead of trying to shore up the Gibraltar fort. The German forces in Britain consist of an armada of planes and a mere 3 paratroop points. The aircraft cannot defend against an advance: with a significant mechanised arm, the home forces could take losses to enemy air attacks in infantry and overrun the paratroops with the armour.

Production/research: London builds two more fort points. For want of better use for the last two IUs, they conduct amphibian research: it looks as though the US is going to need great expertise in amphibians! It fails.

Spring 1942

Axis: Great care still needed: the Russians can attack freely this turn without any production penalty, the Americans are in, and the British are still alive and kicking, with London too tough a nut for the Birmingham forces to crack alone. What to do? The Axis player broods for a long time, then decides: another para/air army joins the assault on London, while the land forces start a limited offensive in the thinly-defended southern Soviet front.

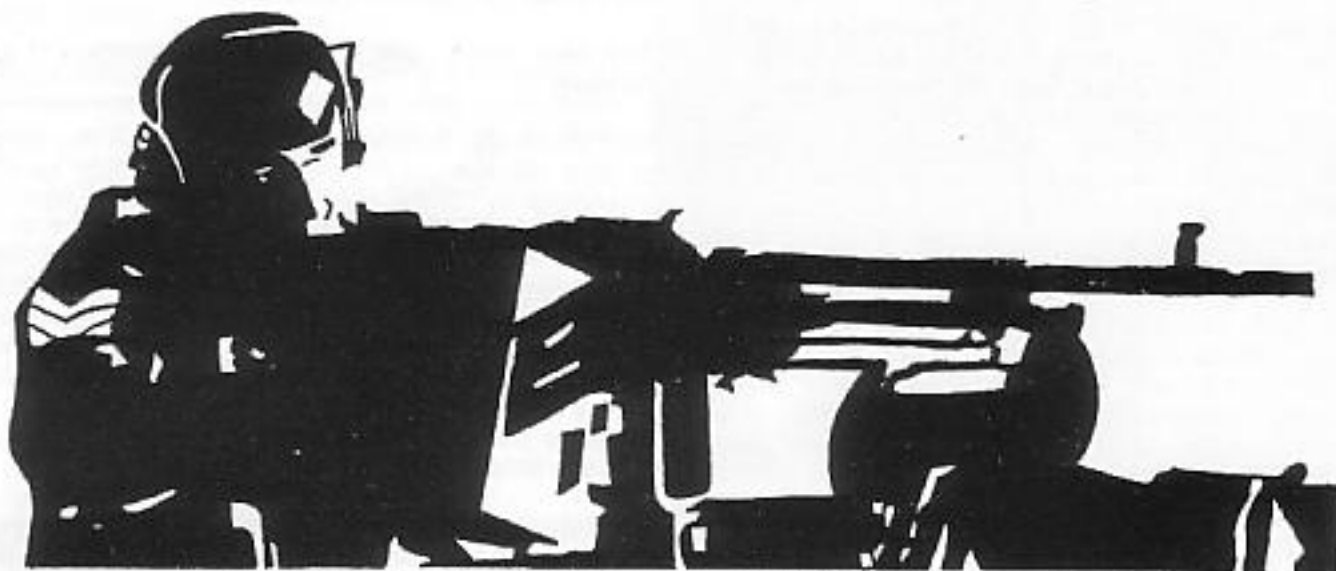
46 points hammer the London defenders, and only 1 point of defenders survives to struggle against the rain of paratroops: Britain falls! Meanwhile, the panzer armies sweep through the Ukraine to end the turn within striking distance of Stalingrad.

The Allies resign. The Axis now has production approaching 50 and should be able to defeat the USSR quite easily once the paras and air points have been retrieved from Britain, well before the US can prepare a significant counter-threat. With a bit of luck, the Axis can even outspend the Allies in fleets and eventually challenge for control of the Atlantic!

The fatal Allied mistake was noted above, and this game is therefore in no way a demonstration of sound defensive play. What it *does* demonstrate is the flexibility of the game system. Paratroops and air points were vital against Gib. and London; mechanised were decisive in the fall of France and the neutrals; cheap infantry production would have saved Russia if the two-front war could have been kept going. The Axis won by using all the unit capabilities to the full in creating multiple threats against the Allies which diverted them from consolidating the Home Army until it was too late. In research they concentrated on the lines with a quick pay-off (mechanised and above all air); if the war had lasted to 1945 this might have proved an error. Conversely, the Allies overdid the long-term research in spring-summer 1940: it's all very well to plan for tomorrow, but wise to make sure that there will be a tomorrow.



BRITONS, STRIKE HOME!



A CLOSER LOOK AT THE BRITISH BATTLEGROUP IN 'MECH WAR 2': and a few other observations

DONALD MACK

In my profile of *Mech War 2* published in *Phoenix 25*, I made some comments anent the British Battlegroup as depicted in that game and intimated that I would return to this subject in more detail. Having done some research and asked a few questions, here we go: furthermore I propose to examine vehicle profiles and to comment on some aspects of the Chemical Warfare Rules inasmuch as they affect the various Chemical Protection (CP) status of vehicles. Finally there will be a word on artillery.

The Battlegroup Concept

The two main types of manoeuvre units in the British Army are infantry battalion and the armoured regiment; both are lieutenant colonel's commands, both are independent units with a life of their own, both are capable of being moved to any part of the world and of being 'plugged in' to whatever command set-up exists in their new station. However the methods of modern mechanised warfare require a high degree of ability to work in a 'combined arms' role to the extent that neither arm can work independently of the other; the infantry need the tanks' guns to help protect them, especially when on the move in their organic armoured personnel carriers (APCs), the tanks need infantry to flush out enemy infantry positions, to provide close protection in close country and to hold ground which their armour, mobility and firepower have helped to capture.

As a result, although both types of unit are still liable (especially the infantry battalion) to operate as 'pure' units of their respective arms in a mechanised context they are much more likely to find themselves working as battlegroups, that is to say as combined armour/mechanised-infantry forces under a single unit headquarters and using an integrated radio net. This will often be achieved by detaching a company — perhaps a reinforced company — from a mechanised infantry battalion to an armoured regiment while the latter likewise detaches a squadron to the battalion: but that is putting it in a nutshell. There are three types of battlegroup, as follows:

The Armour-Heavy BG: As its name implies this has a high proportion of tanks to infantry and operates under the command of an armoured regimental headquarters; in fact it is basically an armoured regiment with infantry under command. Its role is primarily offensive (within a strategic defensive posture) and it would operate as a local counter-attack force.

The Infantry-Heavy BG: More infantry than tanks, under command of an infantry battalion HQ — in other words the battalion is the 'core' unit. Basically a defensive grouping although it has within itself a local counter-attack ability.

The Balanced BG: That's right, you've got it! It will usually consist of two infantry companies and two armoured squadrons and can be under the command of either type of HQ. As a battalion has four rifle companies and an armoured regiment four sabre squadrons, you will realise that the two units can field between them two balanced BGs — or one armour-heavy and one infantry-heavy BG.

A BAOR armoured division's manoeuvre units are three mechanised infantry battalions and two armoured regiments and it will thus field five BGs, two armour-heavy and three infantry-heavy; or four balanced and one very much infantry-heavy; or two balanced, one armour-heavy and one infantry-heavy. The system is thus very flexible, much more flexible than using units permanently constituted as battlegroups, as some armies prefer, although the divisional commander will try to keep much the same groupings together in operations — and on training — to achieve good person-to-person relationships. Furthermore each BG will integrate further to find, not separate companies and squadrons but combat teams, a CT being to the company or squadron what the BG is to the battalion or regiment. Last but not least, the BG will include an armoured reconnaissance element in the form of a troop from the Close Reconnaissance Squadron of the divisional armoured reconnaissance regiment, and will almost certainly include Swingfire (anti-tank guided weapons) and Blowpipe (surface-to-air missiles) detachments of the Royal Artillery.

The Battlegroup in 'MW 2'

The so-called 'Third Battlegroup' see Fig.1 (in fact BGs are identified by the 'core' unit's title, e.g. 1 R Hampshire BG or 15/19 Hussars BG) is, as you have probably now realised, an infantry-heavy grouping. The battalion has detached one company plus one 81mm mortar section (and Milan, of which more later) and has received an armoured squadron; it has then used the resulting mix to form four combat teams. 1st CT is armour-heavy, with two tank troops and one infantry platoon and will be commanded by squadron HQ; 2nd CT is infantry-heavy, consisting of a 'short' rifle company (one platoon having been sent to 1st CT) and a troop of tanks; 3rd CT is a full rifle company

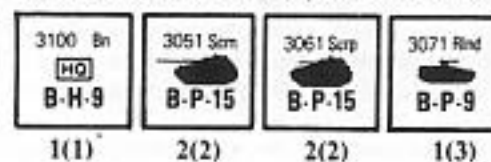
plus a tank troop; and 4th CT is virtually a 'pure' rifle company. Each team also has a section (2 vehicles) from the divisional anti-tank battery, RA, armed with Swingfire ATGW mounted on FV 438 — a modified version of the FV 432 APC. The battalion's integral 81mm mortar platoon, organised in four sections of two mortars, has detached one section with the 'not shown' company and has deployed the remaining three to CTs 1, 2 and 3 (remember that for game purposes on-board artillery/mortar sections are shown as one-step units; this does not affect their fire-CF).

Along with Battlegroup (battalion) HQ appears the attached troop of the Close Recce Squadron, in four sections of two vehicles each. Oh yes, and the Roland. Heaven and SPI know what the Roland is doing there: quite apart from the fact that the British Army doesn't use it — our own Rapiers is just as good, in fact probably better — air defence regiments RA are under Corps command and would be most unlikely to be parcelled out to BGs. They have other roles. Air defence at BG level is provided by Blowpipe detachments of the divisional AD battery, RA; there is no fixed scale but a likely attachment would be one section of

BRITISH

THIRD BATTLEGROUP

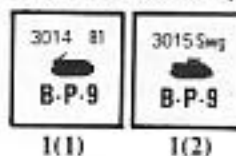
Battlegroup Assets (Independent Command)



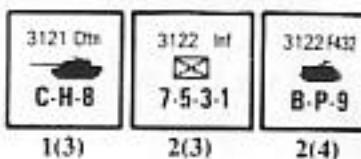
First Team



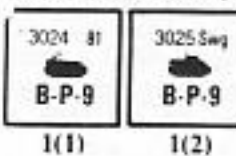
Team Assets (Independent Command)



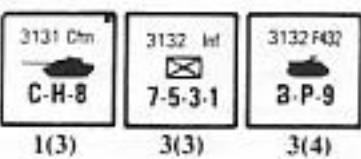
Second Team



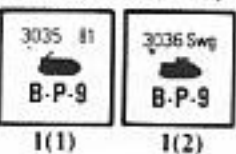
Team Assets (Independent Command)



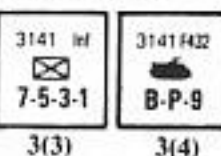
Third Team



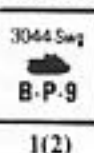
Team Assets (Independent Command)



Fourth Team



Team Assets (Independent Command)



five launchers. This is not shown as such but is satisfactorily represented by the Missile-2 AD capability of the HQ unit.

The general organisation thus depicted is accurate (Roland apart) and reflects the make-up of the British infantry battalion, the armoured squadron, and the divisional sub-units likely to be made available to an infantry-heavy BG. My sole comment at this level is that the Swingfire detachments would be unlikely to be allocated to CTs; their use and deployment would be decided by the BG commander through the medium of the battalion anti-tank platoon commander (who cooks up the anti-tank defence plan for the entire BG) and it is much more on the cards that the Swingfire detachments would simply be 'in location' and not 'under command' as far as CT commanders would be concerned. As they are Independent Command units in the game and can thus range freely, the actual likely situation has not been misrepresented.

Detailed Organisation of 'Third Battlegroup'

Close Recce Troop: That mix of Scorpion and Scimitar is incorrect, I fear. The Close Recce Squadron consists of five troops each of eight Scimitar tracked recce vehicles (to call them light tanks is liable to arouse quiet laughter in military circles): the Scorpions are to be found in the Medium Recce Squadrons of the armoured recce regiment and will be firmly under divisional control. So read each counter as Scimitar, two steps to the counter; this sells you short on armament but I will be coming to this later.

Armoured Squadron: We are also being sold short here. Each troop is depicted as having three steps (i.e. three tanks). Actually a British armoured squadron consists of four troops, two of four tanks and two of three. Furthermore each armoured regiment holds enough extra tanks in preservation to increase the number of operational tanks to four per troop on mobilization, the extra crews coming from recalled Regular Army Reservists. Taking these factors into account, (1) increase any two troops to four tanks each — these would probably but not necessarily, be in CT 1, the armour-heavy CT; (2) if mobilization is deemed to have taken place prior to the outbreak of hostilities, increase *all* troops to four tanks.

Armament

Chieftain Turret MG: The Chieftain tank includes an externally — mounted 7.62mm machine gun on the commander's cupola. The Vehicle Unit Data (UK) table on Page 34 of the Red Star/White Star Exclusive Rules pamphlet should include the following; Weapons Systems — Tur MG*; Air Defence — Gun 3*

Stabilised Main Armament: (This section is applicable to certain tanks other than Chieftain). British tanks have had stabilised main armament since about 1950, enabling the main gun (and the co-ax MG) to be held trained on a target while the tank is moving; this enables accurate fire to be delivered by a moving tank and would convey a particular advantage when using Short Halt fire. I can vouch for this: I have seen Centurion tanks demonstrating fire on the move and regularly hitting their target and remember vividly seeing as

long ago as 1953 a Centurion doing its 'party piece' at the School of Infantry by turning round and round on its axis, one track locked, while turret and gun stood still, held on an unchanging line of sight.

The following tanks should be deemed to have stabilised main armament: UK, Chieftain; US, M60A3; W German, Leopard; Israeli (Suez/ Golan), Centurion. These are able to fire while on the move and have an advantageous modifier when using Short Halt (see box)

Rarden Cannon: The Scimitar tracked recce vehicle is armed with a Rarden cannon which is, in my opinion, much under-rated in MW2: its inclusion under the general classification of Medium Main Gun 3 does not reflect its capabilities. The Rarden was specially designed to be employed against APCs and other lightly-armoured vehicles. It is a 30mm gun with a high muzzle velocity (and therefore flat trajectory), the ammunition for which includes armour-piercing (AP) shot, AP explosive and AP incendiary tracer. It is effective up to 1500 metres (7 hexes) but the tracer burns out at 1100m (5 hexes). The Rarden is normally fired as a semi-automatic cannon — it is clip-fed — but automatic fire of up to six rounds at a time can be used if required.

The combination of flat trajectory, semi-automatic fire, and a proportion of tracer available for inclusion in each clip makes the Rarden a very accurate weapon and the types of ammunition used guarantee highly satisfactory results against enemy APCs. Yet as a Medium Main gun 3 firing at a BMP halted in the open at 0-1 hexes (from very close range up to 300m) it has an attack strength of just 3: assuming that two vehicles are firing together this gives exactly 50% chance of a hit (not a first-fire hit, just a hit) against a BMP standing in the open 100m away! At 2 hexes (400m) this chance goes down to 25% and over 3 hexes (600m) fire is prohibited!!

A letter to SPI about various aspects of MW2 remained long unanswered but I have since been in contact with Stephen Donaldson, then with OSG, who was one of the developers; he told me that he has never even heard of the Rarden and says, "I suggest that you do the evaluation". That is a problem as I am no designer. As a Main Gun 3 the weapon is being sold short but simply to upgrade it to Main Gun 1 or 2 would exaggerate its effectiveness against Hard targets. My simple solution: Rarden counts as Main Gun 2 with the following provisos (1) Fire against 'A' class targets is resolved on the 'B' column of Table (10.52) (2) When firing at a Hard target the -3 Loss Modifier of a Medium Main Gun 3 still applies (see Table 12.3).

This still tends to fall short of Rarden's capabilities but not nearly so much; nor can I be accused of *exaggerating* those capabilities.

Infantry Anti-Tank Capabilities: The infantry Data Table indicates that a UK mechanised infantry platoon may be armed with *either* the Milan ATGW *or* the Carl Gustav shoulder-controlled 84mm anti-tank gun. The notes stress that these

are what is available and that the scenario notes will specify which is carried.

This is an incorrect rendering of the armament actually available. The Milan is operated by the battalion anti-tank platoon, which can deploy four sections each of two detachments, each detachment having two firing posts (i.e. launchers); but the counter-mix fails to provide these detachments, each of which should be shown as an infantry ATGW detachment complete with APC. Furthermore the mechanised infantry platoon is equipped with *three* Carl Gustavs, *plus* LAW.

The best way round this misrepresentation is as follows:

(1) Milan will frequently be deployed on the scale of one section per infantry-heavy combat team. Therefore in 'Third BG' teams 2, 3 and 4 have a Milan section with them.

(2) Designate two platoons in each team as having a Milan detachment with them; each such platoon can fire Milan as a two-step weapon. Loss of one step from the platoon does not affect Milan capability but on the loss of a second step Milan goes down to one step; when the platoon loses its third step the Milan detachment is eliminated too.

(3) Milan is *always* fired separately from the platoon's own weapon systems and in addition to them.

(4) All mech platoons always have Carl Gustav and LAW and fire these in the normal way.



Vehicle Profiles

'B' Class Vehicles A fairly important point on which I remarked in my profile of this game is the fact that Soviet tanks in defilade receive a -1 modifier on the Loss Modification Table, as opposed to -2 for all other tanks. This reflects the fact, proven in combat, that because of the very small angle of depression of their main guns — above 3 degrees — (the penalty for having such low turrets) Soviet tanks cannot make as effective use of defilade positions as can tanks which can depress their guns farther; this puts them at a disadvantage in tank-to-tank fighting.

Unfortunately the modifier which penalises Soviet tanks, all of which have a 'B' profile, applies equally to *all* other 'B' vehicles, a category which includes all British APCs and TRVs and most West German ones, even though these most certainly do not suffer from the Soviet problem; this can produce some difficult situations for the NATO player in scenarios which do not include US units. The simple, sensible and justifiable solution is simply this: loss modifier of -1 in defilade applies only to Soviet tanks and all other vehicles receive the standard -2 modifier.

Add new Case (31.0) to Mech War 2 Standard Rules booklet as follows;

(31.0) Stabilised Main Armament General Rule:

The following tanks have stabilised main armament and are able to fire while on the move as well as having an advantage when using Short Halt fire; UK Chieftain, US M60A3, W German Leopard, Israeli Centurion.

Procedure:

Tank units of the above types with a Bound command may fire while on the move at the owning player's option. Fire combat is resolved at any time during movement.

(31.1) Units firing on the move may fire their main gun and/or coaxially mounted MG at any time during movement. Each system may be fired once only.

(31.2) Fire on the move is at the owning player's option and need not be plotted in advance. To perform fire on the move the owning player simply stops movement of the unit counter, resolves fire in the normal way, and continues movement, to the limit of the unit's MF if desired.

(31.3) Units defending against fire on the move receive a Loss Modification of -2 on their Loss Modification die rolls.

(31.4) Units which fire on the move may not fire the same system again during the movement phase in which fire on the move was performed.

(31.5) Units with stabilised main armament also fire at an advantage when using Short Halt fire (Case 21.0). Enemy units defending against them receive a Short Halt modifier of only -1 of their Loss Modification die roll.

"You take the high ones and I'll take the low ones ..." Curiouser and curiouser, study of the counters made it plain that US vehicles had no such troubles over defilade as all the APCs, which are variants of the M113, are classed 'A'. Thus, it would appear, they have a lower profile than the British FV432; which is odd, very odd, because the height of the FV432 is 6'2" whereas that of the M113 is given (The US War Machine) as 8' 2". Even allowing for the fact that this figure includes the pintle-mounted machine gun the hull of the vehicle is obviously higher than that of its British counterpart, as comparisons of photographs of the two vehicles testify.

To cut a long story short I have done a fair amount of comparison of vehicle heights with their given profiles, with the aid of the data given in 'The Armed Forces of the United Kingdom' (David and Charles), 'The US War Machine' (Salamander), and 'Modern Soviet Armour' (Arms and Armour Press). I had intended to compile a table wherewith to decorate this article and to impress you with my diligence and erudition, but have decided to spare you this opus. Suffice it to say that the following rough yardstick seems to apply.

| Height | 'Game' Profile |
|---------------|----------------|
| Up to 6'6" | A |
| 6'6" - 8'6" | B |
| 8'6" - 9'6" | C |
| 9'6" and up | D |
| Big 'funnies' | E |

On this rating, I suggest that UK APCs are re-designated 'A' vehicles, except for the Swingfire units, and US APCs as 'B's. I really do suspect that there was a bit of fudging over US vehicle profiles (O, Patriotism, what crimes are committed in thy name!) although the tanks are fairly rendered as 'D' vehicles (the M-60 is 10'8" high), especially as the bigger US M113 was depicted as having a lesser profile than the FV432!

Chemical Warfare

I said in my profile that I found some aspects of the chemical warfare rules puzzling. In particular I could not understand why APCs in Chemical Protection State 3 (fully protected) could not dismount their infantry; and interrogation of friends in my regiment, now in BAOR, showed that there is no obstacle to, or doctrine forbidding, so dismounting - you just open the doors and get out. "Of course if you do it in a gas-cloud you'll have to decontaminate the inside of the vehicle afterwards, but that's your rough luck" was the general verdict.

Since then Stephen Donaldson has produced information which helps clarify the CP rules and which also indicates a misconception made when these rules were formulated. For personnel, CP1 is totally unprotected, CP2 is 'suited-up' but not masked, and CP3 is 'suited-up', masked, the lot. For vehicles, CP1 means open ports and hatches whereas CP3 (no CP2 for APCs, remember) is closed-down and over-pressure system operating (i.e. air pressure inside the vehicle is higher than outside).

All well so far and a fair simulation of real conditions and practices. However it also appears that when the rules were written it was not conceived that men in a fully-protected APC would go to the extra inconvenience of wearing CP suits. "APCs are extremely crowded", wrote Stephen, "and I find it hard to picture everyone getting into suits when riding buttoned-down". He is right on both counts but the fact is that if there is a chemical threat you already have your Noddy suit on and you stay in it - your section's APC is not a mobile changing room! This is why exercises in BAOR regularly include CW phases when everyone is 'suited-up' for periods of up to 48 hours or even longer; it is also the reason why means of making full CP gear less arduous to wear are constantly being sought - a new and better design of CP suit is already being issued to British troops and some other NATO countries are buying it from us.

I consider, therefore, that that part of Rule 106.11 which forbids the mounting and dismounting of infantry into and from vehicles in CP3 is best ignored as it is based on a misconception and does not square with actual practice. In addition that part of Rule 103.33 which says that infantry may change from CP2 to CP3 only when in the same



hex as a vehicle should likewise be ignored as this action represents the donning of respirators and special gloves (if the latter are not already being worn), both items carried on the man as part of his personal equipment.

Whether or not TOW would still be fired by US units during a chemical attack is outwith my knowledge but it is as well to point out that the BMP's Sagger system cannot be reloaded while the vehicle is closed down; to place a fresh missile on the launch rail requires the gunner to open up and to expose the upper half of his body. Indeed a suppressed BMP would be unable to reload for the same reason. Neither of these disadvantages of the BMP-mounted Sagger system are mentioned in the Soviet Vehicle Data; perhaps you may wish to incorporate them.

Artillery Spotting and Fire Control

At the risk of boring you with technical details, here is how one actually spots for artillery. (1) Identify the location of the target on your map as accurately as possible and note the grid-reference (2) Take a compass bearing on the target and convert it from a magnetic to a grid bearing. This bearing becomes the Observer/Target (OT) Line. (3) Note the height of the target above sea-level. (4) Pass this information direct to the gun position. (5) The battery now ranges on the target with a single gun while you, the spotter STAY PUT and correct the fall of shot in relation to the OT line; this last is essential as, although it is immaterial to the gunners to know where the spotter is, it is vital that the OT line remains constant. For example if the OT line is at 90 degrees to the line of fire, "Up 200" from you would be "Left 200" to the Gun Position Officer. (6) Once the ranging gun is spot on give the gun position "On Target"; the target is now registered and can either be engaged there and then or noted as an "on call" target - the gunners have the data they need and until the battery changes its location can engage that target, at will, with full accuracy.

However this procedure requires the spotter to be able to talk direct to the gun position on the artillery radio net; as a result spotting is normally done by the battery commander of the battery in direct support of the battlegroup or by one of the three battery observation posts (OPs) - the commander and the OPs are 'up front' with the battlegroup, usually deployed to combat team HQs. 'Other arms' officers receive practical training in artillery spotting but this is envisaged as an emergency procedure if the OP personnel have been incapacitated, and still requires one to have access to the OP radio; I stress that there is no direct link between the battlegroup's own radio net and that of the gunners, nor would this be practicable as too many stations on one net results in Babel.

That is the system generally used by NATO armies and it means that artillery spotting cannot be done just like that by anyone who has a radio and who can see the enemy. The Soviet system is less flexible still, each battery having only one OP and

that able to talk only to its parent unit (the British OP can 'flick' to the artillery regimental net if necessary) - see the article 'Soviet Artillery' in S&T 78. As a result Soviet artillery plotting is much more rigid than that of NATO, a known weakness: if a battalion concentration comes down in the wrong place it cannot be switched as easily as a NATO concentration.

Yet in MW2 not only can any unit spot for off-board artillery (OBA) but the Soviet artillery is just as flexible as that of NATO in addition to being available in Soviet quantity! May I suggest the following amendments;

(1) Spotting for OBA can be done only by any HQ unit or by a unit of a company or company-equivalent; this cuts out the use of motorcyclists, spare recon vehicles or even unemployed engineer or air defence units as instant OPs. (I understand that a ruling on these lines has been included in Cityfight).

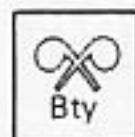
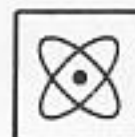
(2) Spotting units must have an overwatch command in order to be able to spot; remember the OT Line!

(3) Soviet OBA fire, once it impacts on a target, cannot be switched (although it may be corrected in the usual way) until the next gameturn but one. In other words an OBA concentration plotted on, say, Turn 3 will impact on Turn 4 and must continue to impact on Turn 5; even if replotted on Turn 4 it cannot be switched before Turn 6.

These additions would be a better reflection of the deployment of available artillery OPs with companies/combat teams and would also do something to reflect the greater rigidity of Soviet fire control. They are contrived rulings, of course, but at least they do something to counter the present instant-thunderbolt use of artillery as permitted by the rules and also tend to diminish the present disconcerting effects of giving the Soviet player Soviet gun-density linked to NATO control systems.

Epilogue

This article was conceived solely as a dissertation on the organisation of the British battlegroup in 'MW2' and on some ways of making the representation more accurate as regards organisation and firepower, especially anti-tank firepower. In the writing it acquired a few appendages of more general application, but I hope that these prove to be a bonus rather than a distraction.



Considering that Second World War Russian games make up the most popular section of SPI's range, it is surprising that "the world's greatest tank battle" has had to wait so long. Still, it has arrived — after many reports in "Outgoing Mail". These reports mentioned that the "PanzerGruppe Guderian" system had been discarded as inappropriate for this battle, so I was quite interested in seeing how the game turned out. At first sight however, it looks much the same as other SPI games.

The map is the standard 22" by 34" and covers the area around Kursk at 10 Km to the hex. This allows various famous landmarks to be incorporated including the cities of Roslavl, Orel (Oryol is what it should be, I think), Kursk and of course Kharkov — the most fought-over city in the history of wargaming! The map is covered with the now familiar bright colours of recent SPI games — green splotches for woods, blue lines for rivers and roads (NB Panzers drive on roads *only*), brown slopes and black railway lines, all overlaid with masses and masses of red and blue triangles (dragon's teeth) marking the opposing sides' entrenchments. Incidentally, the terrain effects chart does not make clear that any hex containing a dragon's tooth symbol is an entrenchment hex, as well as having one or more dragon's teeth hexsides. This is important as defending troops get a bonus for being in an entrenchment hex and another one for being attacked across dragon's teeth hexsides.

The pieces are colourful too. The units are German Divisions (plus the two battalions of Heavy Tank Destroyers without which no game of this battle would be complete) and Russian Corps (Corpses?) and Divisions. These are grouped into Corps (German) and Armies (Russian) which are then grouped into Armies (German) and Fronts (Russian). The counters of each German Army and each Russian Front are a different colour — shades of grey and green for the Germans and red, pink and orange for the Russians. This means that it is immediately obvious which formations are where and which formation a unit belongs to. Armoured/Mechanised units are also obvious as they have a band of a different colour across the bottom third to half of the counter. My only complaint about this system is that some of the German armour units in different formations use the same pair of colours — in a different order — which makes them difficult to tell apart at first glance. As well as the units, there are markers for signifying various things. These include step loss markers for the larger infantry units which do not have counters for every step. There are also two deployment displays for units to be laid out in their formations and, as usual, two copies of the charts and tables. These latter include a section called "Miscellaneous Information" which contains odd bits and pieces of the rules that one normally forgets. I found this a great help, especially when playing the game for the first time, so please repeat it, SPI

The Sequence of Play is reassuringly familiar: after an (optional) Air War phase, the German player kicks off, his turn consisting of; Administrative phase; Movement phase; Combat phase (Gun segment and two Combat segments); Mechanised Movement phase; Disruption Removal phase and Organisation phase. The Russian player then has his turn, made up of the same phases, to complete the game turn.

The Air War allows either or both players to try to intercept the opposition's aircraft. If this is successful, the two sides shoot it out; surviving aircraft or unintercepted ones are then available for ground attack in the Combat phase.

The Administrative phase introduces the first new concept — modes (this is a more complicated version of what was used in "Operation Star"). During this phase both players decide which mode to place their units in. This is done by Headquarters — each unit in a formation is in the mode of its HQ. There are three modes: Assault; Mobile and Static (units may also be Disrupted as a result of overrun). All the modes have advantages and disadvantages with the exception of Disrupted which is just a disadvantage. Assault mode allows a unit to attack in both combat segments, but halves movement and prohibits overruns. Mobile mode allows units their full movement allowance and allows them to overrun, but they may only attack in the first combat segment. Static mode gives defending units an advantage when attacked, but units in Static mode cannot attack and may only move half of their movement allowance. Mode can also affect combat. Some combat results contain the letter M, rather than a slash, separating the attacker's and defender's combat results. In these cases, the attacker's and defender's losses are increased by one if the attacker is in Assault mode and the Defender in Static, and reduces them by one if both sides are in Mobile mode. Obviously, it is very important to get units into the right mode. This also places a premium on planning since you have to know what you're going to do in order to decide which units to put into which mode. Woe betide the player who forgets what he'd planned to do or who changes his mind halfway through his turn! As mode is governed by HQ, rather than by individual units, players have a good reason to keep formations together and use them as a group, rather than scattering them along the front line piecemeal.

Movement follows orthodox principles: each unit has a movement allowance and expends points as it moves from hex to hex, different terrain costing different amounts to enter or pass through. The observant reader will have noticed that no mention has yet been made of supply considerations. This is because supply for movement purposes is judged for each individual unit when it begins to move. This does away with all the "Out of Supply" markers. However it does allow some interesting manoeuvres, such as moving HQ's up to the front in order to put units back into supply before moving them. As normal, Supply is traced to HQ's and thence to a 'friendly' map edge via roads and railways. Out of supply units have their movement allowance halved — attack strength is also halved if units are out of supply at the instant of combat.

Rail movement is allowed, but is very limited. Both players are only allowed to move five units per turn on their own side of the start line. Furthermore, only two units may pass through a given single-track railway hex and no more than four through a double-track hex in one turn. It therefore becomes quite difficult to move large formations by rail, especially when you want to preserve their integrity.

Other points about movement include the German player's ability to 'infiltrate' — i.e. move directly from one enemy-controlled hex to another. This gives the Germans a means of rolling up lines of entrenchments from the side, once an initial breach has been made. While on the subject of movement I must not forget overruns (as if anyone could). Units stacked together and in Mobile mode may attempt to overrun enemy stacks in the movement phase. Overrun is fought like normal combat, except that any defending units that retreat are disrupted. Disrupted units may not move nor attack, have no zone of control and are at a disadvantage if attacked. Zones of control, by the way, can be exited at a cost in movement points.

Stacking is limited by stacking points. Up to six stacking points can be in the same hex. Russian Corps have a stacking value of three, HQ's, Kampfgruppen and Divisions have two and everything else one, except Russian artillery, anti-tank and Partisan units which have zero. The result of all this is that you can put two Corps or three Divisions in one hex.

KURSK

HISTORY'S GREATEST TANK BATTLE

JULY 1943

PAUL EVANS



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Enough of this, let's move on to Combat. This is on a slightly different basis from normal. The attacker adds up his points in the normal way; the defender does not. The number of attacking points gives a column on the Combat Results Table which is then shifted left (in the defender's favour) or right (in the attacker's favour) to take account of terrain, mode etc. The die is then thrown and modified according to the number of defending steps. The more steps, the greater the modifier and the worse the result for the attacker. The result is the number of losses for both attacker and defender. These may be taken as steps lost or as hexes retreated — although there are limitations on how far a unit may be retreated. This is pretty straightforward, if a little different from usual. It does have the effect of stopping odds counting (he's got 7 points doubled so I need 42 points to get 3:1). The attacker simply piles in what he's got available (up to 72 points anyway), tries to get as many column shifts in his favour as possible and hopes for the best! There is then a second combat segment for anyone who's survived the first and wants another go and is in Assault mode.

The situation is somewhat more complicated by the presence of anti-tank and artillery units. These are only separate units for the Russian player — German anti-tank and artillery points are built in to their HQ's, reflecting the differing doctrines in the two armies. As a result the rules are slightly different for the two players. First of all, anti-tank fire is resolved in the Gun segment of the Combat phase, before either Combat segment. For the Russians, any defending stack that contains an anti-tank unit may fire it. This is just like normal combat with only the anti-tank unit(s) attacking and any losses on the defender are taken in armoured units first (bye, bye, Panzers!) — only the attacking anti-tank unit can be lost on the other side (and generally is). Artillery units affect combat by reducing the attacker's strength by the strength of the artillery unit(s) — this is halved against just armoured units. Artillery can also be used to barrage in support of an attack — adding its strength to the other attacking units — and there is an optional rule allowing counter-battery fire. German anti-tank and artillery points work in the same way, but may be parcelled out between any units stacked with or adjacent to the HQ. This

gives the German player an incentive to put his Headquarters in the front line where he can use their firepower, but where they are also vulnerable to counter-attacks. Russian HQ's have no firepower, no combat strength and no zones of control — they are simply administrative units through which supply is channelled. As a result Russian HQ's are generally kept back from the front line where they are safer — unless the Germans manage to break through!

For all aficionados of PGG et al, there is the reassuring sight of some untried units. However, these units — Russian Divisions — have a standard untried strength and at least one step — when flipped over they reveal a new strength which may be as much as the original strength! There is also a Mechanised movement phase. This gives the armour a chance to move again and exploit any gaps opened up by the fighting. This is followed by the Disruption removal phase. At this point any units disrupted by overruns in the previous movement phases are restored to full health.

The last phase of each player turn is the Organisation phase. This covers quite a few odds and ends. Replacement steps are brought on to bolster up battered units — the German player can even do this in enemy zones of control. Units may also be placed into Independent Command or Alternate Subordination. Independent Command means that units are not tied to any HQ — which frees them of some supply considerations — but they cannot attack. This can be a way of getting mobile troops to exploit any breakthroughs, but its uses are somewhat limited. Alternate Subordination means that a unit reports to a different HQ from the one printed on the counter. Both sides are strictly limited in the number of units that can be in Independent Command or Alternate Subordination at any one time. Units may also be broken down and recombined. The German player changes Infantry Divisions for Kampfgruppen or vice versa, the Russian swaps Rifle Corps and Rifle Divisions.

No game of the East Front would be complete without some Russian partisans. This game is no exception. As usual they simply mooch around in the German rear, trying to interfere with his supply. The German player can detach security units from the front line to go and deal with them. There is one more rule that needs to be mentioned and that is Russian reserves. At the start of each scenario certain Russian formations are designated as reserves. This means that they cannot

move or attack until they have been activated. The Russian player can activate a given number of reserve formations in each game turn and more if the German is doing well. Reserves are also activated if attacked. However, each reserve formation activated by the Russian player gives the German a victory point. Regardless of how they were activated, each active reserve formation gives the German player one victory point per turn and a bonus at the end of the game. This makes the reserves rather a double-edged tool for the Russian. He needs to activate sufficient reserves to stem the German assault, but, if he activates too many, the German is getting victory points on a plate, and if he activates too few he is not going to be able to stop the Germans short of Stalingrad (no, that's not on the map). So, if you intend playing Russian, brush up on your cost-benefit analysis!!

Apart from the activated reserves, the players get victory points for the usual good deeds — eliminating enemy units and capturing geographical objectives. The level of victory depends on the difference between the two sides' points — generally the attacking side has to do a lot better to win decisively. I say attacking side because in one of the three scenarios the Russians are on the offensive! The three scenarios cover the historical battle, in July, the Russian offensive in August and the original German High Command plan to attack in May — which Hitler would not allow as he wanted the attack to wait for the new Panther tanks. The May scenario sees the German troops looking much the same as in July, but the Russians are without many of the reserves and nearly half of the entrenchments that were present in July. The German player thus has a rather easier time of it, but he needs more victory points to win. The



[17.3] AIR WARFARE RESULTS TABLE (Optional)

| | Number of Attacking Air Points | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Def | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 1 | 1/- | 1/- | 1/- | 1/- | 1/- | 1/- |
| 2 | 1/- | 1/- | -1/- | -1/- | -1/- | -1/- |
| 3 | -1/- | -1/- | 1/1 | -1/1 | -1/1 | -1/1 |
| 4 | -1/- | -1/1 | 1/2 | 1/2 | 1/2 | 1/2 |
| 5 | 1/1 | 1/1 | 1/2 | -2/- | -2/- | -2/- |
| 6 | -1/1 | -1/1 | 1/2* | 1/2* | 1/2* | 1/3* |

The result to the left of the slash applies to the attacking Air Points; the result to the right applies to the defending Air Points. - = No effect. # = The indicated number of Air Points are scored. * = The Air Point is eliminated, in addition to any other result; subtract that Air Point from all future Air Point allowances for the rest of the scenario.

[18.19] INDICATOR LETTERS KEY

| | May | | July | | August | |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | In Play | Off Map | In Play | Off Map | In Play | Off Map |
| A | X | - | - | - | - | - |
| B | - | - | X | - | - | - |
| C | - | - | - | - | X | - |
| D | X | - | X | - | - | - |
| E | - | - | X | - | X | - |
| F | X | - | - | - | X | - |
| G | X | - | X | - | X | - |
| H | - | X | - | - | - | - |
| J | - | - | - | X | - | - |
| K | - | - | - | - | - | X |
| L | - | X | - | X | - | - |
| M | - | X | - | - | - | X |
| N | - | X | X | - | - | - |
| P | - | X | - | - | X | - |
| Q | - | - | - | X | - | X |
| R | - | - | X | X | - | - |
| S | X | - | X | - | X | - |
| T | - | X | X | - | - | X |
| V | - | X | - | X | X | - |
| W | X | - | X | - | - | X |
| Y | - | X | - | X | - | X |

X = A unit with the letter described by the letter is on the map. - = A unit with the letter described by the letter is not on the map. # = The unit is in the "Off Map" column, or is in the "Off Map" column of an adjacent scenario. # = The unit is in the "Off Map" column.

[18.5] MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION TABLE

- 5.27. Line of sight of supply. Movement Allowance is halved, rounded down.
- Unit is out of communication. Movement Allowance is halved, rounded down.
- Unit is out of both communication and supply. Movement Allowance is halved, rounded down.
- 5.33. Maximum rail movement (feet): Exclusively along single track: 20. Any combination of single & double-track: 25. Exclusively along double-track: 30.
- 5.38. No more than 2 units may use rail movement along a given single-track rail hex.
- 5.39. No more than 4 units may use rail movement along a given double-track rail hex.
- 5.8. Cost to overrun: + 1 Movement Pt.
- 7.6. Stacking limit in one hex: 4 Stacking Pts.
- 7.11-7.14. Civil Stacking Point value: Soviet Rifle Corps: 1. Division, HQ, Kampfgruppe: 2. Partisan, anti-tank, artillery: 0. Regiment, brigade, fortified area: 1.
- 7.23. A maximum of 1 anti-tank unit and 1 artillery unit may occupy a given hex.
- 8.31. Disengagement cost: + 2 Movement Pts.
- 9.53. Step Loss Marker value: - 2 Attack Strength / - 1 Step Value / - 4 Attack Strength / - 2 Step Value.
- 9.64. Anti-tank units are eliminated if they retreat after combat.
- 9.65. Artillery units lose one Step for each hex they retreat after combat.
- 11.15. Independent Command limit: German: 9. Soviet: 5.
- 11.31. Line of Supply (LOS): For non-HQ units: 7. For HQ units: 8.
- 11.34. Line of Communication: 7 hexes.
- 11.55. If a unit is out of supply when attacking, its Attack Strength is halved, rounded down.
- 12.12. Artillery supports infantry with its full strength modifier.
- 12.13. Artillery supports secondary affected units with half its strength modifier.
- 11.26. All combat results that affect anti-tank units are halved, rounded up.
- 13.27. German HQs may dispense Anti-Tank and Artillery Points up to 1 hex away.
- 14.11. A four-step German infantry division may be broken down into 2 Kampfgruppen.
- 14.12. A maximum of 2 divisions within a corps may be broken down at any given time. A maximum of 11 divisions may be broken down at any given time.
- 14.13. The German independent command limit is decreased by 1 for every 3 Kampfgruppen units in play.
- 14.31. Soviet rifle corps may be broken down into 3 divisions.
- 14.36. 2 or 3 divisions may be recombined into 1 rifle corps. Subtract 1 Step from the total Step Value of the recombined divisions.
- 15.31. Game-Turn 1 partisan allowance: May: 5. July: 1. August: 5.
- 15.32. Partisan allowance on subsequent turns (all scenarios): 1.
- 15.33. Maximum number of partisan units in play: May: 6. July: 4. August: 7.
- 16.2 (Optional). Disengagement cost in Assault mode: + 1 Movement Pt.
- 17.8 (Optional). Die-roll required for successful interception: One Player attempting: 1 or 2. Both Players attempting: 1 through 1.
- 17.11 (Optional). Subtract 1 from the die-throw die-roll for each Air Point over 1 committed to interception.
- 17.21. No more than 2 Air Points may be allocated to capture combats.
- 18.14. Soviet reserve units must be deployed within 1 hex of their controlling HQ.
- 18.31. The Soviet Player must expend 1 Victory Point to activate a reserve formation.
- 18.36. The Soviet Player may activate a maximum of 1 reserve formation on any Game-Turn of the May and August scenarios.
- 18.35. The Soviet Player may activate a maximum of 1 reserve formation on Game-Turn 1 of the July scenario; 4 on Game-Turn 2, and 1 on any subsequent Game-Turn.
- 18.37. The Soviet Player expends 1 Victory Point for each reserve formation activated during the Organization Phase.

[5.31] How to Read the Units

GERMAN INFANTRY DIVISION (back)

Line Designation: 1st SS, 2nd SS, 3rd SS, 4th SS, 5th SS, 6th SS, 7th SS, 8th SS, 9th SS, 10th SS, 11th SS, 12th SS, 13th SS, 14th SS, 15th SS, 16th SS, 17th SS, 18th SS, 19th SS, 20th SS, 21st SS, 22nd SS, 23rd SS, 24th SS, 25th SS, 26th SS, 27th SS, 28th SS, 29th SS, 30th SS, 31st SS, 32nd SS, 33rd SS, 34th SS, 35th SS, 36th SS, 37th SS, 38th SS, 39th SS, 40th SS, 41st SS, 42nd SS, 43rd SS, 44th SS, 45th SS, 46th SS, 47th SS, 48th SS, 49th SS, 50th SS, 51st SS, 52nd SS, 53rd SS, 54th SS, 55th SS, 56th SS, 57th SS, 58th SS, 59th SS, 60th SS, 61st SS, 62nd SS, 63rd SS, 64th SS, 65th SS, 66th SS, 67th SS, 68th SS, 69th SS, 70th SS, 71st SS, 72nd SS, 73rd SS, 74th SS, 75th SS, 76th SS, 77th SS, 78th SS, 79th SS, 80th SS, 81st SS, 82nd SS, 83rd SS, 84th SS, 85th SS, 86th SS, 87th SS, 88th SS, 89th SS, 90th SS, 91st SS, 92nd SS, 93rd SS, 94th SS, 95th SS, 96th SS, 97th SS, 98th SS, 99th SS, 100th SS.

GERMAN INFANTRY DIVISION (front)

Line Designation: 1st SS, 2nd SS, 3rd SS, 4th SS, 5th SS, 6th SS, 7th SS, 8th SS, 9th SS, 10th SS, 11th SS, 12th SS, 13th SS, 14th SS, 15th SS, 16th SS, 17th SS, 18th SS, 19th SS, 20th SS, 21st SS, 22nd SS, 23rd SS, 24th SS, 25th SS, 26th SS, 27th SS, 28th SS, 29th SS, 30th SS, 31st SS, 32nd SS, 33rd SS, 34th SS, 35th SS, 36th SS, 37th SS, 38th SS, 39th SS, 40th SS, 41st SS, 42nd SS, 43rd SS, 44th SS, 45th SS, 46th SS, 47th SS, 48th SS, 49th SS, 50th SS, 51st SS, 52nd SS, 53rd SS, 54th SS, 55th SS, 56th SS, 57th SS, 58th SS, 59th SS, 60th SS, 61st SS, 62nd SS, 63rd SS, 64th SS, 65th SS, 66th SS, 67th SS, 68th SS, 69th SS, 70th SS, 71st SS, 72nd SS, 73rd SS, 74th SS, 75th SS, 76th SS, 77th SS, 78th SS, 79th SS, 80th SS, 81st SS, 82nd SS, 83rd SS, 84th SS, 85th SS, 86th SS, 87th SS, 88th SS, 89th SS, 90th SS, 91st SS, 92nd SS, 93rd SS, 94th SS, 95th SS, 96th SS, 97th SS, 98th SS, 99th SS, 100th SS.

GERMAN HEADQUARTERS UNIT (front)

Headquarters Designation: 1st SS, 2nd SS, 3rd SS, 4th SS, 5th SS, 6th SS, 7th SS, 8th SS, 9th SS, 10th SS, 11th SS, 12th SS, 13th SS, 14th SS, 15th SS, 16th SS, 17th SS, 18th SS, 19th SS, 20th SS, 21st SS, 22nd SS, 23rd SS, 24th SS, 25th SS, 26th SS, 27th SS, 28th SS, 29th SS, 30th SS, 31st SS, 32nd SS, 33rd SS, 34th SS, 35th SS, 36th SS, 37th SS, 38th SS, 39th SS, 40th SS, 41st SS, 42nd SS, 43rd SS, 44th SS, 45th SS, 46th SS, 47th SS, 48th SS, 49th SS, 50th SS, 51st SS, 52nd SS, 53rd SS, 54th SS, 55th SS, 56th SS, 57th SS, 58th SS, 59th SS, 60th SS, 61st SS, 62nd SS, 63rd SS, 64th SS, 65th SS, 66th SS, 67th SS, 68th SS, 69th SS, 70th SS, 71st SS, 72nd SS, 73rd SS, 74th SS, 75th SS, 76th SS, 77th SS, 78th SS, 79th SS, 80th SS, 81st SS, 82nd SS, 83rd SS, 84th SS, 85th SS, 86th SS, 87th SS, 88th SS, 89th SS, 90th SS, 91st SS, 92nd SS, 93rd SS, 94th SS, 95th SS, 96th SS, 97th SS, 98th SS, 99th SS, 100th SS.

SOVIET ARTILLERY UNIT (front)

Artillery Designation: 1st SS, 2nd SS, 3rd SS, 4th SS, 5th SS, 6th SS, 7th SS, 8th SS, 9th SS, 10th SS, 11th SS, 12th SS, 13th SS, 14th SS, 15th SS, 16th SS, 17th SS, 18th SS, 19th SS, 20th SS, 21st SS, 22nd SS, 23rd SS, 24th SS, 25th SS, 26th SS, 27th SS, 28th SS, 29th SS, 30th SS, 31st SS, 32nd SS, 33rd SS, 34th SS, 35th SS, 36th SS, 37th SS, 38th SS, 39th SS, 40th SS, 41st SS, 42nd SS, 43rd SS, 44th SS, 45th SS, 46th SS, 47th SS, 48th SS, 49th SS, 50th SS, 51st SS, 52nd SS, 53rd SS, 54th SS, 55th SS, 56th SS, 57th SS, 58th SS, 59th SS, 60th SS, 61st SS, 62nd SS, 63rd SS, 64th SS, 65th SS, 66th SS, 67th SS, 68th SS, 69th SS, 70th SS, 71st SS, 72nd SS, 73rd SS, 74th SS, 75th SS, 76th SS, 77th SS, 78th SS, 79th SS, 80th SS, 81st SS, 82nd SS, 83rd SS, 84th SS, 85th SS, 86th SS, 87th SS, 88th SS, 89th SS, 90th SS, 91st SS, 92nd SS, 93rd SS, 94th SS, 95th SS, 96th SS, 97th SS, 98th SS, 99th SS, 100th SS.

[9.92] STEP DIE-ROLL MODIFIERS TABLE

| Die Modifier | Number of Defending Steps |
|--------------|---------------------------|
| -2 | 1 |
| -1 | 2 |
| 0 | 3 or 4 |
| +1 | 5 or 6 |
| +2 | 7, 8, or 9 |
| +3 | 10 or more |

Total the number of Steps in the defending hex, including any Anti-Tank and Artillery units. Headquarters units always count as one Step. When rolling on the Combat Results Table, apply the Die-Roll Modifier.

[9.91] COMBAT RESULTS TABLE

| Attacker | Modified Attack Strength Total | | | | | | | | | | | Defender |
|----------|--------------------------------|-----|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----------|
| | 0 | 1-5 | 6-9 | 10-13 | 14-17 | 18-21 | 22-25 | 26-29 | 30-33 | 34-37 | 38-41 | |
| 1/2 | 1/2 | -1 | 1/2 | 1/3 | 1/3 | 1/3 | 1/3 | 1/3 | 1/3 | 1/3 | 1/3 | 1/3 |
| 1/2 | 2/2 | 0 | 1/2 | 1/2 | 2/3 | 2/3 | 1/4 | 1/4 | 1/4 | 1/4 | 1/4 | 1/4 |
| 2/1 | 2/2 | 1 | 1/2 | 1/2 | 2/2 | 2/3 | 2/3 | 2/3 | 2/3 | 2/3 | 2/3 | 2/3 |
| 2/1 | 2/1 | 2 | 2/2 | 2/2 | 2/2 | 2/2 | 2/2 | 2/2 | 2/2 | 2/2 | 2/2 | 2/2 |
| 3/1 | 3/1 | 3 | 2/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 |
| 3/1 | 3/1 | 4 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 |
| 3/1 | 3/1 | 5 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 |
| 3/1 | 3/1 | 6 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 3/1 |
| 4/- | 3/1 | 7 | 3/1 | 3/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 |
| 4/- | 4/- | 8 | 4/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 |
| 4/- | 4/- | 9 | 4/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 | 4/1 |

Number to the left of the slash (or "w") applies to the attacker; number to the right applies to the defender. The attacker must have a minimum of six attack Strength Points to engage combat. The "0" at left and "1"-3" columns are used only when column shifts of anti-tank or artillery units cause the Player to use a column worse than the "6-9" column. # = Step losses or hex retreats required (dependent on mode of unit); - = No effect; w = 21 attacker with Assault and Defender in Static Mode, the number result for both attacker and defender is increased by 1; if attacker and defender are in Mobile, reduce number by 1.

August scenario is rather spoilt by the special rules which I assume are there to give the Russian player a chance. The prime example of this is the rule that if the German player makes more attacks than the number of the game turn (i.e. one in game turn one, two in game turn two etc), the extra attacks suffer a column shift of four columns in the defender's favour. I can see it now: "No, no, Field Marshal, this is August 3rd - you can only attack two Russian Corps!". What this seems to mean is that the game as it stands is biased towards German attackers and Russian defenders and therefore needs modification if the Russians are on the offensive. This rather spoils the August scenario.

There is one other piece of innovation in connection with the scenarios, and that is the use of code letters to denote which scenario a unit is present in, whether on the map, or as reinforcements and at what strength. Each unit counter has one or more code letters. The letter(s) says which scenario(s) the unit is used in and whether it is on the map or a reinforcement. The unit is at the strength shown on that face of the counter - a unit can have different letters on different sides showing that it is at different strengths in different scenarios. This makes it easy enough to look up a particular unit's code letter(s) and discover which scenario(s) it takes part in. However, it is a bit more difficult to pick out which units are required for a scenario as there are a minimum of fourteen letters to look for and they could be on any of the counters or faces of a unit. So, while this does save space in the rules (as you don't need a section saying where each unit goes), I don't think it is a great improvement over present systems.

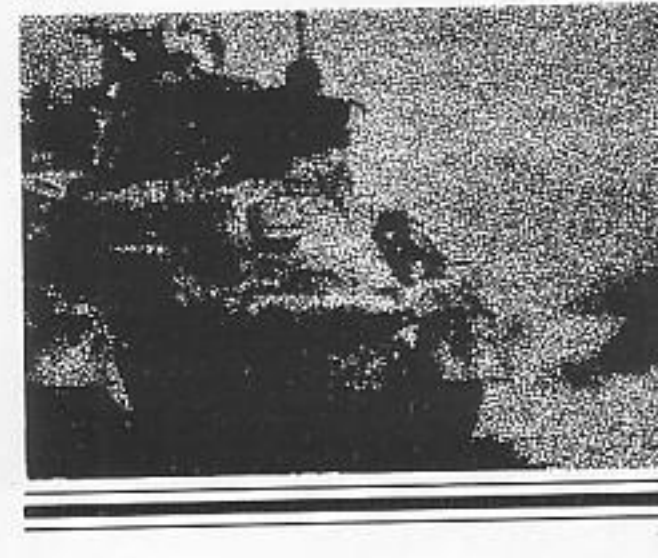
So much for the rules, now to describe what the game is like to play. For this purpose I am going to stick to the historical, July, scenario. The procedure is that the Russian player sets out his forces first, then the German and then the Russian adds in his anti-tank and artillery units. Both sides have an area assigned to each formation and must cover their front line with units or zones of control. The German player moves first, so the Russian player is under great pressure to get his initial placement right. To be able to stand up to attack by units in Assault mode, Russian stacks must contain at least five steps - the equivalent of a Corps. The Russian player also has to cover his entire front line, with each formation inside its assigned area. This is no easy task. It is probable that there will be weak spots and the German player will attempt to exploit them. The Russian player is best able to defend the shoulders of the salient - where the historical attacks came and where the German armoured spearheads are located - leaving a weaker crust around the rest. The German now gets the chance to set his troops out. He has more leeway than the Russian as he can move his troops before actually attacking.

However, it is well worthwhile deciding where your attacks are going to be and setting up as close as possible. The Russian then adds in his artillery and anti-tank units, reacting to the German threats as much as he can. Both players will have decided the modes of their units when setting up. For the Russian this is relatively simple: Static mode for everybody (with one or two exceptions, if possible, to give a mobile reserve) in order to gain the defensive bonus. The German has to be more careful. The actual attacking units need to be in Assault mode to get both attacks. However, this will halve their movement so they need to be close to what they're going to attack. In addition it is worthwhile keeping some armour in Mobile mode - and possibly in Independent Command - in order to exploit any gaps that open up in the Russian line. The rest of the troops guarding the flanks can be put into Static mode in case of Russian counter-attacks, although it may be worthwhile leaving some units in Mobile mode to pursue any precipitate retreat by the Russians. With all this to think about, you will not be surprised that just setting up the game can take some time - I recommend a crossword or a good book for each player while the other guy's doing his stuff.

Game Turn one: the German panzers roll forward; first the defending anti-tank guns take their toll of the advancing tanks - this is generally only a step or two, but every little helps - and get killed in reply; then the full weight of the assault lands on the defending Russians, modified by both sides' artillery (and aircraft). In general, a Russian five step unit (Corps) or stack, attacked by the maximum 72 points of German units, will lose three, possibly four steps (the Russian should not take retreats if he can avoid it as that allows the German to advance across the entrenchments and annihilates any remaining anti-tank or artillery units). The German lops a step or two off his infantry and smiles. The second combat segment wipes out the defending Russians. Luckily for the Russians the German player cannot make many attacks of this size in a turn, but the result will still be several holes in the Russian line. In the Mechanised movement phase the German player gets the chance to exploit his gaps with any units in Mobile mode. If the Russian has set up his troops well, there will be a second row of defending units to bring this advance up short; if not, he's in trouble. It is now the Russian player's turn. His major decision is how many - and which - reserve formations to activate. This is not an easy question to answer as, even when activated, reserve units can take several turns to get to the scene of the action - there are a few formations in easy reach which are the first to be activated though. My general principle is to activate as many units as possible and move them in towards the hot spots. This has a cost in victory points, but will also slow the German advance, stopping him from getting so many territorial victory points.

Assuming that the German player does not make any spectacular breakthroughs, the game progresses in much the same way - German attacks knocking holes in the Russian lines which the Russian then plugs as best he can, slowly retreating across his entrenchments all the time. The outcome of the game will generally depend on the care with which the Russian player deploys his troops and the astuteness of the German player in choosing where to make his attacks. At the end the Russian is left with a large pile of dead units, hopefully balanced by a large number of towns that the German has not captured. All the above goes by the board if the Germans manage a breakthrough. In this case, it's a mad scramble by the Russians to pull as many units as possible back out of any potential pockets and to activate sufficient reserves to form some sort of line against further incursions. In fact I claim the signal honour of having lost the entire Kursk salient in two game turns following adroit German attacks on some major flaws in my initial deployment. And this in spite of the warning that the defender tends to win when both players are new to the system!!

The result of this is that the game plays slowly. The Russian cannot afford many mistakes, and no major ones. The German is always looking for his best advantage; so each turn is full of planning and pondering. This, I'm afraid, rather puts me off the game. I prefer my games fairly fast and furious. The game contains an impressive amount of detail and realism - the comprehensive OB for one thing - and is really excellently done. The system works well, with the odd hiccup, and, I feel, is a very good simulation of the battle. However, I can only say that I find it a bit dull. It somehow lacks that spark that arouses and captures the interest, bringing one back to play a game again and again. This game is certainly one I'm glad to have played both from the point of view of the system, and as a historical simulation of an important battle, but it is not a game that I think will be played very often.





saladin at acre

WILLIAM HAMBLIN

The game *Acre: Richard Lionheart's Siege, 1191* (available from Simpubs in the Quad-pack *The Art of Siege*) is a recent attempt to simulate the important siege of Acre by the Crusaders in which they were opposed by the field army of the Muslim Sultan Saladin. It is one of the few examples in pre-technical military history where a siege was successfully carried out while the besiegers were themselves surrounded by enemy forces and historically includes a number of interesting features regarding medieval warfare.

The siege began when King Guy camped outside of Acre on the 28th of August 1189. In the following months large numbers of French, Italians, Danes, Normans, Sicilian, and Levantine Franks gathered to participate in the siege and the naval blockade of the city. Saladin arrived before Acre with some of his forces in September of 1189. A large number of battles took place between the opposing armies during the following year and a half, with some notable Muslim victories, culminating in the arrival of a large French army under King Phillip on 20 April 1191, and an English army under Richard I on 8 June. With these additional forces the balance of power shifted to the Crusaders, who, though unable to take the city by storm, received the sur-

render of the garrison only 34 days after Richard's arrival.

The game only attempts to recreate these last 34 days of the siege (although with some simple modification, scenarios covering other phases of the siege could also have been developed). Militarily, the fighting included catapult bombardments, mining, the storming of walls, towers and breaches, sorties by the garrison, attacks from Saladin's surrounding armies and sea battles.

In attempting to accurately simulate the siege *Acre* must necessarily reconstruct the organisation, troop types and numbers, and weaponry of the opposing forces. A wargame will be a "simulation" of history only to the degree that the rules and structure of the game accurately reflect the historical capabilities and difficulties of the opposing armies. Unfortunately, *Acre* fails to adequately recreate the military system of Saladin's armies in nearly all aspects. The following will be a comparison between the historic reality of Saladin's military forces with the way it is portrayed in the rules and commentaries of *Acre*. In doing so only studies and translations in English will be used (the one exception being a French article), all of

which could have been incorporated in the design of *Acre*.

Organisation

The first problem area in the game is in the purported organisation given for the Muslim armies. According to the rulebook "The basic Moslem infantry unit was the faylag, a division of about 5000 men." (p. 14 col. 2) The first point that should be made is that nearly all of Saladin's troops were mounted (more on this later). The use of the term "faylag" as referring to the basic Muslim organisational unit also presents a number of difficulties. I assume it refers to the Arabic word "faylaq" which indeed was "a body of 5000 armed men." (Scanlon p. 124) However, it was not the basic organisational unit of Saladin's army as the rulebook suggests. Indeed, I have never seen the term used in relation to Islamic armies of any period by any Arabic historian, except in one war poem by al-Mutanabi, praising Sayf ad-Dawla (reseat at Aleppo 944-967). I also searched two major dictionaries of Medieval Arabic, but was unable to find the term listed in either. "Faylaq" would seem to be an Arabic transliteration of the Greek word 'Phalanx', and could well be how the Arabs referred to byzantine infantry formations, but I am at a loss to discover its fundamental significance in relation to Islamic warfare.

In reality, the basic unit of organisation for Saladin's army was the 'Tulb' (plural: Atlab) (Gibb p. 76-77, Humphreys p. 79-80 where he calls the Tulb 'the most important parade and field unit.'). According to al-Maqrizi (an Arab historian, quoted in Gibb, p. 76) the Tulb had "a number of horsemen ranging from 200 to 100 or 70." This is nothing like the 5000 men of the supposed faylag, and note that they were all cavalry. In 1181 the entire Egyptian army was composed of 111 Tulbs with 8640 men, excluding Arab irregulars, who numbered an additional 1300 horsemen, and a few fatimid infantry (Gibb p. 76-7) who would have most likely been phased out by the siege of Acre in 1191. Having the units of the game structured around the large faylags misrepresents the basic tendency of Saladin's forces to be in small, mobile, independent tactical units which were generally organised into larger units either according to geographical location, or by need in each battle.

Geography and Troop Numbers

The geographical origins and numbers of the various units of Saladin's armies are also presented incorrectly in the game. Before describing specifically the geographical locations given to the Muslim units in the game, it would be useful to briefly outline the numerical organisation and geographical origins of Saladin's armies as reconstructed by two of the leading historians for Muslim armies of this period, H.A.R. Gibb, and Stephen Humphreys. Both of these scholars have done detailed studies of many of the available Arabic and Latin sources, and although they differ in some particulars, they are in general agreement on most issues.

Saladin himself commanded the troops from Egypt, which was the power base for his empire. The Egyptian army consisted of about 8000 askaris (armoured horse archers — see below), and the 1000 elite Halqa Guards, totalling 9,000 armoured mounted archers. Syria was divided into a number of regions, each with a separate governor and army. Damascus and Aleppo, the two major cities of Syria, along with their dependent cities, each fielded armies of 3000 askaris each. Hama and Hama mobilised an additional 1000 askaris each, bringing the Syrian total to a further 8000 askaris. Northern Iraq, known to the Muslims as al-Jazira, also had a force of some 8000 askaris, divided as follows: Mosul, the capital of the region, and its dependent cities had about 4000 askaris, with the rest of the cities of the area such as Harran, Sinjar, Hisn Kaifa Mardin, etc., together fielding another 4000. Another possible source of troops for Saladin's armies which is not discussed by either Gibb or Humphreys would be Saladin's dominions on the West coast of Arabia and Barqa (Cyrenica) in modern Libya. Although I have been unable to discover any exact data for troop strength from these regions, I would estimate that neither would be capable of fielding more than 1000 askaris. In reality it would seem that most of the troops of Barqa remained there as border guards (at least I have been unable to confirm any contingents from that region in action against the Crusaders). There

was a contingent from Mecca of unknown strength fighting with Saladin during his campaign of 1188. This would give a total force of some 27,000 regular askaris (excluding auxiliaries) as Saladin's total available force.

In actual practice, however, only about half of the available askaris were ever mobilised for foreign campaigns from any province at one time (Gibb p. 78). The rest of the askaris remained on the defensive, serving as a basis for troop rotation. The units would fight for a certain period then return home and be replaced by the askaris who had had home duty. In addition to these figures we could add 4-8,000 auxiliaries; Turkoman, Arab bedouins etc. These troops would be divided into two classes. First there were tribes which received regular yearly stipends from Saladin (but not full salaries as did the askaris) and who could be called on to serve as scouts, raiders, and light troops on any occasion. These numbered some 1300 Arab cavalry from Egypt and possibly similar numbers from Syria and al-Jazira, giving about 4000 auxiliaries with stipends. Additionally, there were the Mutawwa'in or volunteers, tribesmen, soldiers of fortune, or brigands who would serve without regular salaries for one season in return for whatever booty they could collect during the campaign. It appears that Franks were occasionally included in their numbers. Finally there were various specialist corps, Siege Crews, naphtha troops, mountaineers, etc, who were called up as the need arose. All of these types of troops and their relation to the playing units of Acre will be discussed below.

The total available troops in Saladin's empire was 25,000 askaris from Egypt, Syria and Iraq, with perhaps 2000 more from Arabia and Barqa, plus auxiliaries. Only half of the 27,000 askaris would have participated at the siege of Acre at any given time (although all may have seen action through troop rotation) giving a total of perhaps 14,000 men, with an additional 4000 auxiliaries bringing the number up to possibly 18,000. There may also have been several thousand irregulars and militia, but such troops would be disinclined to serve long at a protracted siege where there was little booty to be gained, and no salaries from the Sultan to support them. During the siege of Acre, which was a major effort on Saladin's part, more than half of the available askaris may have been mobilised, possibly bringing the total available up to 20,000 men. We must also remember, however, that perhaps half of the garrison inside Acre would have consisted of askaris as well, which might have lowered the total number of possible troops outside the city. Mobilising more warriors than this would have left Saladin's borders undefended against his Islamic enemies in Anatolia, Southern Iraq, Persia, Arabia, Nubia and North Africa, as well as increasing the potential for internal unrest within his domains. These figures can now be correlated with those given in Acre.

From the above description it should be evident that Saladin's army at Acre should be divided into four roughly equal parts, the regular forces of Egypt, Syria, Iraq and the auxiliaries, numbering at most a total of 20,000 but probably somewhat less. Acre has Saladin with 9 faylags or 45,000 men, which is over twice too many.

Although I am here dealing mainly with the Muslim armies at Acre, it might be well to point out a difficulty relating to the Hospitaller and Templar units represented in the game. Each Order is given 3 "knight" units which are oddly classed as infantry and would represent about 1800-2400 men according to the scale given in the rulebook (p. 4 col. 1) as well as 2 "Knight Cavalry" equaling about 1200-1600 men. Historically hundreds of knights of the Orders had been killed during the campaigns preceding Acre (nearly 100 at Cresson, 250+ Templars at Hattin, Saladin executed 100 after Hattin - Runciman pp. 453, 490, Gabrieli, p. 138) and many others were compelled to defend their castles. It is clear that their numbers had been greatly diminished during the campaigns preceding Acre, and it is doubtful if they could have ever mustered 3000 men each even when the orders were at full strength. Furthermore, the turcoples (light cavalry) are not represented as being part of the Orders. The numbers of the Templars and Hospitallers in the game seem to be grossly exaggerated.

The geographical regions given in the game as the origins of the Muslim troops are also incorrect. The Muslim armies in the game are divided into three major divisions: the armies of Sinjan, Egypt and Mosul. If Mosul is taken to represent the armies of Northern Iraq as a whole (although Mosul actually fielded only one half of the troops of that region) then the sections of Egypt and Mosul are fairly accurate. The Army of Sinjan, however, is difficult to deal with. I am unfamiliar with this term being used for Syria, whose armies are otherwise not represented in the game, nor am I aware of the term being used for any other region of Saladin's empire. It could be referring to Sinjar, a city in Northern Iraq, but the contingents of Northern Iraq are apparently represented by the Army of Mosul. At any rate, wherever Sinjan is supposed to be, Saladin certainly didn't come from there. He was invariably associated with the Egyptian contingents, and his Halqa Guard had their fiefs in Egypt.

Officer Corps

Noting that geographical designations and troop numbers are wrong and that the Syrian Army and the Auxiliaries are not properly represented, the designations of the commanders of each Muslim army given in the game can be examined. Gabrieli (pp. 192-214, translating Baha ad-Din) was used as the major source for the following list of commanders of the Muslim Army.

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|--|--|
| Ala Faylag 1 2-2-2-9 | Zahir Faylag 2 2-1-1-9 | Faylag 1 6-5 | Faylag 1  (2)6 | Faylag 2  (1)9 |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|--|--|

The commander of the Army of Mosul is listed as Zahir. This is apparently Zahir ad-Din ibn al-Bulunkari who was indeed an officer of the Mosul contingents. The other Mosul "faylag" has the commander Ala who is Ala ad-Din of Mosul. The Mosul Army, as noted above, however, should be only one half of the Army of Iraq which would make it one eighth of all of Saladin's troops, whereas in the game it is 1/4 of the entire army.

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Saif Faylag 1 3-2-3-9 | Qutb Faylag 2 2-2-2-9 | Husam Faylag 3 2-1-1-9 | Faylag 1 6-5 | Faylag 1  (2)6 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|---|

Sayf ad-Din is listed as a commander of the Egyptian army. He was actually a Kurdish prince who was commanding Kurdish troops who had fiefs in Egypt and would therefore be considered part of the Egyptian askaris. However, Qutb ad-Din was the commander of the regiments of Hisn Kaifa in Iraq, not of Egyptian units, and Husam ad-Din, also listed as an Egyptian in the game, was actually commander of the troops of Nablus which formed a small part of the Syrian army.

| | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Faylag 3  8-9 | Taqi Faylag 1 3-2-3-9 | Zain Faylag 2 3-2-3-9 | Isa Faylag 3 3-2-3-9 | Faylag 1 6-5 |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|

There are a number of problems with the army of 'Sinjan' as well. The game gives Taqi, Zain, Isa and Saladin as the four generals of "Sinjan". Taqi ad-Din commanded the askaris of Hama in Syria. Zayn ad-Din commanded Kurds from Arbela in northern Iraq. Isa was Governor of Jerusalem and would have been included with the Syrian askaris. Saladin's guard or halqa was stationed in Egypt. Thus each of the commanders who are listed as being from the 'Sinjan' army actually come from a different province in Saladin's empire. Two important Muslim commanders, Saladin's two sons, Al-Malik al-Afdal (Egyptian) and Al-Malik az-Zahir who commanded of the Aleppan contingents, are also not included even though they were more important than some of the leaders used in Acre.

| | | | | |
|--|------------------------|---|--|---|
| Faylag 3  8-9 | Faylag 1 6-5 | English  6-7 | Saldns G.  14-8 | Faylag 2  (1)9 |
|--|------------------------|---|--|---|

Cavalry-Askaris

The description of the Muslim cavalry forces in the Acre rulebook, and the corresponding format for the Muslim cavalry units in the game contains a number of inaccuracies. First, there is the previously mentioned problem of the tulb as the basic unit of organisation, rather than the faylag. It is also claimed that "The light horse archers were unarmoured and avoided melee combat; they had

swords for defensive use." (p. 14 col. 3). This description raises a number of questions. First, in the game all the horse archers, which include nearly all the Muslim cavalry, are represented as being light cavalry. In reality nearly all Muslim regular cavalry were horse archers who carried spears, swords and/or maces, and generally wore chain mail as well (Gibb p. 81). Regular cavalry were designated as askaris (see Gibb and Humphreys throughout). The askari warrior was a horseman who was usually of Turkish or Kurdish origin and often a mamluk, but was nearly always trained as a Turkish mounted horse archer. In the Egyptian army there were two types; the 'tawashis' and the 'qaraghulams' (Gibb p. 76-7). The Tawashis were heavy cavalry and, according to Maqrizi, each had "a squire to carry his armour" (Gibb p. 87 note 31). In 1181 AD, 6,976 of the 8,640 askaris in Saladin's Egyptian army were Tawashis, or, in other words, mailed mounted horse archers with lances and swords for charges and melees. In a sense (though with important differences) they were what the Byzantines would have called a cataphract. The rest of the troops were Qaraghulams or light cavalry. However, the major difference between the Tawashis and the Qaraghulams was in pay and the Qaraghulams probably also had armour of some sort. There is no proof that the same proportion existed between light and heavy askaris in the armies of Syria and Northern Iraq but it probably did.

From the above discussion it becomes apparent that the sentence from the rulebook, "A heavy cavalry faylag was heavy only by Moslem standards, for the men and horses lacked armour. Armed with swords and lances" (p.14-5) is wrong on all counts. The cavalry unit was not a faylag, the askaris did wear armour, and they were armed with composite bows as well as swords and lances.

It may be that the majority of Muslim cavalry were designated as light horse archers in the game based on a description given by R.C. Smail of Turkish troops in Crusading Warfare: 1097-1193 pp. 75-83. However, despite the fact that in general the work is a superb reconstruction of Latin crusading armies, there are a number of difficulties (as he himself admits on p. vi) in relation to his descriptions of Muslim troops. First he describes Turkish tactics using almost exclusively Latin sources, which, although useful, naturally give a distorted view of Muslim armies (It would likewise be impossible to gain a correct understanding of Frankish armies and tactics from reading mainly Arabic sources). Second, he is forced to rely solely on translations of extracts, which are often really abridgements or summaries of Arabic sources. In doing so the possibility of understanding technical Arabic military terms is often lost. Finally, his description fails to clearly make the important distinctions between the light Turkish nomadic auxiliaries (which is basically what Smail is describing), the Arab and Fatimid heavy lancers (the famous Usamah was one of these who were essentially like Latin Knights) and the armoured regular askaris, all of which fought in different armies at different times during the first century of the Crusades.

But even if Smail's description is accepted and used at face value, the representation of the cavalry of the Muslims in the game Acre is inadequate. The horse archers are given a defensive melee strength only (and that only of one point) while it is clear from both the Latin and Muslim sources, as pointed out in Smail's book (pp. 82 - 3), that the Turks would use missile fire to disrupt the enemy ranks followed by the same horse archers charging for close melee combat. The point system of the horse archers in the game denies the Turks the important charging and melee capacity.

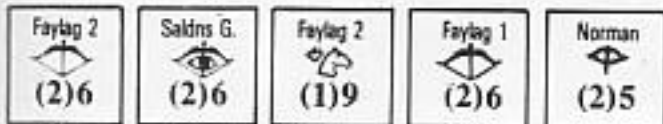
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Infantry

Since the battle of Acre was a siege, the infantry Siege Corps would certainly have been present, but they would have consisted of a few thousand men at most. According to the number of pieces in the game, Saladin's besieging army was composed of over 25,000 infantry (5 faylags) and 15,000 cavalry (3 faylags), plus Saladin's Guard faylag of

5000 mixed cavalry and infantry. Despite the fact that these numbers are excessive, the proportion of troops is also completely incorrect.

It seems possible that Smail's description of the Fatimid armies (p. 83-7) was used to some degree in formulating the rules relating to the Muslim troops. This would be a mistake, however, since Smail is describing the Fatimid forces of the first half of the 12th century. When Saladin became Vizier of Egypt in 1169 he immediately started the "Turkification" of the army of Egypt, beginning with the massacre of the Fatimid Sudanese and Armenian infantry in Cairo (see A. S. Ehrenkreutz, Saladin pp. 76 - 80). He continued to reorganise the military of Egypt, developing it into a system based on Turkish askaris and mamluks which has been described. In fact these military reforms constituted one of his major policy objectives of his early rule, including continued repression and phasing out of all Fatimid troops (Ehrenkreutz, Saladin pp. 69-96). To try to draw any comparison between the Fatimid army of the first half of the 12th century, which indeed had large contingents of infantry, and Saladin's army of 1191 is very anachronistic.



Archery

There are also a number of questions relating to the system for representing archery firepower in the game. According to the rules there are four types of archers which are represented on the following reproduction of the Fire Combat Table:

| Firing unit | Target distance (in hexes) | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|---|---|---|
| | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Archers of the Eyes | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Crossbows | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Bowmen | - | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Horse archers | - | - | 2 | 1 |

There are a number of problems with this system. First, only Crusaders are given crossbows while all Muslims are either bowmen or horse archers. In reality the crossbow was used extensively by Saladin's troops, especially during sieges (This is clear even in the Latin sources, see Itinerary 3:5, 5:19 etc.). Furthermore, the Muslims in Acre itself would have special high powered crossbows (essentially miniature ballistae) mounted on the walls which would certainly have exceeded the range and power of the crusader's hand weapons (Cahen, p. 129-35 and his comments; he discusses a number of different types of crossbows and their uses). It is true that most Muslims didn't carry crossbows as most Muslims were mounted, but the infantry certainly did, especially in besieging or defending city walls. At least a portion of the Muslim archers should therefore be crossbowmen.

In addition, there is still a debate concerning the comparative effectiveness of the 12th century crossbow and the composite bow used by the Muslims. It is far from certain that the crossbow was more effective as the Fire Power Table would indicate, this gives the crossbow a one point advantage at each range level (see Latham, & Faris pp. 77-81, 145-53). For one thing, the composite bow, even if shot from horseback had a much higher rate of fire than the crossbow (Paterson pp. 69ff). Patterson also discusses the fact that in modern tests the composite bow has been shown to be able to effectively penetrate medieval European armour at 100m. The numerous descriptions of unharmed knights with a number of arrows protruding from their armour come from the fact that the horse archers often shot from beyond the 100m mark (to a maximum of c. 240m which would give the Muslim bows a range of 4 or 5 instead of 2 and 3) to provoke the knights into a charge and to avoid return fire from Crusader crossbowmen and archers. At these longer ranges the bows were naturally less effective. It was not until the 15th century with the development of the steel crossbow that it was able to surpass the composite bow in range and penetrating power (Payne-Galloway pp. 20-30). Therefore, although it is not provably incorrect to make the crossbow more effective in the game than the Composite bow, it is highly problematic.

An additional problem is the fact that not all crusaders used the crossbow. Many were armed with shortbows (the long bow didn't come into widespread use in England until the following century) as is made clear by the Latin sources (Itinerary 4:18). What the proportions were between crusader archers and crossbowmen is hard to say, although it does seem that the crossbowmen were more important.



Armour

The rulebook gives the impression that the armour of the Muslim troops was, for the most part, either non-existent or very light (p. 14 col. 3), which is born out by the fact that all Muslim troops except Saladin's guard are inferior in melee value to the Crusaders. This interpretation of the relative quality of the troops is not sustained by the historical evidence.

It is possible that the mail of the Muslims might have been generally lighter than that of the Christians. However it should also be recognised that Muslim steel was superior to Christian at this time, and therefore a lighter Muslim mail suit would have been stronger and afforded more protection than its Christian counterpart. The Christian armour had to be heavier to provide equal protection.

Whichever armour was superior, (and it should be noted that captured armour of the enemy was often worn by both sides) there is no doubt that most Muslim troops were armoured to some degree. The "Treatise on Armament" written for Saladin describes three types of armour used by Muslim troops. First is the 'Jaushan' which was a form of scale armour composed of small plates of either iron, horn or leather. This is described as a 'Persian' form of armour, and since at that time Turks had come to completely dominate the military of Persia, it is likely that 'jaushan' was used by the Turks, perhaps mostly by the Turkomen nomadic tribesmen who didn't have the metallurgical expertise to form good mail. The second type is the 'Kazghand' made by the Arabs and was the common coat of mail. This armour was used extensively by the askaris. Finally there was the 'Kimukht' or leather armour, used by light troops and perhaps the Qaraghulam askaris (Cahen, pp. 138-9). In addition, there are a number of references in Muslim histories to where the Muslim troops are said to have plundered the coats of mail off dead Christian soldiers (for example, there is a fascinating tale of a Turk wearing the armour of a Christian Knight whom he had killed, who is himself killed by a crossbow bolt from Richard Lionheart - Itinerary 3:13). Thousands of mail coats and other types of armour would have been included in the plunder from the battle of Hattin which would then certainly have been worn by the Muslims at the siege of Acre. Obviously, then, many if not most Muslims were armoured.

The Muslim sources mentioned above make it clear that chain mail was widespread, which the Latin sources confirm. For example, describing the Turks defending Acre the Itinerary states "however close the (Turks') armour fitted, or whether the coat of mail was twofold, it availed little to resist the darts from their (the Crusaders') arbalests." (3:13). In other words, not only did the defenders of Acre have mail coats, many of them used double coats, much like many heavy Christian knights.

In addition I have seen, handled and worn an Islamic coat of mail, and from my examination (although admittedly not scientific) it was of very high quality. There are a large number of such mail suits in any military museum in the Middle East.

Saladin's Guard

The rules claim that "there was a faylag known as Saladin's Guard ... A heavy armoured infantry contingent with a longer spear and sword and shield; it was basically a copy of the Christian infantry it faced" (p. 15 col.1). Saladin's only personal Guard unit was the 'Halqa' or 'circle', so called because they surrounded the Sultan in times of danger. They were the troops personally commanded by the Sultan in battle, were all

askaris (i.e. armoured horse archers), and numbered some 1000 men, not the 5000 men faylag the rules imply (Humphreys p. 82-3). They were also usually Mamluks (i.e. freed slave soldiers) and wore special yellow uniforms. William of Tyre states that Saladin's bodyguard was "A thousand of the most valiant knights". They certainly were not trying to copy Christian infantry, although the Halqa often fought on foot protecting the tents of the Sultan.

The rulebook also states that part of Saladin's Guard consisted of elite archers known as "The Archers of the Eyes". In actuality such a unit never existed in Saladin's army. It seems possible that the inclusion of this unit comes from a misinterpretation of a passage in Ian Heath's *Armies of the Dark Ages*, where it discusses Fatimid Sudanese Archers, and relates them, somewhat misleadingly, to the Nubian "Archers of the Eyes" (p. 104). Historically, it was only Nubian archers who were ever called "Archers of the Eyes" and this was mainly in relation to one battle where the Nubian archers shot out the eyes of 150 Muslims (al-Baladhuri p.380; Ayalon, Mamluk, p. 201). The problem comes from equating Sudanese archers in general (Sudani being the Arabic generic term for Negro, of which Nubians were only one group), which were used mainly by the Fatimids rather than Saladin, with one specific group of Nubian archers from a specific period of the past. At any rate, there was never such a unit in Saladin's army.

Naphtha

Another unit included in Saladin's Guard in the game is a special naphtha corps. As a general rule the special corps of Saladin's army were not under the personal command of the Sultan but were drawn from any number of cities in Saladin's empire depending on local conditions and skills (Gibb p. 83-4, & p. 90 note 77). To my knowledge the Naphtha troops were never gathered together into one large unit but were generally in small platoons which would be attached to various Tulbs for a specific action. Instead of having one naphtha unit, it would be more realistic to have a number of naphtha units which would be attached to regular units and serve to increase their melee value in some way. Additionally, Naphtha was used extensively by the Muslim troops in Acre itself, and "Greek Fire" is often given as the reason the Crusaders were forced to retreat from the walls (Itinerary 3:15). This factor is not represented in the game.

Militia

The rulebook states that "The rest of the army (other than Saladin's guard) was a militia, raised as needed and ... returned home at harvest time." This interpretation of Saladin's army is reflected by the general inferiority of the Muslim units in the game. However, the askaris of Saladin's army were by no means militia. They were a highly trained standing army. They did, on occasion, return to their bases at harvest because they owned fiefs and wanted to be there to supervise their affairs, but this was often by means of troop rotation. Calling them a militia, with the implication that they were an untrained rabble is incorrect.

There were militia units in Muslim armies at this time, but they were generally raised only for defense when a specific city was attacked. Gibb (p.83) states that "local or militia troops, (were) distinguished from the askaris in that they were not mounted archers, but fought with spear and sword. By this time, (c.1180) however, it is likely that the old militia organisations of Syria were falling into disuse ..." For a long term siege such as Acre, it is unlikely that the militia units would have been able to remain in the field as could the regularly paid askaris.



The Garrison and Fleet at Acre

As mentioned above, Saladin stationed a large number of Egyptian askaris in Acre in order to bolster the defenses of the local Syrian askari garrison and the city militia. It would be impossible to estimate accurately what portion of the troops were askaris, but there could have been

several thousand present. Muslim crossbowmen should also have been included in the garrison.

Another crucial aspect of the campaign which is not represented in the game was blockade running by the Egyptian fleet. On various occasions throughout the siege Saladin's fleet entered Acre, bringing supplies and reinforcements. The crews of the vessels that entered Acre apparently often participated in the defense of the city. The flow of ships, supplies and troops into Acre played a vital role in the defense of the city which allowed it to hold out for so long. It was only with the arrival of the large English and French fleets that the Crusaders were finally able to securely blockade the harbour and prevent any further arrival of supplies and reinforcements. During the course of the last month of the siege, however, there were a number of naval battles as Muslim ships tried to break the blockade (see Ehrenkreutz, "Naval" on this entire question). The naval aspects of the siege would represent an important and interesting aspect which could have been included in the design.

Auxiliaries

The rulebook also fails to make clear the fact that there were Turkoman, Kurdish, and Arab tribal irregulars who actually served as Saladin's light cavalry. The light horse archers in the game would be equivalent to the Turkoman and Kurdish tribesmen but there were also mounted irregular Arab Bedouins as well as regular paid Arab contingents having varying degrees of armour protection serving as lancers. On occasion, such as at the Battle of Arsouf, Bedouins were seen dismounted firing bows, but they were not trained in mounted fire, which is a highly complex skill requiring extensive training. It is likely that there were Bedouin units who rode camels to the battlefield and dismounted to fight on foot, either as archers or spearmen. These light auxiliaries were used as scouts, skirmishers and raiders.

Playability

Although there are many errors in the historical reconstruction of the Muslim armies for the game (and other problems with the Crusader armies which haven't been dealt with here), the game design and playability, like most SPI products is generally good. A few of the rules which attempt to recreate the military environment in which the Crusaders and Muslims fought will be briefly examined.

The division of the game-turn into a Bombardment phase, or alternatively an Assault phase is a good attempt to recreate both strategic and tactical considerations in one game. If the Crusader decides only to work on damaging the walls a turn will pass with only a single Bombardment phase. On the other hand, if melee combat occurs, an Assault phase of ten "impulses" is utilised, allowing for tactical manoeuvring and combat.

Although the basic idea is good there are a number of problems with the actual format of the Assault phase. Since one game turn (which apparently equals two days) is divided into ten assault impulses, one would assume that one impulse is the equivalent of either one hour if the assault phase is supposed to equal one day of fighting, or two hours if it equals two days. A man in an hour could easily walk a mile to two even over rough terrain. Each hex in the game is about 50 metres, making a mile some 32 hexes. In an hour, or one "impulse," then, a man should be able to walk 32 hexes. In the game, however, the average movement capacity for infantry is only from 4 to 6 hexes, making the integration of time and space, which is of vital importance in actual warfare, rather confused. Furthermore, each unit equals from 600 to 800 men and stacking is not allowed, which in many ways limits the range of tactical possibilities by limiting the possibility of concentration of force at a given crucial area.

The rules for siegecraft, (which seem to have been based on another SPI game dealing with the Turkish siege and conquest of Constantinople) including ladder assaults, bombardment, mining, repairs, etc. are very good, and in some ways they seem to me to be historically the best aspect of the game. However the rule on Muslim Intervention, which limits the Muslims to deploying only a portion of their army in any turn, creates an un-



historical limitation on the Muslim player. According to the rulebook (p. 6 col.1) the entire Muslim army can be deployed only twice during the game. During the other 14 turns only various portions can attack the Christians. The problem is that the Muslim player must decide which portion of his army is to attack before the Christian player decides whether to make an assault on the city. Therefore, if the Christian Player makes a major assault, and the Muslim player has chosen only to commit a limited number of units on that turn, the Christian player has the potential of taking Acre while the entire Muslim army sits idly in their camp. Actually, whenever the garrison of Acre was hard pressed by Crusader assaults, they would send signals by means of drums and signal fires to Saladin, who would then mobilise his army to assault the Crusaders in the rear and relieve the pressure of the city (Itinerary 315, 319). Historically, then, Saladin attacked the Crusaders at precisely the moment the Crusaders attacked the city, something which will happen in the game only fortuitously if the rule on Intervention is followed.

On the whole the game is enjoyable to play and offers a number of interesting challenges to the players on both sides. Generally speaking, the problems are not with the design, but with the attempt to simulate a given moment of warfare between two historically definable armies. In many ways it seems that the game takes the name of the city of Acre, the names of the rulers of the opposing sides, and organises them in an imaginary fashion which often bears little resemblance to historical reality. In a sense, the historical inaccuracies make it so that the game is not really an historical simulation of the siege of Acre, but rather a "fantasy" game wearing an historical mask.

This situation is very unfortunate. The Acre rulebook makes the observation that "The Crusades have been ignored by wargame designers" (p. 15 col. 3), which is essentially true. In a single year there are more wargames produced dealing with either the American Civil War or World War II than have ever been produced on the Crusades in the entire history of the Wargaming Industry. As one who has a deep interest in the Crusades and Medieval warfare in general, such a situation is very depressing. Yet it is equally depressing to see those few games which are produced on the Crusades being marred by sloppy research and scholarship.

The Crusades and the period of Medieval warfare in general has great potential for exciting and interesting wargames which has been virtually untouched by the industry. Yet to anyone who knows the period, it is inherently no less interesting than either the classical period that preceded it, or the age of technical warfare which followed. It is hoped that a combination of accurate historical research and clever game designing will one day rescue the Crusades as a period for wargames from the oblivion where it so unjustly lies.

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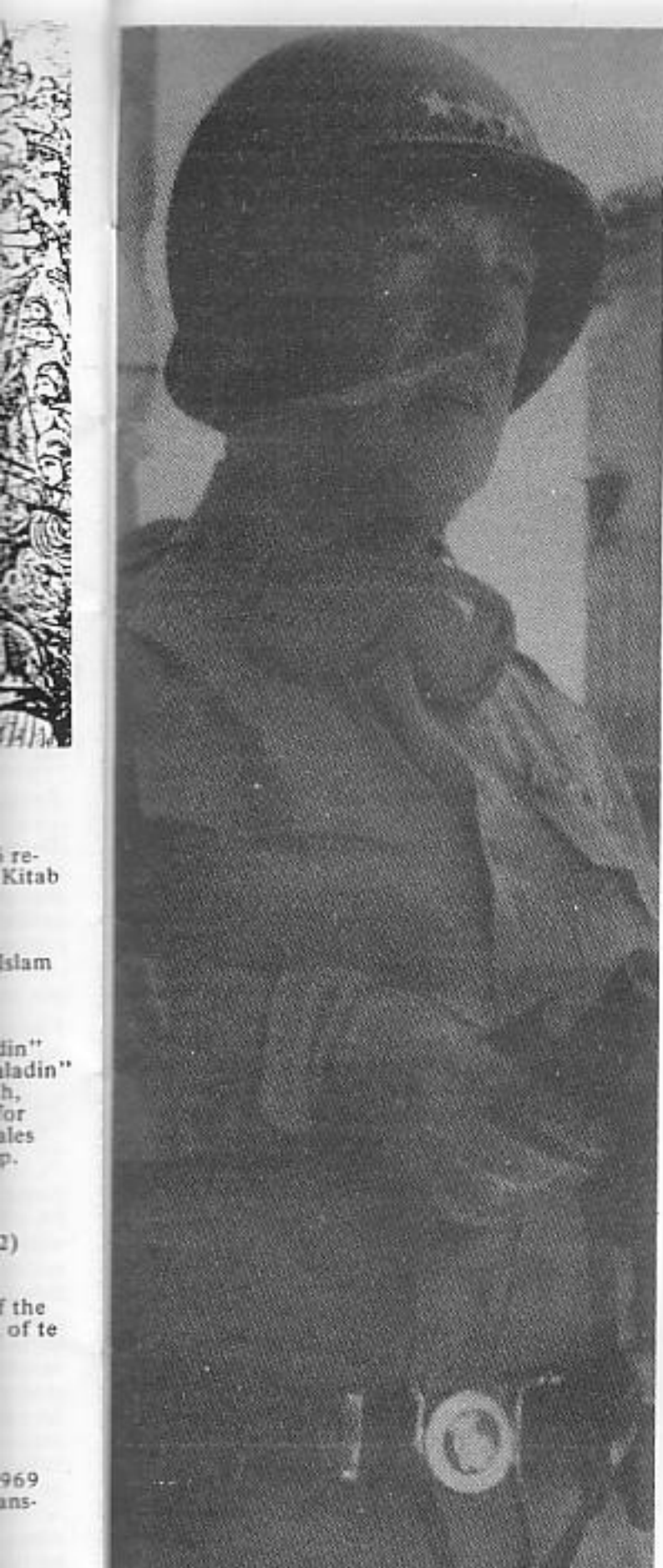
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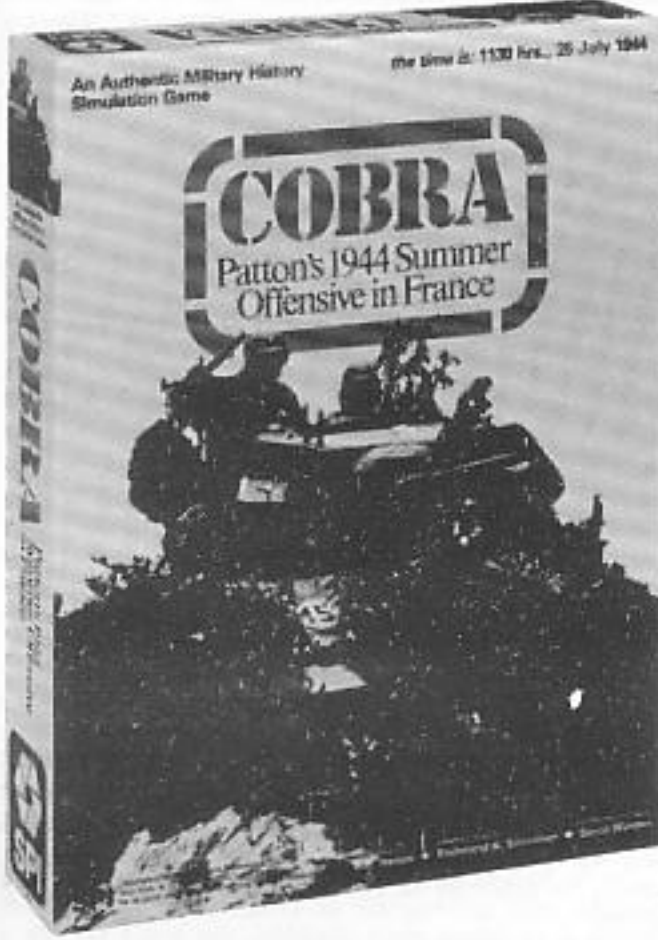
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COBRA RECONSIDERED

ANDREW McGEE



What must be happening in reality is that the units in the front line are spreading themselves more thinly so as to be able to cover two hexes rather than one, but in this case there seems no good reason why attackers should not be permitted to direct their attacks at the apparently vacant hex, which is really being thinly held – it is odd, is it not, that one way to render a hex immune to attack is to withdraw all units from it. To combat this the following rule is proposed:

“Units may attempt to overrun vacant hexes which are subject to enemy ZOCs and into which the standard rules would not permit them to move. The cost to perform such an overrun is 3 Movement Points, and such an overrun does count against overrun limits for the individual unit and for the phase as a whole. The attacker’s strength is calculated as in an ordinary overrun. The defense value of the hex is found by calculating the strengths of all enemy units exerting a ZOC into the hex and halving the result. Column shifts are calculated exactly as for an ordinary overrun and the overrun is resolved exactly in accordance with section (6.5). The adjacent defending units do not suffer combat losses. If the CRT indicates losses for the defender but none for the attacker, then the attacker may advance into the defending hex. The attacker may not advance after a split result.”

It is to be emphasised that this procedure is used only where the overrunning unit would otherwise be unable to move into the defending hex.

(7.0) Stacking.

This is merely a proposal to tidy up a small anomaly; the stacking limit is expressed in terms of divisions, but no allowance is made for the effect of losses; a U.S. Infantry Division which has lost

three steps counts the same for stacking as one which is still at full strength. Substitute the following for standard rule (7.1).

“The Stacking Limit is 12 Stacking Points per hex. The Stacking Value of the various units is as follows.

| | |
|----------------------|----------|
| US Armoured Regt | 4/2 |
| US Infantry Division | 12/9/6/3 |
| US Infantry Regt | 4/2 |
| Br/Can Brigade | 6/3 |
| German PG Regt | 6/3 |
| German Inf Regt | 4/2 |
| German Pz Regt | 4/2 |

The first number indicates the stacking value when at full strength, the second number is the stacking value when at reduced strength. In the case of US Infantry Divisions the successive values are for successive step losses.”

(7.2) Divisional Integrity.

One fairly common rule about which I have always had serious doubts is the one allowing a doubling of strength when all the units of a particular division are present. I do see that there will be an improved performance when the whole division is fighting together, but I find it hard to believe that efficiency is doubled. Of course any change in this will have quite a significant effect on play-balance, and in Cobra this will be principally to the detriment of the Allies. However, some of the other changes to be proposed here will swing the balance back the other way, and this seems to offer a good opportunity to try out a change. Accordingly, the following amendment to rule (7.2) is proposed.

“The effect of Divisional Integrity is now only a 50% increase in strength. The definition of Divisional Integrity and of the units eligible for it is unchanged.”

(8.2) Extent of Zones of Control.

Another of the minor amendments; it concerns the effect of bridged Major River hexsides on zones of control. It is a point not expressly dealt with by the rules; Major River hexsides are said to negate zones of control, but nothing is said about whether this applies even to bridged Major River hexsides. It seems reasonable that some kind of zone of control should exist in such cases, but it is questionable whether it should be as strong as the ordinary Cobra zone of control. The following compromise is suggested.

“Movement ZOCs do extend across bridged Major River hexsides, but these zones are fluid. It costs one extra MP to enter such a ZOC, over and above the cost of the terrain, and one extra to leave it, but a unit may both enter and leave such a ZOC in the same movement phase, and may move direct from such a ZOC to another ZOC, as well as entering it from another ZOC, even a rigid one. For retreat and supply purposes ZOCs do not extend across bridged Major River hexsides.”

(9.0) Combat.

A mixture of minor and major changes here. First, two small ones:
(9.38) The one-column bonus is given to Tiger tanks in attack as well as in defence.

Cobra was a game which should have been a success from the start, having the magic ingredients of tanks and Nazis, and using the highly successful PGG system. In fact it has not had quite as much attention or acclaim as the East Front games on the same system. One of the reasons for this was no doubt that the game as originally published in S&T 65 had Victory Conditions so badly worded as to make an Allied victory almost impossible; subsequent errata have rectified this, and Cobra is now an eminently playable and reasonably well-balanced game. For my part, however, I entertain certain reservations about the details of the system, especially as applied to the Western Front; some of these are relatively minor whilst others are more fundamental. I hope that the rules changes which they have led me to propose will be of interest to all those interested in the PGG system, although I should emphasise that I have not experimented with the effects of any of these changes in East Front games. For the sake of convenience the suggestions follow the order of the original rules.

(6.5) Overrun.

This is one of the more radical proposals, and warrants some explanation. I have long been unhappy about the standard tactic in games with rigid movement-zocs of organising a defensive line on alternate hexes, thereby exposing the minimum number of units to attack, using the minimum number of units in the front line and at the same time making it very difficult to surround any unit.

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I have never understood the reason for limiting this advantage to defence and cannot justify retaining the original rule.

(9.76) This rule is abolished. Again I can find no justification for it. It is extraordinary to suppose that all the trucks will be lost when the division retreats. Since the truck markers can be fairly freely interchanged between one division and another, it might be argued that there is in fact an abundance of trucks but a shortage of petrol, and that what is really simulated here is the allocation of fuel, but remember that the marker may be replaced on the same unit in the next replacement phase, so that this argument asks us to assume that the allocations of fuel are being chopped and changed every two or three days.

Now for the two major changes. The first concerns the options available to the attacker when he suffers a combat result. The standard rule in *Cobra*, as in all PGG games, is that he may retreat or may take the step losses. In PGG itself this is to some extent a genuine dilemma since it may be important to keep an integrated division together for overrun purposes in the second movement phase. In *Cobra* overruns are not permitted in the second movement phase. In any case it is surely unrealistic to think of the attacker simply politely pulling back on discovering that the enemy forces are too strong for him. When a division attacks and is repulsed, people tend to get killed and there is little to be done to prevent this. Accordingly, I propose the following radical amendment:

"The attacker is obliged to take all his combat results as step losses."

It is, I think, worth saying a little about the effect this has been found to have on the play of the game. It might be thought that, combined with the reduction in the effect of divisional integrity, it would severely handicap the Allied armoured divisions. In fact this consequence is mitigated by two things. First, the armoured divisions can lose at least two, and in the case of the Americans three, steps without forfeiting integrity; second, the Allied Player quickly learns the importance of attacking with combined forces of infantry and armour, using the infantry to take the loss. In this rather indirect way combined arms tactics are forced on the player. For the Germans of course this rule is of less importance, since they spend most of their time on the defensive. The next change is aimed entirely at them, however.

Obviously the overall strategic situation of the game is that the Germans are on the defensive. In addition they will generally be fairly seriously outnumbered. To some extent it is difficult for defenders in such circumstances to retreat freely, and for the Germans this was aggravated in the original campaign by Hitler's insistence on the importance of retaining ground even at the expense of losing men. Admittedly this insistence was not so extreme as at times on the Eastern Front, but there were numerous occasions when the Fuhrer took it into his head either that a particular piece of soil was vital or that his generals were conspiring to retreat as far as possible, and consequently issued orders to fight to the last man. To simulate the combined effects of these factors, when a German unit suffers a combat loss and wishes to absorb this by retreating, the German Player rolls one die and consults the table below.

| | Die-roll | | | | | |
|--------|----------|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Combat | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Result | 2 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| | 3 | - | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 |

The number shown is the *minimum* number of steps which must be taken as losses rather than retreats. The German Player has of course always the option to lose more steps than this if he thinks it the wiser course.

(10.0) Headquarters Units.

The standard rules allow the HQ of General Patton to be used to give two combat shifts for American

Units. No other Allied HQ is favoured in this way, although all German HQ's may be used for the purpose of combat bonuses. I am deeply suspicious of this rule, regarding it as merely another chapter in the SPI story of how the Americans really won the war all by themselves, and have preferred to disregard it. I would propose its abolition.

(11.0) Supply.

Supply rules have always been a particular interest of mine, not least because I have thought them the poor relations of game design. *Cobra* is not a sufficiently complex game to require sophisticated supply rules, but there is in my experience a flaw in the rule that the supply line may be of any length; I have on occasion seen U.S. units trace supply from Avranches via Falaise, which is surely stretching belief a little far. I think that the following amendment to rule (11.1) represents a sensible compromise.

"A line of supply may cross a maximum of three non-road hex-sides before leaving the friendly map-edge. Both Primary and Secondary Roads count as roads for this purpose. The non-road hexsides may or may not occur in immediate succession."

(15.3) Carpet Bombing.

A small adjustment is proposed in this section. Given that one game-turn represents three days, it seems to me excessive to forbid all movement through the bombed hex in the succeeding Mech. Movement Phase. Therefore I suggest allowing such movement but at an additional cost of three movement points.

The two sections which follow, (18.0) and (19.0), have of course no counterpart in the standard rules. They embody further changes and developments, which I offer for your consideration.

(18.0) Reserve Designation and Commitment.

This rule was developed at least partly to restore game balance when it was found that some of the other changes, in particular the limitation on German retreats, had tilted the game considerably in favour of the Allies. One problem which arose was that the Allies found it so easy to tear holes in the German line that in almost every game the Germans were surrounded by about turn 5. To counteract this it was decided to allow the Germans the option of designating certain units as reserves, and to give them a special movement phase in which to attempt to shore up gaps created by the Allies.

The Sequence of Play is amended by the insertion at the end of the German Player Turn of a "Reserve Designation Phase" and the insertion immediately after the Allied Combat Phase of a "Reserve Movement Phase".

(18.1) Reserve Designation.

In the Reserve Designation Phase the German Player may designate mechanised units as reserves. To be eligible for this status the unit must not at that time be in an enemy movement-zoc, whether rigid or fluid.

A unit which has been designated a reserve is eligible to move in the following German Reserve Movement Phase. It is not eligible to move in the following German Initial Movement Phase, whether or not it performs Reserve Movement. Thereafter it loses Reserve Status and may fight and move normally. It may be designated a reserve again on any number of turns, so long as it satisfies the conditions of this rule.

(18.2) Reserve Movement.

In the Reserve Movement Phase any unit currently in Reserve may move up to its full movement allowance, as modified by the weather, which is the prevailing weather of the Allied Player Turn. This movement is subject to all Supply, Terrain and Zone of Control Rules. No Overruns may be performed in this phase.

(19.0) Hitler Directives.

Hitler's intervention has been mentioned briefly already in connection with Combat Results; but his insistence on holding the line obviously extended to attempts to withdraw units not in combat. In addition there was the case of the counter-attack at Mortain, which he ordered for the night of 6th-7th

August, against the opposition of his commander on the spot. To simulate intervention of these two kinds this rule limits the movement of German units and requires the German Player to make a certain number of attacks.

(19.1) Holding the Line.

(19.11) Subject to sections (19.12)(19.13) and (19.14) any hex which is in a German Movement-Zoc at the start of a German Player Turn must be in such a Zoc at the end of that Player Turn, unless a hex further north in the same hex-row is in a German Movement-Zoc at the end of the Player Turn. Different units may be used at the start and end of the turn to fulfil this requirement. A move which would result in the violation of this rule is an illegal move and may not be made.

(19.12) The German Player may ask the Fuhrer's permission to disregard rule (19.11). He does so by designating any one or more hex-rows, not necessarily contiguous, in respect of which he wishes to make the application. He rolls two dice, modifying the total as indicated in (19.14). If the modified total is 10 or more, he may disregard rule (19.11) in respect of the designated hexrows for the rest of the current game-turn.

(19.13) Applications may be made at any time in the German Player-Turn, and the number of applications to be made in any one Player-Turn is unlimited, save that only one application is allowed in respect of each hex-row in any one turn.

(19.14) The die-roll is modified as follows:

| | |
|--------------|----------------------|
| Turns 5-8 +1 | Allied VP's 21-40 +1 |
| 9-13 +2 | 41-60 +2 |
| | 61+ +3 |

For the purposes of this die-roll **ONLY** the Allied VP total does not take into account points scored by the Germans for exiting units off the eastern edge of the map. In addition the total is increased as shown below for the Allied capture of the towns indicated.

| | | | |
|-----------|-----|---------|-----|
| St Lo | +10 | Lisieux | +15 |
| Caen | +15 | Falaise | +20 |
| Villedieu | +15 | | |

A town is captured for this purpose when all its hexes are occupied or were last occupied by Allied units.

(19.2) Exiting Units.

(19.21) The German Player is restricted in his freedom to exit units for the purpose of satisfying Victory Conditions.

(19.22) At the beginning of each German Player-Turn the German Player rolls one die and adds the number of the turn to it. The result is the maximum number of units he may exit from the map this turn.

(19.3) Compulsory Attacks.

(19.31) Each turn the German Player is liable to be required to launch a number of attacks.

(19.32) At the start of each German Player-Turn the German Player rolls two dice and subtracts from their sum the number of the Game-Turn. The result is the number of attacks he must launch that turn.

(19.33) The maximum number of attacks the German Player may be required to launch in any one turn is four. If the process described in (19.32) produces a result greater than four, then the German Player must launch four attacks that turn.

(19.34) An overrun does count as an attack for the purposes of this subsection.

(19.4) Disobedience

(19.41) At the start of any one German Player-Turn the German Player, after determining the weather, but before doing anything else, may declare that he intends to disregard the Fuhrer's orders this turn.

(19.42) The effect of this declaration is that rules (19.1) (19.2) and (19.3) are suspended for the duration of the German Player Turn.

(19.43) This option may be exercised only once in the game.

THE NORTH CIRCULAR WAS NEVER LIKE THIS

INITIAL IMPRESSIONS OF CAR WARS
from Steve Jackson Games

JOHN LAMBSHEAD

'14. PEDESTRIANS: If a vehicle collides with a pedestrian, the pedestrian takes full damage (see Collisions).'

'16. KILLS: A "kill" is scored when an enemy vehicle can no longer move or fire, either because of a direct attack or because of an attack during combat. The occupants do not have to die. Killing a pedestrian is not a kill.'

Car Wars is a microgame (oops sorry, Metagaming have copyrighted that, I mean small game in a plastic bag of course) which examines car to car (or bike, etc.) combat at a tactical level. Chad Irby and Steve Jackson (the colonial one) admit responsibility for its design. The cars in question bear little resemblance to my trusty Ford as they are armoured and are equipped with an unusual range of optional extras. MGs, Flame throwers, Missiles, Oil sprays, Minedroppers, Anti-tank Guns (?), Lasers (??) etc. All of which is a little fabulous if, like me, you think that a cassette-recorder, whip aerial and cigarette-lighter-which-lights-up-at-night are the last word in motoring sophistication. In case any poor naive soul has still some doubts about the purpose of this game I will bluntly lay it on the line. You have to destroy everybody else's motor car to win. Car Wars looks forward to a near-future when the citizens of the USA live in fortified towns dining exclusively off algae and the countryside belongs to psychopaths in armed vehicles. Oh, and the chief recreation is watching motor, "destruction-derbies" spiced up with a collection of weaponry which would not disgrace an armoured division.

Inevitably games like this spark off the usual arguments on the 'morality in wargaming' line. Maybe I should state my attitude right away. It is either moral or immoral to derive entertainment from games based on violence. Attempting to draw lines between which types of violence are a 'good thing' and which a 'bad thing' seems nonsensical. If tanks shooting at each other are fair game material then so are cars. Incidentally if wargaming is immoral because entertainment is derived from death where does this leave the book publishing and film industry? John Spence informs me that, with the game, a car sticker is supplied. This apparently bears the game motto Drive Offensively. I would suggest that displaying this sticker would be damned offensive in a country where the most common form of violent death is the traffic 'accident'. It would also be infantile and potentially very stupid. Imagine the following scene. One of Inspector Knacker's flat-footed goon squads has hauled you up before the beak charged with a heinous crime, like doing 31 mph in a built up area or not having enough water in your windscreen wash-bottle. You lie there in chains grovelling and protesting your innocence when the prosecution play their trump card. Why are you driving around with Drive Offensively plastered all over your rear window? Explanations of 'Oh it's only a joke and I don't mean it literally but you see I play this game where you drive around shooting people and running down pedestrians' are not going to get you your licence back. They might just win you a free vallium holiday at the happy farm while trick cyclists discuss your relationship with your father. As an idea Car Wars is tasteless. But bad taste is not necessarily criminal, immoral, fattening or even undesirable.

For a minigame (that's not a copyrighted term is it John?) Car Wars is quite decently presented although, of course, the customer is expected to cut out the counters and map sections. The second surprise about this game is that it is fairly detailed

and quite complex. Indeed I would rate the complexity at about Air Force level. Oddly enough our old friend the hexgrid has been abandoned in favour of squares — you remember squares. Cars do not move from square to square though but can move in any direction in one inch increments, which are equivalent to 10 mph. I found this a little disconcerting and would have preferred a nice simple hexgrid, after all if it's good enough for Air War! Each one second turn is divided into ten movement phases. Cars move in one inch increments in these phases according to their speeds. For example a car moving at 10 mph moves once in phase six, a car moving at 50 mph moves in phases one, three, five, seven and nine while a cardboard counter doing a ton-up moves in all ten phases. This system allows all vehicles to move more or less simultaneously. It is not new having been used by miniatures' people (as opposed to miniature people) and in some board games, e.g. Star Fleet Battles. This system is O.K. where there are only two counters on the board, e.g. most SFB duels, but can get excruciatingly tedious where a number of counters are used, e.g. Car Wars. To some extent this is offset by good player aids in the latter game. As well as driving in a straight line players are offered a variety of 'manoeuvres'; turns, drifts, swerves, pivots and something called a bootlegger reverse — which seems to be a sort of handbrake turn. The manoeuvre system is quite interesting. Each car begins with a certain 'handling number' which depends on its suspension type. During a game-turn each manoeuvre causes a number to be subtracted from the handling number. As the handling number drops the controlling player must start rolling on a loss of control table. If he loses control the car will skid and possibly roll. As wargames go this is a fairly sophisticated system — so is it anything like driving a car? Well, no, not really. This emphasises that we should beware the pitfalls of ever casually assuming that our complex games bear too much similarity to real life, whatever we conceive that to be. While on the subject of movement I should point out that cars have different acceleration rates according to their power to weight ratio, while their decelerations largely depend on their handling number.

Combat is as intricate as movement. A weapon can be fired once at any time during the game turn. To damage a target, first a line of sight must be established. Then dice are rolled on the hit table, the die roll being modified according to a variety of factors, range, target size and speed, visibility etc. If the weapon's hit number, or better is rolled then the weapon has hit (simple innit?). Damage is scored on the target according to the weapon's strength. Generally vehicles take hits on their armour first and then, when this is destroyed, on their innards. Other rules cover crashes, collisions, road debris, uncontrolled vehicles, pedestrians, crew skills, vehicle design etc.

Well there 'tiz. I must admit I find it difficult to see who this is going to appeal to. It is a little too complex to be a 'fun' game or to be of much interest to the lunatic fringe. On the other hand who wants to expend so much effort simply to drive an armoured beach buggy around. The back cover shows a teenage lad in the act of heaving a grenade out of a car window. Apparently this was the winner of the first Car Wars Tourney. Perhaps that answers my question. A combination of intelligence and immaturity is required for a full appreciation of Car Wars.

The New Game.

Having set out all the new rules, it seems a good idea to say a little about the effect they have been found to have on the play of the game.

Obviously the German Player must approach the game in a way very different from that likely to succeed in the standard game. One criticism of the standard game has always been that it is too easy for the German Player to make an orderly withdrawal in a draw from the map. This is certainly no longer the case, for he is now obliged to hold the forward positions for a long time, unless he is very lucky. A move with the die-rolls. In this context it is necessary to think carefully about the use of the two options which are given to him by the new rules, namely Reserves and Disobedience. With Reserves it is dangerous to designate units as reserves in-discriminately, since they lose their next initial movement, whether used as reserves or not. Perhaps more important, the value of a reserve is much diminished if it is in an enemy Zoc when the time comes to use it, so it is helpful if the reserve unit can be in some way screened by infantry. Disobedience is available only once, and good timing is essential. The ideal conditions are bad weather and as few German units in Allied Zocs as possible. Unfortunately these cannot always be achieved, and in my experience players tend to wait as long as possible before exercising this option. I consider this a mistake, because using disobedience to salvage something from what is almost a debacle usually means that you get very little benefit from it. I would favour using it no later than turn four, unless the Allied offensive is very badly stalled.

The Germans can do relatively little about the die-rolls for determining when they must take losses rather than retreating, but this rule makes it quite important to mix infantry and armour in the same stack where possible, and this is in turn made easier by the new stacking rules — when units have taken losses it is easier to stack a few infantry units with a Panzer Division, for example.

Overruns against vacant hexes are in practice used mainly where a stretch of good defensive terrain is being held by weak units and there is a less difficult hex between them, and this now gives the German Player something extra to worry about.

On the Allied side the three important changes are Divisional Integrity, Supply and Attacker Losses. The first makes a noticeable impact after the first few turns when the Allies begin to come up against the main German forces. Nothing can be done about it, and the Allied Player just has to remember that his force is less strong than it was. Interestingly this change does not seem to have the maxi-encouraged players to split up integrated divisions, which I had hoped would be one of the consequences.

The new Supply rules should offset the effects of forcing the Germans to hold the front line, at least to some extent, by making it more difficult for the Allies to surround them without putting themselves out of supply, whilst the Allies obligation to subtract results as losses will blunt their offensive power by making it necessary for them to take units out of the line for refitting.

Overall I am inclined to think that the balance of the game has shifted somewhat in favour of the Allies; certainly playing the German side has been made significantly more difficult, but I believe that the overall result has been to improve the game as a simulation as well as to offer a new challenge. If you've put away your copy of Cobra because you think you've solved all its problems, perhaps this article will encourage you to get it out again. I hope so.

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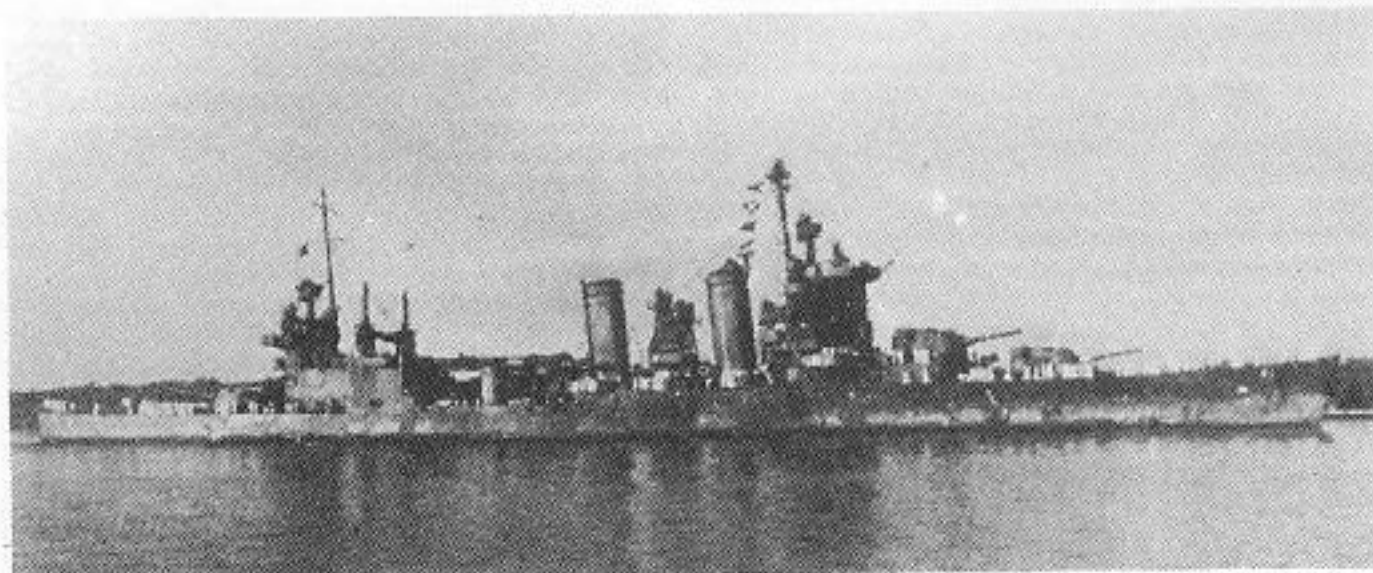
IRONBOTTOM SOUND~

Prime Minister's medical record found on rubbish heap

*'Roll on the Rodney, the Nelson and Renown
You can't have the Hood 'cause the buggers gone down'*

R.N. drinking song

JOHN LAMBSHEAD



Ironbottom Sound is a tactical simulation of the night actions fought off of (sic) the island of Guadalcanal in 1942." It is sold in a large flat box with the usual 'Marvel Comic' artwork. It has always been something of a surprise to me that more games companies do not use good commercial artwork to sell their wares. Inside the box we have the usual rules booklet, a nice large hex sheet, with a cut-out Savo Island which may be moved around on the map. Essential tables are presented on separate cards, as are the scenario set ups. Ships are represented by counters on the map, but also by sheets listing the necessary tactical information pertaining to the ship in question. These sheets are necessary because this game is a very detailed examination of surface ship combat at night (i.e. close range), and so it would be impossible to place all the necessary information on the counters. I.S. includes all the ships that took part in the battles at Guadalcanal plus those that might have done. This last list is interpreted fairly generously to include various European warships, German, British, Dutch etc.

Fascination with detailed 'big ship' battles is as old as wargaming itself. This game is spiritually in the Fletcher Pratt camp with battles being decided by the weight of shells one vessel can hurl at another. Of course anyone wanting to play such a game with WWII warships faces an irritating problem. In this war his beloved capital ships were largely floating targets for subs and planes. Indeed, I am told many of these armoured monsters only ever used their guns in anger while on shore bombardment. Exceptions to this general rule were the battles at Guadalcanal — so here we are.

Let's go on a guided tour round an *Ironbottom Sound* warship; for example the Japanese heavy cruiser *Aoba*. Firstly the ship's tactical sheet informs us that it has primary guns of 8in. calibre and secondaries of 4.7in. calibre. A schematic outline of the *Aoba* is given by boxes. Each gun battery is depicted by such a box. Arrows indicate

the field of fire of the battery whilst its gunnery factors (weight of shells) are also listed. Next we have the ship's flotation factor ('C' class in this case) which is used in the combat system. The ship is also shown as having two lateral torpedo batteries with 24 in. torpedo tubes, and reloads.

On the *Aoba* is an aircraft box (this can catch fire!) and a fire control box ('M'). Should the latter be damaged gunnery is detrimentally affected. Lastly there are a number of empty boxes which represent hull sections. When all these have been destroyed the vessel turns into a submarine. The *Aoba's* maximum speed is given on both the sheet and counter. It takes the form of three numbers, 6, 5 and 5. This means that on turn one the ship has a top speed of six, but only has a maximum speed of five on turns two and three. Effectively then this ship has an average maximum speed of 5.33 recurring per turn. The movement system is nice and easy. Essentially you trundle around at your set speed making 60 degree turns for free, while 120 degree turns use up an extra movement point. One is informed that 'Because of a ship's water envelope as well as the inability to rapidly increase or decrease a ship's speed, ships must expend MF in relation to their speed on the previous turn! I think anyone who has even driven a car or pushed a barrow accepts that it takes time to accelerate or decelerate a lump of metal — where water envelopes come into this I am not sure. However we press on.

Sequence of play is as follows. All ships movement is plotted in advance, as is all torpedo fire and the direction the tin-fish are set to run. Then all the ships are moved simultaneously. At the same time torpedoes move across the map in full view of both players in exactly the same way that real torpedoes don't. An optional rule suggests that torpedo movement be noted down in secret on scrap-paper until such time as they come near a ship. I recommend that this rule be used, despite the extra work, otherwise torpedoes are easily

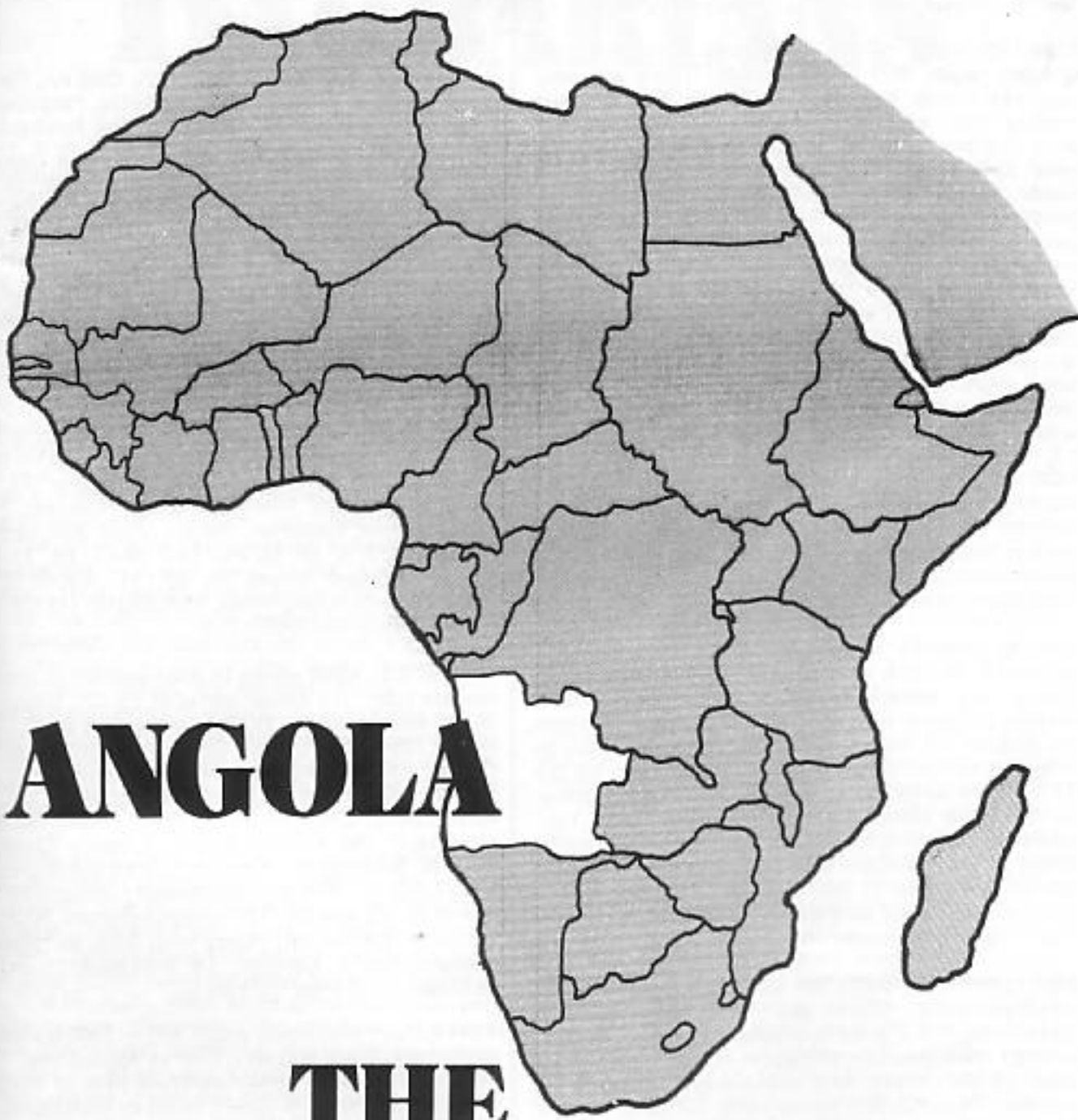
evaded at anything other than minimum range. If torpedo and a ship occupy the same hex, die are rolled to see if their association becomes more intimate. However, damage from torpedoes does not become effective until after the gunfire phase.

Cannonfire is reckoned to be simultaneous. To fire at a target you must have a line of sight and it must be within range. The weapons gunfire factor is cross indexed against the roll of two die (an 11-6 die roll system is used). Various modifiers affect the die roll, e.g. range, orientation of target, target on fire etc. One rolls on the gunnery hit table for any hits inflicted (again two die read as 11-66). This die roll is again modified; this time by gun calibre versus type of target. Surprise, surprise! 4 inch gun will cause more damage to a destroyer than a battleship. This table gives results like, hull damage, primary gun damage etc. Certain hits can only be achieved if the shell has penetrated the target ships armour at the appropriate range. So guess what — on to the armour penetration table. Certain hits just say 'special damage'. This requires two die to be rolled against the special damage table. This can result in the ship catching fire, blowing up, suffering an engine malfunction or some similar misfortune. Optional rules cover improved radar, starshells, searchlights and a '66' table. If a player rolls sixty six on the gunnery hits table he is immediately obliged to roll again on the '66' table. This tells him what damage his own guns have done to him. Cute little things like fire or electrical failure.

At some point in a review one is supposed to make erudite remarks about simulation quality. Now I am going to start this section with a confession. What I know about WWII ship design could be written in neon letters on the back of a British Leyland profit sheet. Nevertheless it all looks amazingly impressive with lots of data and tables. Is it a simulation of Guadalcanal? Ah well now that, as they say, is something rather different. A rather nice succinct account of this campaign is given by Macintyre, 1966, (*Battle for the Pacific*). It is clear that these were rather unique battles. The side that spotted and identified their opponents first would clean up, inflicting heavy casualties. In theory the Allies should have had a major advantage in these night actions with radar equipped ships. In practice the radar advantage was often thrown away by amateurism, incompetence and a complete incomprehension of its potential. In contrast the Japanese were skilled, highly trained professionals. In addition the yellow peril could deploy their excellent 'Long Lance' torpedoes, the existence of which was completely unknown to the Allies. Naturally the inevitable result was wall to wall carpeting of Allied warships across the seabed of the sound; with the odd sort of Nippon double parked on top.

In the game there are visibility rules for each scenario. These might say something like Japanese visibility 12 hexes, USA 10 hexes. This means that a Japanese ship could open fire on a target up to 12 hexes away while Allied ships are limited to a combat range of 10. In practice this is of little advantage to the Japanese player as both sides can 'see' supposedly undetected ships on the map and manoeuvre accordingly! I sympathise with the designer's problem here as I can see no solution short of two maps and a referee. It's the old 'eye balls in the sky' problem once again (with apologies to Boot the wonder racing dog). So instead of surprise overwhelming attacks by hidden enemies these scenarios tend to be more like slug-fest matches. Fortunately hidden torpedo movement restores much of the tactical finesse — especially if you don't tell your opponent you have fired any! Also the close combat range does mean that weaponfire achieves comparatively quick results on targets. It's not as bad as those Dreadnought games where you both blast away at each other until wrist fatigue through die rolling sets in.

Ironbottom Sound was designed by Jack Greene and is published by Quarterdeck Games. It's a specialised game for a specialised market. So if you're after an upmarket gun and armour naval game then this is worth consideration, but perhaps not one for the casual buyer.



ANGOLA

THE ANGOLAN CIVIL WAR 1975-76

ROGER MUSSON

The subject is the complicated three-cornered civil war fought in Angola in 1975-6 between the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the National Liberation Front of Angola (FNLA), and the South-African backed National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). This fierce struggle began with the decolonisation by Portugal of her Angolan territory in 1974, and ended in March 1976 with the collapse of FNLA and UNITA, and the international recognition of MPLA as the legal government of Angola. However, if you've been reading your newspapers recently, you'll know that the matter is not entirely closed yet, with further S. African fighting in Angola, albeit aimed more at SWAPO than MPLA.

The game covers the most important part of the war, from about October 1975 to the end, though the exact date of the start of the game is not given. There are twenty weekly turns. (The hex scale is about 25 miles to the hex.) Either the game can be played as a three-player affair, or a two-player version can be achieved by having one player controlling both the FNLA and UNITA, with the proviso that the two forces must be played independently of one another (so the Allied player effectively gets two sub-turns). Historically, there existed a loose alliance of sorts between these two in the face of a common enemy, the dominant and Cuban-backed MPLA, but they never trusted one another that much.

The rules are fairly simple and straightforward: no stacking combat voluntary, by differential, no adverse effects on attacker; zones of control rigid but not locking; turn sequence is reinforcement, movement, movement of supply units, supply reinforcement, combat. The rules to watch are the supply rules. This is one of those games where you use up supply units whenever you attack. Supply radius is very restricted (two movement points) and to top it all, supply units may only be moved along transport lines, which are not as many as might be desired. The effect is one of making the organisation of effective attacks rather harder than usual; attacks must be channelled along transport lines. Note also that a unit more than three movement points from the nearest road or trail cannot be attacked at all; supply cannot be brought within range. However, units are allowed to attack more than once in any combat phase, providing you can come up with sufficient supply units to fuel each attack.

There is one novelty in the rules: a player, if things are going so badly that he has no hope of conventional victory, can switch to guerilla warfare. The effect of this is to convert all his units into little guerilla bands that waltz round the map ignoring supply and ZOC. Whereas victory in conventional war is determined on the basis of territory held, a guerilla player is awarded victory points on a different schedule, based on how many lines of communication he can cut, with points also for destroying enemy supply units.

More interesting and unusual than the rules, though, is the strategic situation. The MPLA starts off defending a dumb-bell shaped stretch of territory right across the country, with the FNLA to the north of him and the UNITA to the south. Each side has its problems. FNLA is well-supplied with troops but is pitifully short on supply. UNITA has supply coming out of its ears, but has rotten troops (whereas FNLA units are almost all 2-3-4s, UNITA is laboured with 1-2-3s for the most part, with a few 2-2-4s and 2-3-4s). MPLA, on the other hand, has plenty of supply and plenty of troops, both good and bad, but has to fight off both FNLA and UNITA together. Even in the three-player version, these two have got to concentrate all their efforts on crushing MPLA. If they start fighting one another, it is sure to give MPLA an easy victory.

I'll consider the position of each side in turn, starting with the MPLA. The first decision to make is what to do about Lunda province in the east. Holding the road through Malanje is next to impossible. Neither opponent can actually attack it, for there's no way for them to bring up supply, but they can easily cut it with an unsupplied unit, unless you can screen the whole length of it, which would take up far too much manpower. So your eastern position must be supplied by air via the airstrip at Henrique de Carvalho. There are three

Phoenix no. 30 Messrs Bolton & Orr issued a challenge to the readership of Phoenix to name three or more "African based games ... which did not occur in WWII". Since no-one else seems to have taken up the gauntlet, I suppose I might as well. Easy ones first: South Africa (SPI), Africa (SG), Modder River (Yorkshire Games - recently reviewed in Phoenix), Schutztruppe (Bumpas - subject of Messrs Bolton & Orr's review). That's five so far. Then: Roark's Drift (sic - or something very like it), Isandlwana and Fortress Rhodesia (I can't remember the companies that did any of these) and Angola (Games Shop). Up to nine. Two French Foreign Legion games (with funny foreign names) by Bearhug Publications make eleven, and if you allow Source of the Nile we have twelve. Then there are African based scenarios in Frigate (Aboukir Bay), Raid (Entebbe), Chariot (Bubastis) and Rifle & Sabre (a couple of Boer War engagements) - and possibly others. Sixteen if you count these; I shall be conservative and not include games that include Africa on the margins, such as Punic Wars, Middle Sea, Conquerors, Sinai, Chinese Farm etc. Nor will I include the two-map SPI Rorke's Drift game, which, though it reached playtesting, seems unlikely now ever to surface (though Eylau made it eventually). Nor my own Invasion - Chad! and Napoleon at Lubumbashi, both of which are coming into severe research problems.

So, at least eleven and possibly sixteen or more (what have I missed?). in fact Africa hasn't done too badly. Australia, now, there's a place with very few games set there. Mind you, it does have a shortage of battles to be quite frank. There's nothing much beyond the "battle" of Eureka Stockade in 1854, and that little engagement was not much more substantial than the so-called "battle of Bossenden Wood" which you sometimes see quoted as the last battle on British soil. India is far less well-represented than Africa, considering the number of battles that have been fought there. But beyond a few more Rifle & Sabre scenarios, there's not a lot there in game terms. And South America is a very under-gamed continent: I can quote you two only (not counting Conquistador) - any advance on two? Come on somebody!

Anyway, I must leave this enormous digression and come down to the subject of this review, which is the Angola game aforementioned, by the little-known American company, Games Shop.

About the company I can tell you little. It is new to me, but Angola is not a brand-new game. The rules are dated 1979 and the map 1977 so either the game had a long gestation or there's a wee misprint crept in.

possibilities: to hold the eastern position strongly so as to prevent a UNITA attack from succeeding, but at the risk of weakening defence of the coastal provinces; to hold the east with a reduced force, planning to let UNITA have it eventually, but make him pay for it and tie up troops that would otherwise be occupied elsewhere; or to abandon it altogether and concentrate on the coastal provinces. I find the second scheme the most practical. As the game progresses, MPLA is reinforced with several contingents of Cuban troops, big, beefy 4-4-6s, and the build-up of these allows you to gradually switch over from the defensive to the offensive. Rather than split your forces too much, it is probably best to concentrate against one opponent at a time. I favour a holding action against FNLA in the north, concentrating the Cubans for a knockout against UNITA in the south, and then pushing back the FNLA line. This is partly because there is greater room for manoeuvre in the south, making it much easier to bring to bear sufficiently large forces to obtain high differentials and "defender eliminated" results. The exact course of the attack will depend on what inroads UNITA has already made in your position; I favour a pincer movement from Quibala and Benguela if possible, with two forces converging on UNITA's sole airstrip at Nova Lisboa (referred to as "Huambo" on the map for some strange reason). Benefiting from interior lines, you can switch forces north quickly in cases of emergency, i.e. unacceptable gains made by FNLA attacks. In particular, "Quifangondo" (Caxito) must be kept in MPLA hands, or it becomes difficult to supply the rest of your position, the road out of Luanda (where MPLA supply arrives) runs one hex south of Caxito and is therefore cut if the FNLA hold that town.

The FNLA player is the one who is most hamstrung by the restriction of supply units to travel along roads and trails, for this severely channels FNLA attacks along the coast road from Ambriz and the two roads south from Carmona (marked on the map as "Negage" — I can only assume these divergent placenames mean that since 1976 the Angolans have indulged in that perverse habit Africans have of renaming places, but since the old names were in use at the time of the war, using the new ones is about as sensible as designing a game called "Battle for Volgograd"). These narrow corridors are further narrowed by the rough terrain (which contracts the supply radius in terms of hexes). If you had enough supply you could batter your way in, but since the FNLA supply quota averages out at one unit per turn, this isn't on. Every attack must be carefully husbanded, whereas MPLA can counterattack freely — he has lots of supply. So the chance of significant progress is not high unless either you are lucky, or the MPLA player is stupid.

FNLA's one ace is the Chipenda brigade, which, at 4-4-10, is the best unit in the game. It appears on the southern border on turn one, in amongst the UNITA forces. It is the only FNLA unit allowed to use UNITA supply, and historically fought in the south alongside (sometimes) UNITA. But in the game the best course is to bring it quickly to Mocamedes on the coast, ship it north to Ambrizete and use it to stiffen attacks in the north. Frankly, it is about the only way you are ever going to get a decent differential, so don't lose it, whatever you do. It isn't too difficult to take Caxito every now and again, but unfortunately it is difficult to consolidate it, and like as not MPLA will recapture immediately, and you've wasted a precious supply unit. Perhaps a better bet is to try for the important road junction at Lucala (not marked on the map). If you could hold this, you'd have a supply route east along the Malanje road, greatly increasing your scope for action; but the chances are against it with so little supply to fuel attacks. It is worth sending a couple of unsupplied units out east though, just in case you can slip them round the back of the eastern MPLA lines. There is also the chance of getting what I take to be the town of Caungula ("Camaxilo") for nothing, for which you get one glorious victory point.

As UNITA, the order of the day is to hit MPLA hard as quickly as possible, before the Cubans start arriving. Gain what you can, then sit back and try and hold on to it. The main decision to make is how much force to send out east. The answer must be at least enough to screen whatever MPLA deploys there, for you can't afford to have little red 1-2-4s running around behind your lines. Take

advantage of your initial strength while you can, because MPLA isn't going to get any weaker. If the worse comes to the worst, at least you are better placed than the FNLA when it comes to guerilla warfare — the Benguela railway, worth victory points for every cut in it, is conveniently placed.

Now for some critical comments. The rules are actually quite well put together. There are only two real flaws, both minor. One is that the rule stating that supplied units may not attack any adjacent enemy units should read supplied units may now attack any adjacent enemy units. The other concerns the Chipenda brigade, which, according to the rules is automatically in combat supply for the first two turns. Wait a minute: units may attack any number of times per turn providing they are in supply. So the Chipenda brigade can attack an indefinite number of times in the first two turns. In fact, since it can never suffer an adverse result, it can roll up the entire MPLA line single-handed. A correction: the Chipenda brigade is in combat supply for the first two attacks it makes.

One grey area, though, is in the assessment of victory, for there is no distinction made between victory levels in the three-player game and those in the two-player game, though obviously in the latter one player will have points equal to those of two players put together in the former.

I'm not entirely happy about the reinforcement schedule, and the lack of any dates doesn't make things any easier. The first Cuban detachment arrives on game turn one; the first Cubans arrived in Angola on November 12th 1975. The South Africans replied by sending in some armour on the 15th of the same month, but the S. African armour in the game doesn't arrive until game turns four and five. The S. African helicopter units also arrive then, but S. African helicopters actually started action in Angola in late October, together with a unit of armoured cars on a "reconnaissance mission". Where lies truth?

Not in the map, that's for sure. Nor am I thinking of placenames. Those apart, the map has two flaws: one, it's a gross oversimplification, two, it's wrong. The oversimplification is such that only two terrain types are distinguished, rough (a swathe from 50-200 miles wide running up the length of the coast, plus an outlier east of Carmona) and clear (everywhere else). The physical geography of Angola is a bit more diverse than that. Presumably the designer would argue that if rough and forest have the same effect in game terms, one may as well call them both rough, but it looks sloppy. What is worse, though, is that the geography on the map doesn't agree with the geography on the ground. Nova Lisboa is practically on the highest ground in the country, yet it is in clear terrain, and all the rough is to the west of it. Granted that the rough terrain indicates (presumably) relative rather than absolute elevation, it's still in the wrong place. The Angolans may have changed a few placenames since 1976, but they certainly haven't been pushing the mountains around.

The physical quality of the map (also the other game components) is quite satisfactory. The map (22" x 29") is printed in red, blue and black on cream-yellow thick paper. The counters are of quality comparable to GDW — 120 in all. The game is boxed. The map also contains a very useful reinforcement arrival chart. Time to play: about two evenings at the speed I play.

To sum up. My biggest reservation is the inaccuracy of the map. Angola would be a better game if a little more attention had been paid to detail, but is still not a bad game, and not without interest, as I hope my notes on strategy suggested. It is not a game of bold and dramatic manoeuvre, though; the supply rules predicate slow, careful advances for the most part. Not for the panzer/blitzkrieg enthusiast. However, the chances of anyone else ever doing an Angolan game are not exactly great (I think SPI feedbacked the idea once upon a time), so anyone with a burning interest in the subject hasn't a lot of choice. For the general buyer, its chief virtue is that it is a good three-player game, of which there are fairly few on the market. So if you have, say, two brothers and a shortage of three-player games it is worth a try.

FOR SALE

FOR SALE: SPI one pound each, *Cassino*, *Raid*, *Desert Fox*, *Wolf Pack*, *Panzer Battles*, *Paratroop*, *Rescue from the Hive*, *Voyage of the Pandora*, *Barbarian Kings*, *Fighting Sail*, *Ares 5, 6, 7*. For £2 *Cobra*, *Pattons 3rd Army*, *Operation Grenade*, *October War*, *Vera Cruz*. For £3 *Star Soldier*. WWW games all £1 *Forward to Richmond*, *Chinese Civil War*, *Carrier Strike*, *Drive on Damascus*, WW issues 13 and 16. Other games *Pearl Harbor* £6, *Godsfire* £4, *Starship Troopers* £4.00, *Cromwell* £2.00, *Warsaw Pact* £3.00, *Panzer Krieg* £3.00. Add 20% for p&p. M. Robbins, 39 Pennard Road, London W12 8DW. Payment by postal order, give alternate choices.

FOR SALE: for £1, *Armada*, *Combined Arms*: for £1.50 *Panzer Battles*, *Bundeswehr*, *Voyage of the Pandora*: for £2 *October War*, *Mechwar 77*, *Paratroop*, *China War*: for £2.50 *Cassino*, *Panzergruppe Guderian*, *Berlin*. Also 50p each *Phoenix 2, 7, 8, 18, 19* and *S&T 54-62, 64, 71-73, 77, 79*. £1 each *Moves 28, 30, 31*. Apply G. McIver, 29 Corkland Road, Manchester M21 2UR "Work phone 061-863-7715"

FOR SALE: Most games in mint condition. Prices include p&p. (1) Boxed game at £9.00: *Empires of the Middle Ages*, (2) Unboxed games at £2.50 each: *Albuera/Vittoria*; *Drive on Damascus*; *Carrier Strike*; *Chinese Civil War*. *Operation Condor*; *Kesselring*. (3) Unboxed games at £1.75 each: *Cobra*, *Kharkov*; *World War 1*; *Raid*; *Cedar Mountain*; *The Kaiser's Battle*; *Wilson's Creek*; *Ney vs Wellington*; *Cassino*; *Constantinople*; *Vera Cruz*. (4) *Fire and Movement* numbers 20-25 inclusive: £3 the lot. (5) *Moves* numbers 30-50 inclusive: £9 the lot. Please send SAE for reply. Contact David Karfoot, 16 Kirkland Place, Lochvale, Dumfries DG1 4LL.

FOR SALE: (including p&p). SPI — *East is Red*, *Wilderness (Blue & Gray)*, *Plot to Assassinate Hitler*, £1:25 each. *Jena-Auerstadt (Nap at War)*, *Chattanooga (Blue & Gray)* *Road to Richmond*, £1:50 each. *Wilson's Creek*, *Kaiser's Battle*, *BAOR* £2:00 each. *Austerlitz— (1973 version)* £3. *Battleline — Seven Days Battles*, *Fury in the West* £4:00 each. Send cheques ONLY to P. M. Sheppard, 20, Albion Walk, Cheltenham, Glos. GL50 1DD.

FOR SALE: Games in mint condition, (inc. grip top bags), S&T games without magazine, counters unpunched, £2:00 each: *Berlin '85*, *5th Corps*, *Paratroop*, *Kaiser's Battle*, *Fighting Sail*, *BAOR*. Played once (other conditions, the same) — £1:50 each: *Panzer Battles*, *China War*. Played several times, good condition, £1.00 each: *WWI*, *Bastogne*, *Armada* (boxed, played once) second edition — rules edited, £3:00. The lot for £17:50. Orders under £10.00 please add 10% postage, over £10.00 post free. Please send an SSAE. WANTED: *Conquistador* in good condition, preferably the boxed version, will pay up to £5. Apply to: D. Wright, 37, Green Park Rd., Halifax HX3 0SN.

WANTED: *Modern Battle Quad*, *Russian Civil War*, *Thirty Years War Quad*, *War in the Pacific*, *Wellington's Victory*. Contact: D.G.S Howell, 24 Chilworth Close, Chilworth, Southampton SO1 7JJ. Telephone Southampton 769085.

FOR SALE: *Descent on Crete*; *Ardennes Quad*; @ £6 each; *To the Green Fields* @ £5; *Panzer 44* *Mech War 77*; *Fulda Gap*; *Sinai* @ £3 each; *October War*; *South Africa*; *Raid*; *Constantinople*; *Stonewall*; *Kharkov*; *Tannenberg*; *Cassino*; *Armada*; *Panzer Battles*; *China War*; *Paratroop*; *Berlin 85*; *Wilson's Creek*; *Fifth Corps*; *Kaiser Battles*; *Operation Grenade*; *Fighting Sail*; *Cedar Mountain*; *BAOR* @ £1.20 each. All prices include p&p. Contact: Malcolm Will, 39 Royle Green Rd., Northenden, Manchester M22 4NS or phone 061-998 3812 after 5.00 pm.

THE BARBARIANS

PAUL KING

Without a doubt, there is a dearth of good war-games dealing with the Ancient and Medieval periods. The latter has received some attention of late with SPI's Medieval Quad, A.H.'s Siege of Alesia is still going strong, as is Kingmaker, but good games of the periods under question are still few and far between.

Yaquinto now join the field with The Barbarians, an album format double game covering both periods with Sack Rome and Mongol. I have always been impressed with the quality of Yaquinto's components and the album series is no exception. This is a "second generation" album, the originals being a record jacket style package. However, counter storage in the sleeve was unsatisfactory, so now the new style incorporates a box assembly with resealable plastic bags - the result is very pleasing. The actual maps form the inner surface of the record sleeve and are colourful, if a little abstract. The counters are up to Yaquinto's usual standard - eighty for Sack Rome, one hundred and twenty for Mongol. Rules for both games are contained in an eight page booklet which is well laid out and most suitable for beginners, in fact the Mongol rules are almost a rewrite of Sack Rome, so after playing one a quick read through prepares you for the next game.

Beginning with Sack Rome, the map shows the Western Roman Empire, with Rome in the south east corner. The Barbarians enter from the north map edge, the different types - Goth, Vandal, Hun, etc., having their own colour and homeland. According to the rules the game covers the period 330 - 476 A.D., thus each game turn approximately covers ten years. The initial deployment favours the Roman, bordering the Barbarian homelands. Added to this are a number of fortification counters which make the Roman legions difficult to dislodge from their border areas. As the game proceeds it becomes one of attrition as the Barbarians destroy legions at a faster rate than they can be replaced at the "front". The game system is one of Barbarian movement and combat, followed by a similar Roman phase. Once the Barbarians break through and force the legions back to a new defensive line nearer home they can rapidly build up reinforcements and head for Rome, victory being achieved once a Barbarian unit holds an undefended Rome. That Rome will fall within the fourteen game turns is not in doubt, how well a player does as Rome is the real criterion. So once Rome is reached the players reverse rolls and play again. The winner is the person who can hold Rome the longest.

Movement is by area/province, and units stop after crossing two provinces or on entering a province containing an enemy unit. Combat is a very simple procedure and involves pairing off opposing units in an area, excess units and forts are held in reserve or die modifiers and for use in further combat rounds. After pairing is complete, each player rolls a die. To win, the Barbarian must throw a six, the Roman a five or a six. Modifiers increase die roll range, especially for the Roman. As a result of both players throwing the die a pair may have to fight again, both be eliminated, or have one side eliminated. Combat will then move to the next pair and so on. On the surface, it may seem a daunting task for the Barbarians; however, a breakthrough will eventually occur and Rome be forced to fall in the face of overwhelming odds.

Roman tactics are fairly obvious. England must be subdued almost at once - having three legions and back one Pict unit is wasteful. The fortifications must cover the two Goth entry areas, with the remaining fort holding back either the Vandals or the Franks. Unfortunately building Hadrian's Wall would be a waste of effort in this game. One major area to watch is southern France, for once the Barbarians break out into this area they can island Corsica or Sardinia directly to Rome - nasty!

The Barbarians must initially fight in vain, for they are always losing battles. However, since they replace all losses next turn, and Rome can only replace legions by one reinforcement/turn, they will get out eventually. Attacking the fortified provinces may appear difficult, but once taken the areas involved often provide soft attack spots to pull Rome off balance. The direct road to Rome can be very slow, so a diversion to the south to attempt the island hop can be useful, even if it only pulls off a few legions it is worth a try. One unit type, the Hun, can move three areas as opposed to the usual two. Therefore, they should be used to sneak through lines, distract forces from the main push or even head straight for Rome - this often puts the Roman in a quandary. The Picts are also special, as they have no reinforcements. So rather than throw the Picts in piecemeal it is better to use them as a backup in a big stack. Lose the unit and it reappears in Scotland, a long way from where the fighting is. One point which should not need making is always attack, even if only to maintain pressure on the Roman player.

A number of optional rules exist, the first being initiative. Instead of a Barbarian phase followed by a Roman phase, who goes first is determined by die roll. This adds a new dimension to the game. Suppose in one turn the Barbarian moves last and punches a hole in the Roman defenses; next turn he wins the die roll and moves first so as to bring in reinforcements or even expand his foothold.

Sack Rome can be expanded into a three player game also, with two players controlling the Barbarians. The advantage of this system is that Rome can ally with either or both players in his provinces, naturally alliances will only be made with one player if his fellow Barbarian is doing too well. I must admit that as a three player game there was often little scope for alliance - however, the facility is there if you want to use it.

The final optional rule covers personal bodyguard units. These add a bit of fun in that the one designated unit has a modified die range in combat. Both sides need such a unit, especially later in a game and tense moments occur as they attempt to bring each other to battle.

Sack Rome is therefore a quick, easy game to learn and play. I treat it as a competition game only as it is not an exact reproduction of actual events. Perhaps the game's biggest problem is die rolling. This can go on forever sometimes with both players failing to roll a high enough number, and in a large battle actual die rolling can become boring. At the same time it must be said that it can generate much excitement, especially with younger players as they vie with one another to roll a six.

"You have chosen war. That will happen which will happen and what is to be we know not; only God knows."

Message from Chingis Khan to Muhammed Ali Shah, Emperor of Khwarizim, Transoxiana and Khurasan.

The game Mongol differs, as I said earlier, very little from Sack Rome. Movement is the same, however, the Mongol invasion of Europe occurred during a time when the kings and princes would not lift a finger to help one another, therefore some special rules are needed. To begin with, some independent states have armies with no movement allowance - they fight and die on home territory. Other forces are restricted to their home provinces, i.e. Russia and Curran, whilst the armies of Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria cannot leave their bases unless they pass an intervention die roll or reach turn five.

Mongol has nine game turns, each approximately half a year, and to win the Mongol player must control twenty three provinces by the end of any

game turn. Suffice to say I have rarely seen the Mongols fail to do so, often winning by mid-game in some cases.

Combat is similar to that of Sack Rome, in that pairing of units occurs. The big difference lies in the fact that many European army types occur, ranging from Peasant, through Feudal to Knights, the latter being the strongest. Two die are rolled to give a tens and units score of between eleven and sixty six. The combat results table lists the effect of the die result under the heading of European army type to give either army elimination or an exchange result. Without a doubt this system is much more satisfactory, and quicker, than that in Sack Rome.

"..... if you make war on us, the Everlasting God, who makes easy what was difficult and makes near what was far, knows that we know what our power is."

From a letter by Mangku Khan to King Louis IX of France, 1254.

That the Mongols were speedy and fierce fighters is well known; as to whether they were Barbarians or not is another matter. The basic Mongol tactic is to leave the non moving independents to last, Curran and Russia must be removed first so that they may strike at the powerful states of Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria before they fully mobilise. Reinforcements can be given the job of mopping up the independent states at leisure. The result is a win, often by mid-game. The only viable tactic for the European player is to retreat, yet force the Mongol to fight for every province by leaving single suicide armies. Hopefully reinforcements will build up and best armies, the Knights, must be hoarded for use in big fights later on. Naturally the best hope is for early mobilisation of Poland, etc., but this has doubtful advantages if they are used too early.

Again, optional rules are provided, one being our friend the initiative die roll, the other being withdrawal from combat. If after a complete combat round, some opposing units remain, either side may withdraw with all or a fraction of his forces. This is a very useful tactic for the European as a means of killing the Mongol and giving up territory slowly. Unfortunately it was a tactic commonly used by the Mongols, not the Europeans, who were an incredibly thick skulled lot!

Whilst this game is not a pushover for the Mongol player, it need never stretch his limitations. The onus is on the European to put up a good defense, something which did not historically happen. The general tendency is for people to leave Mongol alone and play Sack Rome, at least it involves a bit more competition. In the introduction for Mongol we find that it is meant to be a fast moving game to capture the flavour of events. So we have no mention of Subedei Bahadur, the Mongol military genius who masterminded and executed the invasion, nor of Batu Khan, founder of the Golden Horde, crossing the Vistula when it was frozen, or of the death of Chingis' successor, Ogedei, in 1241 due to overdrinking which brought the invasion to a halt - now that is what I call the flavour of events! As an aside, the book from which I took the quotations is well worth reading if you want a fuller understanding of the Mongol period.

In conclusion then The Barbarians provides us with two easy to play games, but lacking in true historicity. Admittedly Yaquinto got out of this by stating for both that they were after playability and historical flavour of events - whatever that might mean. For myself I feel uneasy about it all; these are just two more games out to catch the Ancient/Medieval buff, but like so many others do not reflect actual tactical and strategic events properly. At the same time I must recommend this offering from Yaquinto for the beginner, the young player and as a handy beer and pretzels game for everyone else.

Further Reading.

The Devils Horsemen. The Mongol Invasion of Europe: James Chambers: pub. Weiderfeld and Nicolson.



HAMISH WILSON

"The long sobs of the violins of autumn — infect my heart with a monotonous langour." As the second half of that quote from Verlain crackled out in the BBC personal messages on the night of 6th of June, 1944, little bands of French resistance started to take their weapons from hiding and made ready to make life as awkward as possible for the Germans who had been occupying their land for four years. On the 8th June the 'Das Reich' 2nd SS Pz. Div. was ordered to move from its rest and replenishment area, south of Montauban, to assist in the struggle against the Allied invasion in Normandy, 450 miles away. In *Das Reich*, Macdonald Hastings tells the story of the march and of the appalling happenings during it. Despite warnings from staff officers of the attrition rates that could be suffered due to the wear and tear of a road march, and probably because of the amount of damage done by the Allied airforces to the French railways, Das Reich set out on the road and were not to reach the southern flank of the Allied lodgement in Normandy until two weeks later. On the way they had to pass through territory where, under the guidance of Allied officers parachuted in to France, the disparate and warring factions of the Maquis were being transformed into a useful guerilla force. These forces were able to cause some delay to the advance of the division but that was less effective than the rumours which the SS chose to believe. So completely convinced were the Germans that they were against a well equipped and disciplined force that they were prepared to accept and endorse a suggestion from Heinz Lammerding (O.C. Das Reich) that five thousand French people be deported for slave labour work and released piece meal in exchange for information from the relatives of the slaves leading to the destruction of Maquis groups. This was the main part of his letter but other parts suggested hostages being shot in a three to one ratio for a wounded German and a ten to one ratio for a shot German.

Macdonald Hastings's account of the ensuing march and atrocities shows, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the forces against which the Nazis deployed a complete SS Pz. Div. were far from being a 'force'. Lurching from ineffective road blocks to sporadic little firefights, the Panthers, Stugs. and Pz IVs were delayed by only hours here and minutes there. It was not until they reached the town of Tulle that major resistance was encountered. The town had been taken the day before by the FTP, the communist end of the resistance and, after a series of scrappy, dusk battles, the reconnaissance regiment of the division retook the town. The following day ninety-nine French civilians were systematically hanged from the lamp posts and balconies of houses. Thus the start of the reprisals which were to mark the route of Das Reich all the way to Normandy. The most notorious of these was the massacre of the inhabitants, and the destruction of the town of Oradour-sur-Glane of which I have already written in this column. Macdonald Hastings deals with this

and the others in his account but, while the book requires to cover these incidents in some detail it is, essentially, an account of the mixed effectiveness of the resistance. Despite being intended to 'clear up' the resistance on its way to the front Das Reich was, by the third day of the march 60 per cent u/s in tanks and 30 per cent in m.t. and, while OKH was demanding its presence at the front, it would not get there for another ten days. Mr. Hastings has focussed on an important aspect of the war in Europe which has not really been covered in this kind of detail before and the depth and extent of his researches have made the book, which also contains thirty two photographs and two maps on the end papers, considerably more valuable than the price of £9.95, which Michael Joseph are charging for it, would suggest.

During recent issues of *Phoenix* I have drawn attention to a number of books which have offered studies of what might happen if there were to be a war in the future in which the Warsaw Pact and Nato came to blows. Amongst the titles I have mentioned there have been those which have spoken from the point of view of the Campaigners for Nuclear Disarmament and I have offered those for your consideration because we, in playing some of the games we do play, are involved in the cardboard end of thinking the unthinkable and it therefore behoves us to be as well informed about the consequences of our actions as possible. There is another title which offers a contribution to this debate which is well worth a look at, especially since its author, Lord Solly Zuckerman, has done a bit of the thinking of unthinkables, landed by Lysander in France during WWII and was the architect of the above mentioned air attacks on the French railway system, and may therefore have a wee bit more to contribute than some of the philosophers who, never having heard a shot fired in anger, happily swap jargonese while they destroy the world on paper. *Nuclear Illusion and Reality* is a slim volume, more that which one might expect from a poet whose talent has finally found publisher's recognition, and the arguments within are quietly advanced with great common sense. Prof. Zuckerman does not come down on the side of the CND. "I do not see the advantages in abandoning what we have already got and I see many disadvantages ..." He does, however, believe that there is a great deal to be said in favour of stopping all nuclear testing and in building more effective conventional forces. I have neither space nor desire to attempt to summarise the arguments but I most heartily commend you to read them in the book in the appropriate detail. Collins are the publishers and the price is £4.95 in soft cover.

In the modern army the armoured vehicles are coming to have a greater and greater importance. Infantry are now expected to be able to operate in NBC environments for lengthy periods and it has been that men get tired more slowly inside a vehicle than dashing about the landscape in their nation's version of the 'Noddy suit'. From *Arms and Armour Press* comes a new book dealing with the most recent developments in the American AFV inventory. Authors Steven J. Zaloga and Lt.-Col. James W. Loop have followed the development of the more modern American vehicles and in *Modern American Armour* tell the sad story of the Sheridan, the MBT-70 and the newest vehicle the M 1 Abrams, the new American MBT. Once again the amount of detail presented here is a tribute to the 'sunshine' law they have in the states about open government. Even the Abrams has its frontal armour thickness described ("the equivalent of 450 mm....") and details of the unfortunate history of the main armament of the Sheridan (bagged rounds cooking off in a gun with an open breech scavenging system!!!) but not only the tanks are covered. APCs in all their various forms from the ubiquitous M113 to the LVTP7 and SP artillery in all its variety are also very well illustrated. The publishers are proud of the two hundred and forty illustrations, of which 16 are in full colour, but I find the text a little too small in print size for comfortable reading and the plan drawings could have been larger to advantage. Those quibbles aside the armour enthusiast will willingly pay £7.50 for this volume and the model maker will find it a useful source of prototype information.

For the last few weeks subscribers to *The Sunday Times* and viewers of the television news services

have been able to watch the thrilling story of the recovery of some twenty million pounds worth of Russian gold from the wreck of HMS *Edinburgh* ha eight hundred feet below the surface of the Barents Sea. From Collins and the pen of Frank Pearce comes the story of the last voyage of that you *Edinburgh* and the story of the men who survive God her and of the very few who survived to get backen to Britain. There are long stretches of this boomation which read like some piece of heroic fictionseven dreamed up by a re-incarnation of C.S. Forester. What is astonishing to contemplate is that the trend heroic stories are true. What is also clear is that the Russian convoys of that time appear to have been to the grudgingly received by the Russians — read the account herein of the *Edinburgh* men waiting for transport to return them to Blighty — not brilliantly organised — Pearce's accounts of the various disastrous voyages of the parts of the *Edinburgh* crew read like an unrelieved string of bad jokebook, played by some demon of naval warfare, with ships getting lost in friendly mine fields, destroyer taking casualties from Armed Merchant Cruisers and RN ships being repaired with bits of cut up railway line. Through all this grim reading there is a thread of humour which Pearce has preserved carefully. The man who stowed away on a destroyer rather than face life in the Russian camp (N.B. not a prison camp) the two men who fought each other every few days apparently just to relieve the monotony and the Admiral who, having lost his ship, sat amongst surviving matelots on the deck of a destroyer and said, "I hope you won't throw me overboard when I tell you who I am." You see, I'm rather a Jonah, Trinidad (a brand new R.N. cruiser) is the fifth ship that has gone under — I'm Admiral Bonham-Carter." This story of battle and tragedy in the northern seas has been told well and will be able to offer insights into the lives of men who lost their ships on the Russian convoys in a way in which few other volumes could. *Last Call for H.M.S. Edinburgh* complete with sixteen photographs and three maps and costs £8.95.

During the time of the Russian convoys the Russian navy was not the great world force it is now. indeed Frank Pearce points out in his book that amongst other things we, the British, sent Russia were four submarines and he forgets to mention the battleship — H.M.S. *Royal Sovereign* — which we also lent them. Nowadays the Soviet Navy is an altogether different proposition. One of the leading authorities in the world on the Soviet navy, Norman Polmar, has provided a foreword to *Soviet Naval Developments, 1982* which *Arms and Armour Press* have just published. This book is a digest of the work which is prepared by the American Director of Naval Intelligence at the direction of the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations and is therefore the nearest thing to the word from the horse's mouth without being in breach of anything 'affecting the security of the state'. It is a slim work but is stuffed with information, insight, e.g. "As has already been noted, the Soviet Navy is not ten feet tall probably they should be characterised today as being 'six feet tall and never growing' ". There are a number of subjects under discussion in this book. Policies and their development take up more space than I can command here, but the hardware is worth mentioning briefly. The new fast submarine, the big new nuclear powered cruiser, the further development of specialised supply ships (similar to our Royal Fleet Auxiliaries) and the re-newed emphasis on both hydrofoils and on RO-RO transport ships and a new, very powerful looking, destroyer class which entered service last year are all detailed and presented with photographs of a high order of clarity — for the most part. Considering the amount of illustration, which is high, the amount of detail, which is considerable, and the combination of comment and hard fact this book is well worth the £7.95 which is being asked for it. Lastly, on this one, don't miss the (sadly) small photograph of the beautiful square rigged sailing training ship 'Kruzenshtern' on page 29. What a yer atom power, noo?

There's a larger amount of reading in a new paperback from Penguin press. It's a Pelican paperback and it's enormous. *The Global 2000 Report* to the President is not for reading the morning after the night before because it's not the brightest, nor the easiest piece of reading I've ever come across. For all that it is worth looking at and spending some

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EUROPEAN WEAPONS & WARFARE

1618~1648

by Eduard Wagner

European Weapons and Warfare is unparalleled as a study of the fighting man in the early 17th century. No other book contains such an in-depth analysis of his life, his costume and weapons, his siegecraft, strategy and tactics. Literally thousands of coloured drawings have been produced by the author, most of them faithfully copied from the rarest of original military manuals. Anyone interested in the Thirty Years War or the English Civil War will have to own a copy of this book. Here are just a few of the reasons: it details every article of clothing used by infantry, cavalry and several principal commanders, as well as the costume of East European, Turkish troops and Municipal Guards; it not only illustrates each article of weaponry, but shows exactly how they were used, including massed drill for regiments and individual hand-to-hand combat; the principal types of artillery are described, as well as how they were manufactured, manoeuvred, mounted and fired. There is a complete study of fortifications (field and permanent) showing what they looked like, why they were constructed in such a way, and how. Actually, the information seems limitless, and here are just a few more topics discussed: hiring troops, military salutes, punishments, mounted drill, horse equipment, pike and musket drill, duelling, demolition, first aid, supply wagons, buildings of the period, bridge building, firearms, edged weapons, polearms, armour, flags, food, lights, baskets, cooking pots... everything but the kitchen sink (although wooden tubs are included).

12½in x 9¾in; 296 pages; too many illustrations to count, all in colour; £14.95 net.



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Second Glance

I have been looking at the 2nd edition (revised) rules for Yaquinto's Beastlord, which have been issued since I reviewed the game in Phoenix 27. This revision has cleared up most of the problems relating to bad rules-writing. The devastating effect of standards on combat in the strategic game has been reduced, and the strategic/tactical interface improved by reducing the set-up distance between two forces on the tactical board.

However, the problems stemming from bad game design remain. In particular, the tactical game system is far too unwieldy and cumbersome for its intended function as a means of resolving combat in the strategic game. An illustration will suffice: in a corner of the battlefield, six goblins gang up on one human man-at-arms unit. Roll two die for each goblin unit, consult the CRT six times, total the damage - it is less than the strength of the man-at-arms, so no effect. The human unit counter-attacks and eliminates one goblin; the other goblins must now all check morale, roll two die for each etc. That's twelve rolls of two dice or twenty-four rolls in all to resolve just one attack in a much larger combat. Meanwhile, the two players not involved in the combat sit round looking bored.

Nor does it help that all tables are buried in different parts of the rule book, and printed rather small.

Final verdict: the strategic game is quite good fun, but you are also paying for the tactical game which is very difficult to incorporate as it stands for practical reasons. The tactical game can be used

in other contexts, e.g. a fantasy role-playing game. Alternatively, you could redesign it yourself to speed it up a bit should you have the inclination. Alternatively, you could play something else. R. Musson

We don't often get a chance to look at the scenes behind the front line in this column, so I'd like to tell you about one work which neatly fills this gap. It's *Diary of an Edwardian Mess Orderly, 1903-6*, and it really is a wonderful book. As you will notice, the period it covers lies between the Boer War and WW1, a period of peace rather than war, and, published by **Hedgewick and Stopes**, this work well conveys the sense of inactivity and sometimes boredom of the British Army at this time. The name of the author of this fascinating account of daily life in a London barracks, has unfortunately not come down to us, but his simple and direct style richly conveys the atmosphere of the period. Entries such as "Jan. 1 - did nothing" and "Jan. 2 - slopped out" provide a fascinating, and in many ways, unique insight into the military everyday life. If I have any reservation about this book, I suggest it is in the author's own marginal illustrations which are reproduced alongside the text. While these are undoubtedly valuable for their authenticity, the style is a little too unpolished for my taste, though they express well the author's rather earthy sense of humour. But this apart, I strongly urge you to add this volume to your bookshelf. This is a work we all ought to study carefully, and it is a real bargain at only £49.99. Worth five or six times the price. (Especially as I get a review copy!)

Jock Callaghan

I read with interest Mr. Sandell's review of *Raid on Iran*. Although he clearly disagrees with most of my political postulates, I cannot complain about this aspect of his review; after all, a game made as a political statement is inviting a review on the same basis! I wonder at his apparent belief that the hostage-taking was somehow more justifiable than the rescue attempt...but this is not the place for that sort of discussion! I would love to have the chance to debate the gentleman someday, preferably before cheering crowds of partisans from both sides. Alas, I fear that will never be. So it goes.

I must, however, take exception to the characterization of the helicopter failures rules as "purely random"! There is only a 1/12 chance that an undamaged helicopter will fail to take off (not "crash!"). This chance rises rapidly for a helicopter that has taken damage; severely damaged helicopters cannot take off at all. The result is that, to play a good game, the commando force must recognize that their transportation is not wholly reliable, and plan accordingly! It is no more reasonable to assume that every helicopter will fly (alas!) than to assume that every bullet will find a target in a Napoleonic simulation.


I am pleased to announce that Mr. Sandell's other objection - the "concertina" rules sheet - will be rectified in the next printing, which ought to take place in spring of 1982. The combination of rules and map on a single sheet proved unpopular, so we will be discontinuing it as games come up for reprinting (except with **One-Page Bulge**, where the rule sheet is only 8 1/2" x 11" anyway).

Steve Jackson

In his interesting article, 'Untitled' (Issue 34) Roger Musson classifies the title 'From Wilderness to Western Shore' as being in the 'purely fanciful' category and 'In My End is My Beginning' as the 'most mysterious'.

Actually both should have been included in the category of quotations, which is what they both are. 'From Wilderland to Western Shore', to give it its correct rendering (and as the author rendered it in Issue 30) is from Frodo's mourning song for Gandalf in LOTR, Vol 1, Ch 7: 'In My End...' comes from T.S. Eliot's 'East Coker', Pt V. The choice of the latter remains mysterious but my guess is that it was made because of the reference in the poem's immediately preceding lines to the sea and the 'vast waters'.

Donald Mack



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The Mage was a Soldier boy
A Soldier boy no more
For what was really RPG
TURNED INTO



Signed
John Johnson

Isle of York,
Nautica Markets
Land of Bull's
Tavern
15th Day of the
Light. 161

Dear Thur,

It threns that the thtrange
figment of thumous imagination -
Curoosly named Mage Ord Amark-
(the grste and mothit fearfulls withard)
hath twittated with undergarmenthe
by confuthing WARGAMING with
ROLE PLAYING. Plesthe can
thomeone correct hym before
he doth impune the resth of
my family!

Signed
Both Ise R. Iyah Dango
(Mrs)

The Lichway

Mail!

Oh Noble Editor

Me Thinks the
MAJOR Has writ
his LETTER WHILE
CURSED BY SOME
ILLUSION THAT ROLE-
PLAYING GAMES HAVE
SOME RELATIONSHIP WITH
WARGAMES!

Signed
Morraine Shushfest (gnd)
Peter Wilmshurst (Fighter)
Mauripha Phagge (knl)

The Barberbanks

John of Spence
Land of The Phoenix

Oh, sir. The Mage Ord I am Ack has
by inference raised the Jonly Role Player
to heights as yet unattainable. We
can now be classified as "Wargamers"
instead of "ROLE PLAYERS"

What will the many players of the
other 'wargames' respond - shall you
print replies from:- *Terrance & Tommie*
Tom Goble, *Bunnies & Burrows*, *?*
UNIVERSE, *DragonQuest*... et al...?

Signed
Willie Tootley (Miss)

* Note Miss Willie Tootley is a Surgeon Technician
Who is very well known in SPACE OPERA.
- yet another wargame!

...the char... rules as... 2 chance... to take off... dly for a... y damaged... ult is that... orce must... ot wholly... no more... ter will fly... will find a... Sandell's... es sheet... hich ought... mbination... unpopular... come up... ge, where... Issue 34)... Wilderness... y fanciful... ing' as the... cluded in... what they... n Shore... he author... mourning... 7: 'In My... t Coker... mysterious... use of the... preceding

...en only by a portion of the team!)? All we can... by is the result as WE see it developing in the... ished game. Thus, though we do get criticism... a game's historicity it is often open to dispute... om either the designer or other gamers - not an... y discussion to untangle for anyone who doesn't... ve that particular piece of expertise.

... would say, as an extension of this, that a player's... istorical expertise may be deep but is usually... chy (how many of us are true historians after... ll) with much emphasis on such things as weapon... bility and unit strengths but less on logistics, political and strategic factors that may have played... a part in a battle. Thus, our arguments often go... o further than to cover some of the more super... ficial aspects of historicity. We thus have to place a... certain degree of trust in the designer and his... istorical research which is presumed to be wider... than anything most of us have. But should we?... How many game designers are true historians... within the specialised field, not only of military... history but of the era covered by his game?

The article in this issue on the siege of Acre is... written by a person with more than a passing... interest in a specialised area of military history and... I have to admit to being a bit taken aback by how... many errors have appeared in the game. This has... led me to re-examine my attitude to the designer... as a fount of knowledge - I am rather more... cynical than I used to be! This is a shame as far... as I am concerned, I would far rather like to... believe that playing a game will allow me to see... the historical glass darkly rather than having to... learn up the history before going into what is no... more than any other fantasy game.

I don't really see any easy way out of this situation... - economics don't allow a reasonable return for... the extended research many games would require... and financial returns for game designing are not in... the top bracket of rewards so ready-made historian... designers will continue to be few and far between... I can only hope that reviewers with special interests... or experience will share their knowledge with us... through the medium of these pages - though in... turn I have little chance of checking their point of... view when it is presented without more work than... I have time. Well, there is always the Mailcall... column where more esoteric aspects of historicity... could find a useful home - let's be hearing from... you folks.

Lastly, the winners of the Christmas A&AP Quiz -... First Prize of 'A Military History and Atlas of the... Napoleonic Wars' goes to A.J. McGuire, Second... Prize of 'The Atlas of Naval Warfare' goes to Rob... Gibson and Third Prize of 'Napoleon's Conquest... of Prussia' goes to T. MacLaughlan. We will be in... touch with the lucky winners and I again thank... Arms and Armour Press for their generosity in... supplying the prizes.

Feedback Responses to Issue 34

Phoenix 34 rating = 6.77
 WW1 games = 6.97/6.08
 Third Reich = 6.63/6.09
 Black Horse, Red Star = 6.60/6.03 (1st Prize - £10)
 Beat to Quarters = 6.25/5.93
 Airwar Thoughts = 6.14/5.17 (2nd Prize - £7.50)
 Ace of Aces = 6.00/6.41
 Lee at the Crossroads = 5.67/5.00
 Operation Star = 5.03/5.97 (3rd Prize - £5.00)
 Untitled = 4.91/3.63

Book Review = 6.23
 Mailcall = 5.97
 Immediate Quiz = 5.70
 Prize Quiz = 5.42
 Crossword = 5.21

There was a marked shift in the sample type this... issue, the average response for time in the hobby is... now 6.78 years and it thus looks as if a greater... portion of the answering readers are long term... gamers.

Games replays warranted a rating of 6.8 - good!
 WW11 games continue to be the most popular with... Present and Future games a close second. Nothing... changes there!

FEEDBACK

How to use your Feedback Response Card.
 After you've finished reading this issue of Phoenix, please read the Feedback Questions below and give us your answer/numbers on the insert in the response boxes corresponding to each number. Please be sure to answer all the questions. Incompletely filled out cards cannot be processed. What the numbers mean: When answering questions "0" always means NO OPINION or NO QUESTION, "1" means YES and "2" means NO. When the question is a rating question, "1" is the WORST rating, "9" is the BEST rating, "5" is an average rating and all numbers in-between express various shades of approval or disapproval. PLEASE DO NOT USE DECIMALS OR HALVES.

The deadline for the return of these responses is four weeks from the receipt of this issue.

- How long have you been playing board wargames? 0 = less than one year; 1 = 1 year; 2 = 2 years ... 9 = 9 years or more.
- How many board wargames do you have? (Quad games count as four games) 1 = 1-10, 2 = 11-20 ... 9 = 81 or more.
- Did you send in the Feedback card from Phoenix 35.
- Do you read any other conflict simulation publications other than S&T and Phoenix? This includes magazines covering SF/F/role playing games and magazines not totally devoted to conflict simulations. 0 = none, 1 = 1 other, ... 9 = 9 or more magazines.
- What is the average number of hours you spend playing simulation games each month? 0 = none, 1 = 1 hour or less, 2 = 2 to 5 hours, 3 = 6-9, 4 = 10-16, 5 = 16-20, 6 = 21-25, 7 = 26-30, 8 = 31-40, 9 = 41 or more hours.
- What level of complexity do you prefer in games? Rate your preference on a scale of 1 to 9 with higher numbers being the more complex. 9 = Air War or Flat Top, 5 = Blue and Gray Quads.

- Pick one area about which you would most like to see games done; 1 = Ancient and Dark Ages; 2 = Middle Ages and Renaissance; 3 = Napoleonic; 4 = American Civil War; 5 = World War I; 6 = World War II; 7 = Modern to Near Future; 8 = Science Fiction; 9 = Fantasy.
- Pick one area about which you most like seeing articles on in Phoenix; rating as for question (7).
- Over the last six months do you think that you have spent less (1), about the same (2), or more time (3) on board wargaming than the six months previous to that? (4 = newly entered the hobby so doesn't apply).
- How long have you been taking Phoenix? 1 = 1-6 months, 2 = 6 months to one year, 3 = 1-2 years, 4 = 2-3 years, 5 = over three years.
- How long have you been taking S&T? 0 = don't take S&T and never have; 1 = taken S&T for one to two issues; 2 = taken S&T for up to a year; 3 = 1 to 2 years; 4 = 2-3 years; 5 = 3-4 years; 6 = 4-6 years; 7 = over 6 years; 8 = have given it up but took it for 1 to 12 issues; 9 = given it up now but took it for over two years.

- Rate your appreciation of the following types of articles in Phoenix on a scale of 1 to 9 with 9 being highly appreciated to 1 being no interest.
- Long reviews of games
 - Short reviews under 1000 words long.
 - Game critiques that go further than a straight review - they give you some ideas as to how a game plays.
 - Game analysis - optimal tactics/strategies with no review material given.
 - Game variants - new rules or scenarios. Consider that you have the game to answer this question.
 - Game variants - as 16 but for a game you do not own.
 - Overviews of a number of games e.g. WWI games, etc.
 - Game problems.

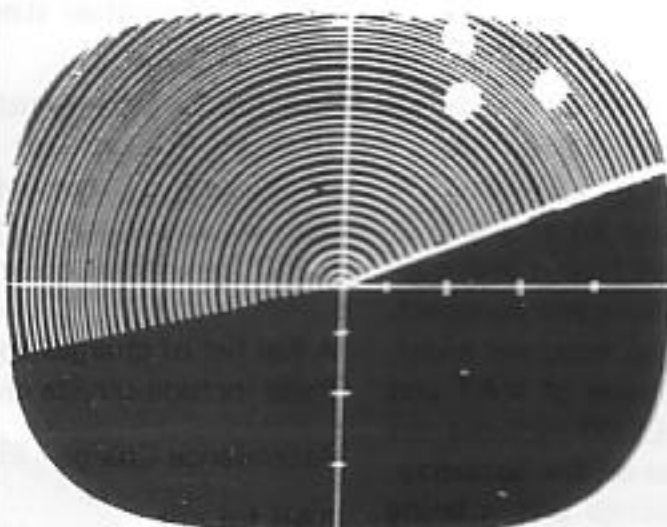
- Game replays - detailed information on moves, attacks and reasons behind actions.
- News from the boardgaming scene.
- Letters from other gamers.
- Articles on minority interests e.g. Postal play.
- Players aids - techniques for making gaming easier - new charts etc.

If I have not mentioned some further type of article please mention it below, with your interest in it.

Rate this issue of PHOENIX on a scale of 1-9; 9 being excellent and 1 being poor. To help me improve the magazine I would appreciate a few constructive comments below if you rate it 4 or less.

Rate the following articles in this issue on a scale of 1-9, 9 being excellent and 1 being poor. PLEASE ENTER "0" IF YOU DID NOT READ THE ARTICLE.

- Hitler's War - article quality
- Hitler's War - choice of subject
- Briton's Strike Home - article quality
- Briton's Strike Home - choice of subject
- Kursk - article quality
- Kursk - choice of subject
- Saladin at Acre - article quality
- Saladin at Acre - choice of subject
- Cobra Reconsidered - article quality
- Cobra Reconsidered - choice of subject
- Car Wars - article quality
- Car Wars - choice of subject
- Ironbottom Sound - article quality
- Ironbottom Sound - choice of subject
- Angolan Civil War - article quality
- Angolan Civil War - choice of subject
- The Barbarians - article quality
- The Barbarians - choice of subject
- Mail Call
- Book Review
- For Sale
- Contact!



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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 Wargamers newsletter containing correspondence, opponents for F.T.F. and P.B.M., games or 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.

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I would like to play in a postal Dragonquest campaign. Can anyone offer me a game? Chris Steadman, 12 Freshwater Drive, Paignton, Devon, TO4 7SB.

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.

I am hoping to run a 'controlled' game of Air War at this autumn's SPUKORGY. If you are interested and likely to be going I should very much like to hear from you - I can be contacted c/o: Mill House, Rodmersham Green, Sittingbourne, Kent.

Please could you indicate whether you will be taking a copy of the game (either edition, but the more we can use the merrier) and also if you would be willing to act as an assistant controller.

For the idea to work, we will need at least three copies of the game and at least two assistant controllers.

If you mark your letter to me with an 'A' on the envelope and enclose an s.a.e. it would be extremely helpful. I look forward to hearing from you.

R. Jordan.