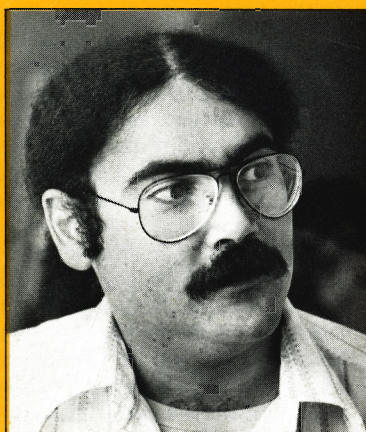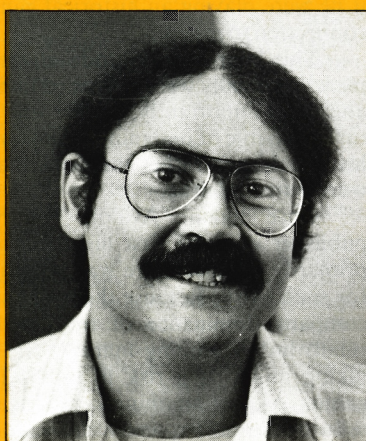# Moves

Conflict Simulation Theory and Technique

Prados: "I dashed off these great ideas about how to do it, wrote them all down, and sent them all off to Avalon Hill. All that I got back was this little blue postcard with four sentences and little boxes next to them to check off, and they had checked off the box that said, 'We do not accept ideas for games from people.'"

Prados: "I'm not putting most of my time into the games at this point, I'm putting most of my time into academic work. I'm thinking of a couple of articles to write, and I'm doing some work on an October War game, an operational-level Egyptian Front game — which should be very interesting when it gets itself together."
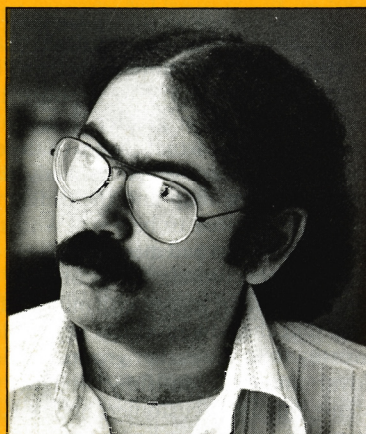
Prados: "...if the following that's developing for the fantasy and science fiction side of gaming doesn't have a larger amount of cross-over to the historical side...then the hobby as a whole could be in bad shape."

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MOVES

Conflict Simulation Theory and Technique

In this issue...

Simulations Publications, Inc., 257 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10010

Opening Moves

HORIZONTAL GROWTH

When this hobby of ours first lumbered into daylight in the late fifties, its games were essentially ahistorical. Avalon Hill's *Tactics II* and *Gettysburg* had some of the attributes of historical games — terrain analysis, valued pieces with functionally different roles, etc. — but were nevertheless only crude impressions of operational level military action. This is not intended as a criticism — for their time, the games were enthralling and exciting quasi-models of reality. No one who knew anything about history, however, would have based a serious dissertation upon them.

These early games and their brothers soon to follow succeeded on the basis of their play value and their ability to excite the user's imagination with the *idea* of commanding units and waging war on a grand scale. Much in the manner of a likeable TV show with an absurd premise, the games allowed the player to suspend belief to the point where it *felt* as if he were playing an historical game with a connection to reality.

This near-verisimilitude attracted people who actually were interested in history — and more importantly, people who were actually capable of designing a game with a real historical basis rather than one that merely wore historical drag.

Once again, Avalon Hill was the publisher of these first historical games — primarily because there was no other outlet for such work. Because there was such one-company dominance of the (at that time small) hobby gaming market, AH was not taking much of a risk in publishing these games. Almost anything it produced would sell to the infrequently fed audience of ravenous gamers.

One result of producing games that were more identifiably historical in nature was that they became more complex. The paper technology necessary to support a manual simulation was far greater than that needed to reaffirm the virtual cliches of the early AH "classic" games. When the only thing that changes is the map and the order of battle, one doesn't need to be a real whiz to design the rules system and mechanics.

Another result of publishing simulations instead of games with military flavoring was that the new products proved less playworthy than the earlier group. Avalon Hill's loyal audience dutifully bought the new items, but many customers boggled at actually playing what they had purchased. Instead, they stared at it. They fondled it. They sorted counters and mused over special rules. *PanzerBlitz* was perhaps the first playable historical game. Although complex by early standards, it was nevertheless well organized,

rewarding, and filled with action to excite the player's imagination. It was the first widely produced tactical armor game. It became the bestselling hobby game on record. It was the first "SPI" game published by AH (i.e., it was designed by Jim Dunnigan and editorially and graphically designed by me). In fact, as a test, it first appeared in an early issue of *S&T* as a mini-game.

The game had (and still has) a lot going for it: built-in history; relatively smooth play; attractive components that create additional interest; a fairly readable over-view of mechanized warfare. At the time of its introduction, it was breathtakingly innovative. It expanded the hobby vertically; i.e., it penetrated further into historically based gaming than any predecessor. Even though the game didn't perfectly re-create the doctrinal environment of WWII armor, the attempt was serious enough to command respect and attention.

PanzerBlitz was published just as SPI was starting out. In a way, it was the bellwether for a long list of SPI games that pressed and tugged at the category of historical games. SPI was largely responsible for re-defining hobby games as *simulations*. Phrasemaker that I am, I foisted the label "conflict simulations" on the hobby as a way to direct attention toward the more serious brand of game that SPI was starting to do.

As *S&T* began to discover the serious game market through its print advertising campaign, the games being designed broke from the relatively narrow historical periods previously dealt with and proceeded to range up and down the timelines (although, even today, SPI is still the only significant publisher of modern period games). Through its print campaign, SPI definitively established a relationship that was to have far reaching consequences. It seemed that there was a strong connection between the people who were interested in science fiction and some of the people who were interested in simulation gaming.

This relationship had been recognized anecdotally even before any massive hard evidence was produced by successful advertising in science fiction media. Many of the staff members of SPI were sf oriented. Also, there is an obvious philosophical connection — both activities deal with "world-creations," scenarios, and alternate possibilities. A certain sub-genre of sf story relies heavily upon military and para-military themes.

Near the end of '74, *StarForce* was published and quickly became one of SPI's all-time bestsellers — not because it was the greatest game in the galaxy; rather because it served a previously unmet need: a lot of gamers wanted science fiction games. SPI, and some of the even younger companies, started to create and publish science fiction and fantasy games with regularity. The sales of these games (including the fantasy counterparts) bore out the perceptions and surveys of the publishers. For example, over 70% of the units sold in SPI's top ten last year were in the sf/f category.

Now every fledgling company and its watercooler are rushing to produce sf/f games and "grow" money on fertile soil turned up by SPI, Metagaming, TSR, and GDW. What this results in is a lot of enthusiasm, activity, and — inevitably — some dumb games amidst a mixed crop. Already there are signs of "shakeout" (some companies falling by the wayside and regrouping. Nevertheless, we are entering the third generation of sf/f games. The force of the category is undeniable — and it means change in the wind for the purely historical gamer.

Much of the trade recognition that the hobby is now receiving comes from the sf/f category. Distributors and dealers realize that non-historical games are very hot sellers. All of us (manufacturers) know that the market is broader for sf/f games than for strictly traditional historical simulations. Because of the fantastic settings, such games are more acceptable to people who have been socially conditioned to avoid military history (e.g., women).

In a way, gaming has come full circle. It's returned to its ahistorical, fantasy-dependent roots. The sophistication lies in the fact that it's now flat-out, acknowledged fantasy that is getting the attention, and the scope of possible fantasy settings has been broadened. Now, instead of being limited to fantasy renderings of the battles of Gettysburg, Waterloo, and Stalingrad, the market has expanded to include entirely original fantasies woven around worlds that never were.

This doesn't mean that historical simulations are going to roll over and die out. It simply means that the scope of the hobby has widened to include game-types and subjects that appeal to greater numbers of people. This is evident even in the name that the field is acquiring: "hobby gaming" instead of the more academic "simulation gaming." This is not simply an exercise in euphemistic neologisms. Many games being sold today don't really simulate anything at all — they "fabulate" instead.

These games of fabulation should not be resented or scorned by traditional simulation gamers. The new product category lends strength and diversity to a narrowly based special interest. It also places new demands upon designers and publishers alike, forcing them to invent new ways of doing things that have benefits for every category in the hobby gaming field.

This trend also returns some needed concern to the area of play worthiness. If an sf/f game lacks this quality, it is in serious trouble — there is no possible smokescreen of data and historical huff and puff to hide its flaws as an entertainment. Beyond giving things far-out labels and providing interesting illustrated covers, there's not much an sf/f game designer can do to convey his "story" except to produce a game that holds together from the player's point of view. A poorly designed sf/f game is more easily spotted and discarded (which bodes ill for some of the low-wattage product brought out simply to cash in on the trend).

Designer's Notes

Games in the Production Cycle

Air War Update components lie spread over the breadth of the production panorama, much like the bits and pieces of a downed jet fighter. The counters are printed and reside in our warehouse. The 16-page booklet of new rules and scenarios is now being printed and collated. The 72-page 2nd Edition of the charts, tables, and data sheets has just been sent to the camera house and we await the blueprint proofs in order to check them through one last time.

Deathmaze and *Demons*. We are awaiting blueprints on the rules and map (for *Demons* only, of course, as there is no *Deathmaze* map). The counters are being printed, and the covers produced (the artwork for both, *Demons* in particular, is impressive).

Games in the Art Department

SPIBALL Baseball and *Football*. The rules for both games are set and being checked. The Art Department is currently contemplating whether it will be possible to make much (or not much) sense out of the myriad of charts, tables, and team ratings that accompany each game, so that they can format them to be typeset.

Stalingrad. The rules are in galley form, and have been sent to John Hill for him to check over. Boardwork on the art for the map is mostly complete, although the tags (names printed on the map) have yet to be typeset. Preliminary specification work is being done on the counters.

Bulge and *Leningrad*. The map and counter boardwork is nearly complete. The rules are being laid down on the boards for *Bulge*; we are still awaiting corrections on *Leningrad*.

Metz. The *S&T* 78 game, now retitled "Patton's Third Army," has just been turned into the AD, and work has begun.

Demons

Demons has left R&D and is currently in the hands of the Art Department. RAS and company are putting some really nice touches in the game, including ghosted representations of the actual Cabalistic symbol of each individual demon on that demon's counter. Assuming that space constraints permit (and they look good at present), we should also be able to include a nice "history" piece on the "Lesser Key of Solomon" and the text of the conjurations used to call up the demons included in the game. All in all, the package promises to be "information intensive" and worth the purchase price for the historical material alone. Besides, how many other games allow you to torture your opponent nigh unto death?

D. J. Ritchie

Leningrad

I have completed my rewrite of Dick Rustin's *Leningrad* game. The game is very

GAME PROFILE

THE CHROME PLATED MACHINE-PISTOL
A Look at the Squad Leader System, Part I
by Jeff Geisler

Folks that know better than I have said of *Squad Leader:* 'It doesn't have anything to do with the realities of tactical combat, but it's a hell of a game.' Others have said that it *feels* so much like a realistic simulation that it's immaterial that it really isn't (and doesn't pretend to be). Perhaps it could be said that *Squad Leader* benefits from a kind of Kodachrome 'realism' that doesn't let history stand in the way of having fun and exciting your imagination.
— RAS

The *Squad Leader* game system is Avalon Hill's most recent contribution to World War II tactical combat. One may well wonder why another such game is needed, but *Squad Leader* has qualities that make it exceptional and truly a contribution to the genre. It is the first game in an intended series; four expansion kits will follow that will include additional counters, mapboards, weapons, and nationalities along with the rules applicable to the new features introduced. *Cross of Iron*, the only one published so far, has as many counters as *Squad Leader*, another mapboard, and extensively adds to and revises the *Squad Leader* rules.

The scale and emphasis of *Squad Leader* are both given in the title. Units are squads of four to ten men, with counters for individual leaders. Vehicles are depicted singly. Each hex is 40 meters across, and the time scale is two minutes per Game-Turn. The graphics are up to Avalon Hill's normal standard of professional excellence, with, for once, a fairly decent box cover illustration. The Germans are represented by light blue counters, the Russians by light brown, and the Americans by a pleasant green. Beneath a picture of two advancing infantrymen, there are three numbers on the counters' front; they are respectively firepower, range, and morale rating. The reverse side has a picture of men shot up and the irritating pidgin "Broke" (for "Broken") plus the rally number, which is usually the same as the morale number. The leader units have a named figure of an officer, a morale rating, and a (usually) negative roll modifier (DRM). The vehicle counters are to-scale, top views of tanks, self-propelled guns, halftracks, trucks, and jeeps, with the main gun size, machinegun firepower, and movement factors printed on the counter. The reverse side is a wreck.

The mounted map is the best tactical gamemap I have ever seen; the multiplicity of colors and the drafting style give it the appearance of an aerial photograph and contribute greatly to the verisimilitude by making a player feel as if he were playing on real terrain rather than a mere gameboard. There are also more terrain types than I have ever seen on a tactical gamemap, including not only woods, stone or wooden buildings, hedges, and walls, but also wheatfields, cliffs, shellholes, and three levels of hills. It is one of the first gamemaps that does not look like a gamemap, and furthermore, it plays less like a gamemap than is usual. The twenty millimeter hexes offer two benefits—first, the extra room in the hex allows comfortable fiddling with the stacks of 1/2 inch infantry and weapons counters, and secondly, the 5/8 inch vehicle counters just fit with their opposite corners across the hex. This placement makes an unambiguous definition of the covered arc, flanks, and rear and also defines the vehicle within the hex, which is important with respect to line-of-sight. A unit traces a line-of-sight from the center of its hex to the center of the target hex, a drudgery that the presence of a white dot in the middle of each hex alleviates somewhat. The line-of-sight is clear unless it actually crosses blocking terrain. Since the counter's position defines the vehicle's position within the hex, the presence of a vehicle may block the line-of-sight.

The game provides two quick reference data cards, printed on heavy stock paper, which contain a variety of tables and charts. Twelve scenario cards also are included with the game.

The 36-page rule book includes extensive designer's notes, answers to questions about play, and an index. The format is set for programmed learning; that is, a Section presents new rules, and then a scenario is given, using those rules, before players move on to more complex additions. Thus the first, third, and fourth sections develop the basic game, while the remaining nine sections are largely chrome. Programmed learning allows a player to start with a minimum of rules reading, but it does have the drawback of presenting things in a haphazard fashion rather than as a unified whole. This tends to make a difficult game even harder to assimilate, but the detailed index helps considerably in cross-referencing rules. Avalon Hill does give veteran wargamers one well-appreciated service—a warning on the box describes the game as Tournament Level IV, *not* for neophytes. This caveat allows them to leave out the patronizing and redundant remarks in some wargame rules, such as how to make the map lie flat.

Game Mechanics

The heart of a game is its Combat Results Table, and a look at *Squad Leader's* CRT shows its emphasis on leadership and morale. It involves a two dice resolution, with dice-roll modifiers applied for the presence of a leader directing the firing units and for the terrain occupied by the target units. The results are Killed-In-Action or morale checks, usually accompanied by a number. Lower dice rolls give more effective results. To perform a morale check, the owning player rolls the dice; if the number rolled is greater than the morale number of the unit, the unit "breaks," is inverted to show this state, and, in a later phase, routs toward a building or woods hex. Number results on the CRT, or the dice-roll modifier of a friendly leader in the hex, add to the morale-check dice-roll. A unit remains broken until rallied by a leader. If fired upon, demanding another morale check that it fails, the unit is eliminated. In order to rally, a unit must be stacked with a leader; the player then rolls two dice and applies to the roll any dice-roll modifier that the leader has. If the number rolled is equal to or less than the rally number on the back of the counter, the unit rallies and it can function normally.

If a unit is stacked with a leader and it breaks because of a combat result, it must undergo an additional morale check. This has the effect of making it sometimes unwise to stack units with leaders, especially weak ones. In the Designer's Notes, John Hill justifies this situation with a quotation from *Enemy at the Gate* in which Craig describes the death of a battalion commander and the consequent collapse of the morale of his troops. In game terms, the benefit of having a leader present to direct fire with his DRM must always be weighed against the risk of more severe casualties. But if the leader passes his morale check, he can add his DRM to the units in the stack when they undergo their morale check. In effect, the leader can either kill the whole stack or help it to avoid any casualties whatever.

The Sequence of Play is a symmetrical, interactive fire-move-defensive fire with three dual-player participation phases. The Game-Turn begins with the *Rally Phase*, in which both players attempt to rally broken units and leaders, and to repair weapons. Next, the phasing player fires any unit he wishes in the *Prep Fire Phase*, but if a unit fires, it cannot move in the following *Movement Phase*. After his opponent's Movement Phase, the non-phasing player may fire in

the *Defensive Fire Phase* any of his units with a line-of-sight to an enemy unit. The phasing player then has the *Advancing Fire Phase*, in which he can shoot at full strength with any unit that did not fire in the Prep Fire Phase or at half strength with any unit that did move. Both players then rout any broken units toward cover during the *Rout Phase*. The phasing player now has the option to move each unit one hex during the *Advance Phase*; they can enter any enemy occupied hex, which initiates Close Combat. In the *Close Combat Phase*, players mutually attack each other's units occupying the same hex, using an odds Combat Results Table. For a given ratio of attacker's to defender's strength, a number occurs on the Table; if a player rolls with two dice and the result is less than or equal to the number on the Table, the unit he is attacking is dead. A leader may apply his DRM to one combat. If all opposing units are not eliminated, the units are locked in melee and must repeat their combat in the next Close Combat Phase. After the results of Close Combat are applied simultaneously, play repeats starting with the Rally Phase.
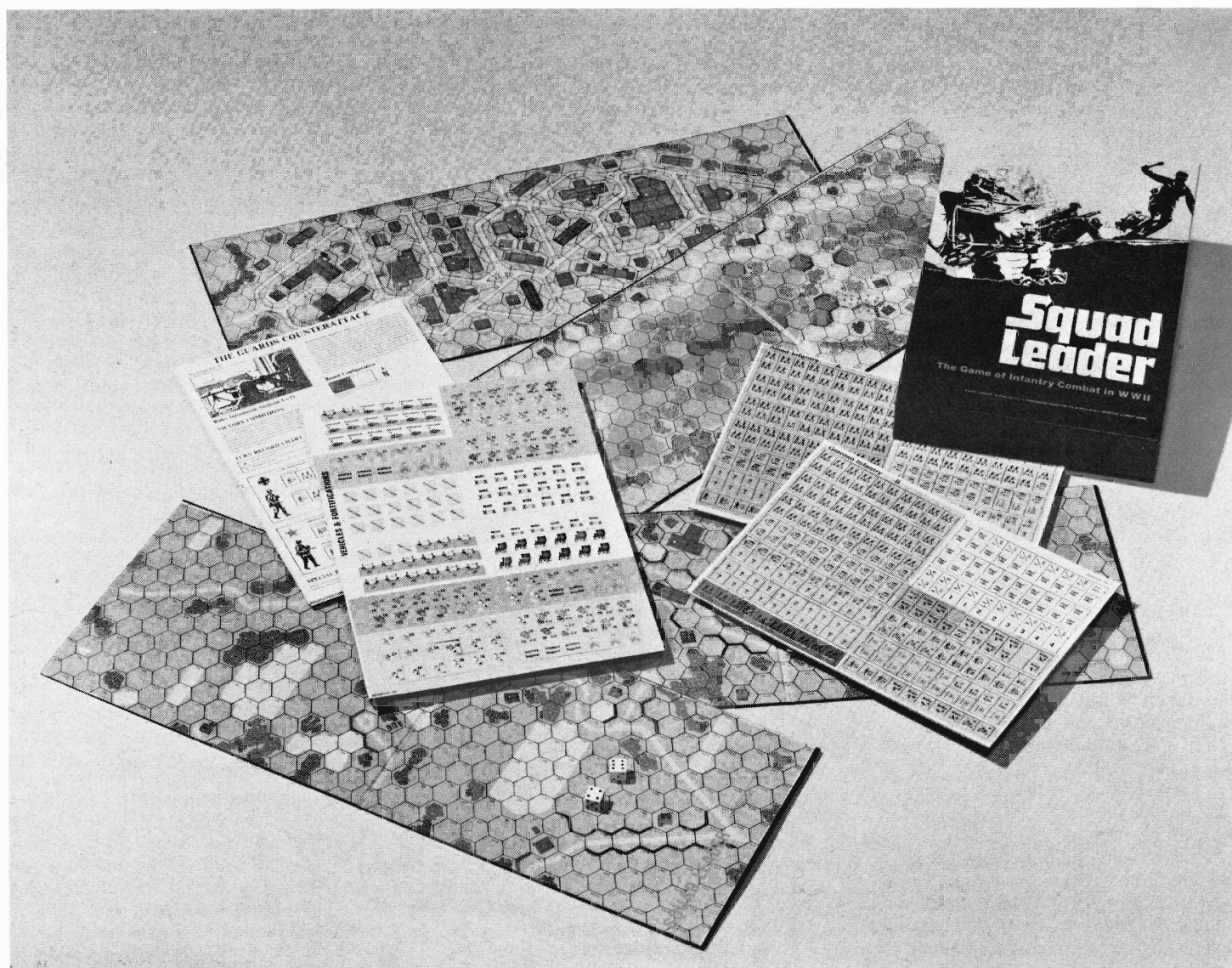
Infantry Game

Innovative in *Squad Leader* is the idea of representing heavy weapons separately from the squads. There are, for instance, counters for light, medium, and heavy machineguns as well as flamethrowers, satchel charges, and bazookas. As a provision for moving these weapons, the game uses the concept of Portage Points. Each squad has a portage capacity of three; each leader has a capacity of one. The various weapons have a cost listed in a chart. If the portage point cost exceeds the portage capacity of a unit, the unit loses from it Movement Allowance however much the portage capacity is exceeded. A squad has four movement points, unless it has spent the entire phase stacked with a leader. In that case its movement is increased to six, the normal movement allowance for a leader.

The use of separate counters for heavy weapons allows for some interesting rules. Weapons can be captured and used by the enemy, for example. Each machinegun counter has a fire-power and penetration factor, and a range printed on the front. The penetration factor is the number of additional hexes along a line-of-sight that a machinegun can project its fire. This nicely simulates the cross fire effect of machineguns, especially the heavies, and makes a difference in the tactics of the attacking units. The counters also have a breakdown number on them; if an attack results in an unmodified dice-roll equal to or greater than the breakdown number, the weapon has jammed or run out of ammunition. In subsequent Rally Phases the owning player rolls one die with a 1/6 chance of either repairing the weapon or eliminating it.

Squad Leader's treatment of artillery is conventional with the exception of the radio counter. In order to use artillery, a leader must have a radio and must have established and maintained radio contact with the off-board artillery. Contact uses a dice-roll and depends on the nationality of the unit. After the leader gets radio contact in the Rally Phase, the player can place a spotting round in a hex in the leader's line-of-sight during the following Close Combat Phase. He rolls for scatter, which also depends on the nation-

ality of the player's forces. In the Rally Phase immediately after placing the spotting round, the player can correct the round up to three hexes. He can then fire for effect in the Prep Fire Phase if he is the phasing player or in the Defensive Fire Phase if he is not, or he can correct the round again in another Rally Phase. Fire is resolved on the Infantry Fire CRT, using for the artillery those columns equivalent to infantry fire, according to the calibre of the rounds.

Armor Game

Since a game cannot really simulate World War II without also simulating combined arms operations, *Squad Leader* of course includes armored fighting vehicles, trucks, and jeeps. AFV operations will then be divided into three types—AFV versus AFV, infantry versus AFV, and AFV versus infantry.

In tank against tank combat, fire is resolved using two tables—the To Hit Table and the AFV Kill Table. The To Hit Table takes into account the terrain the target is in, the range, and the nationality of the gun crew. It is a two dice Table, with numbers that must be rolled equal to or lower than in order to hit. Such things as the movement of the target, the movement of the firing unit, firing outside the covered arc, etc., will modify the dice-roll. Once a hit has been obtained, the player refers to the AFV Kill Table. Again, this is a two dice Table, with numbers that must be rolled less than or equal to in order to kill. The Table takes care of variables such as whether the target presents the front, side, or rear, and the gun-type of the firing units; dice-roll modifiers take care of differences in armor and silhouette of the target type. The infantry anti-tank weapons also have columns on this table.

Tanks and self-propelled guns can also fire high-explosive ordnance against soft targets. Resolution is on the Infantry Fire CRT in a manner analogous to artillery fire, but with the requirement that the To Hit Table must be consulted first. Additionally, tanks, SP guns, and halftracks may use their mounted machineguns. There are two numbers separated by a slash on the counter; the first represents the covered arc machinegun factor (i.e., turret and hull mounted machineguns), and the second is the 360° anti-aircraft machinegun factor. Fire from machineguns is resolved on the Infantry Fire CRT as normal machinegun fire, although separately from the HE fire. Thus it is possible for a tank to fire its main gun and break an infantry unit, then finish it off with the machinegun by causing it to break again. Use of the 360° machinegun, however, exposes the tank crew to enemy fire; there is a chance that they could suffer an adverse result and abandon the tank. AFVs are also capable of overrunning infantry.

Infantry may be vulnerable to tanks, but they are not helpless. They have the use of a variety of infantry anti-tank weapons, including *panzerfausts*, bazookas, demolition charges, flamethrowers, and anti-tank guns. The projectile weapons use a fire procedure similar to that of the tank weapons, referring first to a hit table (which, for the *panzerfaust* and bazooka, is distinct from the anti-tank hit table) and their own column on the AFV Kill Table. An infantry unit adjacent to an AFV has two modes of attack, once it has passed a pre-AFV attack morale check. One mode is close assault against the tank in the Close Combat Phase. In order to destroy a tank, the squad must roll less than or equal to its firepower rating; hence a stack of German assault engineers with a rating of 8 is pretty fearsome as an anti-tank weapon. Or it could attempt to immobilize the tank in the Defensive Fire Phase by rolling less than or equal to a number which is given in the AFV Immobilization Numbers Table and which is dependent on the terrain the firing units occupy. The potency of infantry units in anti-tank roles encourages a player to integrate his tanks and infantry well, since close combat must first eliminate any infantry units riding on the tank or using it for cover.

An AFV may also be immobilized simply through movement. Any time an AFV goes through woods or into a wooden building hex, there is a 1/6 chance that it will be immobilized if it is Russian or American and a 1/3 chance it will be if it is German. The main gun and the machineguns are subject to malfunction and ammunition shortage in a manner analogous to infantry machineguns. Although a tank may be killed, its crew does not have to be, and *Squad Leader* provides for this possibility by the survival numbers on the wreck side of tank and SP gun counters. If a die-roll is less than or equal to this number, the crew survives and the player places a crew counter on top of the wreck. This crew can then fight or die like any normal unit.

Chrome

The programmed learning approach lends itself well to a layering of chrome. Some is in the form of additional weapons, such as the anti-tank weapons already mentioned, HEAT for anti-tank guns, and mines. Assault engineers can use flamethrowers and demolition charges, and make smoke. Some AFVs can fire smoke as well. Smoke does not absolutely block the line-of-sight, but once the counter is placed, the player rolls one die and the resulting number is added as a DRM to any fire that is traced through the smoke hex.

There is chrome in the form of special rules, such as the provisions for sewer movement in the Stalingrad house-to-house fighting scenarios. There are night rules, rules for snow, and rules for cross-river assaults. Later scenarios introduce roadblocks, bunkers with three levels of hardness, wire, and emplacements. One useful special rule involves building level differentiation. All buildings covering three hexes or more are considered to have an upper story. A unit can occupy either the upper or lower story, and in order to change levels, it must use the staircases in the buildings, designated by a small white square.

The fire and rubble rules are some of the gaudier chrome. In a building hex, an HE attack may cause rubble or start a fire, and flamethrower attacks may start a fire. The fire spreads according to a dice-roll and a table on the back of the counter. A player may find his units hit by fire of two kinds: trapped in a burning building but cut off from retreat by enemy machineguns. There is also a rule for berserk Russian units; if a Russian squad rolls a two on a morale check, the unit goes berserk and immediately attacks the closest enemy unit. It is immune to any further morale checks and continues to close assault the nearest enemy unit until it has been killed.

But really the most interesting aspect of the game is the Design Your Own Scenario Section and the Campaign Game. To make their own scenarios, players first abut the geomorphic mapboards in any way they desire. Then they randomly select the victory conditions, nationality, and composition of the defending force with a draw of cards from a 52-card deck. They secretly determine what force they think will be necessary to accomplish the mission, according to the point value schedule given for the units. The player who comes up with the lower total point value of force gets the force he chose; the other player becomes the defender and gets the force that was previously selected. The number of options provides an immense array of possibilities, insuring that even the die-hard will not run out of scenarios. Yet, scenarios are easy to devise for those lacking either broad imaginations or the inclination to research company level engagements.

The Design Your Own Scenario Section becomes most useful, however, in the Campaign Game. The counter-mix includes some leaders with no names who are used in the Campaign Game. Each player starts out as a corporal in his respective army. During the game, Elan Points are awarded for courageous acts, like single handedly destroying an AFV; Cowardice Points accrue from breaking under fire and causing units stacked with the leader to break under fire. At the end of the scenario the Cowardice Points are subtracted from the Elan Points; a plus ten performance point total results in the leader being advanced one rank. Elan and Cowardice Points are carried over from scenario to scenario. The object is to achieve a higher rank than your opponent after a number of games. The difficult part is surviving.

The game takes on the flavor of role-playing, without the romantic sentimentality of fantasy games, and appeals to those disenchanted with the silliness of science-fiction, and to those who require some history in their games. *Squad Leader* is not perfect; there are glaring errors such as the possession of a crest yielding no advantage to armor, but some of these have been corrected in the *Cross of Iron* revisions. Altogether, I consider *Squad Leader* one of the better games in my collection. Although I am not fanatical about tactical games, it is fascinating enough to make me ignore the annoyance of minutiae. Add to this the subtle attractiveness of its role-playing, and you have a deserving winner. ■■

INTERVIEW

DEBRIEFING PRADOS
Conversations with the Creators

by Greg Costikyan PHOTOS BY REDMOND SIMONSEN

John Prados is nice enough to drop by my office every once in a while and trade industry gossip and put up with my lectures on the superiority of tempered capitalism. Greg Costikyan (who thought of doing this series of articles) and I wanted to kick off in a neutral ballfield and so naturally chose John as the first subject because of his ecumenical freelancing amongst the major and minor publishers. As you'll see, John is a history oriented designer and worries a little about sf/f games (see Opening Moves). Relax. *—RAS*

John Prados is one of the more prolific and perhaps the best known of the freelance designers—he works for no single company, but has had games published by SPI, Avalon Hill, GDW and OSG. Since one of the purposes of this series of interviews is to give designers more exposure and to increase awareness of the importance of designers —as opposed to companies—in the development of games, John seems an appropriate person with whom to start.

John Prados was born on January 9, 1951 (Richard Nixon's birthday), at a naval hospital in Queens. Because his father was then in the army, he spent his early years shuttling from one part of the country to the other; eventually, he wound up in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where he spent his high school years. In the late sixties, he returned to New York in order to attend Columbia University; while a Junior at Columbia, he designed his first published game, SPI's *Year Of The Rat*. He is currently a graduate student at Columbia in the Political Science Department, and is working on a dissertation for his doctorate.

In 1974, Avalon Hill published John's best-known game, *Third Reich*. Shortly thereafter, John, with Al Nofi and Jim Cumbo, formed Morningside Games, which designed games for publication by the now-defunct Rand Games Associates. At this time, John wrote up the first draft of what would eventually become the constitution of the Game Designers' Guild. With his Morningside partners, John pushed for the establishment of such an organization; he was instrumental in the formation of the Guild, and is considered its unofficial founder.

John has a deep interest in American foreign policy and its interaction with the military; consequently, he is deeply interested in the First and Second Indo-China Wars. It is thus not surprising that two of his games

and many of his articles deal with that subject.

John has designed eight published games, has written for almost every magazine in the hobby, and is currently Contributing Editor for *Fire & Movement*.
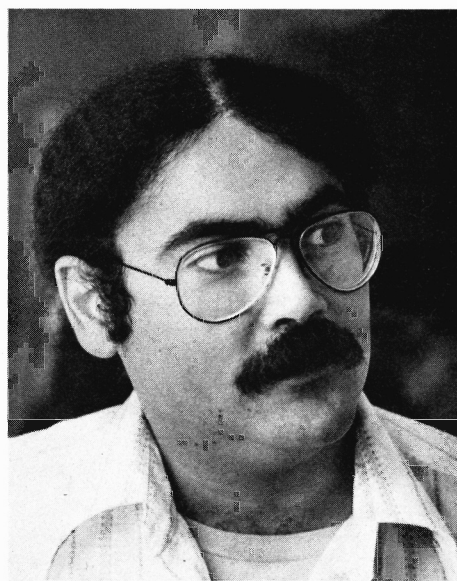
This interview was conducted on a sunny Sunday afternoon in early September at John's penthouse apartment in the upper 90's on the West Side. GC is Greg Costikyan, and JP is John Prados.

GC: How did you get into wargaming?

JP: Actually, I got into wargames because I was a model railroader. I used to go back and forth through Chicago on the way to visit my grandparents in Leavenworth when I was a kid, and I always made a point when I was in Chicago of going to the Museum of Science and Industry because they have the most amazing train layout that you have ever seen at that museum. It must be a hundred, hundred-fifty feet long and fifty or a hundred wide, and it was all my favorite railroad, the Santa Fe. One time I went to the museum to see the train layout, and when I was coming out I went to the museum store, where they had the Avalon Hill game *Dispatcher*, and right next to the *Dispatcher* game they had *Tactics II*. So I had a little bit of money, and I got both games. That's how I got into it. It rapidly became apparent that these games came out once a year or twice a year, and they cost more money than I had when I was a little kid. I started using my money to buy cardboard instead of games, and making

my own. When I would hear that a new Avalon Hill game was coming out on some subject, I would dash off to get cardboard, and think, "well, how would I do that subject?" I would get my game on that subject ready, and then their game would come out. It was a lot of fun, although it wasn't exactly conscientious simulation designing, the way it's thought of now.

GC: Well, neither were Avalon Hill games at the time.

JP: That's true; they used the same CRT for ten years.

GC: How did you first get published?

JP: Actually, as a good example for fine, upstanding young designers who're trying to break into the market, it's real difficult. Going back to the time when I would jimmy up designs when I heard that Avalon Hill was going to come out with something new, I heard they were going to do a Jutland game —actually, Jimmy Dunnigan's first game for them. I was immediately enthusiastic about doing a Jutland game, because I'd never seen a naval game. I dashed off these great ideas about how to do it, wrote them all down, and sent them all off to Avalon Hill. All that I got back was this little blue postcard with four sentences and little boxes next to them to check off, and they had checked off the box that said "we do not accept ideas for games from people." That was very disappointing.

After inventing all these games of my own, which I did throughout high school, I went to college, and more or less got out of the games altogether. That period lasted for about three years, until I heard that there was a game company in New York. Since there was one so close by, it was almost like I couldn't avoid going down to see what they were all about. It looked interesting—people were friendly. Jimmy said, "Well, you know, do the Friday night playtests, and after a while maybe we'll give you a chance to do a game." Well, I never did that. I did finally decide I was going to go to a Friday night playtest, and it happened to be during the whole Vietnam offensive in '72. It also happened that the Gravell edition of the Pentagon Papers had just come out, and I had gone over to the bookstore and gotten a copy of them. I took one of the volumes with me to read on the subway, going down to SPI.

When I walked into the office with this heavy-duty book under my arm, I was spotted by Lenny Glynn, who was an editor at the time. Instead of playtesting, he pulled me in-

to a back room, and we had a heavy conversation about Vietnam. He was very interested at that point in getting *Strategy & Tactics* to do current material, as opposed to the more historical games which they'd done. I was able to talk a good rap about what was happening in Vietnam, and he thought it was a great idea to do a game on what was actually happening right at that time. I certainly agreed with him. Then I was able to demonstrate design expertise because I had actually done a whole lot of Vietnam games already. I had one that was sitting up in my dorm room that I was able to lend to the SPI people—it was a French Indo-China wargame that covered the period of 1945-54. They even used one of the rules for their American Revolution game. They decided that I could design a game, and so I got the assignment to do *Year Of The Rat*, which turned out to be my first game.

*GC:* What are you working on currently?

JP: I'm doing a strategic Napoleonic game which should be published by West End, if they ever get themselves together. I have a *Western Front Panzerkrieg* for which I'm seeking a publisher and hoping to sell before the end of the year. Looking further ahead, I'm also working on my dissertation for Columbia. I'm hoping to work hard enough on it to be able to defend it next year. The dissertation is about American intelligence and its treatment of the development of Soviet nuclear forces, and I'm looking for all the material I can find along these lines. The record so far serves as a cautionary tale, which suggests the large role that our perceptions have played in justifying military development programs in this country. I'm not putting most of my time into the games at this point, I'm putting most of my time into academic work. I'm thinking of a couple of articles to write, and I'm doing some work on an October War game, an operational-level Egyptian Front game — which should be very interesting when it gets itself together. It will be very fast-moving, and the Israelis will have lots of fun, while the Egyptians will have lots of strength.

GC: What do you see for yourself and game design in general in the future?

JP: I think I'll answer the second question first. Every few years, somebody comes up with a formula which is supposed to be the be-all-and-end-all. At one point, that was the quad games, later it was the monster games, and now it seems to be these microgames. People jump on the microgame bandwagon, and so on. In a little while, there's tons of them. On the topic side, there's the whole business about historical games versus fantasy and science fiction games. I'm sure everyone on the publication side of this industry is sitting around contemplating their navels and trying to figure out which way this market is going to go. In some respects, I think microgames will be good for gamers, mostly because I like to keep the prices on the games down. I thought that the high prices on the monster games were a great disservice to hobbyists in general.

GC: On the other hand, if you bought something like *War In Europe*, you were probably laying out fewer dollars per actual hour of enjoyment than for any other game.

JP: Sure, but that depends how you massage the statistics. In terms of it being a manageable game which you could sit down with friends and play well.... I'm convinced that the best games are the ones you can sit down and play in an afternoon, two afternoons at the very most. I had some experience with monster games that totally convinced me they weren't the way to go. When I was in high school, I did a monster Pacific game which I used to play with some friends. We played it consistently from 9 in the morning to 5 in the afternoon for three whole weeks, and we were unable to finish the game with four people playing it. That
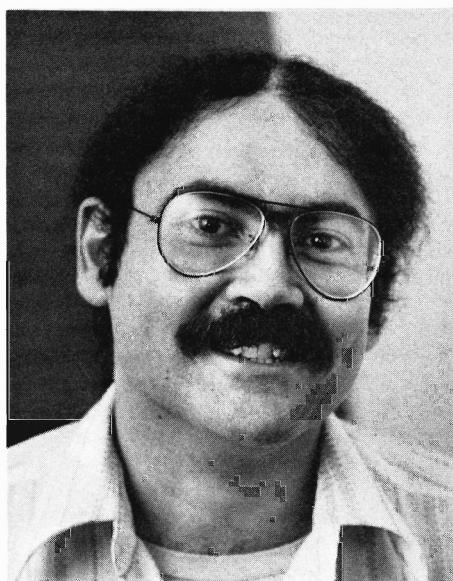
experience convinced me that monster games weren't where it was at. I do think that you have to finish a game in order to get out of it whatever message it's supposed to be conveying. Microgames will be good because you'll definitely be able to finish them, and they do take a step back in price. On the other hand, they might be too simple. I like to do games that are mid-range in complexity and interest level. By doing games at that level, I figure players can master the game, and by giving them a lot of scenarios, they'll keep going back to the game to play it again. With microgames you're going to get the phenomenon where people play the game and it becomes stereotyped, after they figure out what the victory formula for a particular game is.

GC: That's true, although people do seem to continue to play *Ogre* again and again and again. I would think the potential of that game would be pretty much played out after four or five playings.

JP: Well, the favorite game syndrome. Can't ever get around that. I'm sure people will play *Creature [that Ate Sheboygan]* for a long time, too.

GC: What do you see as the future of game designers in the industry as opposed to where games are going to go?

JP: This whole business with the microgames feeds into that question, in a sense. I think you've got a problem. With the microgames there's an almost insatiable demand for material. The designers are going to have to produce enormous numbers of new titles in order to meet the demand. For one that has been interested in improving the general situation of designers as authors of things, I think micros are going to be bad because they're going to reduce the level of quality, since people are going to have to move fast to produce so many games. It will also reduce the perception of the value of what designers are doing, since they'll be producing them so rapidly, and the remuneration is pretty minimal. That view flies in the face of the fact that when you do any new game, whether it's a small game or a large game, you still have the problem of design and development problems arising. You can't ensure, even with a small game, that it's going to sail through without a hitch. It might be that with a small game you're buying into as many problems as you might be with a big game — but the demands are so much greater. So, as far as the designers are concerned, I'm not convinced that the microgames are best for them. On the other hand, as far as the companies are concerned, they love them. They see an opportunity to make back their print budgets very rapidly. They also think — and I agree — that offering lower-priced games will encourage hobbyists. Those two things go in different directions, so I'm not sure what position I should take. A lot of this depends on fundamental questions about the hobby. Is the number of people playing the games getting larger or not? Are we keeping the people who got into the games earlier, and are they staying with us? If not, and if the following that's developing for the fantasy and science fiction side of gaming doesn't have a larger amount of cross-over to the historical side, which is where I'm centered, then the hobby as a whole could be in bad shape.

GC: In other words, you think the hobby could become too dependent on the fast-playing and not terribly well-researched games?

JP: In terms of the types of designs, that's possible. I certainly think that the incentive for the designer is not there if he's making three hundred dollars for his design, and therefore not making any significant amount of money, unless he's doing a lot of them — have half a dozen out in six months. If you're doing half a dozen games in six months, it's pretty clear how much effort you're putting into each one. I don't know what that says about the amount of quality you're able to put into microgames. I was discussing this with Kevin Zucker at Origins this year. By deliberately restricting the choice of subjects by choosing a simple, well-defined subject, it might be possible to preserve the quality of the games to some degree. If the demand for the games becomes too large and the same

sort of glut phenomenon develops, which happens with games in general, then it's not going to be possible to restrict the choice of titles to those kinds of well-defined situations.

GC: What about your future, personally, as a game designer?

JP: I got into this sort of accidentally when I walked into SPI and freelanced a design for them. I have since been told by Tom Shaw that freelancing designs is a mistake. You shouldn't freelance them, you should produce them, because all the money is in the production. Well, I tried that, with indifferent results. I don't think so; I'd much rather be a freelancer. I've been able to progress pretty well as a freelancer, and to use my designs as a complement to my academic work in international relations and political science. I know that if I'd had a full-time position with any of the game companies, I wouldn't have been able to do what I have done in terms of academic work. I don't want to be limited only to doing games, nor to doing only academic work. I would like to continue this situation — I'll continue to sell my games to publishers in the industry. I want to finish my dissertation, defend it, see if I can get an academic job, and at that point sell a game or two a year.

GC: Is there anyone you want to insult, any controversial statements you want to make?

*JP:* No. Too many people think I've insulted them already.

GC: Okay. What game do you consider your best, and why?

JP: I might make a distinction between published and unpublished games. The unpublished game which I would consider my best would be the French Indo-China game that I did in 1969 which covered the period from 1945 to 1954. I think that was excellent because the historical information was built in quite well. The guerrilla situation worked within the game system, with the regular warfare operations going on at the same time, and it provided for comprehensive coverage

of the whole period. Those things, I think, make it a good game. In terms of published designs, I think there's some question. *Third Reich* has certainly done very well. It's been very well received, and it's gotten, probably, more awards than any other game has won. But in terms of the game that ran smoothest from inception through historical research through playtesting and publication, I would say *Panzerkrieg.* It just worked like a gem, almost without a hitch. I would say that one was pretty good, too.

GC: Correspondingly, what do you consider your worst game, and why?

JP: Good question. Probably, and I'm embarrassed to say it, my worst game is *Cassino.* Because — although there's nothing really terribly wrong with it — it
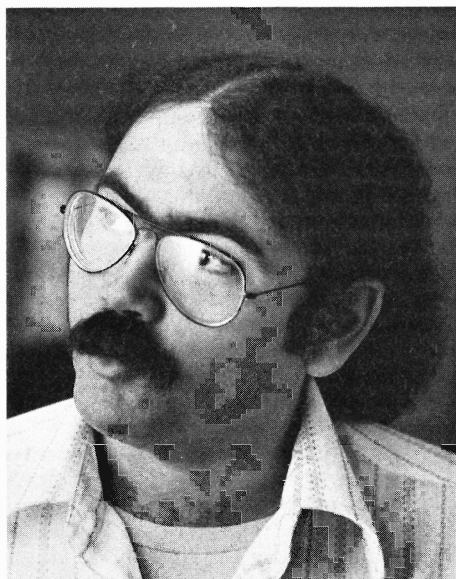
doesn't seem to have fulfilled the expectations of the people who were interested in it. I've run into several gamers who've had a lot of fun playing it and who don't understand

the reviews that I've gotten. What can I say? All these people are experts on the situation — these people who are reviewing it — presumably, and they don't think it fits the situation terribly well. Unfortunately, the designers of games — and this is going to be even more true for designers in the new microgame format — are limited by what the publishers are willing and able to handle. In the format of an *S&T* game, there were inevitably things that could not go into *Cassino,* which people missed very sorely. In the sense that people were very disappointed with what they got, I would have to say that *Cassino* is the worst game.

GC: Who do you see — aside from yourself, obviously — as being the best designers currently active in the industry?

JP: I would have to say Frank Chadwick. Chadwick shows a solid grasp of game mechanics, and is also very careful about his historical research. I might include (Jim) Bumpas, because Bumpas is not scared to handle a topic like *Lebanon 75* (John is referring to an unpublished game) that these more commercialized operations wouldn't touch with a ten-foot pole. I'm also very impressed with Stephen Newberg's work with Simulations Canada, largely because of his *IJN* and *Raketny Kreyser* games.

GC: What do you consider your design philosophy?

JP: My design philosophy, to sum it up, is realism *and* playability. I think it's necessary for a game to be realistic for players to get something out of it. At the same time, however, I resist the notion that you can build endless realism into a game. I don't think it's possible, theoretically, and I know it's impossible practically. Consequently, I try to draw a balance between playability and realism so that a game is realistic enough to say something real to the people who are playing it, but that it's playable enough to finish and get the message out of it. The game shouldn't be too complex, so people can absorb it — I pitch my games at a moderate complexity rating — and it should not be so long that people can't finish it. In practice, it means that I try to choose my scenarios so that no single scenario has too many turns in it. In that way, people can have a decent shot at finishing the game. On the historical side, it means that the game has to have enough meat in terms of the counters and rules systems so that it's a good portrayal of the situation it's intended to simulate. I don't think that simulation is a misnomer for these games that we design; but I don't think that simulation should be taken too far.

GC: So something like *Campaign for North Africa* is not what you're looking for.

JP: Really. That's a good place to bring up computers in games. It may be possible, and probably will be inside the next ten years, when the technology is widely enough disseminated and the skills are widely enough known, that people can handle a topic like *Campaign for North Africa* and be able to remove themselves from the paperwork by shuffling it all onto the computer. They'll be able to concentrate only on the overall

JOHN PRADOS: Games Designed (Published)

Game	Company	Year
Year of the Rat	SPI	1972
Rise and Decline of the Third Reich	Avalon-Hill	1974
Vicksburg: War for the West	Morningside/Rand	1975
Von Manstein: Battles for the Ukraine, 1941-1944	Morningside/Rand	1975
Last Days at Saigon	Bridge Magazine	1975
Pearl Harbor: The War Against Japan, 1941-1945	GDW	1977
Panzerkrieg: Von Manstein in the Ukraine, 1941-1944	OSG	1978
The Battle of Cassino: Assaulting the Gustav Line, 1944	SPI	1978

SCENARIOS & VARIANTS

NLB: AN ANTI-VARIANT
Balancing the Campaign Game
by Mark Brazas

OK you guys, I'm giving you S&V type articles in this issue, and now it's up to you to really use them and report to me whether or not they're worthwhile. We ain't got no time here on the game farm to test out these here hybrids. Up to you to actually play these things and validate them with your experience (and then drop me a note about what you learned, etc.). *NLB* is an interesting enough system to play, so none of you have any excuse on that score (and I've heard rumors about campaign imbalance that have encouraged me to print this).
— *RAS*

While other simulations burst upon the wargaming scene like lightning, only to fade with equal rapidity to dust covered obscurity, *Napoleon's Last Battles* (*NLB*) maintains a remarkable longevity. Like *The Russian Campaign*, *NLB* enjoys a wide constituency of repeat players; the pleasure of the game lies in the contest, rather than in cracking the system or extracting historical information. A game player's game, its lineage includes *Napoleon at War*, *Blue and Gray*, and the Avalon Hill "classics."

The reasons for *NLB*'s success are fourfold: the campaign itself; the game system; the graphics and physical systems; and folio play-balance.

The historical campaign saw the unfolding of the "strategy of the central position." The French, numerically inferior to the combined Allied armies, sought to crush their initially-divided foes with successive concentrations, first against the Prussians, then against the Anglo-Allies. Hindered by command control, poor reconnaissance, wishful thinking, and the uniformly inept performance of Marshal Ney, they nonetheless came within the ace of defeating an enemy whose total strength numbered nearly twice their own.

In gaming terms, the battle went down to the last die roll. The Duke of Wellington conceded as much when he said, after the battle of Waterloo, "It has been a damned nice thing—the nearest run thing you ever saw in your life." Play-balance was definitely present in the original historical event!

The outcome was determined by the concentration of the rallied Prussian army with Wellington's "scum of the earth," who withstood the onslaught of Napoleon's veterans for nearly six hours to win one of the decisive battles in world history. A French victory here is one of history's great might-have-beens. Certainly a Europe dominated by France, rather than Germany, would have

had profound effects reverberating into the twentieth century. In short, the campaign is both eminently gameable and historically significant.

The game system and graphics practically speak for themselves. The system is easily grasped by novices as well as by experienced players who lack the time and/or inclination to spend hours getting into the game or fighting with their opponent over rules interpretations. The system captures the ebb and flow of Napoleonic battle elegantly for the scale used. The Combined Arms and Chateau rules are nice touches which give the game flavor without sacrificing playability. The
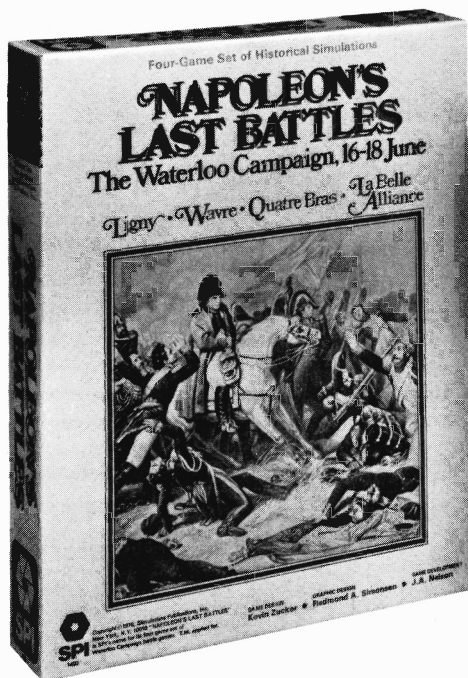
meticulously-researched map is one of the hobby's finest achievements (although "Mavelines" is an incomprehensible shorthand for "Sart-Dame-a-Velines," and the "o" is absent from Gemioncourt). The counters are appropriately colorful for a Napoleonic engagement, particularly the Anglo-Allies. Regimental commanders' names for the Prussians would have been excellent, but I have yet to discover this information anywhere. Finally—and most important, for competitive players—all four folios are well-balanced contests which reward careful placement and calculated risk-taking.

Unfortunately, the play-balance of the folios is not replicated in the campaign game.

One gets the impression that all the playtesting went into the parts, and little or none into the whole. This is a real tragedy, since more gamers' interest seems to be attracted to the big game. The Command and Reorganization rules are innovative concepts which deserve a better fate than to be interred in a battle which the French have no chance of winning against a competent Allied player or team. The same can be said for the entire campaign game, a mini-monster which two players can comfortably finish in a weekend or all-night marathon.

The following approach to the *NLB* Campaign Game is titled an anti-variant because the intent, perhaps pretentious, is to supplant the published campaign game rules as the standard version fought by competitive players. The suggested modifications seem to me to provide a pronounced improvement in the campaign game's play-balance at little cost to playability. The rules modifications are presented first, as a body, followed by a discussion of the rationale behind the changes.

Rules Modifications

[13.2] (*change*) Title of this section should be 'Folio Victory.'

[19.27] (*addition*) Blucher may move a maximum of one hex (of any kind) per Friendly Player-Turn, until either the Prussian Army is Disintegrated (see 22.6) or until 2100, 16 June, whichever occurs first. During the time when his movement is limited, Blucher must still conform to the normal rules of Leader movement (see 19.21).

[21.0] (*addition*) Reorganized units may not move on the turn of Reorganization.

[21.2] (*change*) An Officer must be within five hexes of a Friendly Commander belonging to the same Army to attempt Reorganization. An Officer attempting, etc. (rest of the Case as is). Officers reorganizing units do not count against the Command Capacity of the Commander. Any number of reorganizing Officers may use the same Commander, regardless of his Command Capacity Rating.

[22.6] Army Demoralization and Disintegration (*addition*) In addition to Corps/Nationality Demoralization, the three Armies are also subject to Army Demoralization and Army Disintegration in the Campaign Game.

[22.7] Determination of Army Demoralization/Disintegration (*addition*) During the listed date, when cumulative Combat Strength Point losses of an Army equal or exceed the following levels, Army Demoralization (Dm) or Disintegration (Dis) occurs immediately.

Army	16 June Dm/Dis	17 June Dm/Dis	18 June Dm/Dis
French	60/–	90/–	90/–
Prussian	55/75	65/85	65/85
Anglo-Allied	25/40	40/50	45/55

Demoralization/Disintegration of one Army does not preclude Demoralization/Disintegration of another. If two Armies pass Demoralization/Disintegration levels at the same instant, the non-Phasing Player's Army is considered to have been Demoralized/Disintegrated first.

[22.8] Effects of Army Demoralization/Disintegration (addition)

[22.81] If the French Army is Demoralized, the French immediately lose the Game.

[22.82] If the Prussian or Anglo-Allied Army is Demoralized, the French Player is allowed the option of subtracting 1 from the die-roll on any attack made against units of the Demoralized Army exclusively. This option is exercised *after* the die is rolled. Attacks by the Demoralized Army are not affected, nor are French attacks on defenders which include units of an undemoralized Army.

[22.83] If the Prussian or Anglo-Allied Army is Disintegrated, all attacks by French units on the Disintegrated units may be shifted one column to the right on the Combat Results Table; i.e., a 2-1 would become a 3-1, etc. (A 6-1 would remain a 6-1, but a 9-1 may be adjusted to a 10-1 Automatic Victory—see 28.0). This odds-column shift is optionally applied by the French Player *before* the die is thrown.

[22.84] If units of a Disintegrated Army (only) attack the French, the odds are shifted one column to the left on the CRT; i.e., a 2-1 becomes a 1-1. Army Demoralization, Army Disintegration, and Corps/Nationality Demoralization are separate effects which are suffered cumulatively, in addition to any Combined Arms odds-column adjustment (if the Combined Arms rule is used). **Example:** If 7 Strength Points of Prussians are attacked by 22 Strength Points of French in a Combined Arms attack while the Prussian Army is Disintegrated, the French Player could employ any odds ratio equal to or less than 5-1 (normal 3-1, plus one column to the right for Combined Arms, plus one column to the right for Army Demoralization). In addition, the French could subtract one from the die roll after the attack was made. If the Prussian units belonged to a Demoralized Corps, they would suffer Corps Demoralization movement penalties and inability to advance after combat in their turn. Automatic Victory may still be achieved by Disintegrated units which attack at 11-1 (see 28.0). Attacks on or by units of "mixed" morale suffer penalties of the least-disadvantaged unit. Specific combinations are listed below; "Dm" refers to Army Demoralization:

	Penalty	
Units	Attacking	Defending
Dm + normal	none	none
Dis + normal	none	none
Dis + Dm	– 1 on die roll	none

[22.85] If the Anglo-Allied Army Disintegrates, all non-British, non-KGL units of that Army are immediately removed from play (including reinforcements which have not yet entered the map) and considered eliminated by the French Player. Such units never return, even if the Anglo-Allied Army is subsequently "reintegrated" (see 22.86).

[22.86] Armies (except the French) may become undemoralized or reintegrated by the passage of time (i.e., arrival of reinforcements; see 22.7) and/or Modifications to Army Demoralization/Disintegration Levels (see 22.9).

[22.9] Modifications to Army Demoralization/Disintegration Levels (addition)

[22.91] At the instant the Prussian or Anglo-Allied Army is Demoralized, the French Demoralization Level is increased by 10 points for each Demoralized Army. This bonus may be earned only once per Allied Army by the French. Once earned, it is not revoked, even if the Allied army in question subsequently recovers its morale.

[22.92] At the instant that the first combat occurs between French and Prussian units on the *La Belle Alliance* mapboard, on 1100 June 18 or later, the Anglo-Allied Demoralization and Disintegration levels increase by 10 points.

[26.0] *(change)* Delete the Level of Victory section, and replace with the following:

LEVEL OF VICTORY

French Decisive: If the Victory Point Total reaches 230 or more Victory Points at any time, the French Player wins an immediate Decisive Victory.

French Tactical: 150 Victory Points at game's end.

French Marginal: 100 Victory Points at game's end.

Allied Marginal: Avoid French Victory.

Allied Tactical: 50 or less Victory Points at game's end.

Allied Decisive: If the French Army is Demoralized (see 22.6) at any time before the French have achieved a Decisive Victory, the Allied Player wins an immediate Decisive Victory.

[27.0] Allied Reliability (addition)

[27.1] Whenever a non-British, non-KGL unit of the Anglo-Allied Army is attacked, a die is rolled prior to combat resolution **(Exception: 27.3)**. Results as follows:

1-3: Unit defends at normal Combat Strength

4-6: Unit defends at half Combat Strength, fractions rounded up. Halving for Allied Reliability and Terrain (see 5.6) is cumulative; a unit's Combat Strength may never be reduced below 1, however.

[27.2] Prior to any attack involving Anglo-Allied units, a die is rolled for each non-British, non-KGL unit immediately prior to combat resolution **(Exception: 27.3)**. Results as follows:

1-3 Unit attacks normally.

4-6 Unit remains in place, but does not add its Combat Strength to the attack.

Units which can not participate due to Allied Reliability suffer the same Combat Result as other attacking units. Units which have "failed" the Reliability test may not advance after combat. If such units compose the entire attacking force, the result is an automatic **Ar**.

[27.3] On both attack and defense, Allied units are not subject to Reliability die rolls if they are stacked with, or are directly adjacent to, any British or KGL Combat unit.

[28.0] Automatic Victory (addition)
GENERAL RULE:

Automatic Victory allows destruction of Enemy units during the Friendly Movement Phase. As soon as 10-1 odds or better are achieved against a defending stack or single unit, it is eliminated without Friendly loss. All Combat Strength and CRT-column modifications for terrain and Army Disintegration are used in computing Automatic Victory odds. The Zone of Control of the eliminated defender, including occupied hex(es), may be ignored for the remainder of the Player-Turn. Friendly units may freely enter these hexes, paying only normal Terrain costs. The Friendly units which achieve Automatic Victory remain in place for the remainder of the Player-Turn **(Exception: 28.4)**.

[28.1] Friendly units used to achieve Automatic Victory may not be used to attack other Enemy units (either Automatic Victory or normal Combat Phase attack) in the same Player-Turn. If units used in an Automatic Victory are adjacent to Enemy units in the Combat Phase, these Enemy units must be attacked by other Friendly units. If this is not done, all Friendly units participating in the Automatic Victory are eliminated.

[28.2] Automatic Victory may be declined; i.e., odds voluntarily may be reduced below 10-1. The attack is then conducted in the Combat Phase; the Enemy unit(s)' Zone of Control remains present throughout the Friendly Movement Phase.

[28.3] For Automatic Victory purposes, Allied Reliability (see 27.0) is ignored. All Allied units defend against Automatic Victory at normal strength, modified for Terrain and Army Disintegration.

[28.4] One unit participating in an Automatic Victory may advance into the hex occupied by any eliminated defending unit, at any time during the Friendly Combat Phase.

[28.5] Units which begin the Friendly Player-Turn in Enemy Zones of Control may not leave, even if the Enemy unit(s) suffers Automatic Victory. The Friendly units may, of course, be used to achieve Automatic Victory—provided they are in Command (see 20.0).

Rationale

The Blucher movement limitation attempts to capture the "hussar mentality" of *Alt Vorwarts*. Blucher's offensive spirit was a key element in Napoleon's decision to attack the Prussians first and in the eventual Allied victory. (Over Gneisenau's objections, Blucher moved the Prussian Army to the aid of Wellington—the most important decision of the campaign. The subsequent enshrinement of the lily-livered and Anglophobic Gneisenau in the pantheon of German military glory remains a mystery to this writer).

The Prussian Army included a substantial number of green *Landwehr* and militia with shaky commitment to the Army or to this war. Only a year previously, recruitment efforts had met with rebellion in several provinces. A concentration in the face of the enemy, followed by immediate retreat upon any sign of offensive activity by Napoleon, was not the ticket to confidence for the Prussian Army.

The existing rules encourage a conservative Prussian first-day strategy. The leaders run for the rear while the Army sacrifices as few troops (preferably 2-4s) as possible. The fleeing leaders reorganize the losses as soon as they occur. This is not the way battles were fought, especially under Blucher. His was a young, impressionable army, only recently reorganized by Scharnhorst's reforms, still stinging from the humiliation of 1806. To maintain this army, he must maintain his own reputation, and face the French on the ground he had chosen.

Army Demoralization/Disintegration is a straightforward adaptation from the original folio rules. It simply reflects the fact that armies concentrated to fight, and the word got around rather quickly when defeat was at hand. It would have been more realistic to have some sort of "group" morale—perhaps a percentage of total strength points— for each independent detachment, but this would have burdened players with the tedious job of

calculating and recalculating morale levels, and deciding to which detachment troops in transit properly belonged. I think the rule works well—the majority of casualties will generally be incurred on the significant "front."

Allied reliability is likewise simple. Some Allied troops spent the 18th of June cooking din-din in the Foret de Soignes. Others fought like lions or Englishmen. Wellington's dispositions at Waterloo deliberately sandwiched these unreliable elements between steady British and KGL regiments.

The Automatic Victory rules prevent the Anglo-Allies from stalling a French exit with a succession of 1-7s lined up along the road to Brussels. They also add a new dimension of tactical difficulty for the Allies which reflects their qualitative inferiority in cavalry and artillery. Wellington's retreat must be conducted with a good deal of skill to prevent pins and early losses. The 10-1 attack may be considered a rout which allows the attacking waves to penetrate the line.

The reorganization changes effect a more realistic pace for Prussian recovery from Ligny. They also nullify the conservative Prussian strategy discussed earlier. With Automatic Victory, the French can cause Prussian headaches on the 17th with an energetic pursuit. The role of personal leadership by the top Commanders is given more appropriate weight.

The new victory levels attempt to rectify the absurdity of the old ones, under which the French could destroy both Allied Armies (twice over, at that) with scant losses, and still lose the game. Doubtless some will object to the interpretations of victory. After all, the French still had the Russians, Austrians, and another corps of Prussians to fight. But military force does not operate in a vacuum. I remain convinced that a French victory in the campaign, as I define it, would have taken the political wind out of the Congress of Vienna's sails. Provided, of course, that Napoleon had exorcized the the vaulting ambition of 1813, when in a fit of *hubris* he rejected the coalition's recognition of his throne in exchange for return of the French annexations in Germany of 1810, Illyria, and the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. Certainly the political climate in France, bled white by the wars of conquest, encouraged a moderate view of Empire.

Conclusion and Suggestions for Further Development

I think that evenly-matched opponents will find themselves having a more exciting and realistic time with the Waterloo campaign under the rules presented above. The new version eliminates the artificial and ahistorical first-day strategies fostered by the old rules. It also discourages the Allies from playing lazily, which the old rules allowed them to do. Rather, Blucher and Wellington must fight artfully on the original battlefields of Ligny and Quatre Bras. Further, they are rewarded for appropriate offensive action by possible French Demoralization. (This is by no means a chimera.)

The outcome of the first-day battles will do much to determine the subsequent course of the game, but so will the retreats and pur-

suits of the 17th. In several solitaire playtests, I've had results ranging from Allied victory on the first day to decisive French victory. The later tests tended toward the marginal decisions.

These rules are proposed as an anti-variant. Ideally, SPI would reproduce these pages and include them in a 2nd edition of *NLB*. Many players are reluctant to use magazine articles and other unofficial sources of rules. This is not surprising in light of the uneven quality of these sources. Also, using magazine rules puts the non-subscribers —who presumably include a high proportion of novices and "amateurs" without financial and/or obsessive interest in games — at a disadvantage. It leads to player fragmentation and makes it harder to get a decent contest up where both players know what the game looks like. This would be most unfortunate for a game with as much potential for mass fan appeal as the *NLB* Campaign.

As mentioned previously, these rules were designed to redress play imbalance without destroying the playability of the original. I think the effect of the real campaign is captured; players make the right moves, though perhaps for the wrong reasons. Another job remains to be done with a tournament version of the *NLB* Campaign. This would give us a real live operational simulation of the Waterloo Campaign, replete with hidden movement and scads of tables, as a worthy companion to *Wellington's Victory*. Such a Tournament Game would include:

• *Improved logistics* rules providing for re-supply after engagements (e.g., the first day's battles). Muffling, the only Prussian commentator translated into English, mentions removal of ammunition supplies from Gembloux to Wavre—logistics might be tied to...

• *Off-board movement* to provide a satisfactory rationale for the movement of Thielemann's corps and Grouchy's detachment to Gembloux in terms other than madness. (In the published rules, such a move is not simply idiotic—it's illegal.)

• *Fatigue.* Unlike cardboard counters, exhausted men must occasionally pause to sleep, hungry men to eat.

• *Limited intelligence.* In a strategic sense: not only was Napoleon ignorant of Bulow's whereabouts on the 16th—so was Blucher! The positions of their opposite numbers were a matter of guesswork to the Allied commanders throughout much of the campaign. The French had similar problems. Tactically, the French had little idea what was waiting for them on the reverse slopes of the Waterloo position. The Nassau brigade on Wellington's extreme left lost more heavily to their oncoming Prussian allies than to the French. The unannounced arrival of D'Erlon's corps on the French left at Ligny came close to demoralizing Vandamme's hard-pressed corps through mistaken identity.

• *Multi-commander rules* for multiple players which reflect the coordination/communication difficulties of the 1815 campaign.

• *Movement differentials* for tactical, strategic, and forced march movement. An uncertainty factor—to simulate, for instance, the

fire in Wavre which slowed Bulow's march on the 18th—would be nice.

• *Command control* to provide for the peregrinations of D'Erlon's corps, and the tactical ineptitude of Ney and Orange.

• *Improved night and weather* rules.

I haven't seen OSG's *Napoleon at Leipzig* yet; from the ad copy it seems that many of these innovations may be appearing on the hex-grid. Perhaps they can be transferred, with appropriate reworking, to the 1815 campaign. The physical and game systems of *NLB* are begging for state-of-the-art development. Address correspondence to:

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Napoleon's Last Battles Addenda

[8.17] (*addition*) If a unit(s) is attacked through Stream, River, Bridge hexsides by artillery bombardment only, the unit's defense strength is not doubled. Artillery may bombard across Pond hexsides at one or two hex range.

[9.11] (*addition*) Entry of reinforcements may be delayed to later Game-Turns. If reinforcements' entry hex(es) are blocked by Enemy units or their Zones of Control, the reinforcements may enter at the closest open board-edge hex. Reinforcements which do not enter the map are not counted in the Victory Point total of the Campaign Game or Folios.

[10.3] (*change*) Delete the parenthesized section "(and . . . command)."

[13.1] (*clarification*) The definition of occupation given in this rule applies to the Supply rules of the Campaign Game (see 24.2).

[14.3] (*clarification*) If French losses reach 35 Strength Points and the Prussians are undemoralized, the French immediately lose the game.

[24.0] (*clarification*) Delete the parenthesized reference to 0900 hrs. Supply is determined during the Command and Reorganization Phase of each day's initial daylight Play-Turn.

[24.1] (*change*) This rule should read: . . . All Prussian Supply is traced to any hex on the *eastern* map edge. All Anglo-Allied Supply is traced to any hex on the northern or *western* map edge.'

[25.0] (*clarification*) When using both 25.3 and 25.4, 25.3 takes precedence over 25.4. ■ ■

GAME PROFILE

THE BEST GAME YOU'VE NEVER PLAYED

Caesar: The Battle of Alesia
by Wayne Weber

See, *MOVES* is not a house organ. This is the *second* article in one issue concerning an Avalon Hill game. Actually, AH bought up this game after it was published as *Alesia* and made it their own. One can understand why they bought it up — it's a pretty good game that's been played by a number of SPI guys, even. As the author points out, however, it's been roundly ignored by gamerland for reasons of subject, availability, etc. Perhaps this piece will pique your interest and you'll buy it, and...what am I saying? Just go ahead and *borrow* a friend's copy. — RAS

An odd fact in evidence on the *Strategy and Tactics* bi-monthly Games Rating Chart is that Avalon Hill's *Caesar,* one of the highest rated games on the chart, is also among the least played. Only six percent of *S&T's* Feedback respondents have played *Caesar,* and that is a shame in view of the extraordinarily high quality of this game, both as a simulation of history and as a genuinely enjoyable way to spend a few hours.

Caesar (formerly published as *Alesia*) recreates the unenviable situation in which Julius Caesar found himself in 52 B.C. During the course of putting down a rebellion in Gaul, Caesar and ten Roman legions succeeded in driving the rebel leader Vercingetorix and 100,000 of his men into the town of Alesia, to which the Romans laid siege. Unfortunately, the Gallic cavalry was able to escape, and rode off to raise the rest of Gaul against Caesar. Soon a relief force of 250,000 more Gauls was on its way to the aid of Vercingetorix and his besieged army.

To face this threat, the Romans constructed dual rings of awesome fortifications—one ring facing inward toward the town, the other facing outward against the relief force. Outnumbered six to one, the Romans prepared to defend against attack from two directions at once.

Caesar's designer, Dr. Robert Bradley, has captured this situation very nicely, using a rather simple game system (symmetric movement-combat sequence of play, mandatory combat between adjacent units, odds/ratio combat results table, tables for resolving missile fire). The mapboard depicts Alesia and the doughnut-shaped Roman fortifications around the town. Much of the flavor of the game derives from the Gallic ability to move unseen through ten "Off-Board Zones" that ring the visible playing map. These off-board zones represent thick forests and high ridges behind which the Gauls

could move without detection. The Gallic relief force begins the game in off-board Zone I, facing the southwest corner of the Roman outer perimeter. From there, the Gallic Player can move as many pieces as he desires in either direction through the ring of off-board zones, at the rate of one zone per turn.

The Roman Player knows which off-board zones contain Gallic units, but he doesn't know the number or the type of units in any particular zone. Thus, surprise Gallic assaults can come from literally any quarter; the Roman Player must defend everywhere, even though he has insufficient units to do so adequately. Furthermore, he must keep a wary eye on the besieged Gallic force in Alesia, which, within certain restrictions designed to simulate the poor coordination between the two Gallic armies, is able to charge unexpectedly out of the town to hurl itself against the Roman inner perimeter. And to compound Caesar's troubles, the Gallic units are not only far more numerous than the Roman units, but each Gallic unit is, on the average, stronger than its Roman counterpart.

There is, however, a silver lining to Caesar's black cloud. First, the double ring of ramparts the Romans must defend is a great boon to them. Not only are the Romans doubled when defending on the ramparts (so long as they are attacked only from non-rampart hexes), they may also march at twice normal speed when proceeding along them. Thus it is relatively easy for the Romans to reinforce hard-pressed sectors. Caesar's chances are also enhanced by the ability of his units to stack three high, while his enemies can stack only two units in a single hex. This rule simulates the superior training of the Roman cohorts.

Furthermore, Gallic units attempting to attack either Roman perimeter must traverse the Outer Works, an unpleasant ditch filled with wooden stakes, iron spurs, and entwined brambles; Gallic units ending their movement on the Outer Works in a Roman ZOC risk a one-sixth chance of elimination before combat is resolved, so the best-laid Gallic attack plans can be fouled up by poor luck on the Outer Works. Ten deadly little archer and slinger units add to Gallic woes, but far worse are the twenty-three Roman forts; when manned, the forts have a missile-engine capability, and can fire at Gallic units up to three hexes distant while the Gauls are moving. Finally, surrounded Gallic units attacked at odds of 2-1 or better are automatically eliminated, since during the actual bat-

tle the Gauls tended to panic and run when they saw Roman troops on their flanks.

As a result of all this, even a victorious Gallic Player will likely suffer dreadful casualties. The victory conditions themselves are very simple—the Gallic Player has two "assault periods" (days) of twelve turns each in which to exit Vercingetorix from the map. If he fails to do so, the Roman Player wins. Losses to either side play no part in the victory conditions.

Caesar is an unusual game in that the final outcome is often determined to a substantial degree by what goes on before the first Game Turn. If the Roman Player initially fails to set up Caesar's legions intelligently and economically along the lengthy defensive perimeters, or if the Gallic Player fails to devise a solid plan of attack against the formidable Roman defenses before play begins, little success can be expected by the guilty Player. Thus it is of particular importance to outline the kind of considerations each Player should keep in mind during this critical preparatory period.

Roman Set-Up

As Dr. Bradley mentions in the game notes accompanying *Caesar,* the Roman Player should always give the outer perimeter precedence over the inner in deployment of his forces. For several reasons, the besieged Gallic army is far less of a threat than the relieving force. First, of course, Vercingetorix' army is much smaller than that of his would-be saviors. Secondly, only one small portion of the Roman inner perimeter can be reached by the Alesian Gauls within one turn's movement. Thus the Roman player should have ample time to reinforce any section of the inner perimeter threatened by the besieged Gauls before they can attack it in full force.

Furthermore, the inner perimeter is well-situated along rivers, which hinder Gallic movement and double Romans defending behind them. The Romans also dug a long moat to the west of Alesia known as the Isolated Trench, which has the same effects on Gallic movement and attack as a river.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Gallic force from Alesia cannot attack with the abandon of the relieving force. The presence of the Vercingetorix counter, and the concomitant need to constantly protect him, forces the besieged Gauls to move and attack with caution.

Thus the defense of the inner perimeter really initially requires only two legions, five

or six cohorts of the North Italian recruits, and four forts. In deploying along the inner perimeter, the Roman Player should pay particular attention to the stretch just south of the Ose River; with no shielding rivers or trench, and relatively close to Alesia, it is the most vulnerable section of the inner perimeter. Though the Romans will be spread very thinly along the inner perimeter, they should be able to reinforce any threatened section of it well before Vercingetorix' ponderous army can attack it.

It is the deployment of his units along the outer perimeter that will give the Roman Player most of his problems. No matter how he jockeys his units during set-up, portions of the outer perimeter will be left inadequately defended, particularly if the powerful Tenth Legion (Caesar's "bodyguard") is held off the line in reserve, as it should be. Therefore the Roman cohorts should be concentrated where the Gallic axe is most likely to fall. Particularly vulnerable sections of the line are those that run close to the map-edge, since Gallic units can swarm out of their off-board sanctuary and attack these sections of the outer perimeter all in one turn, before

Roman reinforcements can arrive. The sections of the outer perimeter facing off-board Zones II, IV, IX and X should all be well manned for this reason. Sections of the perimeter farther removed from the map-edge can be more scantily defended, since there will be more time to reinforce them if a Gallic assault materializes.

Certain areas deserve extra strength simply because they face off-board zones from which the Gallic Player can stage assaults very early in the game. The Roman Player should remember that his opponent does not have time on his side; he has only twelve turns in each assault period to exit Vercingetorix, so the sooner his relieving force successfully attacks the Roman perimeter, the better his chances of getting Vercingetorix off the map in time. Since all Gallic relieving units start the game in off-board Zone I, and can only move one zone per turn in either direction, there is only a gradually increasing number of zones from which they can attack in the early game turns. Thus the Roman Player should not scrimp on the deployment of his cohorts along the outer perimeter facing off-board Zones I, II and X, since any of

these sectors can be attacked as early as Game Turn Two.

In placing his units the Roman Player should not attempt to garrison the protruberant "camps" facing off-board Zones I, II and V. There are simply not enough cohorts available to allow for a defense of these jutting sections of the outer perimeter. For example, the "camp" ramparts facing off-board Zone I would require at least four cohorts even for a bare-bone defense, whereas only two cohorts are needed to defend the same section of the perimeter if the Roman Player satisfies himself with a defense of the "perimeter" ramparts behind the camp enclosure. It is also true that units defending Roman camps outside the main perimeter are in danger of being cut off.

The Roman Player must exercise even greater care in placing his forts than he does in positioning his units since, unlike the cohorts, the forts may never be moved again. Caesar's forts are the real backbone of his defense, not only because of the lethal hail of missiles they can rain on Gallic attackers, but because Gallic ZOC's do not extend into forts, nor Roman ZOC's out of them. Thus
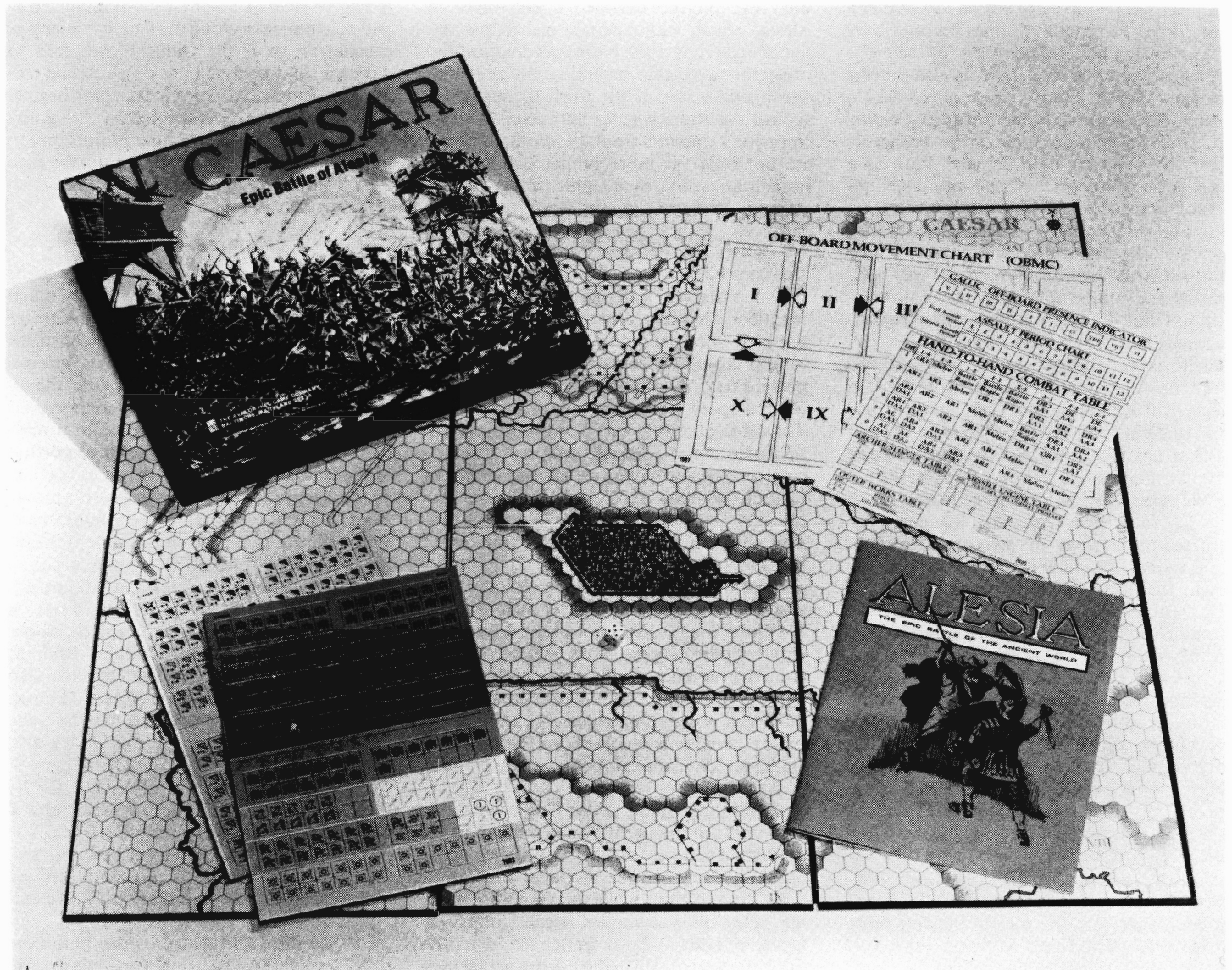
Roman units in forts, unlike their comrades on the ramparts, will not find themselves forced to make poor-odds attacks against adjacent Gauls just to maintain their position.

However, the Roman Player must strike a balance between using forts as anchors of his defense and using them in their other major role, as bridges connecting portions of the often segmented Roman perimeters. In general, forts being used in this latter role should be situated so as to connect only those sections of the perimeter separated by a river, not sections separated by a hex containing other terrain. Rivers that should be bridged to ensure the rapid movement of reinforcements include the Ose River both south of Mt. Rea and in the east (where two forts are sufficient to make all four rampart terminals mutually connecting), and the Brenne River in the southeast.

The rest of the Roman forts should be placed so as to strengthen the outer perimeter as much as possible. They should be evenly distributed along the line, though perhaps the perimeter facing off-board Zones II and X deserve an extra fort or two because each of these sections is both close to the map-edge and subject to attack early in the game. At least a couple of forts are also required to stiffen the rather haphazard Roman fortifications in the Mt. Rea area. Finally, the Roman Player must be sure to garrison his forts adequately. He will only be making cheap gifts of them to the Gallic Player if he mans them with, say, a single Numidian light infantry unit. Even though only one unit is required to trigger the missile engine capability of a fort, only those forts very remote from the map-edge should be allotted fewer than two defending units. Where possible, the Roman Player should support forts with a unit in the adjacent hex. This makes any attack on the fort all the more difficult.

There are several other kinds of units the Roman Player commands, and whose deployment also merits careful thought. Caesar's mercenary Germanic cavalry units are weak but fast, and are most useful for obtaining 2-1 surround attacks on unwary Gallic units. The cavalry is most effectively placed where there are gaps in the Outer Works (cavalry units cannot cross that horror), and plenty of room for maneuver outside the outer perimeter. Areas behind the perimeter facing off-board Zones I, III, V, VII and VIII all fit the bill. Never, except in the direst emergency, commit the Roman cavalry to the line. Hold the cavalry back to threaten the flanks of Gallic assaults; at the very least, the presence of the cavalry will force the Gallic Player to divert much-needed units away from his main attack to cover his flanks.

Furthermore, the ability of cavalry to move up to thirty hexes along ramparts makes it very handy for reinforcing hard-hit areas of the perimeter. The cavalry won't stop a Gallic attack, but may slow it down just long enough for more substantial reinforcements to arrive.

Another possible use for one Roman cavalry unit is as a sort of mounted assassin. The Roman Player may wish to station an inconspicuous cavalry unit inside the inner perimeter. If the Gallic Player is careless in protecting Vercingetorix as the Gauls exit Alesia, the cavalry unit may be able to dart in and kill the Gallic leader (Vercingetorix is automatically eliminated in a Roman ZOC), thus obtaining a cheap victory. Admittedly this is an unlikely turn of events, but the attempt is perhaps worth the diversion of a single cavalry unit.

The Roman North Italian Recruit cohorts are almost as strong as the regular legion cohorts, and can be deployed by themselves along the less critical sections of the perimeter. However, the Roman Player should note that the Recruit cohorts can safely take the place of legion cohorts in the defense of important forts. A fort garrison consisting of a regular legion cohort and a Recruit cohort is just as good as a garrison of two legion cohorts. Forts need to be attacked at odds of at least 3-1 to obtain a reasonable chance of success. Now even if the Gauls attack from three hexes, the most they will be able to muster against a fort is forty-eight attack points, which gives them 2-1 odds against the fort, regardless of whether it contains two legion cohorts or a legion cohort and a Recruit cohort. Thus the deployment of Recruit cohorts in forts frees the stronger legion cohorts for use on the perimeter.

Caesar's mercenary archers and slingers are few in number, and should be deployed with care. Start them all on those portions of the outer perimeter facing Zones I, II and X, where they will be in position to meet any early Gallic assaults in force. As the game progresses, and the Gallic threat expands, move the archers and slingers around the outer perimeter to face the new attack possibilities, until they are evenly distributed around the perimeter.

The deployment of the two Roman leaders is also an important element of Caesar's position. Roman leaders provide extra die rolls on attack and defense for units with which they are stacked. Labienus should begin the game opposite off-board Zone I to aid in defending against any early Gallic assaults. From there the Roman Player can move him or not as he sees fit. Caesar himself should be held in reserve with his bodyguard, the Tenth Legion. In general, always keep leaders attached to a powerful Roman stack of three units. Not to do so is to expose them to needless risks and to waste part of the benefits they provide.

Gallic Set-Up

The Gallic Player has less pre-game brainwork to do than his opponent, since all of his units are automatically deployed in off-board Zone I to begin the game. However, the Gallic Player should not be idle while the Roman Player ponders his set-up; this is the best time for him to work out a careful, coherent plan of attack on the Roman position. (Of course, every Roman set-up will be unique, and when that set-up is complete the Gallic Player will need to tailor his attack somewhat to fit the peculiarities of the particular Roman defense he faces.) The Gallic Player should divide his forces into attack groups on the Off-Board Movement Chart, and decide on a specific game turn and zone or zones of attack for each group.

Of course there is more to *Caesar* than simply setting up the pieces. What follows is a game of massive surprise assaults, desperate stands, and whatever the outcome, enough casualties to satisfy the bloodthirstiest of gamers. As the game unfolds, there are some general considerations each player should keep in mind to guide his actions.

The Roman Player should, above all, hold the perimeter ramparts as long as possible, not just because his units are doubled on the ramparts, but because the longer they can hold out on the ramparts the longer the Gallic units must remain on the nightmarish Outer Works. And of course so long as the Roman Player keeps his perimeters free of Gauls he will enjoy a considerable advantage in mobility over his enemy (potentially as much as sixteen hexes per turn for the Roman to six for the Gauls). Once the Gauls are able to segment the Roman perimeter with their attacks, much of this advantage is lost.

A second rule the Roman Player must follow is to keep a strong reserve and use it wisely. He should not succumb to the temptation to put all his troops on the perimeters; this will strengthen his overall defense only marginally, and seriously reduce his ability to reinforce crumbling sections of the line. The reserve should consist of the Tenth Legion and the Caesar counter, and should be split into two parts, one deployed in the north and one in the south. This maximizes the chances that at least part of the Roman reserve will be able to reach an assaulted sector in time.

The Roman Player should avoid committing his reserves against feints and minor attacks. Now this is naturally easier to say than to do, but the Roman Player should always remember that he faces a very large relieving army. What seems to him a quite formidable force may be no more than a diversion.

In this connection, a third rule suggests itself: the Roman Player should always know roughly how many Gallic units remain off the board—this will help him to decide whether a given attack is a feint or the real thing. This advice will probably be distasteful to the "historian" gamer, since admittedly Julius Caesar had no way of knowing how many Gauls lurked in the trees beyond his outer perimeter. But the Roman Player whose primary interest is in winning the game will find much comfort in knowing that those Gallic units that just entered the board were practically the last Gauls remaining off-board, and that he can now safely strip his defenses in unendangered areas and send reinforcements streaming en masse towards jeopardized sectors. Thus the Roman Player more concerned with the game than the simulation should know that the Gallic relief force consists of 138 infantry units and 20 cavalry units.

There are also a number of general considerations the Gallic Player should keep in

mind as guidelines for his decisions. Most basically, the Gauls must avoid making too few or too many attacks with the relieving force. Historically, the Gallic relief force poured all its might into a single massive assault, and was bloodily repulsed. The same tactic failed twice more. The Gallic Player in *Caesar* will likewise find that it is almost invariably fatal to make only one huge assault with the relief force; such an assault does nothing to hinder the flow of Roman reinforcements to the attacked sector, or to throw the Roman Player off balance. Anyway, 150-odd units attacking the same sector of the perimeter just get in each other's way. The Gallic Player should make secondary attacks in support of the major attack to draw away reinforcements, sever Roman rampart lines of enhanced mobility, and keep his opponent confused about the Gallic Player's real intentions.

At the same time, however, the Gallic Player must avoid making too many attacks with the relief force. No more than four Gallic attacks, including diversions, should be launched. The Gallic forces may seem overpowering at first, but the combination of horrors awaiting for them at the Roman perimeter will soon whittle even a large assault force down to far less formidable size. Thus attack forces of fewer than thirty-five to forty units will usually meet with little success.

The attack of the besieged Alesia force on the inner perimeter is a case unto itself. A single attack should be made by all the besieged units against a section of the inner perimeter in an attempt to link up with a major attack that has already penetrated the outer perimeter. In other words, the attack from within must be made in conjunction with an attack from without; the besieged Gauls are simply too weak to fight their way out alone.

Each Gallic attack, whether on the inner or outer perimeter, should be part of an overall "game plan," a coherent and unified strategy for cracking the Roman perimeter. No attack should be launched without a definite purpose in mind, or without a definite relationship to the other attack(s). The Gallic Player should not send in two or three completely unrelated and independent assaults against the outer perimeter, hoping that one of them will be able to break through to the besieged army. His attacks should be carefully choreographed so that each attack either supports an attack that has gone in before or sets the stage for an attack that will follow.

Although the establishment of a definite "game plan" is crucial to the Gallic Player's chances of success, he should not be an abject slave to his strategy. Things rarely go as one plans, so the Gallic Player should be prepared to improvise if necessary. He should heavily reinforce unexpectedly successful attacks if time and distance permit, and should hold back support from assaults that seem to be going nowhere fast.

Another general tenet that should guide Gallic play is the need to disrupt Roman lines of mobility whenever possible. Often the movement of Roman units along the outer perimeter can be disrupted for a turn or two by small Gallic cavalry raids against lightly manned segments of the perimeter. Unfortunately, most Roman reinforcements will move along the shorter, less vulnerable inner perimeter, which can generally only be reached by a major Gallic assault. Assaults aimed at disrupting Roman mobility by capturing a section of the inner perimeter should be made against those points where the inner and outer perimeters draw close together. The perimeter opposite off-board Zone II is a particularly good place for this kind of attack; only one hex separates the two perimeters, and the outer perimeter is very close to the map-edge.

The Gallic Player may even wish to base his entire game plan on the selective disruption of Roman mobility. He may be able to isolate an entire section of the Roman perimeter by attacking on its flanks and in each case penetrating to the inner perimeter. For example, a sizeable attack on the constricted Roman perimeters facing off-board Zone II, in conjunction with an attack on the perimeters opposite Zone VIII where they draw together around the Brenne River, may well succeed in completely isolating most of the southern half of the Roman ring from reinforcements. If these attacks are successful, they will be followed by a crushing attack on the isolated Roman perimeters with the remainder of the relief force from without and the Alesia force from within. Without reinforcements, the Romans have little hope of preventing Vecingetorix' escape.

Of course the above suggestion is intended only as an example of one way the Gauls might achieve victory. It should be emphasized that there is no single optimum strategy for either player in *Caesar*. A strategy which works for the Gauls in one game may well fail miserably the next due to a different Roman set-up or a different Roman response. *Caesar* is a difficult game to play into the ground, because the flexibility it allows both players ensures that every game will be unique; that is where much of the game's richness lies.

Returning to the broad guidelines for Gallic success, the imperative need to keep Vercingetorix safe is another point meriting constant Gallic consideration. This burden falls largely on the Alesia force. To keep their leader insulated from Roman ZOC's, while simultaneously breaking through the stiff Roman defenses, is no easy task for the besieged Gauls. To have any hope of succeeding, they must stick together in a single phalanx of units. The Alesia force simply does not dare to split up into two or more parts. Even as a unitary force it will be hard-pressed to cut through the Roman defenses with Vercingetorix still alive.

A final consideration for the Gallic Player to remember is that there are two assault periods in a game of *Caesar*. Although the Gauls' chances of victory are usually less on the second day due to their losses, such a victory is far from impossible. If the Gallic Player perceives that he has almost no chance of exiting Vercingetorix in time (at the end of the first assault period, Vercingetorix and his besieged army are returned to Alesia if they still remain anywhere on the map), or if a key assault is repulsed, by all means he should withdraw his forces back into Alesia or off the board, and wait for the second assault period. He should not lose any more units in useless assaults. Every unit he loses on the first day diminishes his chances of victory on the second.

Having outlined the broad points each player should remember, some words on the nuts and bolts of victory are in order—what tactics should the players use? Tactics in *Caesar* are not complex. The game system is quite straightforward, and that is reflected in the best uses of that game system.

The Roman Player should realize that the only way he can successfully meet the floodtide of Gallic units is to take advantage of his superior stacking ability (three units per hex for the Romans to two per hex for the Gauls). During his initial set-up the Roman Player will find that he can stack very few units, for he must defend practically everywhere. Once the Gallic attacks start to come in, however, the Roman Player will be able to concentrate his units in the defense of much smaller areas, and will have enough units to stack. A stack of three legion cohorts is hard to budge on any terrain, and practically immovable on a rampart.

As was previously noted, the Romans must hold the perimeter as long as possible, but the Roman Player must also know when to make orderly retreats from the ramparts. There is an abundance of "Melee" results on the *Caesar* Hand-to-Hand CRT, which means that the attack has had no effect, and the defender will have to counterattack in his combat phase, or retreat from the enemy ZOC. A Melee result is usually much to the Gauls' advantage, since the outnumbered Romans will not be able to effectively counterattack, and must yield the ramparts. If Melee results (or retreats) are simultaneously obtained against two or three Roman units in a single area, it may be necessary to withdraw not only those units but several other nearby units in the Roman line from the ramparts. This is particularly true if the units forced to retreat are on the flanks of a group of several other units. The coherency of the Roman line in an attacked area must be maintained, even if it means surrendering part of the ramparts.

Another Roman tactical imperative is that the ramparts should be defended as much as possible with units in alternate hexes. If the Roman Player presents a continuous line of units, the Gauls will make use of diversionary, or holding attacks against certain Roman units so that others may be attacked at high odds with a good chance of success. Thus after the Gallic combat phase Gallic units will likely be left in the ZOC's of the Roman units that beat off the holding attacks; the Romans will have to retreat in their ensuing movement phase, since attack is unfeasible. Also, of course, as every experienced wargamer knows, continuous hex defenses are vulnerable to flank-to-front assaults, which can result in the actual elimination of Roman cohorts.

As has been stressed repeatedly, the rapid movement of Roman reinforcements is of paramount importance to the Roman de-•

fense. A simple tactic that facilitates this movement is that of "sliding" whole sections of the Roman defense along the ramparts into a hard-pressed area. Gaps left in the defense of the perimeter are filled by units sliding in from other areas. Naturally the Roman perimeter defense is stretched thinner by this process, but it does increase the volume of reinforcements flowing into a particular area by allowing practically every unit within one turn's movement of the crisis area to be sent there immediately as reinforcements. Without "sliding," only those few units which could be spared from the defense of nearby areas against potential attacks would be available as immediate reinforcements. Actually, sliding is a tactic that should be familiar to many wargamers, as it is applicable to almost any game where a continuous front must be defended.

Gallic tactics are no more complex or exotic than those the Roman Player should use. The overriding tactical necessity for the Gauls is to attack whenever possible, even at poor odds. At 1-2 odds, for example, the worst that can happen to the attackers is a retreat; the Gauls might even obtain a "Melee" result, which will force the Romans to counterattack and, if unsuccessful, to retreat.

Where the Roman Player elects to defend in a continuous line, either due to the eccentricities of the perimeter or to his own carelessness, the Gallic Player should take advantage of his deployment in the manner already described.

Where possible, the Gallic Player should allocate more units to attacks on rampart hexes than are really necessary to achieve the desired odds. Thus, any losses that occur on the Outer Works (the effects of which are assessed after movement ends) may be compensated for by the presence of the extra unit(s). Unfortunately, there will generally not be room for extra units unless the Roman position can be attacked from three hexes.

The bevy of weak combat units he commands are a problem for the Gallic Player, since they are not really powerful enough to take on Roman cohorts, and anyway there are plenty of stronger units available for that, at least initially. There are, however, a couple of good uses to which these lesser Gallic forces can be put. First, they are ideal for defending the Gallic flanks, particularly where Roman cavalry is lurking in the vicinity. Secondly, they are useful for muting the missile fire of troublesome Roman forts.

The rules of *Caesar* stipulate that when a Gallic unit begins its movement phase adjacent to a Roman fort, that fort may only fire at its primary range during that phase (i.e., its range is only one hex). Thus the Gaul may wish to keep at least two weak units in separate hexes adjacent to the fort in question at all times; even if one is eliminated, the other will still be there next turn to keep the fort's range curtailed. Another unit can be sent in during that next turn to ensure that the fort remains hemmed in, so to speak. Naturally, the Gallic Player may lose a fair number of his weak units in this way, but they will have protected his larger, more important units from the fort's lethal volleys. Such tactics

may even prove to be the difference between success and failure for a particular Gallic assault, because a single Roman fort is perfectly capable of crippling an entire Gallic attack against a nearby section of the perimeter.

The Gallic Player should leave at least one unit, preferably cavalry, in each off-board zone. This will keep the Roman Player guessing as to the real whereabouts of the main Gallic forces, since he cannot tell whether a given zone contains one Gallic unit or a hundred.

Another good opportunity for using the Gallic cavalry presents itself when the Roman Player, in his anxiety to reinforce a sagging sector, strips his line in other areas and leaves Roman forts isolated and/or undermanned. Fast moving, massed Gallic cavalry can dart in and pick off several such forts in just a couple of turns, and be gone before reinforcements arrive. This tactic will be most effective if carried out during the first assault period. Even if the major Gallic assaults of the first day fail, the loss of those few Roman forts may prove decisive during the second day's action.

A final note on Gallic tactics: the Gallic Player should not be excessively concerned with perfect execution of his assaults at the tactical level. He has a lot of units and can afford to make a few mistakes. It is more important for him to keep an eye on the overall ebb and flow of the game. The Gallic Player must be alert to the opportunities which present themselves as the Roman lines inevitably stretch and weaken. The above advice about picking off isolated Roman forts is but one example of such opportunism. Sometimes the Gallic Player may wish to change his entire game plan to take advantage of the developing weakness in the Roman perimeter. It is more important that Gallic attacks be sent in against the right sector than that they be executed perfectly. If the Gallic Player has chosen his point of attack well, the sheer weight of Gallic numbers will often carry them through the Roman perimeter.

Such was the case during the actual battle. The Gallic attacks of the first day against the heavily-defended Roman perimeter in the southwest and the west were easily defeated. However, the attack on Mt. Rea on the second day came within a hairsbreadth of breaking through to Vercingetorix' army, not because Gallic tactics were any better than in the previous attacks, but because this time they had chosen a very weak point in the Roman defense.

Thus it can be seen again that *Caesar* succeeds brilliantly at what most wargames only attempt: it faithfully captures the flavor of an historical situation, while simultaneously remaining relaxing and truly fun to play. *Caesar* provides a splendid view of a complex and unusual battle through the prism of a simple yet subtle game system. It is, in short, one of the few wargames around that truly deserves the description "elegant." Regardless of whether or not you are much interested in the ancient period, *Caesar* is a game worth owning. Ask anyone who's played it—if you can find anyone who's played it. ■ ■

Notes from the SPIRIT WORLD

Greetings. For all those who have been patiently waiting, Eric Goldberg has been given the green light to go ahead with the designing of *Dragonslayer,* SPI's first Fantasy/Role Playing game. Eric is now looking for people interested in blindtesting this game. *Dragonslayer*, designed to introduce people to the genre, will be simple to learn.

Eric Goldberg is also looking for answermen for the following games: *First World War Module, October War, War In The Pacific, Mech War 2, Next War,* and *War Between The States.* Being an answerman entails the following:

1. All games questions on your chosen game will be forwarded to you, and you will be responsible for answering them.

2. You will be responsible for compiling an official errata sheet for the game, to be verified by SPI.

Eric apologizes for not answering the letters of volunteers who responded to the last request for answermen; if you have already sent a letter, just drop him a short note reaffirming your desire to do the job.

Ajax Buccini, who is designing *Antwerp* for the Victory in the West Series, would like to know if anyone out there has any information to share on German and British OBs for the British 21st Army Group sector, from Aug-Nov 1944.

Those of you who read the Feedback section of *MOVES* and *S&T* may remember a proposal way back when, for a game titled *Battle of Britain.* This game was going to be a strategic/tactical level game of the Battle of Britain, in which players plot out their raids and interception missions on "tote boards" not unlike the ones used by the Luftwaffe and Fighter Command. SPI has now found John Butterfield to be the right designer for this game, which was received well in Feedback. John is now looking for people interested in blindtesting this game.

Getting back to the Victory in the West series, Joe Balkoski is looking for anyone with information concerning German, British, and American Corps and Army non-divisional level formations involved in the battles for the Rhineland, Feb-Apr 1945.

Joe is also looking for information (unclassified, of course) dealing with U.S. and Soviet task force organization, how these task forces are deployed, and where they are deployed around the world (e.g., carriers in task forces, escorts, bases of operation, etc.) for use in *Naval War.*

Here's a treat for *TSS* die-hards. Tom Hudson, who is assisting Eric Smith with the *TSS* Capsules series, is looking for people interested in blindtesting *Pea Ridge* or *Monacacy Junction,* the first two games in this series. These games are not capsule games *per se.* They each use one full map, and 200 counters, and the new revised rules for *TSS.* At the moment, Tom needs only five or six blindtesters. *Joe Perez*

MOVES IN ENGLISH edited by Charles Vasey

THE ART OF SIEGE

by Stephen Clifford, Pete Bartlam, Geoff Barnard

TYRE, 332 B.C.
(or Ten Years Too Late)

The date of the siege portrayed in this example of the *Art of Siege* is worth mentioning, as anyone buying the edition of the game I received will find both map and rules booklet cover proclaiming 322 B.C. as the year of the siege.

The game map is a standard hexagon-printed sheet, with a very attractive map of the island city, a piece of the mainland coast and Alexander's Mole, and wide expanses of blue sea. This looks most impressive when the waiting red ranks of the Macedonian army are massed on the coast.

Within twelve turns, the Macedonian player must capture two key points (the Temples of Heracles — Melkart — and Agenor) in Tyre, or the Tyrian player wins. Each turn, the Macedonian must choose between a Naval Superiority/Bombardment Phase (six impulses) or an Amphibious Assault, during which the Macedonian player *must* force a win.

In the Bombardment Phase, Macedonian ships attack the city walls with battering rams and catapults, opposed by counter-bombardment from the walls and by the Tyrian fleet. At the same time the Macedonian player may attempt to push his Mole nearer the island, and the Tyrian may obstruct beach hexes and repair walls. The Macedonians can soon win naval superiority if the player is prepared to trade ships, as he can afford to do, and the Tyrian player is probably best advised to preserve the last elements of his fleet, together with his fireship, for a do or die attack on the invasion fleet.

Once he is satisfied that sufficient breaches have been created in the walls, the Macedonian player will attempt an amphibious assault. Land units, which take no part until this point, are embarked in the ships and attempt to storm the breaches, using special landing rules.

Movement of both land and naval units is controlled by leaders, and cannot take place outside the control radius of a leader. Land leaders also directly influence combat by their presence, and lend extra points to attacks made by units of their nationality within a certain radius. (The Macedonian forces are divided into the various groups of allies, distinguished by a range of counter colors.) Naval leaders also carry combat and ramming bonuses. Most leaders are relatively immune from combat hazards (although in one game I played the Tyrian King was

killed), the greatest risks being run by land leaders when being transported by sea. Two of the leaders provided, Alexander and King Azemilk, have both a land and a naval capability.

There is one unexplained Macedonian naval leader counter in the game. This is "Pyntgrs," who is not named in the set-up rules. Presumably this is Pnytagoras, the Phoenician commander of the left wing of Alexander's fleet, whose Pentereme was sunk by the Tyrians in one early melee.
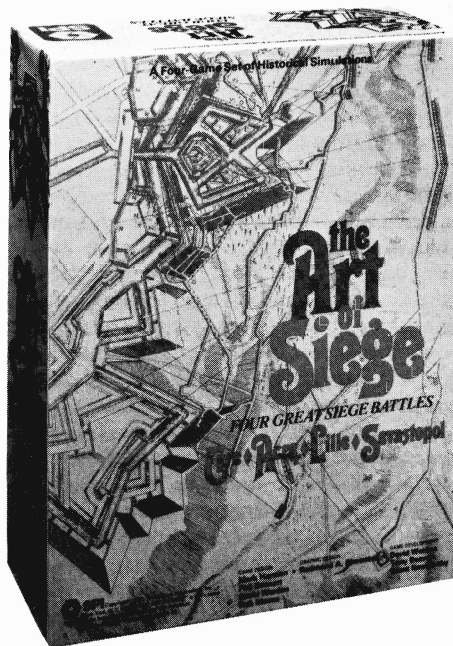
It is a pleasant surprise, in the light of current trends, to find that the rules, though fairly full, are by no means too long, especially bearing in mind the charts and maps included in the booklet. I received some rules errata, which proved very useful, although attributing to the counter-mix two 'faults which mine did not have. There are, as usual, a number of unclear points in the rules, probably attributable to inaccurate proof-reading, but all can be resolved by common-sense, and there is no useful purpose in cataloguing them here.

Undoubtedly the best aspect of the *Tyre* rules is the segment dealing with naval movement and combat. This produces a dense mass of maneuvering galleys, backing oars, ramming, and general interlocking, which represents pretty well the character of an ancient naval battle. If the Tyrian ships take
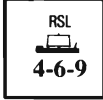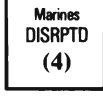
refuge behind the booms of their harbors, they can make themselves virtually immune from attack, on the assumption (which seems reasonable, although it is not spelled out in the rules) that ram attacks cannot be made across the booms. This is acceptable, except in the closing stages, when the harbors were overrun by Alexander's ships while most of the Tyrian crews were fighting ashore. Although Marines form one of the main land units of the Tyrian army, their presence ashore has no effect on the Tyrian naval capability during the Amphibious Assault Phase. Arrian (II.24.1) also makes it quite clear that the Northern harbor *had* no boom. The boom closing the narrow entrance on the mapsheet makes this harbor impregnable.

The naval counters are divided into Triremes, Quinqueremes and Biremes. Apart from combat factors, these are well and clearly differentiated by marks on the counters. Triremes bear two stripes, Quinqueremes one and Biremes none, making the ship type obvious at a glance.

One of the weakest aspects of the game is the rigid distinction between the alternative Bombardment or Assault Phases open to the Macedonian player. There are siege towers containing fire units on the Mole, but these can fire only in the Assault Phase. Macedonian catapults can be used only in the Bombardment Phase, and must be shipborne, although Arrian (II.18.6) indicates that some were placed in the towers on the Mole. Nor is there any real provision for a successful completion of the Mole up to the East walls of the city. Such a possibility, which would mean a land attack from one direction, is not catered for in the land movement rules. The extension of the Mole to the Tyrian coast will also affect naval movement, forcing communication between the two harbors via the long, western, route.

Once the assault has been launched, the Macedonian player soon learns that it is essential to support the Phalanx units with missile troops as, unsupported, the heavy units will be held in their beachheads by the Tyrian Marines, which can both fire and melee. The large combat factors of the Phalanx cannot be used in attack because of disruption by fire combat, while retreat due to fire attack can cause heavy losses in a confined space. The Militia, whose leader cannot control any fire units, are the weak point of the Tyrian defenses, whether they hold the South part of the island or are held in reserve (which causes the other units to be spread more thinly).

Some counters from *Tyre:*

Front		Back
Alexandr Macedon 5-4-3-7	Land — Backprinted Leader — Naval	Alexandr Macedon 3-3-5
Cyprus 5-7-10	Trireme	Cyprus 3-7-10
Cyprus 4-8-11	Quinquereme	Cyprus 2-8-11
RSL 6-6-9	Bireme	RSL 4-6-9
Tyre 0-8-11	Fireship	
Militia ↑↑↑ 2-4	Spearmen	Militia DISRPTD (2)
Marines ↑↓↑ 4•5	Spearmen Archers	Marines DISRPTD (4)
Guards ◇ (1)6	Archers	Guards DISRPTD (1)

It is my impression (gained, I have to admit, from solitaire play so that the two players are always evenly matched!) that the Macedonian player has the better chance of winning. To do so, however, he must be willing to suffer heavy casualties, sometimes sufficiently high to cripple the army. Alexander used only the Hypaspists and Coenus' division of the Phalanx to storm the walls. In the game you must be prepared to lose twice this number to break out of the beachheads. This seems to stem from the differing views of the designer, Mark Herman, and the developer, David Werden. As Herman says, Werden was forced to make changes to give the two sides some balance. To do so, he insists that Alexander must win by the point at which he did historically. He justifies this on the dubious grounds that Alexander's coalition would have broken up if he had delayed. Alexander's real worry was to leave a secure situation *behind* him when he marched into Persia. While the army was in Phoenicia, his alliances were secure. Werden argues that only one Amphibious Assault Phase can be allowed, on the ludicrous grounds that "the additional losses would have crippled Alexander's forces' morale for the next battle," yet his victory conditions force genuinely crippling losses. Herman rightly says that Macedonian victory is inevitable, whether the Macedonian player wins the game or not.

On the whole, then, *Tyre* is a quite successful representation of Ancient siegecraft, and is very good on naval combat in particular. As for this siege, the system is too inflexible to give the full picture of the siege of Tyre. It is in the Victory Conditions that the game falls down, with the results described. To create two different (and possible) results for what was a foregone conclusion is, however, very difficult. It is not, I am afraid, quite as difficult as this game makes it appear. Cf. Arrian, II.15.6-24.6.

Stephen Clifford

WISE ACRE

My first impression of *Acre* was of a cleaned-up *Constantinople*. On later examination, it turned out to be a cleaned-up *Constantinople!* However, it does have the important "Alesia factor," for we have not only the siege but the besiegers besieged. The Crusaders must not only invest the city, but also, utilizing their own earthworks, try to hold off Saladin and his three-army relief force.

To set the scene, the four-color mapboard is quite pretty, though conventional; i.e., it has hexes unlike some others of the Siege Quad, and is similar in style to *Constantinople* (though without all that sea!) One quarter of the board is taken by charts. These are very useful, but are annoyingly situated as far as is possible from the center of the action: i.e., the city. The playing area has the men of Acre in one corner, their backs to the sea, looking over their walls at the Crusader camps, beyond which lie the Outerworks used to hold back Saladin. This leaves Richard and the rest as the "meat in the sandwich."

Like *Constantinople,* game turns are either bombardment or assault. However, while the Crusader chooses, the Moslem secretly elects a relief force. For half of the sixteen turns, he must select the small Army of Mosul, six times he can choose the slightly larger Army of Egypt, and twice (only) he can go to town and let Saladin lead out his Army of Sinjan plus the other two. With the exception of the latter, which forces an assault phase, the choice is academic if the Crusader chooses to bombard as the field armies are forced to leave him to it.

Bombardment sees the mighty catapults swing into action. Lined up against the walls are The Evil Neighbor, Furious, Victorious, Wrath of God, and God's Own Sling. Hardly seems fair does it? Well it is, because Moslem engineers are running round repairing walls as quick as they're broken. The repair table does, however, make it harder to repair a wall that is either breached or nearly so. This presumes the Moslem player elects to repair the walls, for, while the rocks are flying about upstairs, down below grim-faced men are slowly burrowing their way toward the walls. Engineer points can therefore also be spent on counter-tunnelling and, if the correct hex is guessed, underground combat takes place. Undetected tunnels will eventually permanently breach the walls.

When the Crusader feels the walls are in sufficient state of disrepair (or when he gets fed up waiting), he elects to assault. This gives him ten impulses to get into the city or at least cause as much damage as possible. Each impulse sees first the Crusader then the Moslem forces, garrison and field, move. This is followed by a simultaneous fire combat phase. Here fire-units (roughly half the total forces) attack targets at ranges from 1-4 hexes. A clever, if somewhat laborious, use of two fire tables allows for a wide variety of missile units: crossbows, long bows, horse archers, ballistae, catapults, and Saladin's Archers of the Eyes. These can all disrupt targets, force them to retreat, or eliminate them.

After the Crusader uses non-moved units to fill Foss hexes in the next phase, we move on to the three melee phases, where the remaining half of the forces slug it out. First the garrison hits the attacking Crusaders, then undisrupted Crusaders attack both Acre itself and also the relief armies, and finally the relief armies themselves have a go. Thus, the defender always hits first.
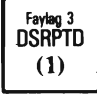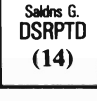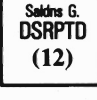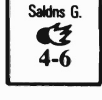
This sequence continues until the Crusader takes Acre or kills Saladin, or the Moslem kills both Richard I and King Philippe of France or occupies the Crusaders' camps. If none of these events has taken place by the end of sixteen turns, then the Moslem is awarded victory.
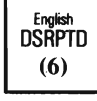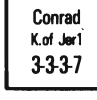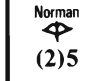
So much, therefore, for the mechanics of the game. How does it stand up to critical analysis? Before I go on, I must declare an interest. *Constantinople* was voted by the readers of "Perfidious Albion" the worst game of 1978. I actually liked it a lot! So when I say that *Acre* is very similar and I like it too, where does that leave us? Well, having *Acre*, I'll never play *Constantinople* again. This is because *Acre* takes the good points of *Constantinople* and builds on them. The rules are tidied up, though still not perfect (the classic glitch being the reference to the Harbor Tower being in the non-existent, and very land-locked even if it was portrayed, hex 1951 instead of 2104) and we have a wider variety of units to play with. The big score, though, is the double-encirclement angle. At last the poor soul who is holed-up in the city has something positive to do. Each side gets the chance to be both attacker and defender. It's also quite playable solitaire, the only problem being the guess-work in tunnel discovery. This is easily overcome by using a random die-roll, weighted in favor of most likely hexes, to determine which ones are investigated.

Playable, but what about historical accuracy? I must now confess that I am not a slave to absolute realism. Endless arguments about which particular SS division held what bit of scenery in the Ardennes leave me cold. So, for me, as long as the forces are reasonably accurate, it's the flavor of the thing that's important. Before I dismiss historical accuracy, however, I must point out that, here in England, we refer to our greatest king as Richard *the* Lionheart. Does your dropping the *the* mean we look forward to SPI games featuring such all-time super-stars as Attila Hun, Ivan Terrible, or even Kate Great!

Still I digress; back to the flavor of the thing. A real siege is long and tedious. It's unfair to say this spirit is captured, but one does get the feel of the lengthy process of grinding away at the fortifications in the early stages of the game. It's the assault phases where things don't seem quite right. The overall effect of it needing a lot of effort outside the walls to achieve an impact inside is there, but this is obtained wrongly, by having forces mass against the walls in relative safety — forces that are unable to do very much once they've surmounted the defenses. It should be much more dangerous up against the walls, making it necessary to employ a lot of arrow-fodder, with units who successfully breach the defenses having much more effect. Ladder assaults, for example, are too easy. One doesn't get the feeling of desperate men clawing their way to the parapets, rung by rung, through a hail of arrows. Siege towers, as well, have gone from being the death-traps they were in *Constantinople*, thanks to Greek fire, to being almost unassailable.

Some counters from *Acre*:

Front	MOSLEM	Back
Faylag 1 | | | 6-5	Spearmen	Faylag 1 DSRPTD (6)
Faylag 3 8-9	Siphasis Medium Cavalry	Faylag 3 DSRPTD (8)
Faylag 1 (2)6	Bowmen	Faylag 1 DSRPTD (2)
Faylag 3 (1)9	Horse Archers	Faylag 3 DSRPTD (1)
Small Catapult	Small Catapult	
Saldns G. | | | 16-4	Elite Spearmen	Saldns G. DSRPTD (16)
Saldns G. 14-8	Ulefisy Senior Guard	Saldns G. DSRPTD (14)
Saldns G. 12-8	Chiarious Junior Guard	Saldns G. DSRPTD (12)
Saldns G. 4-6	Naphtha Grenadiers	Saldns G. DSRPTD (4)
Saldns G. (2)6	Archers of the Eyes	Saldns G. DSRPTD (2)

Front		Back
Garrison | | | 6-5	Garrison Spearmen (backprinted)	Garrison | | | 3-5
Garrison (6)6	Garrison Bowmen (backprinted)	Garrison (3)6

CRUSADER

Front		Back
The Evil Neighbor	Giant Catapult (Mangonel)	
Anjou 8-4	Men-at-Arms	Anjou DSRPTD (8)
Hosptlr 10-4	Knights	Hosptlr DSRPTD (10)
Bretons 8-6	Javelin (Lancers)	Bretons DSRPTD (8)
English 6-7	Knight Cavalry	English DSRPTD (6)
King Guy K.of Jer1 0-1-2-7	Backprinted Leader	Conrad K.of Jer1 3-3-3-7
Ballista	Ballista	
Norman (2)5	Crossbowmen	Norman DSRPTD (2)

Still, the chipping-away aspect and exploiting weaknesses angle once you get your toe in is there. So it's a siege, but a medieval siege? To me, wargaming in this period is all about color and pageantry, so let's have the heraldic style counters of *Agincourt* or even Battleline's *Machiavelli*. To be presented with the basic *Renaissance of Infantry* style counters (now nine years old) leaves a lot to be desired.

So, there we are; an enjoyable, playable game, a good simulation of a siege, with one or two caveats, but a minus for medieval flavor. When Richard the Lionheart, in legend at least, the greatest king of England is reduced to "K.Richrd English 4-3-3-7," then romance is truly dead. *Pete Bartlam*

SEVASTOPOL
A Historical Comment

I must admit that, as a game, *Sevastopol* works well. There is a lot of color, the objectives of both sides are clearly defined, and there are interesting things for each side to do, as the Russians work away strengthening their fortifications, repairing damage, and plotting off-map battles to distract the allies, who are meanwhile constructing their siegeworks and planning artillery bombardments to commence an assault.

Sevastopol is, however, supposed to be a simulation, and what I'm more concerned about is the extent to which it is valid. In some respects it may be in fact too much of a simulation, insofar as the game is somewhat fixed. It is, I think, acceptable that the designer should have started the game in October, thereby avoiding the period in September when the Allies sat and did nothing in front of the virtually non-existent fortifications; it would after all be silly to have the game depend on a Turn 1 assault! What is less satisfactory is the treatment of the Allied Right Flank, facing the Malakoff and the Little Redan. This area in the game cannot be used until the French enter there in January and July, yet prior to that the British had been in the area, only had done nothing. I admit that the Russian Field Army was still operating in the area as well — in fact the Inkerman battle area encroaches onto the game map area here — and also the area was covered by the guns of the Russian ships in the bay (not included at all in the rules). I rather suspect that the designer considered that the action out there prior to January 1855 was not part of the siege and could therefore be disregarded.

This has led to two problems. Most important, the Russians start the game with the Mamelon Bastion in operation, whereas in fact it was only occupied by the Russians on the 22nd of February 1855 (i.e., Turn 7). Secondly, the fixing of the front has caused the moving of the location of the British Lancaster Battery to the edge of the wrong ravine: it should in fact be behind the French January 1 lines on the south edge of the Carenage Ravine, although in game terms this is insignificant.

The early appearance of the Mamelon is more important, as the enfilade rules make it a vital modifier to the ability of the British to dig parallels. The British Left Attack area is useless except as a fire base. The Right, however, where the activity should be, is stopped immediately by possible enfilade from the Mamelon. The British, who should be digging away toward the Great Redan, instead have the Mamelon to worry about, and the terrain and siegework rules are such that there is no way they can avoid this problem until the Mamelon falls.

A particularly fascinating part of the game is the Russian Field Army Intervention Phase, wherein the Russian Player may, subject to certain conditions, opt to fight Balaklava, Inkerman, and Tchernaya Bridge. I rather feel that the Russian player is allowed too much freedom with these. It's reasonable to allow Balaklava and Inkerman before the winter of 1854, when they actually happened, but the rules allow them to be left until March 1855 or later. Balaklava (treated as an attack on the British supply lines) would have been much more difficult by then

owing to the extra French troops and the Sardinians, in the rear areas, while Inkerman, which involved a considerable force from inside Sevastopol, would have been very difficult after the French January 1 siege area is opened and almost impossible after the July 1 area opens, except in a very reduced form with a much less drastic effect. Furthermore, the Russians should have a Sally Box to "commit" troops for Inkerman, and also possibly for alternative threats on Evpatoria (any troops sent there must be away a complete turn, but if they win, Russian reinforcements and supply are helped). In April 1855, the Russians sent men north to attack Evpatoria, but a new Allied bombardment and threatened assault caused them to be hurriedly recalled without completing their mission.

As for Tchernaya Bridge, if the Russians get a result there (re-opening the land link with Sevastopol) their replacement rate increases. Why don't the Russians get this extra replacement while the land link is still open before the winter of 1854/55? I rather suspect that the Russians could get as many supplies and men into and out of Sevastopol as they wished across the harbor throughout the siege — Tchernaya Bridge was in reality another Russian attempt to dislodge the Allied siege positions by threatening their rear and supply lines, and a Russian success there should delay or prevent the opening of the French Right siege areas rather than have the effect given in the game.
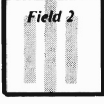
As in the companion siege game, *Lille*, the main part of the game is spent in the construction and destruction of siege works. Given the restrictions of the game, I suppose it is acceptable that while the assaulting Allies are obliged to construct complete and connected works, the Russian positions have been highly rationalized into the Bastions, thereby disregarding all the lesser battery positions, the curtain walling between the bastions and the various bastion outworks. The latter in particular is unfortunate, as in a number of instances an Allied attack was able to take, and hold, the outworks (of Central, Flagstaff, and Great Redan at least), while failing to take the whole position. In the game, an assault is an all or nothing affair: if at the end of 5 assault phases you haven't captured the Bastion, you must retreat right back to your starting point! It is also interesting to note that in *Sevastopol* the considerable mining activities are completely disregarded (the French did lots, especially in front of Central and Falgstaff, and just before the main assault on the Malakoff, where the ground was suitable), whereas in *Lille* the much lesser mining works are represented.

Obviously, the designer had his eyes firmly set on the renowned bastions (Malakoff, Great Redan, Central, and Flagstaff — for some reason called 'Mast' in the present game; i.e., a translation of the French name Bastion du Mat). This pre-occupation is again reflected in the Victory Conditions, which require one minor and one major bastion to fall for an Allied victory. Historically the Russians retreated after the fall of the

Mamelon and subsequently the Malakoff. This is a little simplified, as it would seem that, historically, although the Malakoff was pivotal, an equally valid game objective like Flagstaff was not, in that the ground behind it was well covered by other works, especially Great Redan and Central.

Similarly the Great Redan is useless militarily on its own. Historically, access to it was controlled by the Malakoff, which is why the British and the French nearly always combined their attacks on these positions. It is a pity that all the topographical detail shown on the map affects only Allied siegework construction, thereby missing out all the subtleties of the fields of fire of the various Russian works. This could at least have been represented in slightly more detailed Victory Conditions.

Some counters from *Sevastopol*:

Front		Back
Siege 1	Siege Battery	
Mortar 1	Mortar Battery	
Field 2	Field Battery	
Marine 2	Field Battery (Marine)	
Zouave 1/1 8B	French Zouave	(pick/shovel icon)
Naval 2 3B	English Independent Naval	
Siege Ammo × 10	Ammunition Supply Track Marker	
3	Bastion Strength Level Marker	4

There is only one part of the rules I would query, and this concerns the construction of Russian works. In order to construct, Russian infantry must be in the Bastion (Rule 9.43). Rule 3.1 defines the Bastion Reserve position as being part of the Bastion. Hence it seems the Russians can stay in the Bastion Reserve, where they are much safer from enemy fire, and still construct and repair. While this may well be correct, it strikes me as rather odd that this should be the case when the designer himself states that the vast majority of casualties were suffered during construction and repair, and I rather wish the

point were more clearly explained. On the same subject, rule 9.38 prohibits British and French Guards and the British 1st Division from building siegeworks, while I have a contemporary quote that men of the Guards Brigade could construct a gabion per day per man, while a line regiment was capable of only one gabion for every three men employed. The rule may well be true for the French Guards, but maybe there should be a rule to allow the British Guards to build 3 times as fast rather than not at all!

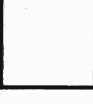One is left with the impression that the designer of this game may have left out more than necessary in order to make the game fit the format. It's quite likely there were limitations placed on the level of complexity allowable, and some of the points I've covered would have entailed a considerable increase in complexity. Still, although *Sevastopol* remains an interesting game, as a simulation it is true only to a very limited part of the activity of the siege. Unfortunately, however, the design and system of the game are such that there is not much the player can do to improve matters, as to do the full job, the hexless and highly stylized map would need substantial revision. Still, there are some things you can do, and I hope I've put a few ideas your way.
Geoff Barnard
■■

Opening *MOVES* [continued from page 3]

In the not-too-distant future, I hope to be able to write a column in *Ares* discussing the manner in which new sf/f gamers seem to be widening their interest to include historical games. I also hope to discuss how the sf/f game has brought about increased interest in science and the history of mythology.
Redmond

CORRECTION

The author of *Creature Feature* (*MOVES* 47) stated that human units could be replaced during the Human Movement Phase in the Tactics section of his article. Units may never be replaced after elimination in *Creature That Ate Sheboygan*.

FEEDBACK RESULTS *MOVES* 46

Rank	Article	Rating
1.	*MOVES* in English	6.95
2.	Designer's Notes	6.84
3.	Forward Observer	6.56
4.	Good Woods	6.40
5.	Highway to the Reich	6.38
6.	Opening *MOVES*	6.24
7.	Colossal Counter Contest	5.89
8.	Playback	5.86
9.	Heli-War	5.81
10.	Second Prize: Philadelphia	5.59
11.	War in the World, Pt. 2	5.37
	This Issue Overall	**6.34**

SCENARIOS & VARIANTS

FIREFIGHT ALONE
A System for Solitaire Play
by Robert A. Kunz

"To fight and win the first battle of the next war."[1] That is the stated objective of the U.S. Army. *Firefight*[2] is one of the tools used by the Army to train company level leaders to "win the first battle." It is designed to challenge both the military and non-military gamers in the proper use of small unit tactics, maneuver techniques, terrain, and suppressive fire.[3] It does these things well, but it has one minor drawback: it requires a player for the Soviet side who not only knows the rules of play, but also has an understanding of Soviet tactics and has experience in interfacing these tactics with the game's mechanics. A player with these qualifications is not always available. This article offers a solution to this problem by describing a solitaire version of *Firefight*.

The U.S. commander in *Firefight* faces a Soviet force that routinely uses standardized organizations, formations, and tactics. Because of this standardization, it is possible to develop a solitaire game that accurately simulates Soviet tactical doctrine. The following scenarios and rules have been developed using the Soviet tactics described in current U.S. Army publications.[4]

First, it may be helpful to review Soviet small unit tactics. The *Firefight* Supplement gives a general description of Soviet doctrine, as well as the organization of the Soviet units. Therefore, the following discussion is directed specifically toward Soviet platoon, company, and battalion level tactics with emphasis on formations and fire support as they relate to *Firefight* scenarios.

Soviet Offensive Tactics

The goal of the Soviet attack is to push through weakly held areas and disrupt the enemy rear, rather than to seize enemy defensive positions and key terrain. Strongly held enemy defensive positions are freely bypassed and left for following units to mop up.

The Soviets do not normally use fire and movement, but continuously advance by firing from short halts. Heavy losses are accepted if the advance can be sustained.

The Soviets believe the meeting engagement will be the most common form of combat on the modern battlefield. It will normally follow and advance to contact with initial actions carried out by the reconnaissance elements. The Soviet battalion does not have an organic recon platoon, so the recon elements come from either the regimental recon company or from designated platoons of the motorized rifle companies. In any case, the recon vehicles move as pairs about 100 meters apart. The pair operates about 1000 meters ahead of the lead company and probes for unguarded routes.
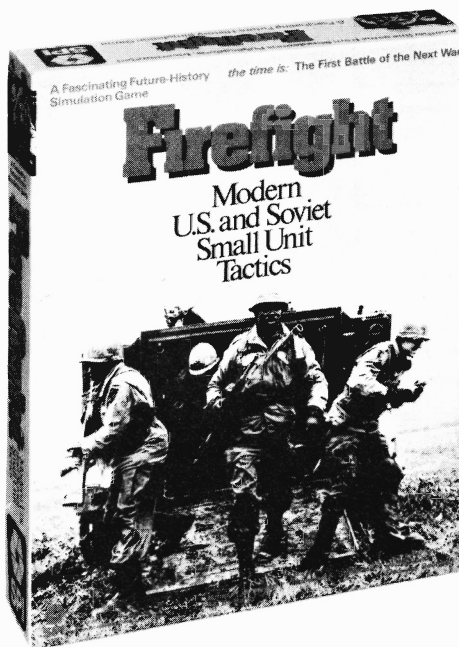
The Soviet battalion will maneuver and conduct probing attacks to find gaps or an exposed flank in any defensive line it encounters. It will then conduct a hasty attack to exploit the weak point. If the attacking force is halted, it will form a hasty defense and wait for following units to continue the advance. A three-to-one superiority is considered necessary to conduct a sustained offensive, and if possible forces are massed to achieve a six-to-one superiority.[5]

The Soviet motorized rifle battalion conducts a hasty attack on a 1500 meter front with two companies on line and one company following 1000 to 2000 meters to the rear. Alternatively, the battalion could employ three companies on line. Each reinforced motorized rifle company is deployed with a platoon of four tanks on line on a 500 meter front with ten BMP's on line, following 300 meters behind, as illustrated in **Figure 1.** Naturally, these distances may vary somewhat, depending on the situation, but they tend to be more standardized than in U.S. units.

The Soviet tank battalion normally conducts a hasty attack with three companies on line on a 2000 meter front. Each tank company is deployed on line as shown in **Figure 2.** A battalion conducting a hasty attack will normally be supported by three artillery batteries of on-call fires.

If the hasty attack cannnot overcome the enemy resistance, the Soviets then plan a deliberate attack. The goal of the deliberate attack is to break through the enemy's forward defense to allow exploitation forces to pass through. The breakthrough attack is characterized by narrower attack frontages and extensive artillery support.

Tank units are normally used in the deliberate attack for both the breakthrough and the exploitation force. A tank battalion conducts a breakthrough attack with two tank companies abreast, followed by a motorized rifle company 400 meters to the rear, and a third tank company 400 meters further to the rear. The lead tank companies are normally deployed with two platoons on line and a third platoon 200 meters to the rear **(Figure 3).**

Artillery is essential to the success of the breakthrough attack. A first echelon battalion will have six to nine artillery batteries in support. These batteries fire a concentrated preparation lasting from 30 minutes to an hour. The preparatory fires are intended to destroy enemy forces in immediate contact and neutralize enemy supporting fires. The fires are shifted when the lead elements of the attack approach to within 200 to 400 meters.

As the fires are lifted, the lead Soviet companies assault the enemy positions. The infantry remains mounted unless either forced out of their carriers by enemy fire, or required to clear obstacles. The assault force normally continues through the objective. Primary emphasis is placed on penetrating enemy defenses to carry the battle to the enemy rear, rather than seizing and consolidating on terrain objectives.

Soviet Defensive Tactics

The Soviets consider defensive action as a temporary measure to gain time or to economize in one area to provide more forces in another area. The Soviets recognize two forms of defense — the hasty defense and the deliberate defense. The hasty defense is used during temporary halts, and the deliberate defense is used when the halt will be for more than a few hours. The hasty defense is characterized by company-sized strong points with all-around defense, backed by large reserves. The deliberate defense is characterized by battalion-sized strong points, successive defensive belts, and a strong counterattack force.

The motorized rifle company usually defends a zone 2000 meters wide. The first echelon companies are normally reinforced with a tank platoon. The defensive area is organized into platoon strong points forming two lines of defense. Two platoons are on the first defensive line, and one platoon is on the second defensive line, about 450 meters to the rear. The platoons occupy defensive zones of about 500 meters (**Figure 4**). The tanks are dug in between the first and second defensive zones.

There is little general firing from frontline positions until the enemy attack is definitely underway. When the enemy reaches a line about 400 meters from the first defensive line, the artillery barrages are fired, and the enemy is brought under anti-tank fire. Here the enemy also encounters mine fields and obstacles.

Soviet tank companies defend an area up to 1000 meters wide. Two tank platoons occupy the first defensive line, and one tank platoon occupies a second defensive line about 400 meters to the rear. The tank platoons occupy a frontage of 300 to 400 meters. Individual tanks are dug in and are located to support each other. One motorized rifle platoon is normally assigned to each tank company to provide close-in support. In broken terrain, two or three tanks may occupy ambush positions in front of the first defensive line and in gaps between platoons.

As the enemy approaches the defensive position, the tank company concentrates fire on the most threatened approaches, and artillery fire is called in. The targets are engaged at 1000 to 2000 meters. Tanks are maneuvered to meet threats. The infantry units fire on enemy personnel and supplement tank fire with their anti-tank fire.

At company level, there is not much difference between the conduct of the hasty defense and the deliberate defense. Naturally, the deliberate defense allows more time for the preparation of defensive positions, gun emplacement, mine fields, and artilley support. But the main difference is the deliberate defense is a series of successive belts of defense, up to 30 kilometers in depth.

Solitaire *Firefight* Rules and Scenarios
GENERAL RULE:

The following modifications of the *Firefight* rules reflect the Soviet tactics at platoon and company level. These rules are not intended to be all-inclusive, but to provide a framework with which an intelligent player can create the elements of

FIGURE 1: Reinforced Motorized Rifle Company Attack Formation
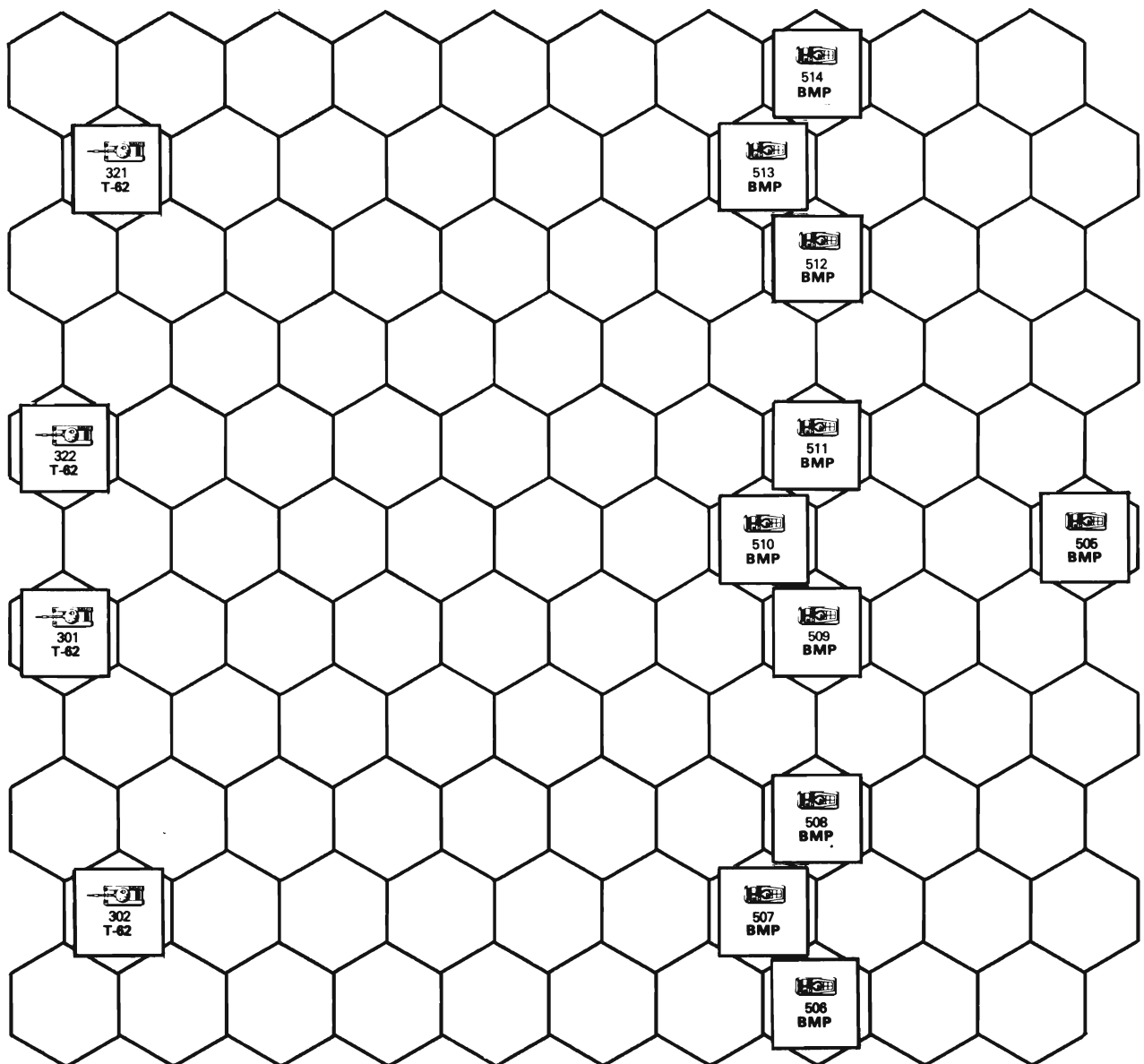
realism and surprise that a U.S. company commander would face on a modern battlefield. In cases not specifically covered by these rules, or when a Soviet unit has more than one option, the unit will take the course of action that is most favorable to the Soviet force. In cases where there is no clear-cut advantage to the Soviet force, Soviet course of action can be determined by a roll of a die.

DIRECT FIRE:

All vehicles of a Soviet platoon mass their fire on a single target whenever possible (see Case 6.3). If there is more than one U.S. target to fire at, the Soviet platoon will fire at the target that poses the greatest threat.

MOVEMENT:

In Soviet offensive scenarios, each attacking Soviet unit is given an entrance and an exit hex. The line between these two points describes the route of advance of the Soviet unit. The unit enters the map with the center of mass on the entrance hex in the formations given in **Figure 1, 2,** or **3** for that unit. The unit then moves on the route of advance toward the exit hex. The unit may deviate up to three hexes from this route to gain more cover, avoid restrictive terrain, etc. Company-sized units

FIGURE 2:
Tank Company Attack Formation
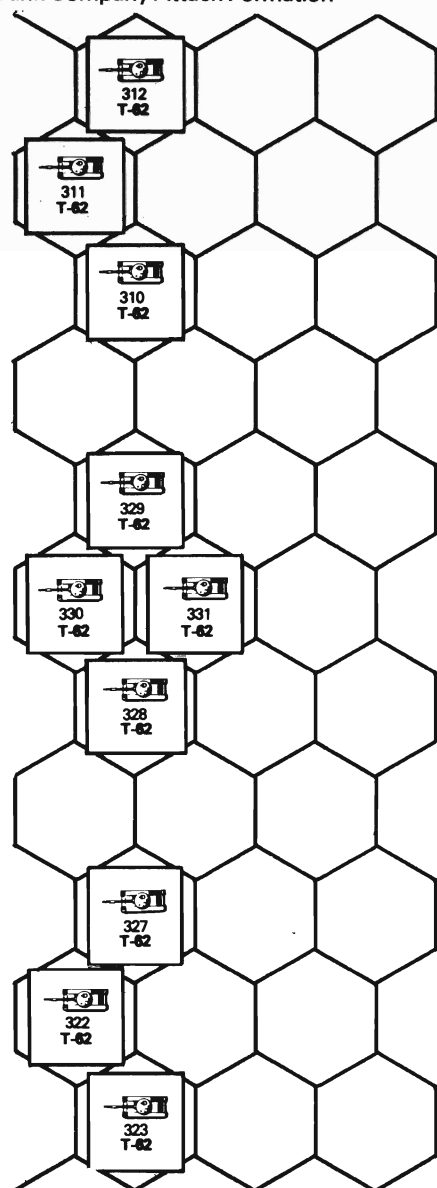
maintain the company formation to the maximum extent possible. Individual vehicles normally move at the maximum movement rate, but they adjust their rate of march as necessary to maintain their approximate relative location in the company formation

The Soviets normally do not use overwatch fire at company level. If a U.S. unit is spotted within 20 hexes of a Soviet tank, the tank fires at the U.S. unit using the Short Halt Technique (Section 17.0). All tanks within a platoon normally fire at the same target. If the Soviet company comes under effective anti-tank fire, the BMP's in the company halt and return fire. The BMP's, however, must maintain a distance of 6 to 10 hexes from the lead tank platoons of that company. If there are no tanks present, the BMP's maintain the momentum of the attack halting and firing only once every three turns. Normally, one platoon will halt and fire at a target while the other BMP's continue. The next turn, another platoon halts and fires, and so on until the anti-tank fire has been suppressed or by-passed. The infantry remains mounted and fires from their BMP (Section 16.0).

When defending, Soviet vehicles can move up to four hexes to obtain better firing positions.

U.S. ATTACK (Map B)

GENERAL SITUATION:

A U.S. tank-heavy company team has been ordered to seize the high ground northeast of Gerlafingen as part of a battalion attack. A Soviet company is defending in zone with a platoon-sized strong point on Hill 492 (hex 2832).

TASK ORGANIZATION:

U.S. Forces: Two armor platoons, one mechanized platoon; Organic Support: two 4.2″ mortars; Direct Support: two 155mm.

MISSION:

U.S. Forces: Attack and seize the high ground vicinity hex 2832.

DEPLOYMENT

U.S. Forces: Enter north edge of Map B.

Soviet Forces: Soviet units are deployed following the U.S. Movement Phase in Game-Turn 7. At the completion of the U.S. Movement Phase, a die is rolled and the result cross-referenced on the following table to determine Soviet deployment.

Die Soviet Force

1 *BMP (with infantry*):* 2027, 2625, 3024, 3826. *T-62:* 3029, 1632. *Artillery:* 1913, 2112, 2018, 3215. *Minefield:* 3328-3727.

2 *BMP:* 0825, 2732, 2526, 3024. *T-62:* 2027, 3029. *Artillery:* 2020(S), 2013(S), 2319(S), 3216(S). *Minefield:* 3425-3928.

3 *BMP:* 0532, 2732, 2930, 3230. *T-62:* 1632, 3131. *Artillery:* 2029, 2113(S), 3127, 3529. *Minefield:* 2331-2828.

4 *BMP:* 1632, 2732, 3029, 3331. *T-62:* 1838. *Artillery:* 3530, 3127, 2529, 2029. *Minefields:* 3328-3529, 2729-2928.

5 *BMP:* 0825, 2027, 2831, 3024. *T-62:* 3029, 3628. *Artillery:* 2019(S), 2113(S), 2529, 2827. *Minefield:* 3325-3922.

6 *BMP:* 1733, 2930, 3227, 3427. *T-62:* 1838, 2732. *Artillery:* 2628, 2927, 3227, 3427. *Minefields:* 3328-3529, 1731-1930.

*Each BMP has two fireteams employed in Improved Positions in adjacent hexes (see **Figure 4**).

Special Rules

INDIRECT FIRE:

The Soviets have On Call Fire (Case 8.11) plotted for the hexes indicated. Each Game-Turn that a U.S. unit is within three hexes of a target hex, an Impact marker is picked at random and placed on the target hex. The fire is then checked for scatter and effect. The resulting impact hex becomes the target hex for the next Indirect Fire Phase. Artillery hexes listed with (S) are smoke targets (Section 14.0).

MINES:

If a U.S. unit enters a plotted mine hex, a die is rolled. The result of the roll, plus three, is the Attack Strength of the hex. The U.S. unit is then attacked with that number of Points (Section 18.0).

VICTORY CONDITIONS:

The U.S. Player receives one point for each destroyed Soviet unit and one point for each U.S. unit within three hexes of hex 2832. The Soviets receive one point for each destroyed U.S. vehicle.

GAME LENGTH:

The game lasts until the U.S. forces have secured Hill 492 (occupied by U.S. units not under Soviet direct fire, and no Soviet units within four hexes of hex 2832) or until twelve U.S. vehicles have been destroyed.

SOVIET ATTACK (Both Maps)

Note: See diagram on page 3 of rules booklet.

GENERAL SITUATION:

Soviet forces are expected to attack from the north with a battalion-sized force in this sector. A U.S. infantry-heavy company team has been ordered to occupy a battle position north of Rte. 298.

TASK ORGANIZATION:

U.S. Forces: One armored platoon, two mechanized platoons (infantry in Improved Positions), four TOW's; Organic Support: three 81mm mortars, two 4.2″ mortars; Direct Support: two 155mm.

MISSION:

U.S. Forces: Occupy and defend Battle Position 1, located generally between hex 1134 (Map B) and hex 1230 (Map A).

DEPLOYMENT:

After the U.S. company team has been deployed, a die is rolled to determine the deployment of the Soviet force. Each Soviet company is given an entrance hex. This means the center vehicle of the company enters on that hex, and the rest of the company enters in the appropriate formation. The company then moves from north to south using the entrance hex row as its axis of advance.

Die Soviet Deployment

1 A Soviet tank battalion is making three attacks to probe for gaps or flanks in the U.S. defense to continue the advance. Tank co. (see **Figure 2**) enters hex 1101 (Map B) on Game-Turn 1; tank co. enters hex 3301(B) on Game-Turn 5; one infantry plt. follows each tank co. two turns after the tank co. has entered. *Smoke Screen:* Hexes 1827-2325(B), 3028-3330(B), 1128-1329(A). *Preparatory Fires:* Hexes 3832(B), 3024(B), 0326(A), 0931(A).

2 Regiment orders battalion to attack the U.S. left flank to create a gap there. Tank co. (+) (see **Figure 3**) enters on hex

1001(B); tank co. (+) enters on hex 2001(B); tank co. is initially deployed in woodline 0907–1707(B) and supports lead companies by fire until Game-Turn 10, then follows the advance. *Smoke Screen:* Hexes 2531–3128(B), 2226–2724(B), 0449–0947(A), 0428–0931(A). *Preparatory Fires:* 1533(B), 0831(A).

3 Regiment has ordered battalion to attack the center of sector to gain control of the dominant high ground. Tank co. (+) enters on hex 2601(B) on Game-Turn 1; tank co. (+) enters on hex 3601(B) on Game-Turn 1; tank co. enters on hex 3101(B) on Game-Turn 5 and supports by fire until Game-Turn 15, then follows in company formation. *Smoke Screen:* Hexes 2929–3128(B), 3128–3329(B), 0630–1128(A). *Preparatory Fires:* Hexes 2526(B), 2925(B), 3826(B), 0226(A).

4 Regiment has ordered battalion to seize the Asbachhohe (vic hex 0931A) which dominates the avenue of advance through Ebersburen. Tank co. (+) enters on hex 0201(A) on Game-Turn 1; tank co. (+) enters on hex 1001(A) on Game-Turn 1; tank co. enters on hex 0701(A) on Game-Turn 5, supports lead companies using Short Halt technique and passes through lead companies to continue the attack if necessary. *Smoke Screen:* Hexes 0531–1227(A), 3129–3330(B). *Preparatory Fires:* Hexes 0831(A), 1030(A), 0326(A), 0627(A).

5 Regiment has ordered battalion to by-pass to the east of the U.S. positions. Tank co. (+) enters on hex 1001(A) on Game-Turn 1; tank co. (+) enters on hex 1901(A) on Game-Turn 1; tank co. enters on hex 1061(A) on Game-Turn 5 and follows the lead companies. *Smoke Screen:* Hexes 0929–1128(A), 1228–1429(A), 3129–3330(A), 1843–1943–2043(A). *Preparatory Fires:* Hexes 3125(B), 3426(B), 0126(A), 0426(A).

6 A motorized rifle battalion (+) has been ordered to attack the high ground northeast of Gerlafingen. Motorized rifle co. (+) (see **Figure 1**) enters on hex 1601(B); motorized rifle co. (+) enters on hex 2801(B); motorized rifle co. (+) enters on hex 0201(A). *Smoke Screen:* Hexes 0431–0929(A), 0648–0849(B), 2929–3128(B). *Preparatory Fires:* Hexes 1533(B), 2027(B), 2832(B), 0126(A).

Special Rules:

INDIRECT FIRE:

Preparatory fire is executed by placing a 152mm Impact marker on the target hex. The fire is then checked for scatter and effect. The resulting impact hex becomes the target hex for the next Indirect Fire Phase. This continues until a Soviet unit is within six hexes of the impact hex.

VICTORY CONDITIONS:

The U.S. Player receives one point for each destroyed Soviet vehicle. The Soviet player receives one point for each destroyed U.S. unit and one point for each Soviet vehicle to exit off the south edge of the map.

GAME LENGTH:

The game lasts until 30 Soviet vehicles have been destroyed or until all Soviet units have exited the map.

MEETING ENGAGEMENT (Map A)
GENERAL SITUATION:

A U.S. tank-heavy company team has been ordered to be the advance guard of a U.S. tank battalion moving to a blocking position (off map) to contain a Soviet penetration.

TASK ORGANIZATION:

U.S. Forces: HQ Section, two armored platoons, one mechanized infantry platoon; Organic Support: two 4.2″ mortars; Direct Support: six 155mm.

MISSION:

U.S. Player: Advance south along Rte. 1 to blocking position (exit off south edge of map).

DEPLOYMENT:

The U.S. force enters the north edge of the map in any formation.

Soviets: Each Game-Turn after the U.S. units have completed all movement, roll the die to determine if a Soviet force is encountered. If a one is rolled, it means a Soviet force is encountered, and the die is rolled again to determine the Soviet deployment.

Die Soviet Deployment
Soviet Movement to Contact

1 Three T-62 platoons: enter on hexes 2253, 1853, 2653. Objective: Exit north mapedge. Two BRDM overwatch 2740, 1944.

2 Three T-62 platoons: enter on hexes 0124, 0121, 0118. Objective: Exit hexes 3942–3946. Two BRDM overwatch 1129, 0728.

3 Three T-62 platoons: enter 3925, 3922, 3919. Objective: Exit hexes 0103–0106. Two BRDM overwatch 2728, 3321.

4 Three T-62 platoons: enter 3938, 3941, 3943. Objective: Exit hexes 0116–0124. Two BRDM overwatch 3438, 3421.

Soviet Hasty Defense

5 T-62: 0930, •1029, 1129. BMP: 1844, 1944, 2044, 2640, 3538.

6 T-62: 0731, 1229, 2728. BMP: 0426, 0627, 0828, 1944, 3321.

Soviet Reinforcements: Each Game-Turn after the Soviet main force is encountered and after all U.S. movement, roll the die to determine if the Soviets receive reinforcements. A die roll of one means the Soviets receive reinforcements, and the die is rolled again to determine the type.

Die Soviet Reinforcements

1 One T-62 platoon: in overwatch positions on Hill 502 (0252)

2 One T-62 platoon: enter 1854. Objective: Hill 485 (1945).

3 One T-62 platoon: enter 3938. Objective: hill at 3539.

FIGURE 3: Reinforced Tank Company Attack Formation
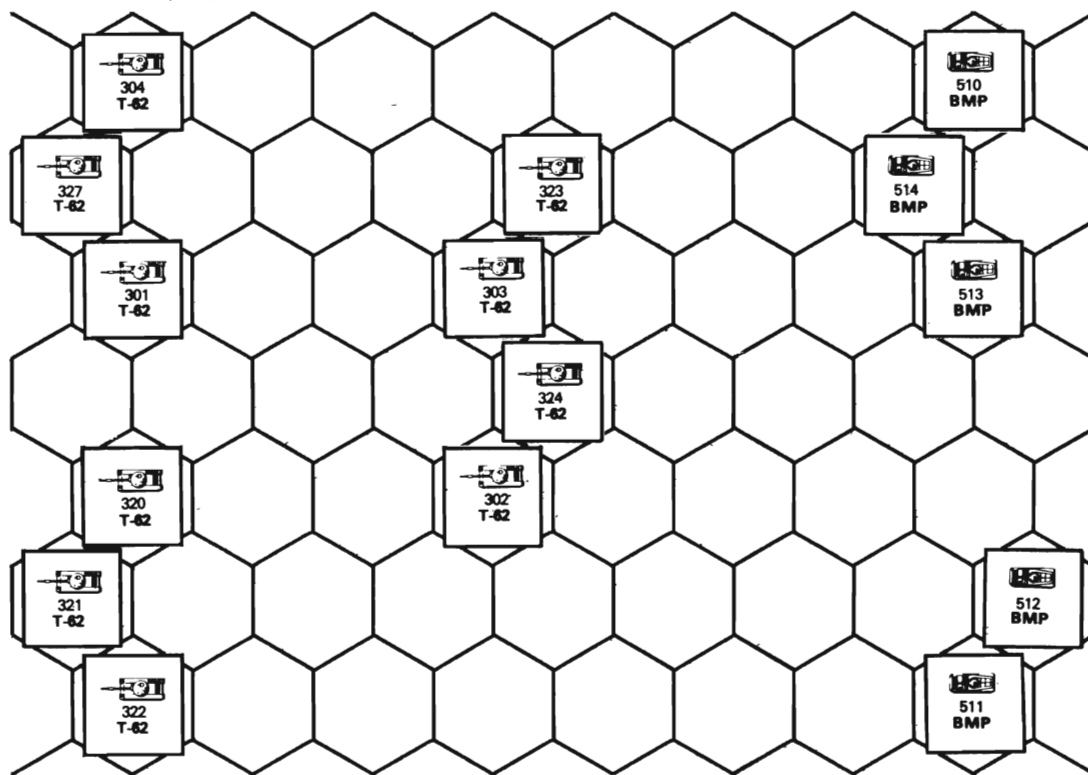
4 Two 152mm artillery on nearest spotted U.S. unit.

5 Two 122mm artillery on nearest spotted U.S. unit.

6 One 152mm artillery on nearest spotted U.S. unit.

VICTORY CONDITIONS:

The U.S. player receives one point for each Soviet vehicle employed, one point for each Soviet vehicle destroyed, and one point for each U.S. vehicle that exits the north mapedge. The Soviets receive one point for each U.S. vehicle employed, one point for each U.S. vehicle destroyed, and one point for each Soviet vehicle that exits off the designated mapedge.

GAME LENGTH:

The game lasts until all U.S. units have exited the map. U.S. units may exit any mapedge, but they receive Victory Points only if they exit the north mapedge

References

1. FM 100-5 Operations (1976), p. I-1.

2. *Firefight* is a company level battle simulation designed for the U.S. Army by Simulations Publications, Inc., New York, N.Y.

3. FORSCOM Training Note Number 4, "Gaming Simulation," 19 May 1977.

4. USAITAD Report 14-U-76 "Military Operations of the Soviet Army," U.S. Army Intellience Threat Analysis Detachment (1976), pp. 155-185. FM 7-20 The Infantry Battalion (1978), pp 2-1 to 2-26. FM 30-102 Handbook on Aggressor Forces (1969). ■ ■

FIGURE 4: Motorized Rifle Platoon Defensive Position

All infantry teams are in improved positions. Odd-numbered infantry teams are armed with RPG anti-tank weapons.

Direction of U.S. Threat
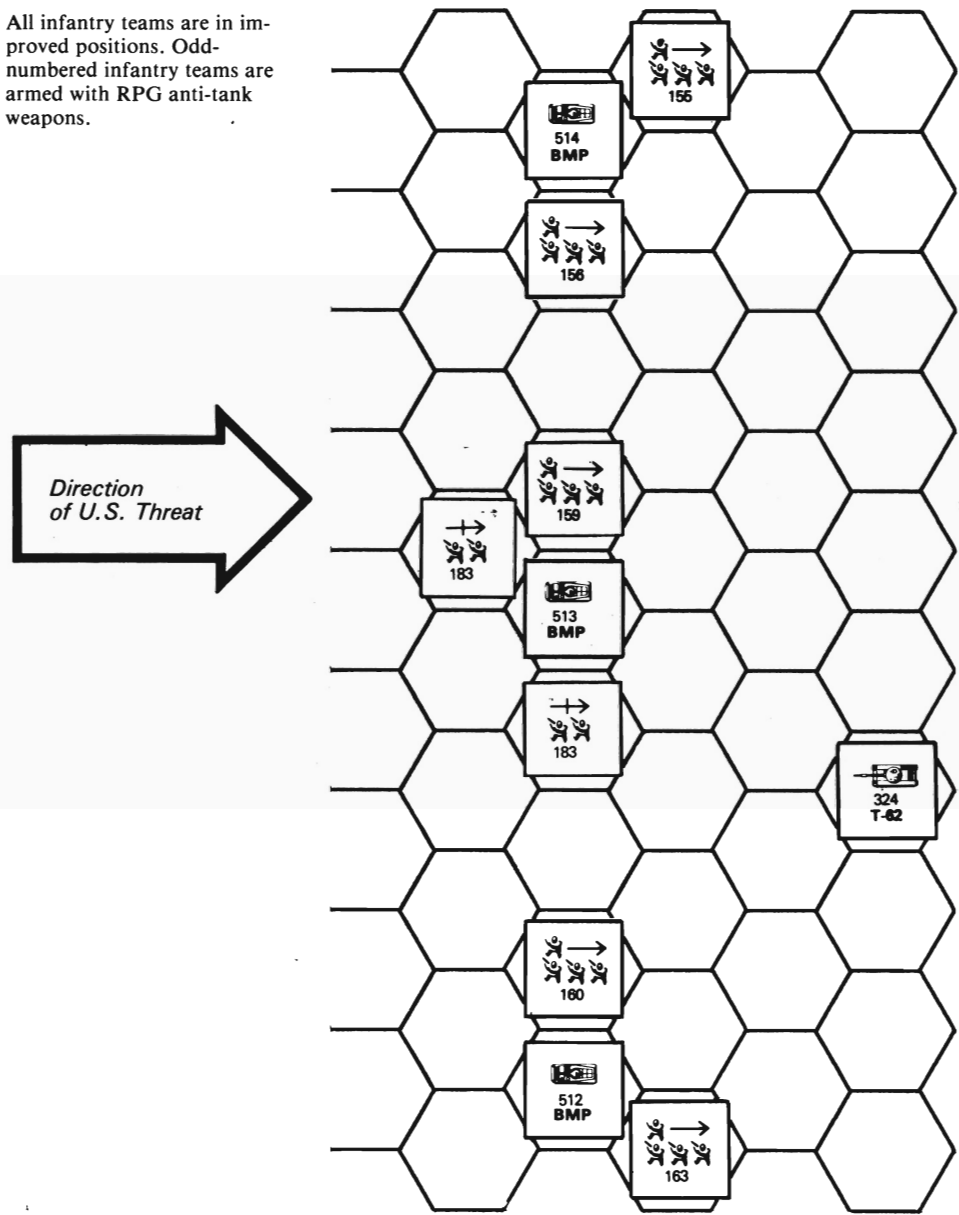
SpiGroups

The response to *MOVES* free listing of SPI Groups has not been overwhelming thus far. In order for us to maintain this service, we would appreciate more of you sending us information on your clubs and associations. For those of you who are planning to send that information for future issues, here are the closing dates for upcoming issues:

MOVES 50: End of February '80

MOVES 52: End of June '80

MOVES 54: End of October '80

Remember: we must have the complete information in hand by these dates in order to include your listing (see *MOVES* 40 for a detailed explanation of what information is required). The following key to listings provides an outline of the necessary items:

LINE ONE

Three Digit Zip Code, Town or City/Agent's Last Name

LINE TWO

Number of Current Members/Average Birthdate/Year formed/Frequency of meetings/and three ranked period preferences, based on the Feedback response numbers.

LINE THREE

Group Agent's full name and phone number.

LINE FOUR

Group Agent's full address.

Reminder to All Existing Groups:

You will not be relisted unless you re-submit your data (it is suggested that you photocopy an original file copy to save yourself the bother of re-typing every time).

SpiGroups

U.S. LISTING

018 Andover/Kolodgy Group
11/55/72/Weekly/795
Chuck Kolodgy (617) 475-5936
34 Gray Rd., Andover, MA 01881

010 Amherst/Wang Group
12/58/72/Twice Weekly/875
Dennis Wang (413) 253-9472
11 Dickinson St., Amherst, MA 01002

452 Cincinnati/Macintyre Group
99/54/65/Daily/948
Al Macintyre (606) 525-6442
6750 Shenandoah, #5, Florence, KY 41042

■ ■

CONTEST

...AND THE WINNERS ARE....
Results of the Colossal Counter Contest
edited by Rich Berg

Well, it just goes to show you. No matter what you can think of, there's always somebody else who can think of the same thing. We had over 100 entries in the Colossal Counter Contest, and although the first group of entries augured for no one even getting half of them right, toward the end we received a spate of near-misses and almost had-ems that ended with the one and only perfect score arriving on the last applicable date.

Mr Anthony Svajlenka III of Champaign, Illinois, scored a perfect 173 (in points) by identifying all the counters correctly. He stated on his answer sheet that he guessed at several of the answers, so Mr. Svajlenka must be a lot luckier than most people (some of whom didn't even bother to guess at the answers). The prizes were awarded as follows:

Grand Prize: Anthony Svajlenka (173, 0 wrong)
First Prize: John Astell (167, 2 wrong)
Second Prize: Robert Zabik (163, 2 wrong)
Rick Behnke (153, 3 wrong)
Third Prize: Larry Lingle (150, 6 wrong)
Bill North (141, 5 wrong)
Jack Thomas (141, 6 wrong)
Ronald Skowsky (137,8 wrong)
L.R. McAneny (133, 7 wrong)

I think mention should be made of the entry of Mr. John Tate. It is not that Mr. Tate got every single one *wrong*, it's that he did it with style. Some of his answers — most of which relied on sight and word puns — might serve to illustrate (compare his answers with the actual counters and/or real answers):

#5 The Making of the King, 1485
#7 License to Kill
#8 Wooden Quips and Iron Puns
#9 Panzer Ants
#10 Battle for Budweiser
#14 Hells Angels at Hastings
#22 Roger Moore vs George Hamilton
#23 The Invasion of Plato's Retreat (granted, a local joke)
#33 Flashman

In any case, below are the actual answers, with some notes as to each one (where applicable).

#1 *Starship Troopers*
#2 *Victory in the Pacific*
#3 *Caesar* (Caesar/Alesia was accepted, but *not* Alesia)

#4 *Squad Leader* (C'mon, guys, this is Greenwood's own counter!)
#5 *Kingmaker*
#6 *Avalanche* (Stumped a number of people)
#7 *Air Assault on Crete* (Those who said *Descent on Crete* were out of luck, not only for the wrong answer but for having bought the latter ...)
#8 *Wooden Ships and Iron Men*
#9 *Gettysburg* (You didn't need the '77, but many added it.)
#10 *Panzer Leader* (This counter does not appear in any other games in this series.)
#11 *Tobruk*
#12 *Terrible Swift Sword* (The most missed easy counter. This was *not* Operation Olympic, which has a similar, but different counter.)

#13 *Ancient Conquest* (either I or II)
#14 *William the Conqueror 1066* (Any combination of those two was accepted, as it is difficult to tell from the box what the title is.)
#15 *Super Tank I*
#16 *The Fall of Tobruk*
#17 *Dauntless* (not *Air Force*)
#18 *Submarine* (A surprising number missed this!)
#19 *Citadel* (Also, a big stumbler for many.)
#20 *Elric* (Wargaming's unerotic answer to erotica)
#21 *Battle of Midway* (although it does look like Daffy Duck, now that you mention it ...)
#22 *Manassas* (A real "gotcha," missed by many.)
#23 *Troy* (not *The Iliad*)
#24 *Fury in the West*
#25 *Battle for Atlanta*
#26 *Verdun*
#27 *The Siege of Jerusalem, 70 AD* (Got some strange answers on this one ...)
#28 *Pearl Harbor*
#29 *Torgau* (A toughie; you either knew it or you didn't, as there was little reference point from the counter.)
#30 *Khalkin-gol* (Few people spelled this correctly, but most got it.)
#31 *Field Marshall* (A stumper, but it did have the designer's name on the counter!)
#32 *Lords and Wizards* (Admittedly, a strange counter ...)

#33 *The Battle of Saratoga*
#34 *Lankhmar* (Most wrong answers thought this was a Genghiz Khan game)
#35 *Battle of Eylau* (Despite the rather non-informative counter, many got this.)
#36 *Jerusalem!* (This game has lots of great counters.)
#37 *Cromwell* (Not too many confused this with the other English Civil War game, but some did.)
#38 *Mukden, 1905* (Few people got this right.)
#39 *Crete, 1941* (Most of you had the right company, wrong game.)
#40 *Dieppe*
#41 *Nomad Gods* (See #32, same school...)
#42 *War of the Star Slavers* (Only three people got this right — the top three finishers; must be selling like overcoats in August.)
#43 *Desert Fox.* (Our winner, Mr. Svajlenka, said this was Desert Foxes; we gave it to him ...)
#44 *Napoleon's Last Campaigns*
#45 *Battle for Hue* (A lot of people got this, as they did most of Conflict's old games. Hmmmm.)
#46 *Raiders of the North* (I didn't think anyone had ever bought one of these.)
#47 *Rhein Bung* (The counter is indicative of the level of competence of the remainder of the game — as is the rather proctologically misspelled title — and few people ever ventured a guess on it.)
#48 *Jacksonville: Beaches of Doom* (The Nasty one answered right the most number of times.)
#49 *Vicksburg*
#50 *Omaha Beach*

Any complaints should be forwarded to me along with a 5000-word dissertation on game-balance in the campaign game of *CNA*. Complaints without that dissertation will be placed in the appropriate circular file. ■ ■

F.O.

by Eric Goldberg

Once More into the Bulge

Birds fly south every winter, lemmings plunge to watery deaths, and wargame companies publish games on the Battle of the Bulge. The latest firm to succumb to this irresistable urge is Operational Studies Group, known more familiarly as OSG. The ad campaign for *Dark December* informs us that it is "OSG's *only* game on the Battle of the Bulge," which sounds much like a junkie insisting that he is injecting his last fix. OSG cannot be held entirely responsible for releasing the seventh entry in the Bulge sweepstakes; Danny Parker, a grizzled veteran of no less than three Bulge games, designed the game.

Dark December is an operational level treatment of the German offensive: units are regiment or brigade sized; each turn equals 12 hours; and each hex is about three kilometers across. The title may be somewhat obscure, but with the number of similar simulations already published, we are fortunate it is not called *Revenge of Son of the Bulge.*

The package comes in the standard pasteboard box that both SPI and OSG use. The cover depicts a rather murky-looking tank; presumably it has the appropriate twilight camouflage to prevent the purchaser from warning the Allies of its presence. The interior components are up to OSG's usual high standards. The rules are set in 9-point type, which makes them readable without fear of eye-strain. The accompanying study folder includes the official U.S. account of the battle, and an extremely well presented Order of Battle. The counters are colorful and for the most part highly functional (a few have dashed lines across the unit values), and include the inevitable white-on-black SS units. The map is pleasing to the eye, though it is difficult to detect the difference between woods and dense forest hexes. The adage about missing the forest for the trees really does apply here. The terrain analysis is impeccable — designer Parker's research is in very good order.

Dark December's game mechanics will be recognized by most gamers. Since the design intent is that the game be simple and playable, such familiarity is to be expected. Due to overexposure of the subject, even the *special* rules are no surprise. This is in part due to the use of *Dark December's* predecessors as secondary sources.

Supply rules have become increasingly sophisticated in the past few years. Before the advent of Line of Sight, supply was the rule which no self-respecting game could do without and which slowed play to a snail's pace. Nowadays, painless supply rules are available, and *Dark December* avails itself of the unsupplied/isolated mechanic. A sliding scale of penalties for being out of supply insures that units will not go gallivanting across the board while the rest of their fellows remain bogged down at the front line (which is, after all, the whole purpose of such a rule).

As every Fuehrer and his generals know, the Germans were running short of fuel at the end of 1944. The German Player must consult Fuel Shortage Table at the beginning of every turn to determine which of his units have run dry. The Allied Player chooses one division to be out of supply due to fuel shortages, so the German offensives must lurch ahead. Perhaps this rule can be applied to a game on gas lines in modern day America.

Other Bulge games have stressed the tremendous importance of the road network and the bridges. *Dark December* allows for Strategic Movement, with which units may zip along roads, and the terrain costs for off-road movement are pretty stiff. The Allies may blow bridges to prevent German armor progress, and then the Germans must feverishly rebuild the river crossings.

The combat system presents several new twists. The terrain in which a unit is located determines whether it suffers from a particular combat result. Thus, the positioning of units in defensive terrain becomes as important as it was in the actual battle. There are a variety of other combat results: mandatory losses, firefights and counterattacks. The latter, which was pioneered in Jim Dunnigan's *Crete* (1969), lends a fluid, tactical feel to the game. An already hairy combat situation can become completely confused if the attacker elects to make an All Out Assault, which is a second and more bloody attack. The design work on combat is the heart of *Dark December,* and it makes a potentially mediocre game a good game.

The other rules build upon the existing framework. Several weather rules restrict the players, but in an unobtrusive way. The usual armor superiority and fortification rules do the expected, and the sole German parachute unit makes a cameo appearance. The air power rule is too abstract for this observer's taste; the Allied tactical air support is factored into the Combat Results Table. The reserve rule is listed as an optional rule (it is taken from *PanzerKrieg*), but should be used in play.

Dark December may suffer from incomplete development. The terrain effect on combat, which is the most intriguing rule, produces some very odd results. Units will become pocketed in "islands" of terrain, which presumably is desired. The frequency of results which force losses is relatively low, which in turn forces some very "gamey" tactics. The rules are not extremely clear on one or two very important points. (We are told, for instance, that terrain defense levels *in a* hex are non-cumulative, but not whether the defense level of a river hexside and the defending unit's hex are cumulative.) Such is the quality of the design that these gray areas are almost serendipitous: either interpretation of key rules will produce interesting games. The

Herbstnebel scenario is recommended; it seems to be the best tested of three.

Why should the reader purchase *Dark December* if he already owns a Bulge game? Because, despite its faults, it is a good game. One benefit of the proliferation of Bulge games is that each succeeding product must be at least above average to attract a decent market share. If we assume that conflict simulations give insight into history, then *Dark December* gives the best overview of the battle. Now, if OSG can only restrain itself from releasing another Battle of the Bulge game...

Some needy companies do not yet have a Battle of the Bulge game. Until that gap can be filled, these unfortunate firms should produce games which include Germans or which are tactical treatments of armor warfare. Yaquinto Publications, which unveiled its first games at this year's Origins, incorporates both Bulge substitutes in *Panzer.* The title is easily the second most popular word in wargame titles, right after "the."

Panzer is a game of German and Soviet ground combat during World War II. It simulates actions during the years 1941 through 1945, which allows all of the really interesting vehicles to be included for the player's perusal. Until science fiction and fantasy stole tactical armor's thunder, it was easily the most popular subject for a game. Recent games in the genre have tended towards overcomplication; the worst offender was *Panzer Battles,* which had a disastrously convoluted combat procedure. *Panzer* is a good argument for moderation, but takes a surprising length of time to play.

Yaquinto does not stint its customers when it comes to providing components. The *Panzer* package contains enough paper to constitute a fire hazard. The cover art is one of Rodger MacGowan's better efforts. Upon lifting the box cover, a set of heavily illustrated rules will be found. Further excavation will uncover piles of unit data cards, three geomorphic maps, a vehicle facing display, two countersheets, command sheets (i.e., simultaneous movement pads), percentile dice, and a counter tray. The data cards bear a strong resemblance to the tax tables distributed by the IRS, and will make the *Panzer* player's optometrist happy. The maps are quite functional, despite being colored institution green. The counters represent both units and terrain features, with several large counters fitting over seven hexes. The use of visual cues throughout the rules aid comprehension of the game immensely. If the production people at Yaquinto could join forces with the OSG art staff, the result would be the best packaging in the field.

The design of *Panzer* is a curious blend of outmoded mechanics, state of the art technology, and fresh new ideas. The use of simultaneous movement, while it may improve the realism of the game, is the culprit primarily responsible for the lengthy playing time. The scenarios are partially free form, but are not quite constructed to allow for full scenario generation. The intent of the rules is

to present the gamer with as many options as possible, but several seemingly arbitrary and pointless decisions will hamper that gamer's flexibility.

Designer James Day has done his homework. *Panzer* contains a tremendous amount of information, covering esoterica from gun depression to vehicle weight to machine gun locations. The package may be worth the purchase price for the hard data alone. This mass of information is part of the game's strength and weakness. On the plus side, *Panzer* is an in-depth simulation. However, the flow of play is impeded by the amount of routine data processing encumbering the players at anything over the simplest level of the game.

Yaquinto may be new at the wargame business, but it has solved a problem which has plagued its elders for years. The solution to Line of Sight problems is illustrated examples plus a tabular summation of blocking terrain. As one who has wrestled with observation problems as a player and as a designer, I was very pleased with the elegance of the sighting procedure.

An extremely rare occurrence has been noted in the movement rules. Generally, games produced by different companies will avoid using the same mechanics until a particular rule is accepted by the public. However, SPI and Yaquinto agree that armored vehicles move in the same fashion. Admittedly, the consensus rule is the most logical one, but that has never prevented differences of opinion in the past. Basically, unit movement is heavily restricted by the individual unit's facing.

The fire routine is the key to the game. Everything but the horoscope of the tank commander is factored into fire, but the procedure is not overly burdensome (except that it requires some time). The firing player determines what targets are in the firing unit's field of fire, terrain and movement modifiers, a host of miscellany (but most tanks do not carry a spare miscellany) and *then* gets to compare his unit's armor penetration strength to the protection rating of the target unit. Of course, the protection rating is determined by which part of the target vehicle is being struck (players get to fiddle with a vehicle facing display, which is a real hassle if any tank units are adjacent to the target). If the shell hits, the firing player rolls to determine where the target has been struck, and then to see what type of hit has been achieved (it could be a dud). At times, fire reminds one of deadly dull geometry problems and on other occasions makes the game fascinating.

Infantry plays its usual role in an armor-oriented game. It is excellent machine gun fodder, and is often not of enough value to warrant transporting it aboard vehicles (so it moves the usual one hex per turn). However, it still can close assault (a wargame term if there ever was one) and fire anti-tank weapons when given the chance. This is no reflection upon *Panzer,* but I would dearly love to see a new treatment of infantry in an armor game.

Panzer is the first game to handle aircraft with some degree of realism. Again, a data card has been provided for the various ground support planes. Planes, as might be expected, do not need to be plotted for movement. The player who has been frustrated in other games because he could not damage planes that wreaked havoc upon his units will be most pleased: ground units can shoot back and knock aircraft out of the sky. The rules do not provide for the wreckage of a plane, which is probably disposed of by a celestial waste removal service.

The morale rules are not as well thought out as they should be. The sequencing of events is especially unfortunate, because a player will know which of his units are panicking before he writes down any of his plots. Similar problems were to be found in the early SPI tactical games, but they have long since been corrected. The other inconsistency with morale is the so-called "straight line" syndrome. A unit moves in a straight line when panicked, expending all of its Speed Factors. Since the owning player chooses that direction two-fifths of the time, he will run it into the least traversable terrain so that it may have the greatest chance to be rallied. Players of *Panzer* are advised to amend the command control section.

This is another game that suffers from spotty development. The rules writing is very weak in places (though the illustrations clarify many important holes), and the organization is the wargame equivalent of neanderthalic. Play of the game reveals that it was developed by Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: some of the rules show extreme attention to detail and others are crocks. In defense of the developer, the game is an extremely ambitious project.

I have not yet formed a definite opinion about *Panzer.* My natural tendency is to play game-oriented simulations (such as *Mech War '77*), which *Panzer* really is not. The amount of care lavished upon the game does impress, but the plethora of inconsistencies offsets many of the good aspects. At least it has nothing to do with the Battle of the Bulge.

Debriefing Prados [continued from page 9]

aspects, and therefore, be able to handle that game. I do think there is going to be a place for computer games. I'm not convinced we're there yet. It's going to be a big problem for all of us designers to transfer our skills from the written word to computer language.

GC: What do you see as the place of conventions in the development of the hobby?

JP: When the conventions first started, some elements in the hobby didn't think they were going to work. It's a fact that Redmond and Jim both thought that Origins was such a waste of time they couldn't be bothered to go down for the first one. As a meeting-place for the hobby, despite those kinds of opinions, Origins rapidly acquired an overarching value. Now it has reached the point where large portions of the industry, particularly the Third World publishers like West End, Nimrod, OSG and god knows how many others, are all very aware of Origins. They — and other publishers as well — time new products so they're available for these conventions. Origins has become a kind of benchmark for the hobby. I think it also performs a function for gamers. It's given them a chance to get together in a way not normally possible. Despite the fact that

I'm a designer and I know a lot of gamers, for a long time I played 90% of my games by myself. In fact, it's still true that I play a large number of games by myself. But conventions allow one to come into contact with huge numbers of other people.

GC: One thing still bothers me about Origins, as opposed to a science fiction convention where there isn't this drastic division between the pros and the canaille. Science fiction writers attend parties, talk to other people, mix with fans, and so forth, whereas at wargaming conventions, there seems to be a stricter division. The professionals speak at panels, but they don't get out into the mob. One thing I'd like to see at conventions is larger numbers of parties.

JP: I certainly agree with that. I've done a lot of work along those lines. At the first Origins, along with Al Nofi and Jimmy Cumbo, I had an open-air session with anyone who cared to attend, just to meet gamers and talk with them. It was a great success and became institutionalized at the second convention. Now we have all these panels and things, which were completely nonexistent at the first convention. When people started charging money for panels, I wasn't in agreement with that policy. Panels should be free,

because this is the opportunity for the so-called professionals to meet people from the hobby and get their ideas — like feedback. Also, at the second Origins it was Rand that had the only party. At this past Origins, I made the dip for the OSG people's party. The convention offers an opportunity to get out and talk to people, and get their impressions about what they think the direction of the hobby is and the kinds of material they'd like to see translated into games. I think that's one of the main functions for a professional person attending a convention.

GC: About the Guild?

JP: Well, I have hopes for the Guild. I was pleased to see that this year the Guild actually seems to have gotten off the ground. For the first time the office managed to collect the dues from the membership, thus making the Guild an on-going thing. It shouldn't be paid for out of Randy Reed's pocket. I think that's a very positive development. On the other hand, I am — and I'm sure all the other members are also — waiting to see what it produces. I'd like to see what the Guild is going to do in terms of concrete projects. Through those concrete projects, I'd like to see the Guild develop a larger impact on the hobby as a whole. ■■

CONVENTIONS Up and Coming

The following is a list of conventions scheduled to be held in the upcoming months, including place, name of convention, and whom to contact for further information.

February 8-10

WARCON '80, Memorial Student Center of Texas A&M University. *Contact:* GROMETS, Student Programs Office, P.O. Box 5718, College Station, Texas 77844.

February 29–March 2

2nd ANNUAL TEXAS OPEN WAR-GAMING TOURNAMENT. *Contact:* Gregory Surovic, Veterans of Simulated Wars, Dept. of Military Science, The University of Texas, Austin, Texas 78712.

July 4-8

EMPRICON II/CONSPIRACY, combined science fiction and gaming convention. *Contact:* EmpiriCon/ConSpiracy, P. O. Box 682, Church Street Station, New York, N. Y. 10008.

NOTE: *MOVES* will gladly publish notice of gaming conventions and related events in this column. There is no charge for this service, but information on the event — including name, place, time, and whom to contact — must be in our hands at least 4 months in advance. Address such information to Bob Ryer, c/o *MOVES*, 257 Park Avenue South, New York, N. Y. 10010. ■ ■

NEW INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS FOR *MOVES* ARTICLES

Most of the articles in *MOVES* are written by its readers. We'd like you to give it a try — if your article is well written and on a subject of interest to readers, there's a good chance it will see publication. The Subject of your article is up to you. From time to time the Editor will suggest potential article topics. Don't be afraid to write on other publishers games — *MOVES* is not a "house organ" that ignores the rest of the gaming world.

Types of Articles. The kinds of articles we're looking for fall into the following general categories:

1. *Operational Analysis.* Deals with the tactics and strategy of play in a specific game.

2. *Game Profile/Review.* Description of a game or games with particular attention to its simulational system and playability. Any criticism must be well-supported by logical argument and fact (not simply personal opinion).

3. *Documented Play.* Description of and comment on the move-by-move progress of an actual two-player or multi-player game. Documented play should be the result of several playings, the most relevant of which being the subject of the article.

4. *Field Report.* Provides organized, valid information on some aspect of conflict simulation of general interest. ·

5. *Scenarioplex.* An experimental section of scenarios (each no longer than two typewritten pages) in the style of the parent game rules.

6. *Footnotes.* Short essays (no longer than 500 words) on almost any subject related to gaming. No honorarium is paid for Footnotes.

7. *Miscellaneous.* Articles that don't fit in the specific categories, but which the author feels appropriate for publication in *MOVES*.

Manuscript Requirements. Typewritten, double-spaced on white bond. Line length 55 to 65 characters; no more than 25 lines per page. Min-max length: 6 to 30 manuscript pages. Pages should be numbered and tagged with author's last name. Cover sheet should give date written, full-name, address, phone number, suggested title, and honorarium preference.

Honorariums. For all published submissions (except letters and Footnotes) *MOVES Magazine* pays an honorarium at the rate of $5 per running 10″ of edited text, calculated to the nearest half column. Alternatively, Authors may elect to take their honorarium in SPI products at the rate of $10 per 10″ rendered against the list price of the items. Honorariums (cash or credit slip) will be rendered 30 days after publication.

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This agreement, between Simulations Publications, Inc. (hereafter SPI), a corporation of the State of New York with its principal place of business at 257 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. and (insert your name) (hereafter Author) of (insert *working title of article*), (hereafter Work).

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For SPI_____ Title: _____ date: _____

Author _____ date: _____

Please include with your submission a stamped, self-addressed postcard. On the message side of the card write the name of your article. This card will be used to inform you of the status of your submission. Articles and illustrations cannot be returned. Address all submissions to:

Redmond Simonsen, Editor, *MOVES MAGAZINE*, SPI, 257 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10010

British Isles. Readers in the British Isles wishing to submit articles to *MOVES* should direct their submissions and correspondence to: Charles Vasey, 5 Albion Terrace, Guisborough, Cleveland TS146JH, UK

Arēs

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2 Years (12 issues): $26.00

3 Years (18 issues): $36.00

Ares Number 1 will be published in February 1980, with a cover date of March 1980.

Designer's Notes [continued from page 3]

tense, balanced and historical. The game is a full blown *Panzergruppe Guderian*-system game in a capsule format. I have always felt that the Leningrad campaign has been unjustly ignored, and I hope that this is only the first of several games on the topic.

Eric Smith

Kursk

Kursk is in the Art Department, where it progresses quite smoothly. However, the publication of the game has been bumped back to March by *NATO Division Commander* and *Stalingrad*, so those readers who await *Kursk* will have to exercise patience.

Eric Goldberg

Medieval

The development of *Medieval* has come to an end, and at this moment the game is being given a thorough going over in preparation for its departure from R&D-land. So far the game has withstood the careful scrutiny of SPI's esteemed pundits as well as several groups of blindtesters and in-house testers. Consequently, I'm confident that the game you receive will be eminently worthy of your attention. A great deal of effort has gone into *Medieval*, all in the pursuit of making it both a highly playable and entertaining multiplayer game and an interesting educational vehicle. Especial attention was also given to the rules, which hopefully are as complete and comprehensible as they could be. If the rules accurately describe the game we've been playing here for the past seven months, I think *Medieval* will be a very popular game.

Anthony F. Buccini

Wreck of the Pandora

Pandora is finally up and stumbling in its new incarnation after spending several weeks on my desk in a more or less disassembled state. We finally have printouts of the cleaned up rules, and blindtest copies should be going out in a few days. Basically, JFD has combined a couple of the original tables, and I have made some procedural alterations, the sum of which has been to cut the number of die rolls by a third. In a game in which random generation of attributes plays such a key role, cutting die rolls to a manageable level is absolutely crucial. Aside from reorganizing and streamlining, *Pandora* has also had a bit of a refit in the map department. The Mark III map is guaranteed to be prettier, cleaner, and conducive to smoother play. It also has more room for the numerous displays and tables which are an important aid to hassle-free play. And for those who are into the terminology of nuclear disaster, there is a "cold shutdown" display which tells players how long they have to regain control of the ship before all systems reach a state in which restart becomes impossible.

D. J. Ritchie

The Stonewall Project

The first two games to be released in this project will be my game, *Pea Ridge*, and Tom Hudson's game, *Monocacy Junction*. We are playtesting these two games very intensively, six days a week. Tom has been putting in 60 hours a week on the project, and we are both very tired and dazed by the pace. The games are all the better for it

though, since we've recruited a group of very dedicated and talented playtesters. The testing quality has been so good that I'm thinking of testing my future games in the same way with the same crew of people as testers. We are pushing very hard to finish these two games so they can be released in February. I have made several changes to the *TSS/BA* system and will be eventually responsible for rewriting the system standard rules. If you live in the New York area, know the *TSS/BA* system, and would like to do some intensive playtesting, drop me a letter or call me.

Eric Smith

Berlin, 1985

The issue game for *S&T* 80 is coming along nicely. Blindtest copies went out last week and, meanwhile, face to face testing continues here at SPI. The game seems to be generating a good deal of excitement among testers and hangers on, alike. Aside from the inherent appeal of the subject matter, some nice touches have been added to cover the "honors of war," firestorms, collateral damage and movement through subways.

The basic scenario with which we are working involves a four to six division assault by the 20th Guards Army (reinforced) from a "cold start" as part of a general NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation. Against this awesome force, NATO musters the West German police (good for perimeter defense within the city, but of limited value, otherwise) and three brigades of French, British, and American troops. Standing by as an equalizer of sorts are a couple of brigades of West German Jaegers who might, in an extreme pinch, be lifted into Berlin before or during the assault.

In the tradition of *The China War,* the map is "terrain intensive," with two dozen types of terrain including urban, suburban, park, industrial, bog, and airfield hexes. Other features include ferries, police stations (shown as supply hexes), barracks, POL storage tanks, waterworks, heating plants, sewage plants, broadcasting installations and checkpoints. The scale is a kilometer per hex.

Units are company/battalion size with some artillery units abstracted as two-battalion "regiments." The basic game system owes its origins to *Modern Battles,* but is eons advanced in realism as befits the subject. This one should be an unqualified winner.

D. J. Ritchie

Antwerp

Serious design work on this game is just being started now and so there is relatively little to report. Work on the game map will be greatly facilitated by the large number of vintage sources that we have here. Both the German and British orders of battle, however, should seriously test my research abilities as well as my patience. I currently intend to include three scenarios in the game. One will cover the fighting during September and early October, another will cover the fighting from mid-October through mid-November, and the third will cover the entire period. The players will have many strategical options open to them. Moreover, the special rules for this game (flooding, amphibious operations, airborne operations) will require much test-

ing. Consequently, I will try to get a workable version of the game completed as soon as possible in order to begin testing in late November.

Anthony F. Buccini

Battle over Britain

Our first operational level air game is still in the research/design stage. I'm very excited about this game. It should provide the players with an original strategic/tactical game that accurately simulates one of the most unique campaigns in military history. With the help of data supplied by Jeff Gibbs and the legendary Dave Isby, I have put together a map showing all the airfields, radar installations, military bases, factories and population centers in England, Wales, southern Scotland, a bit of Ireland and the north coast of France. Superimposed over this wealth of information is a unique variation on the hex grid that allows both area and tactical movement. The map will be used by both the British and German Players, although counters on the map will keep variable information (what the factories produce, damage to airfields, etc.) secret from the German Player.

The combat units will represent individual British squadrons and German *Staffeln* or *Gruppen*. A second chit will denote each unit's current status: landing, refueling and rearming, available, or delayed. In the basic game, these units will be deployed on the map. In the advanced game, each unit will comprise a stack of counters denoting not only its current "readiness," but the number of planes currently available, the number of damaged planes being serviced, the current fatigue, morale, and experience of the pilots and crew, the quality of the unit's commander and, if in action, the unit's altitude. Units in the advanced game will be kept on each player's command display, being placed on the main map or on the tactical display only when involved in air action.

I don't want to give away too much at once (I need something to write about next time), so stay tuned for a report on the tactical combat system in *Battle over Britain* in my next report.

John H. Butterfield

Naval War

Everything seems ready to go for a first playtest of this modified tactical/operational contemporary naval simulation. We have just received the new 1980 version of *Jane's Fighting Ships,* and are now busy working out ship stats on such intricacies as Active Search, Passive Search, Noise, Jamming, Gunnery, Surface-to-Surface Missiles, Antiaircraft, Torpedoes, Anti-submarine Warfare, and Close Defense. We have drawn up operational maps (at 25 miles per hex) of the Mediterranean, Caribbean, and the Denmark Straits, which will be used to portray the movement of individual Task Forces. Tactical combat will be resolved on a series of separate displays. All in all, it looks like *Naval War* will be far simpler to play than as originally conceived, although hopefully not sacrificing the original design's emphasis of technology and hardware.

Joseph Balkoski

Dragonslayer

The old gray beast has come lumbering out of the closet for a second try. There has been a four or five month hiatus between the initial design work and the beginning of serious design work, largely because the physical parameters of the game needed to be worked out. All such questions have been resolved to everyone's partial satisfaction, which is to say a compromise has been made.

Dragonslayer will be designed to introduce non-role players to the hobby. Every attempt will be made to keep the product at once simple and playable, which should prove attractive to all but those who cannot dispense with the staggering complexity of *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* or *Chivalry and Sorcery.* The designer will also resist the quantification of various game functions as much as possible, as a fantasy setting should not be reduced to a set of mathematical formulae. Serious work has just begun on the game; much more will be reported next month.

Eric Goldberg

Little Round Top

"The fighting was literally hand to hand...the fighting rolled back and forward like a wave." Colonel Chamberlain's battle report happily describes the LRT time capsule battles playtested to this point. Play has been balanced through several map adjustments and varied with the numerous options available to both players. The rules are complete and in the process of final "capsulization" and adjustment to SPI format and standards. With its return from outside blindtesters, my high expectations hopefully will be verified to Brad. Despite the presence of a unit with a "SS" label (2 U.S. SS, Sharpshooters), I would like to assure all Civil War enthusiasts that this game is not another marketing cop-out, but rather a capsule that constitutes a start towards faithfully simulating the period, a capsule that will properly lead to simulations dedicated to the "Three C's" (Confederates, cavalry, and cannister).

Leonard Millman

Battle of Austerlitz

Austerlitz is undergoing some re-evaluation at present to bring the game performance of some of the Allied units into line with their historical performance. Several of the Russian brigades which fought at Austerlitz were composed of raw recruits. They did not maneuver particularly well in the fog and smoke of Austerlitz and were highly susceptable to panic. This is reflected to a certain extent in the game rules, but apparently not to the extent necessary to replicate history. At any rate, a re-evaluation of Morale and Movement Ratings for some of the larger Russian units is underway.

Meanwhile, the game continues to collect its share of goodies. Recent plug-ins include march order rules, hidden placement of the French reserve and "the fog of Austerlitz." Blindtesters should be seeing the expanded rules next week.

D. J. Ritchie

Playback
READER REVIEWS

Playback ratings are reader evaluations of games that are acquired through **S&T** and **MOVES** Feedback responses. Readers have been asked to rate each aspect of the games on a scale of 1 (Poor) to 9 (Excellent). For the actual text of the questions, see Section B of Feedback on page 35. Publishers Abbreviations: **SPI** = Simulations Publications, Inc., New York; **OSG** = Operational Studies Group, New York.

	Creature That Ate Sheboygan	StarGate	Titan Strike	Vector 3	John Carter	Napoleon at Leipzig	Typical Rating Range
Publisher	SPI	SPI	SPI	SPI	SPI	OSG	
Publication Date	4/79	4/79	4/79	4/79	5/79	4/79	
Price	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	19.95	18.00	
Nr. of Players Reviewing	64	31	35	43	30	42	
Date Reviewed	11/79	11/79	11/79	11/79	11/79	11/79	
A. Map, Physical Quality	5.67	4.87	5.28	3.50	6.48	7.74	6.1-6.8
B. Rules, Physical Quality	6.17	5.10	5.03	5.50	6.00	6.72	6.4-7.1
C. Counters, Physical	6.39	5.32	5.42	4.98	6.13	6.93	6.5-7.2
D. Ease of Play	7.51	5.39	5.26	5.19	5.77	7.56	6.3-7.0
E. Rules Completeness	7.05	5.26	4.69	5.40	5.90	6.83	6.3-6.9
F. Play Balance	6.44	5.27	4.97	6.12	6.23	7.39	6.1-6.7
G. Game Length Suitability	7.17	5.70	5.71	5.76	5.57	6.76	6.2-6.8
H. Set-Up Time Suitability	7.69	6.16	6.03	6.05	6.50	6.53	6.2-6.8
J. Complexity Suitability	6.44	5.13	4.94	5.16	6.03	7.19	6.2-6.9
K. Realism	5.10	4.20	3.67	5.07	5.97	7.14	5.9-6.5
L. Overall Rating	6.69	4.97	4.69	4.77	6.33	7.43	6.1-6.8
M. % Who'd still buy	84%	58%	46%	44%	77%	93%	77%
N. % Rec'd money's worth	86%	68%	51%	59%	83%	95%	82%
S&T SURVEY DATA							
% Who've played game	19%	11%	na	na	11%	na	
Acceptability Rating	6.8	6.4	na	na	6.6	na	
Complexity Rating	5.0	5.5	na	na	6.0	na	
Game Length (hours)	1.0	2.0	na	na	4.0	na	
Solitaire Playability	6.5	6.0	na	na	5.5	na	

THE CREATURE THAT ATE SHEBOYGAN
Design: Greg Costikyan
Art: Redmond A. Simonsen
Development: John Butterfield, Greg Costikyan, Phil Kosnett, David Werden
Comments: The monster of the player's choice battles the police, populace, and National Guard in a typical American city.

STARGATE
Design: John Butterfield
Art: Redmond A. Simonsen
Development: John Butterfield, Greg Costikyan, Phil Kosnett, David Werden
Comments: Virunian tyrants and freedom-loving peoples of the galaxy do battle in and around stargates and nullgate energy fields.

TITAN STRIKE
Design: Phil Kosnett
Art: Redmond A. Simonsen
Development: John Butterfield, Greg Costikyan, Phil Kosnett, David Werden
Comments: Struggle among the forces of the European Economic Community and Hegemony of Eastern Asia for control of mineral-rich moon of Saturn.

VECTOR 3
Design: Greg Costikyan
Art: Redmond A. Simonsen
Development: John Butterfield, Greg Costikyan, Phil Kosnett, David Werden
Comments: Warfare in the densely-populated Gilgamesh cluster; tactical combat using *BattleFleet Mars* system.

JOHN CARTER
Design: Mark Herman
Art: Redmond A. Simonsen
Development: Eric Goldberg
Comments: Adventure fantasy game based on the world and characters of Edgar Rice Burroughs. Treachery, love, military and character games, fleet and melee combat.

NAPOLEON AT LEIPZIG
Design: Kevin Zucker
Comments: Operational level simulation of the battle of encirclement.

NOTE: John Butterfield's name was inadvertently omitted from the Playback section of *MOVES* 47. John was the Developer for the entire *Battles for the Ardennes QuadriGame.*

Feedback

MOVES nr. 48, published Dec/Jan 1980

How to use the Feedback Response Card: After you've finished reading this issue of *MOVES*, please read the Feedback questions below, and give us your answers by writing the answer-numbers on the card in the response boxes which correspond to each question number. See centerfold for card.

Please be sure to answer all questions (but do not write anything in the box for question-numbers labelled "no question"). Cards that are incompletely filled out cannot be processed.

What the numbers mean: When answering questions, "0" always means NO OPINION or NOT APPLICABLE. When the Question is a "yes 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 between express various shades of approval or disapproval.

SECTION A

1-3. No question. (leave blank).

Questions 4 through 18 ask you to rate the articles in this issue on a scale of 1 = poor, 9 = excellent; 0 = no opinion).

4. The Chrome-Plated Machine Pistol

5. Debriefing Prados

6. NLB: An Anti-Variant

7. The Best Game You've Never Played

8. FireFight Alone

9. ...And the Winners Are....

10. Opening *MOVES*

11. Designer's Notes

12. Notes from the SPIRIT World

13. *MOVES* in English

14. SpiGroups

15. Forward Observer

16. Playback

17. Was this issue better than the last one?

18-24. No question

25. Assume that you don't subscribe to *MOVES*. Would the quality of this issue alone motivate you to subscribe?

26. For how many issues have you had a continuous subscription to *MOVES*? 0 = I don't subscribe; 1 = This is my first issue; 2 = This is my second or third issue; 3 = This is my fourth or fifth issue; 4 = This is my sixth issue; 5 = This is my seventh through eleventh issue; 6 = This is my twelfth issue; 7 = This is my thirteenth through eighteenth issue; 8 = This is my nineteenth or subsequent issue; 9 = I am a *MOVES* Lifetime Subscriber (regardless of number of issues received).

27. What level of complexity do you prefer in games? Rate your preference on a 1-9 scale, with higher numbers indicating increased complexity. Use the following games as guidelines. 1 = *Strikeforce;* 4-5 = *Chickamauga;* 7 = *Patrol!;* 9 = *Air War.*

28. Your age: 1 = 13 years old or younger; 2 = 14-17; 3 = 18-21; 4 = 22-27; 5 = 28-35; 6 = 36 or older.

29. Your sex: 1 = Male; 2 = Female.

30. Education: 1 = 11 years or less; 2 = 12 years; 3 = 13-15 years; 4 = 13-15 years and still in school; 5 = 16 years; 6 = 17 years or more.

31. How long have you been playing conflict simulation games? 0 = less than a year; 1 = 1 year; 2 = 2 years . .8 = 8 years; 9 = 9 or more years.

32. What is the average number of hours you spend playing simulation games each month? 0 = none; 1 = 1 hour or less; 2 = 2-5 hours; 3 = 6-9 hours; 4 = 10-15 hours; 5 = 16-20 hours; 6 = 21-25; 7 = 26-30; 8 = 31-40; 9 = 40 or more hours.

33. How many simulation games (of all publishers) do you possess? 1 = 1-10; 2 = 11-20; 3 = 21-30; 4 = 31-40; 5 = 41-50; 6 = 51-60; 7 = 61-70; 8 = 71-80; 9 = 81 or more.

34. Did you send in the feedback card for your last issue of *MOVES*? 1 = yes; 2 = no.

35. Pick the *one* area about which you would most like to see games and articles done: 1 = Ancient (Rome, Greek, Biblical, (300 BC–600AD); 2 = Dark Ages and Renaissance (600 AD–1600 AD); 3 = 30 Years War and pre-Napoleonic (1600 AD–1790); 4 = Napoleonic (1790–1830); 5 = Civil War/19th Century (1830–1900); 6 = World War I (1900–1930); 7 = World War II (1930–1945); 8 = post-World War II (1945–present); 9 = Science Fiction and Fantasy.

Rate the following game proposals on a scale of 1 to 9, with 1 indicating very little inclination to buy the game if published up through 9 indicating a definite intention to purchase it.

36. *The Trojan War.* A colorful game covering this historical/mythical conflict. The approach would be realistic (if hypothetical) in terms of army capabilities, geography, objectives, siege warfare and tactics. However, the gods and heroes involved in the multi-year struggle would be featured prominently. Achilles, Agamemnon, Odysseus (Ulysses), Paris, Hector, Ajax, Diomedes, Aphrodite and the other great figures of legend who participated directly or indirectly in the epic campaign would be lovingly portrayed. The Greek and Trojan players would attempt not only to fulfill their overall military objectives, but the private goals of certain characters as well — a combination of state-of-the-art ancient warfare game systems and our *War of the Ring/Freedom in the Galaxy* character system. Would include one full-size map, 200 counters, cards and historical information. To sell for $12-15.

37. *Winter of our Discontent.* A medieval aficionado's dream come true, starting where *Kingmaker* leaves off. A simulation incorporating the best from the power politics genre and adding combat displays, detailed Parliaments, many more personalities, and generally giving a much more accurate "feel" for the era. As a proponent of the house of Lancaster or York, your first move is to recruit supporters and secure your faction's power. Very simply, you must, as a "kingmaker," gain the ruling house, keep popular support, maintain or secure foreign respect, and maintain peace in the realm. And accomplish all this in an era of outrageous chaos and political upheaval that marked the extinction of the glorious Plantagenets. Game will include such items as commissions of array, statutes of assent, bills of attainder, ambassadors, fifty personalities replete with heraldic counters and historical political instabilities, and tactical battle displays allowing every peculiar incident of this period to take place. Examples of these are family grudges, "no quarter," fits of pique, treachery, master bowmen, fog, snowstorms, sanctuary and even Squire Lovelace of Kent. Physical components would include two maps, Combat and Parliament displays, 600-800 full color heraldic counters, and would sell for $18.00.

38. *Napoleon's Victory: The Battle of Austerlitz.* A four-map, 1600 counter battalion level simulation using the popular *Wellington's Victory/Ney vs Wellington* system. Uses special formation rules, skirmishers, and maneuver. Four scenarios: The Battle for Sokolnitz; Napoleon's Counterattack; Attack of the Russian Guard; and, of course, The Grand Battle Game. To sell for $30.

39. *Albuera.* On 16 May, 1811, one of the bloodiest battles of the Peninsular War was fought. Marshal Soult, commanding 23,000 French troops attempted to relieve the French garrison trapped in the fortress of Badajos. The besieging force of 30,000 Allied troops under Sir Charles Beresford, gave battle on the field of Albuera, where a confusing and wild clash took place. The 23,000 Spanish troops in the Allied army fled after the first shot, leaving only 7,000 British and Portugese remaining to fight the French. The French seemingly had the battle won, but could not break the Allies. In his afterbattle report, Soult stated that "I pierced his center and turned his flank. The day was *mine.* But still the British would not run." Beresford turned defeat into victory, when the British troops turned on the French attackers, and drove them from the field with an uphill attack, into a driving rain! Victory had slipped from Soult's grasp. Badajos was lost. *Albuera* will be a *Ney vs Wellington* system game on this desperate battle. The system lends itself well to the battle, with rules covering morale, formations, and leadership. *Albuera* would contain one full-size map, 400 counters, historical background, and would sell for $12.

40. *A Distant Thunder.* A strategic *and* tactical simulation of the opening campaign of the Civil War, from The Seven Days to Antietam. Players would maneuver their forces in three-day turns on the strategic map until forces of both players were in the same hex, when players would

resolve battles on a tactical "battlefield" taken from a selection of 12-16 small geomorphic tactical maps. Great emphasis would be placed on hidden movement, limited intelligence and especially on leader abilities. All the major leaders would be included (from brigade level up) and would be rated for their abilities in such areas as movement (Jackson's troops will move much faster than those of McClellan), intelligence (in the military sense), plus many ratings particular to individual leaders (how *is* Jackson feeling today?). Play on the strategic map would be on a brigade level and, on the tactical maps, regimental. Leaders would also be rated in many tactical categories including picking defensive terrain, and even influencing the actual choice of tactical maps. The strategic map would cover the East coast from North Carolina to southern Pennsylvania, bordered by the Shenandoah Mountains. The game would include numerous tactical scenarios besides the campaign game, 1000 counters, 12-16 tactical maps beside the strategic map, and would be fairly high in complexity. $20.

41. *The Gettysburg Campaign:* A simulation of the Confederate invasion of the north in June-July 1863. The game would be strategic in scope, with a single map portraying Virginia, Maryland, and southern Pennsylvania. Units would be in corps size for the U.S. Army of the Potomac and in division size for the C.S.A. Army of Northern Virginia. Time scale would be one day per Game-Turn. The game-system would emphasize limited intelligence between opposing forces, as well as the capabilities of high-ranking leaders. Very short playing time, easy to learn; 200 counters. $10

42. *Operation Gericht: The Battle Of Verdun, 1916.* This game would cover the entire 10 months of the battle in 4 individual scenarios and a campaign game. Scenarios would include the initial German attack of 21 February, the battles for the Morte Homme, the May Cup offensive, and the French counteroffensive of October 19th. Turns would equal one week and would be of two types: Attrition Turns (in which the effects of an entire week's shelling and infantry contact would be abstracted) and Assault Turns (broken down into daily impulses so as to better represent the fluid movement and comparatively higher losses resulting from a major offensive). Detailed artillery rules, including realistic LOS, ammunition consumption, variable fire missions, gas attacks and spotting, play an important part in the game. Other features would include rules covering pioneers, Brandenburgers, Moroccans and Territorials, realistic trench melee and fortress reduction, isolation, limited step reduction for units, morale, and 1916 linear attack doctrine. Units would represent battalions and regiments of infantry (of several varieties) and artillery (distinguished by predominant gun types). Optional air rules included. One full-size map (at one kilometer to the hex), 400 counters, historical article. $12.

43. *Grand Alliance.* An update of SPI's *World War II* . The scale would be somewhere between *War in Europe* and *World War II*, probably 70 kilometers to the hex and one month per Game-Turn. Units would be corps and armies. The thrust of the design would be the creation of a comprehensive product with simple mechanics, playable in an afternoon. All important aspects of the war from submarines to partisans would be covered in the game's basic systems with strict limitations on the "non-systems chrome" included in the design. Two maps, 800 counters, extensive playing aids. $18.

44. *Roads to Moscow, 1941.* With the coming of October and the autumn, the Soviet High Command did not expect any further offensive activity on the part of the Germans. But on the last day of September the Wehrmacht launched a massive offensive with Army Group Center. Achieving quick breakthroughs, some 600,000 Russians were trapped in two pockets located near the cities of Vyasma and Bryansk. The last German push to Moscow had gotten off to a fast start. *Roads to Moscow* recreates the opening weeks of Operation Typhoon on an operational regiment/division level. Using the popular *Typhoon* system, the game will include special rules for weather, mud and supply. The game will include multiple scenarios and a campaign game. Also included will be a special set of rules for linking the game to *Operation Typhoon.* To sell for $25.

45. *Convoy.* In March 1943, a series of naval engagements occurred between Convoys SC122 and HX229 and the "Sturmer" and "Dranger" submarine wolfpacks which was to decide the fate of the Battle of the Atlantic in the Second World War. *Convoy* would be a strategic simulation of this week-long action that resulted in the sinking of 21 Allied merchant vessels and a number of U-boats. Both the German and the Allied Player

would be provided with an identical map of the Atlantic from Nova Scotia to Great Britain. On this map, strategic movement and searching would be undertaken, while U-boat attacks would be resolved on an abstract tactical system. Individual surface ships and U-boats would be represented. Would include 2 maps, 400 counters, and historical information. $15.

46. *Fighter.* This game would be to *Spitfire* what *Airwar* is to *Foxbat & Phantom:* the definitive simulation of plane-to-plane combat from 1938 to 1947 The game would use *Airwar's* twelve-point/attitude movement systems with appropriate alterations in scale. Unlike the estimates used in *Airwar,* hard data on WWII planes is available, making for a truly accurate assessment of the capabilities of each aircraft. Types from both theaters of war could be represented, permitting FW10 Dora vs. Hellcat, Gloster Meteor vs. Zero, or ME109 vs. Corsair The lack of missiles any more complex than the ME163's *Jagdfaust* would result in a game where the emphasis is on flying and fighting. A less forbidding introduction to the excellent *Airwar* system for the fledgling Flying Tiger (and a rest for the *Airwar* fan), *Fighter* would sell for $15.

47. *The Corporate Wars: 2031.* The year is 2031. There are no more nations. There are no more political parties. There are no more unions. Only the Corporations exist. Only the Corporations prosper. It has been this way for thirty years. Ever since the series of devastating wars which characterized the end of the 20th century effectively sounded the death knell of the nation-state, the Corporations have grown and prospered. Now the great multi-national Corporations hold unchallenged power. They control the world's resources. They control the world's cities. Their power is limited only by their mutual mistrust. *The Corporate Wars: 2031* would be a multi-player, multi-scenario simulation of the possibilities for conflict in such a setting. Each Player would adopt the role of "The Chairman" of his own corporation, engaged in a struggle for wealth and power via political, economic and/or military means with his opposite numbers in other corporations. Included would be limited warfare scenarios depicting major "offensives" involving two, three or more corporations as well as a "Brave New World" scenario depicting a world-wide revolt against the corporations by a secret society of committed in-dividualists and an Armageddon scenario for up to six players which would end with one player in control of the world or the entire globe a radioactive cinder The entire gamut of political and military weapons would be available including assassins, agitprop nets, orbital weapons platforms, NBC systems and conventional land, air and sea units, among others. Two maps depicting the entire globe. 800 counters. $16

48. *Laserburst.* A full size-map game, dealing with a fighter-to-fighter battle over a future city. Each player would control a fighter squadron, one player trying to attack and destroy the city and its ground units (including a special presidential envoy), and the other player attempting to hurl back the defenders, by using his smaller fighter force, armed ground units, and tower top lasar turrets to blow the enemy out of the skies, while keeping the important ground units, buildings, and the president, safe from harm. The game would use simultaneous movement, with many movement and fire options for the fighters, and a special damage system that can cripple a ship's guns, jets, or destroy it all together Damage would be noted on the same sheets that the si-moves will be written on, this sheet being specially formatted for just that, not unlike the *Battlefleet Mars* fleet record sheets. To win would require careful strategy to outthink the enemy fighters, especially when you have one on your "tail", and must use special maneuvers or the braking technique to shake him off All-in-all, a true game of strategy To sell for $12.

49. *War of the Western Reach.* The Terran Confederation and the Centauran Alliance have been colonizing the archipelago world of Poseidon for over a century. The peculiar nature of the planet and the lack of high-technology resources prevented the inhabitants from thinking about anything but survival; now, both colonies are virtually self-sufficient. Meanwhile, tension runs high between Confederation and Alliance, and Poseidon becomes the site of the first "brush-fire" war between the two great human powers. Players control military forces which include hovercraft, amphibious assault vehicles, space-to-surface attack vessels, and infantry. Anything more potent than 2 kiloton tactical nuclear weapons is eschewed by both forces, as the geological structure of the home islands is relatively fragile. Strategy will have to be formulated with both the enemy and the nature of the

planet in mind. In addition, political consideration must be given to Confederation-Alliance relations, and to those who advocate self-government for Poseidon. *War of the Western Reach* will be the first operational level exploration of surface warfare in the distant future. Will include one map, political and tactical displays, 400 counters and (hopefully) a background story. $17 to $20.

50. *Barbarian Kings.* The savage and sorcerous continent of Quemerya includes many powerful city-states. Each is led by one of the great Hero-Kings, who seek to unify the various peoples into one powerful nation. Every nation is assembling its multi-racial armies, levying taxes and recruiting wizards to their service. The winner of this massive struggle will become Overlord of Quemerya. Each player is assigned one province and a Hero-King. From his initial allotment of bezants and Hero Points, the player must choose abilities for his Hero-King and determine the composition of his army. The combat units are divided by type (archer, infantry, etc.) and race (elves, goblins, etc.). Mercenary leaders must be hired to lead armies, and wizards must be employed to cast spells and conduct research. The player who leads his city-state to control of the most province will become the Overlord. One capsule-size map, 200 counters, and relatively short rules. $8.

51. *Citadel of Blood.* A fantasy role-playing game using the *Deathmaze* game system, but set in the Valley of the Great Sword, first popularized in SPI's *Swords and Sorcery.* From one to five players enter the Citadel of Blood in search of The Hellgate, the hidden talisman which was the foundation of the power of the Deathlord of Arahelm. The game would include the entire gamut of characters and species from the sword and sorcery cosmology, but would be presented in a serious format. 200 counters, 12 page rulebook, no map. $5.

On a scale from 1 to 9, please rate the complexity of the following games. Use the following ratings as a guideline: 1 = Strikeforce; 4 = Chickamauga; 7 = Patrol; 9 = Air War.

52. GEV (MG)
53. Imperium (GDW)
54. War of the Ring
55. Ogre (MG)
56. Creature That Ate Sheboygan
57. Wizard (MG)
58. Swords and Sorcery
59. Traveler (GDW)
60. Death Test (MG)
61. John Carter
62. Dungeons & Dragons
63. StarGate
64. Stellar Conquest (MG)
65. BattleFleet: Mars
66. Invasion: America
67. War in the Ice
68. Ney vs. Wellington
69. Road to the Rhine (GDW)

Anticipating double digit inflation in 1980, we are searching for ways to keep game prices down. One possibility is to take the plastic trays out of games. It's either that or raise the price on a game before the next year is out (the tray is particularly liable to inflationary effects as it is made from petroleum). Given the choice, on a game by game basis, would you have us delete the tray in the following games or raise the price two dollars per tray. Double digit inflation is bad enough, but 30-40% increases in plastic items is unreal. 1 = for take out the tray (and the price stays the same); 2 = keep the tray in and raise the price $2 per tray; 3 = not sure; 4 = already own the game. Trays would be available as separate items for 5-for-$5.

70. Art of Siege (2 trays)
71. Napoleon's Last Battles
72. Wellington's Victory (2 trays)
73. Napoleon at War Quad
74. Terrible Swift Sword (2 trays)
75. Army Group South Quad
76. To the Green Fields Beyond
77. Great War in the East Quad

78. Atlantic Wall (2 trays)
79. War in the Pacific (2 trays)
80. Ardennes Quad
81. War in the East (2 trays)
82. Wacht am Rhein (2 trays)
83. The Next War (2 trays)
84. FireFight
85. Air War
86. Kharkov
87. Modern Battles Quad
88. War of the Ring
89. Swords and Sorcery
90. John Carter
91. Cityfight
92. Stonewall
93. Great Medieval Battles Quad
94. Bloody April (2 trays)
95-96. No Questions

SECTION B

The results of the following survey are used in our PLAYBACK system. This system reviews games by showing the response of the people who play the games. Questions 104-188 are part of PLAYBACK.

After each game title there are thirteen questions [lettered "A" through "N"]. Unless otherwise noted, these questions are answered with a "1" [poor] through '9' [excellent] rating.

Question A — What did you think of the physical quality and layout of the mapsheet?

Question B — What did you think of the physical quality and layout of the rules folder?

Question C — What did you think of the physical quality and layout of the unit counters?

Question D — What did you think of the game's "ease of play" (how well the game moved along)?

Question E — What did you think of the "completeness" of the game's rules (was everything thoroughly explained)?

Question F — What did you think of the game's play balance (was the game interesting for both sides)?

Question G — What did you think about the appropriateness of the length of the average game?

Question H — What did you think of the amount of "set-up time" needed before you could begin playing the game?

Question J — What did you think of the appropriateness of the complexity of this game?

Question K — What did you think of this game's realism?

Question L — What did you think of this game overall?

Question M — Would you still have bought this game if you knew then what you know now about it (1 = Yes; 2 = No).

Question N — Do you think you received your money's worth with this game? (1 = Yes; 2 = No).

We will ask you to rate six games. If you have not played these games, or have not played them enough to be able to evaluate them, then simply place "O" in the boxes.

EYLAU

104. A (mapsheet)	**111.** H (set-up time)
105. B (rules)	**112.** J (complexity)
106. C (counters)	**113.** K (realism)
107. D (ease of play)	**114.** L (overall)
108. E (rules completeness)	**115.** M (then and now)
109. F (balance)	**116.** N (money's worth)
110. G (length)	**117.** No question

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

DRESDEN

118. A (mapsheet)
119. B (rules)
120. C (counters)
121. D (ease of play)
122. E (rules completeness)
123. F (balance)
124. G (length)
125. H (set-up time)
126. J (complexity)
127. K (realism)
128. L (overall)
129. M (then and now)
130. N (money's worth)
131,132. No question

CAMPAIGN FOR NORTH AFRICA

133. A (mapsheet)
134. B (rules)
135. C (counters)
136. D (ease of play)
137. E (rules completeness)
138. F (balance)
139. G (length)
140. H (set-up time)
141. J (complexity)
142. K (realism)
143. L (overall)
144. M (then and now)
145. N (money's worth)
146. No question

MECH WAR 2

147. A (mapsheet)
148. B (rules)
149. C (counters)
150. D (ease of play)
151. E (rules completeness)
152. F (balance)
153. G (length)
154. H (set-up time)
155. J (complexity)
156. K (realism)
157. L (overall)
158. M (then and now)
159. N (money's worth)
160,161. No question

RED STAR/WHITE STAR (new ed.)

162. A (mapsheet)
163. B (rules)
164. C (counters)
165. D (ease of play)
166. E (rules completeness)
167. F (balance)
168. G (length)
169. H (set-up time)
170. J (complexity)
171. K (realism)
172. L (overall)
173. M (then and now)
174. N (money's worth)
175. No question

SUEZ TO GOLAN

176. A (mapsheet)
177. B (rules)
178. C (counters)
179. D (ease of play)
180. E (rules completeness)
181. F (balance)
182. G (length)
183. H (set-up time)
184. J (complexity)
185. K (realism)
186. L (overall)
187. M (then and now)
188. N (money's worth)
189-196. No question