THE Vip of GAMING MAGAZINE

April/May 1986

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

"But Seriously, Folks..."

There are many ways to write an Editorial. This is one of them. Allow us to do our first "pass around Editorial." The Publisher, Editor and Assistant Editor all are contributing their two cents to this one (and I, the poor unsuspecting secretary, have to do something with the notes they've left on my desk), so let's see what they have to say.

Hmm, the Publisher, Alan Emrich, wishes to inform you V.I.P. readers that he wishes to apoligize for the terrible printing job done on the last issue. Like the Monty Python and the Holy Grail credits, those responsible have been sacked. Alan also wants you to know that The V.I.P. of Gaming and Space Gamer magazines have merged at the retail level, and that their combined circulation makes both magazines far more economically viable. (I presume that to mean that DTI can afford to keep publishing this magazine on a regular schedule). (Right. - ED).

The Publisher is also pleased to announce that a proof reader has been added to the magazine staff. Aside from her downright attractive looks, and manner, Karen Wolterman is a dedicated English major who crusades against what our very staff and writers specialize in — the butchery of the English language. While it's inconceivable that she could catch every grammatical glitch and spelling error, we are sure to see much improvement in these areas beginning with this issue. Remember, we accept many first time writers, and the manuscripts that they send us range from fair to illiterate. (To that end, we have designed a custom rejection slip for this magazine. While cute, it's still a rejection slip).

The Editor, Pete Flahive, is pleased to announce a reduction in the confusion level caused by this magazine's many sub-magazine sections. From now on, each section will have its own title page to introduce you into its world. I.e. Space Gamer, Fantasy Gamer, Battle Plan, Computer Gamer, First Class Gaming, etc., will all have their own title pages. Not to be completely logical, the title page will, actually, only be a title half-page, with anners and credits, but that should suffice.

Pete also wants you to know that it looks like a game will appear in the next issue of The V.I.P. Allen Varney, Warren Spector and the Space Gamer staff were looking for a way to get this project done, and since a game format is right up V.I.P.'s alley, you'll get a game. The game is entitled **Mind Duel** and is about psionic combat. Doubtless, playing it will require some thought. (A little humor, there!). (Very little. - ED)

Gary E. Smith, our beleaguered Assistant Editor and all around whip cracker, indicates that we are seeking new writers. You are urged, if you've ever had an opinion about a game, ever created a "home made" variant over a game you were really excited about, or ever dreamed up new scenarios for old favorites, then you should write for this magazine. (It even pays!). The writer's

guidelines and submission forms can be acquired by request to this publication, or may even be printed in our pages.

Perrin Tong (I don't see his name on the credits!) has left a note in this pile indicating that The V.I.P. is pushing the frontiers of gaming journalism, leading the forefront, extending the limits of glory, and generally setting a trend. DTI, who brought you the Gamer's Guide of Southern California, will be moving a variation of that theme into these pages. As something of a cross between The Gamer's Guide as it now stands and the Opponent's Wanted Section of The General, the new Gamer's Guide will read as a cross between the yellow pages and newspaper want ads (next thing you know, there will be personals!) (Interesting idea. Let's see what they say about it on the Feedback Cards. - ED).

You should find handy forms and low prices for listings in catagories as follows:

> Business, Retail
> Business, Wholesale
> Buy, Sell, Trade

Clubs & Organizations
Conventions & Events
Opponents Wanted
Play-by-mail Games
Publications

Perrin Tong (there's that name again!) will be the new editor for the Gamer's Guide section of The V.I.P. of Gaming.

That's about it for the notes in the "Editorial, V.I.P." file. This Editorial was brought to you by A. Heiro, humble secretary to the DTI offices.

The Olympus Enquirer
An Insider's Report about the "Gods" of Gaming

You may wonder how one becomes an "insider" in this industry. For us, here at The V.I.P. of Gaming magazine, it was simply a matter of hanging out a shingle, letting the game companies know to add us to their press release list, and then keeping our collective ears to the ground. Between each writing of this column, all press releases, other news, gossip, and miscellaneous notes get stuffed into a file marked "News/Gossip" (located in front of the one marked "Conventions," where all of the convention announcements go). We simply dump the News/Gossip file on Mr. Heiro's desk, threaten him, and he writes this column. What could be simpler?

OF THE GAME COMPANIES THEM-SELVES, there isn't much to say except that East is meeting West. Not only are almost all of the major game manufacturers in adventure gaming planning to attend Origins (in July) in Los Angeles (including The Avalon Hill Game Co., GDW, Victory Games, and even TSR!), but many have also just attended ORCCON, a regional convention run by the same group (STRATEGICON) including Steve Jackson Games (Texas), Dark Horse Miniatures (Idaho), and West End Games (New York).

Speaking of conventions, Origins XIII has finally found a home. Once again, it will be back in Baltimore (how many times does that make for Baltimore?), this time over the July 4th weekend (sound familiar?) in 1987. The Atlanticon people (Baltimore Origins' hosts) will not have Origins at a college campus in 1987, but rather at the downtown Hyatt Regency & Baltimore Convention Center. Future bids for Origins 1988 are speculated to be coming from Knoxville and, possibly, Los Angeles.

Don't forget, it's time to get your Adventure Gaming Arts & Design official Origins Awards nominations ballot in. These are the Charles Roberts and H. G. Wells awards given out each year at the national game convention. Not to be outdone, Fire & Movement magazine has just announced their own awards (called "F and Emmies"). These cover aspects of wargaming not currently covered by the Charles Roberts awards. See F&M number 46 for all the details.

IN THE WIDE WORLD OF ROLE-PLAYING GAMES, everyone is talking about Teenage Mutant Ninja Trutles. You may know it's a hit, but did you know it's something of a smash? Already in its second printing (and the first was of 10,000 copies!), look soon for its sequel, After the Bomb, and the new Dark Horse figures, Orc Girls on Rollerskates (with Uzi's).

Mayfair games has released Project Prometheus for their DC Heroes game. Out by now should be Dragons, the long awaited Role Aids sourcebook. Coming up for DC Heroes will be Escort to Hell, Doomsday Program, Fire and Ice, Countdown to Armageddon, and Batman: A Sourcebook.

The Avalon Hill Game Company is announcing a gigantic supplement for Runequest entitled Gods of Glorantha. It includes three books, plus a twelve page calendar for the world of Runequest.

TSR, those hard working, fast cranking people in Wisconsin will be bringing you modules OA1 Swords of the Daimyo (for Oriental Adventures), B10 Night's Dark Terror (Basic D&D), N3 Destiny of Kings (AD&D), CM7 The Tree of Life (D&D Companion Game), The Inheritance and Knave of Hearts (both for Partyzone). A new One-on-One gamebook series, which appears to be a cross between the Lost Worlds picture books and those solo text adventures, will be out soon. Essentially, each player takes a different book (Fafhrd vs. the grey Mouser) and pursues the other by turning pages and reading aloud until they meet in combat.

FROM THE REALM OF COMPUTERS AND CRT'S, The Avalon Hill Game Company has released Combat Chess (tank and armored car warfare) and Under Fire (akin to Squad Leader in scope and scale) which includes a "construction set" for your own scenarios.

Microprose has released Silent Service, a submarine warfare game (US vs Japan) with some very hot graphics. It's out now for Apple & C-64's, with Atari and IBM due soon.

Strategic Simulations, better known as SSI, announced Wizard's Crown for intermediate role-players. This game combines detailed wargame type tactical battles with the magic, etc., of a fantasy quest. Zilfin will be out soon for beginning role-players. SSI's two new wargames include Nam (a Vietnam game based on the popular Field of Fire system), and Battlegroup (a sequel to Kampfgruppe with the US and Britian in 1943-45).

Strategic Studies Group in Australia (Carriers at War) will be releasing a strategic

level US Civil War game this year. Entitled Road to Appomattox, it can accomodate from zero to eighty human players! This will be one to watch for.

IN THE BATTLEZONE OF WAR-GAMING, Omega Games' Victory in Europe (Germany, 1945) and Rommel at Bay (part of their growing Battles for North Africa series). Soon to follow in that series will be Blood & Guts. Also on their announcement sheet is Achtung! Panzer! (yet another "ultimate" East front strategic WWII game) and The Wilderness (double-blind Civil War battle).

TSR's SPI division will release Barbarossa (old name, new game; strategic East Front WWII) and re-release Terrible Swift Sword (completely revised version, bringing it up-to-date with the rest of the Great Battles of the American Civil War series).

Quarterdeck Games has released Rommel's War (operational desert warfare, great graphics).

International Simulations, a new division of Diverse Talents, Inc. (DTI, who also publish this magazine) have announced the importing of Australian Design Group's (ADG) World in Flames (strategic WWII, Europe and Pacific), and Jedko Games (also of Australia) Field Marshall (operational WWII from a Field Marshall's perspective), African Campaign II (second edition of classic WWII operational desert wargame), and Europe at War (sort of a "good time" War at Sea game on land; same designer!).

FROM THE PAGES OF MAGAZINE LORE, know you that the cover price of The Dragon has risen to $3.50 (just like this one). Also be aware that Game News had a hiccup in its production schedule due to a change in printers.

A new magazine has emerged from Strategic Studies Group in Australia, the computer game company that publishes Carries at War. Called Run 5, it covers computer gaming from an SSG point-of-view and gives the programming information to add new scenarios to your SSG games. While thin, the scenarios make it well worth the $4.00 to owners of SSG games.

Those are the scandles this issue from the Olympus Enquirer, where the "Gods" of gaming make all the news that fits. Stay tuned for the gnomes of Zurich.

- Alan Emrich

ACADEMY OF ADVENTURE GAMING ARTS & DESIGN
OFFICIAL ORIGINS AWARDS NOMINATION BALLOT

for the year 1985, to be presented at ORIGINS '86, July 3-6, 1986, in Los Angeles, California
(for information about Origins '86, write PO Box 8399, Long Beach, Ca 90808)

The Origins Awards, presented at Origins each year, are an international series of awards aimed at recognizing outstanding achievements in Adventure Gaming. They are comprised of the Charles Roberts Awards for boardgaming, and the H.G.Wells Awards for miniatures and Role-Playing games. An Awards Committee of hobbyists (some professionals, but primarily independents) directs and administers the awards system. The nomination ballot is open to all interested gamers. YOUR VOTE can make a difference! A final ballot is prepared by the committee and voted on by the members of the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts & Design. Academy membership, $3 per year, is open to active, accomplished hobbyists, both pro and amateur. Membership guidelines are available for a SASE from the addresses given below. Correspondance should be sent to the US address.

Present members may renew by sending their check with their ballot. Checks should be made payable to GAMA for US $3.

The Academy and the Awards Committee as well as the Origins convention itself, function under the overall direction of GAMA, the Game Manufacturers Association.

Instructions. Read Carefully. Print legibly or type nominations. Ballots that are messy, not filled out correctly, or show attempts at stuffing will not be counted. You may list three nominees per category. It does not matter in what order you list them. To keep the voting as meaningful as possible, do not make selections in unfamiliar categories. YOU MUST SIGN THE BALLOT! And include your address. You may vote only once.

Nominations should be for products produced during the calendar year 1985. Miniature figure series nominations should be for product lines which are either new or have been substantially expanded in 1985.

This ballot may be reproduced and circulated by any means available, provided its contents are faithfully copied.

All Adventure Gamers are encouraged to vote!

DEADLINE: MAY 3, 1986

THE H.G. WELLS AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN MINIATURES AND ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

1. Best Historical Figure Series, 1985:

2. Best Fantasy/SF Figure Series, 1985:

3. Best Vehicular/Acessory Series, 1985:

4. Best Miniature Rules, 1985:

5. Best Role-Playing Rules, 1985:

6. Best Role-Playing Adventure, 1985:

7. Best Role-Playing Supplement, 1985:

8. Best Professional Role-Playing Magazine, 1985:

9. Best Professional Miniatures Magazine, 1985:

10. Best Play-By-Mail Game, 1985:
   (all are eligible except last years winner: StarWeb)

THE CHARLES ROBERTS AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN BOARDGAMING

11. Best Pre-20th Century Game, 1985:

12. Best 20th Century Game, 1985:

13. Best Fantasy/SF Game, 1985:

14. Best Professional Boardgame Magazine, 1985:

15. Best Adventure Game for Home Computer, 1985:

16. Best Amateur Adventure Gaming Magazine, 1985:

17. Best Graphic Presentation, 1985:

Name: _____   Signature _____

Address: _____

City/State or Province/Zip or Postal Code: _____

Send in your ballot by May 3, 1986 to only one of the following addresses:

North America: Awards, Howard Barasch
3304 Crater Lane
Plano, Texas 75023

UK & Europe: Awards, Ian Livingstone
27-29 Sunbeam Rd
London NW10
United Kingdom

Australia & NZ: Awards, Adrian Pett
Breakout Magazine
PO Box 162
Mooroolbark, Vic 3138
Australia
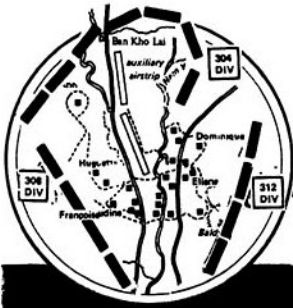
BATTLEPLAN
Board Wargaming Magazine Supplement

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WORLD IN FLAMES

Errata, Changes and Optional Rules

by Alan Emrich
and Tom E. Hughes, Jr.

Over many recent telephone conversations with WIF designer, Harry Rowland, the following clarifications and optional rules were given to and developed by us for common use and playtest. It must be understood that while these changes are currently unofficial, they are very likely to be included into the game's third edition due out soon. (This company plans to support its products until Judgement Day).

Largely, the second edition of the game merely incorporated the errata sheet into the rules. However, listed as 1-2 CHANGE are all of the major changes made between the game's first and second editions, which will greatly help the many owners of the first edition game.

Therefore, on behalf of Australian Design Group and for the good of gaming, let us proceed...

MAP CHANGES: Gibralter is an all-around fortified hex, including from the sea. The Agra land box is connected by land to Madras.

3.0 CLARIFICATION: If a Headquarters with a full stack of aircraft units moves (by choice or if forced to by combat), the aircraft must immediately conform to the stacking limits. Under the effects of rule 10.5.3.6.,

if the hex becomes enemy occupied or if the Headquarters voluntarily moves away from the stack of aircraft units, then the stacking limits for the hex would apply for some aircraft (see 3.0), with the rest (if face-up) needing to rebase (and then be turned face-down) or (if face-down already) being eliminated.

5.0, 6.D ADDITION: Units may now be voluntarily destroyed during the production phase (as well as during the reinforcement segment). This will allow units to be added to the force pool from the map for maintaining production gearing.

9.0 CHANGE (4th Paragraph): A second restriction on pipeline placement is that convoys of a given nationality may only be placed in such a manner as to be within 3 areas of a

friendly controlled port **which a ship of that nationality could move to** (if based properly) by normal movement at the time of placement. (NOTE: The intention of this rule is to keep Italian convoys out of the Baltic & Pacific, German convoys out of the Med & Pacific, and Japanese convoys out of Europe).

10.1.2 CHANGE: Add a "combat redeployment" mission during a land combat phase where aircraft may fly double their range and redeploy face-down as if they had flown a mission. This has the effect of allowing a player to move more aircraft units then a normal (limited) rebasing move, but at the cost of losing them for the rest of the game turn.

10.3.4.1 CHANGE: For realism, when subs intercept moving surface units, the sub may select the target **type** (only), but the specific unit of that type (if there is more than one present in the intercepted group) is chosen randomly.

10.3.5.1 MAJOR CHANGE: If a side contains NAV or Aircraft Carriers in an area, that side's search die roll is decreased by one. This modifier applies only to discovery of the enemy naval units, and does not in any way affect the "natural" number needed to be surprised. Ie., a die roll of '4' will still surprise ships in the 0 and 1 boxes, but (when modified by effects of having a NAV or Carrier present in the search) will allow units in the 3 box to "find" the enemy.

10.3.5.1 OPTIONAL: This modifier may only be applied to specific numbered sea-boxes actually containing NAV or Carriers.

10.3.5.1 OPTIONAL: This modifier may only be applied to a sea-zone during clear weather.

10.3.5.1 CHANGE: If you successfully find your opponent in a naval search, and that opponent is "surprised" by his own search roll, naval combat is then optional at your (the "surprising" player's) discretion according to the normal naval combat rules.

10.3.7.2 OPTIONAL: The attacking player in an air-to-sea battle may always choose to convert any specific final losses called for by the Naval Air Combat Table to enemy transports even though enemy surface ships of the specified target type(s) exist in the attacked enemy fleet. Specific results are applied to transports randomly, if more than one transport and combat result type exist. This represents the

extreme vulnerability of transports to naval air attacks and the difficulty of guessing which one has the best units on board to destroy.

10.5.3.4 CHANGE: Paratroops do not negate fortifications. They now modify them down to a doubled defense. CLARIFICATION: The attacker must still roll on the assault table when using paratroops against fortifications.

10.5.4 ADDITION: MAR units (not divisions) may additionally invade from the 1 section of the sea-box, but attack at half combat when so invading.

10.5.5.7 CLARIFICATION: No breakthroughs are permitted on the Pacific map since no hex costs only 1 MP if entered during movement.

11.4.1 ERRATA: In both editions, the Factory & Resources Chart lists Russia as having 15 factories on the European map. There are, in fact, 16, giving Russia a total of 17 on both maps.

11.4.1 CLARIFICATION: A production multiple of 1/2 is rounded down. This is tough luck for the USA and USSR while still neutral.

11.4.1 CHANGE (4th Paragraph): China's production multiple is raised from 1 to 2 after the Japanese have launched a major assault (see 11.3) or the Japanese capture and/or isolate one (1) Chinese factory.

11.4.1 CLARIFICATION (6th Paragraph): Major power's lending of resources means just that. Ie. "lend lease" resources must come from that major power's home country (which, for Britian, includes Australia, India and Canada) and **not** from "colonial" resources outside their home countries. Therefore, resources from the Netherlands East Indies could not be sent directly to Russia (unless, of course, they were Russian controlled).

11.4.1 OPTIONAL: Add 10 more US Resources (in either box) to the US total. These extra resources are to provide more balance, especially for purposes of Lend Lease.

11.4.2 CHANGE: Russia may increase its Infantry builds each turn by 2, rather than just 1 like other Major Powers.

11.4.2 OPTIONAL RULE: Set the gearing limit increases for Infantry at two per turn for all major powers except Russia, which can be increased by three per turn. This is a realism variant since Infantry is about the quickest and least technical unit to produce of all the various types.

14.0 CLARIFICATION & CHANGE:

If France is conquered outright by the Germans, its colonies become German possessions, including Indochina and New Caledonia. In this case, Japan may still take control of Indochina (**without a roll for American entry!**). New Caledonia is German for all purposes, however. (Good luck getting those resources to Germany, see 11.4.1 Clarification).

15.0 CHANGE: In all cases covered by this rule (Restricted Naval Movement), passage allowed for ownership of a hex (ie. Gibralter) only applies if ownership was at the **beginning** of the game turn.

15.0 CLARIFICATION: No Allied naval units (including convoy pipelines) may use the Panama Canal prior to US entry.

16.0 CHANGE: While neutral, if Russia attacks a neighboring minor country, she can use her surface ships on that minor country. At the war's end, however, normal neutral major power restrictions on naval movement apply, and any ships so used must return to their starting bases.

1-2 CHANGE 18.0 (iii): CVs making port attacks against surprised countries and major powers activate the attack automatically.

22.0 CLARIFICATION: Neutral resources which must be lent by this rule are retained by the lending country on the turn in which it is brought into the war.

1-2 CHANGE 28.3.2 and 28.5.2: In the production phase of the first turn that Germany and Russia are at war, Russia is not restricted by gearing limits (ie. Russia may build any number of units up to its production limit).

28.2.4.4, 28.4.4.6 and 28.5.4.4 ADDITION: If the Japanese launch a surprise attack on American naval forces stationed in Honolulu, on a roll or 1-3, the CV unit stationed there is "out on maneuvers" and uninvolved in the attack. It is returned to Honolulu and able to move from there immediately after.

28.3.1 (4th Paragraph) CHANGE: US entry occurs when Britian is conquered or at the beginning of the May/June 1942 turn. This arrival turn is subject to modification according to the US ENTRY MODIFICATIONS CHART (11.3), cases 9-23 applying, with each shift in status causing an entire game turn's advance or delay. US Entry action 7 is still considered to be chosen in Jul/Aug 1940; action 15 in Jan/Feb 1941; and action 14 in Jul/Aug 1941.

Texas Revolution (TR)
Designed by Dan Mings
Published by Ming Enterprises
11217 Henge dr., Austin, TX 78759
$12.00 plus $2.00 postage
Reviewed by Daniel Parks

Rarely do I come right out and say things such as this, but **Texas Revolution (TR)** is a must-buy game for any wargamer worthy of that title. I would call the game clever (but it is more than that) or very well done (but it is a little less than that), but it falls between the two, with the best of both evident. Well-engineered, it shows us the 1836 Texas Campaign of General Santa Ana against the Texicans led by Sam Houston.

TR covers the Great Runaway Scrape of the Texas Revolution, where Santa Ana and his troops crossed the Rio Grande, took out the Alamo and Goliad, and marched up to near modern-day Houston at San Jacinto, where Sam Houston and the boys ended the reality of a Mexican-owned Texas. A time period of roughly 90 days covers this campaign.

The game itself involves the Mexican forces working their way NE, attempting to catch the fleeing Texan forces and civilian refugees. The Texan player, with a wide drawl optional, must weather the storm, hold vital points to delay the Mexican army, pray for bad weather, watch out for the Indians, decide to torch towns and build up the reinforced Texas "army" to a point where the Mexicans can be taken on.

The Mexican player must storm or beseige (less costly in men, more costly in time) strongpoints, pursue the fleeing Texans, pray for good weather and not let the Texan forces build up into an army. Victory is ascertained by the holding of certain locations scattered on the map, killing specific units (Santa Ana/Texas Government), or controlling towns and refugees.

The game itself goes from company to regt level. Basically, the Mexican player has some large, powerful units (mostly battalions), while the Texans dance around with companies. The systems used in **TR** are all tried and true, though surprisingly a mixed arms bonus is available (mostly, but not solely, for the Mexicans). Panzer freaks will even be calmed to know that Over-runs are possible. Getting into the game is quick and easy, and this might make **TR** a good game to bring along new wargame recruits. Also, the rules are provided in Spanish, so you too can consult the Secciones del juego to find out about Marchas forzadas. Four mini games are included, plus suggestions on how to play a shortened game.

In conclusion, Dan Mings is to be congratulated on this game. So what if it comes packaged in a 3/4 inch flat cardboard box? Dan has given us a nifty slice of history that does credit to the hobby and himself. The game is great: a lot of fun, easy to learn and informative. There is a lot to do here without doing a lot. Highly recommended.

Hitler Turns Against The Soviet Union (Pt. 1)
The Overrunning Of The West (Pt. 2)
(History of the Second World War)
Designed by Nick Schuessler
Produced by Task Force Games
Cost: $9.95 ea.
Reviewed by Daniel Kane

Arguably, Sir Basil Liddel Hart's book series *The History of the Second World War* is the best of its type in illuminating how grand strategy, military tactics, national will and industrial capacity combined (or should have combined) to produce the results they did (or didn't) in World War II. Nick Schuessler and Task Force Games have tried to take the issues brought out by Sir B. L. Hart and make them the focal points for this continuing series of games, even to the scenarios being taken and numbered near directly from some of the chapters in the book itself.

What you get in each part is a 16" x 20" map, 108 counters and assorted game material. However, you only get all the rules (24 pages) in Pt 1, which is the storage box for the series. Part 2 comes as a bagged addendum sans rules. The scale is 175 miles per hex, monthly turns and army level units. The rules themselves are nicely organized and written with brevity. In fact, as errata and rules changes are generated, the individual pages can be easily removed and replaced with new pages. The maps are good, with 10 or so different terrain types called out and provisions for showing developed/undeveloped territory.

The game plays differently than most, with each army requiring a roster list (using grease pencil) of its internal make-up as well as the subordinate formations. The strength of the army must be calculated (use a calculator, please!) from the values of all the subordinate formations. Such things as battle losses, transferred units and replacements alter the strength and this calculation must be redone each turn.

Combat and movement are really one near-fluid step (**Next War, Trial of Strength**) which also allows a defender to choose a suitable defense (entrenched, counterattack, withdraw or hold) while the attacker can employ breakthroughs, encirclements or normal attacks. Resolution calls for indexing the tactics chosen by both sides and referring to the appropriate chart. Losses for both sides are taken care of as a percentage of damage done to the army strength. Somewhat strangely (or differently, take your choice) this current strength does not mean that one has lost any divisions, only that their strength is reduced (supplies, morale, capacity to wage war?). If the strength of the unit reaches zero, any more losses causes a reduction of manpower, ie:, actual divisional lossage.

Combat becomes a case of multiple attacks by the unit(s) on a specific target (several rounds of combat can occur per turn) until the attacker is satisfied, exhausted, or finished (you can force attacks, taking losses in manpower to accomplish your work. Plan on it, Russia). My games were more pushing and shoving, rather than killing and maiming, but the amount of killing goes up as the game progresses.

Eventually, **HSWW** will cover the entire world at war, a sort of very simplified **Europa**, that will come out in installments. With a low unit density, you won't "lose" many units in the mess, but this game does unfortunately tend to make generals into accountants, toting up scores and readjusting strengths. While one will become adept at the calculations over time, I feel that your "typical" counter pusher may decide that the action level is too low to bother with the game. Really, one should consider buying this game series not for any one game, but instead as an overview of the entire war. If done right, every major lesson should be brought forth for the game to interpret and try. Thus, **HSWW** is possibly a connoisseur's game more than a grognard's.

Europe at War

War at Sea and on Land

Europe at War is the latest simulation game from John Edwards and Jedko Games, that same team that brought you Russian Campaign, Fortress Europa and War at Sea. EAW's close kinship to the War at Sea (WAS) system calls for comparisons.

EAW comes in a bookcase box with a colorful 3-piece mounted mapboard, a four-page rules booklet and three counter sheets with lots of 3/4" and 1" counters (I forgot to count them before punching them out) and six dice. From the list of components alone you can tell that EAW is rather simple with a certain reliance of luck. This is true, but less so than you might expect.

Like WAS, EAW's turn record track leaves you guessing a bit as to what period of time each turn represents. Presumably since the Germans begin the game poised either for a risky sail across the English Channel or a full tilt invasion of Russia (as well as having Africa still contested), one can deduce that the game begins in the late spring of 1941.

The action in EAW begins, like WAS, with a consultation to the turn record track to find out what special events or occurrences will hapen this turn. US entry is on turn two, Partisans, V2 Rockets, and technology die rolls are all possible turn-start activities.

The movement phase follows, and is one of the most vital strategic aspects of the game. In each step, the Allies move all of their units, then the Axis. The first step is the moving of regular grunt infantry units (referred to as "troops") one area. This is followed by all convoys, then all other naval movement (and a naval combat phase). Armor units on both sides can then move one or two areas (if the first one was friendly

controlled), then both sides Generals or Leaders move. Finally, the Elite infantry and armor may be added to tip the scales of any impending active fronts. This cat-and-mouse sequence of play whereby both sides can raise the stakes for an area gradually is both exciting and elegant in its simplicity.

Following this is paratroop then aircraft commitment. Aircraft may be used tactically (as added troops in combat) or strategically, to reduce enemy production.

With both sides thus committed to their invasions, airborne assualts, bombing missions and troop allocations, the combat phase begins. Like WAS, you roll dice. Unlike WAS, it's not "lots and lots" of dice, but merely "lots" of dice. Each unit rolls one die, trying to roll a 'six' to "hit" the enemy. For every five units in the batle, the owning player may forgo rolling and take one "automatic hit," thus improving casualty probabilities by 16%. Even though you may have twenty units in a battle, a maximum of only six dice may be rolled, so players usually take all of their "auto hits" first, and then roll dice for any leftover troops.

Applying the hits to your forces is another vital strategic consideration in EAW. For every hit, one armor or aircraft unit is removed, or one die must be rolled to determine infantry/Leader losses. If the latter is chosen, a die is rolled, and a one through four eliminates one Leader. Sides without Leaders must retreat after a round of battle (otherwise it is optional to either continue or retreat).

Certain Leaders allow special advantages. Goering and Doenitz improve the Luftwaffe and Kreigsmarine respectively, when leading them. Patton, Rommel and Guderian improve the aim of tank units considerably. Ahukov and Dietrich lead the elite units of their respective sides with great efficiency.

There are even special units to round out the fun. British Home Guard, Axis

Allies, Siberians, plus all of the various elite forces, make for an enjoyable countermix as veteran gamer/historians tell the tales of these units in terms of EAW.

Following all this is, of course, production. At the beginning of each turn, the value of the control marker for an area is raised by one, up to a limit of three. This control level is then multiplied by an area's production value (two for Poland, one for Italy, four for Germany, etc.) to give that side's production points. Infantry and Leaders cost one point; armor and paratroops, two; ships and planes, three; and A-Bombs cost eight. If the German event roll gives them Albert Speer, the production multiple for Germany rises to four.

The bottom line for this game is that you'll have fun. Like WAS, it's something you get out with the old "beer and pretzels" or teach to beginners because, while the involvement and strategy is there making for a rolicking good game, the realism does not lend itself to being a very accurate simulation. If you don't have time for Third Reich, WWII, or World in Flames, a hoot and some die rolls over the Europe At War board are certainly called for. Enjoy!

TSR's WWII
A Diamond in the Rough

Reviewed by Ron Morley

TSR has recently released a grand strategic level game of WWII's european theater of Operations. For those of you who find **3rd Reich** limiting your style and **Europa** too large and complex this game could be the ideal choice. Just be aware that, as with most of our games, this one has its share of problems too.

As befits a strategic game of WWII in Europe there are many different things which players may do or try over the course of a game. The two 22"x34" maps and 800 counters give you a lot of play options. Along with the standard infantry and armor units each major nation has a selection of air and naval units available. Major nations are not limited to material which was used historically; the Germans can build the Graf Zeppelin aircraft carrier for example.

Each game turn represents a period of one month during which time players alternate actions such as strategic warfare and launching offensives. The order in which players undertake certain portions of the game turn, mainly during the naval and air movement phase, is determined by which side has the strategic initiative. This determination is made during the seasonal economic turns with the initiative going to the side or player with the most preplanned offensives.

Each monthly turn is divided into several phases, each of which may have several steps. The phases include Weather Determination, Strategic Warfare, Naval and Air Movement, Offensive Movement. There is also an Endphase during which various housekeeping tasks are accomplished. As befits a strategic level simulation none of these idividual steps of a game turn is overly detailed, yet the game has an excellent "feel" and players are always aware that a small mistake may spell big trouble in several months. Because of the physical size of the game and the inter-relationships between

phases — which can pose some interesting strategic and logistical problems — it is not unusual for each game turn to run an hour or so in length. This is not an afternoon's beer and pretzels game.

One of **WWII**'s major innovations is the manner in which combat is handled. Gone are the days in which all of one side's units are moved and combat is initiated against some hapless defender. **WWII** requires that far more forethought be put into any offensive action. Headquarters units must generally be used in order to launch a coordinated assault upon an enemy position. In itself this is not unusual. What makes this game different is that after you have declared an offensive, activated and moved any units which are a part of it, and carried out any attacks, your opponent may immediately reply in kind. This cycle of first one side and then the other launching offensives continues, during a month, until both sides have no unactivated units available, or mutual agreement is reached that there shall be no more offensives that month, or both sides run out of preplanned offensives and cannot afford to purchase any more.

If nothing else, this game gives players a good idea of how expensive war really is. The seasonal economic turns force players to make a variety of trade-offs and all the choices will not be comfortable ones to make. The German player especially will feel the economic pinch as the only way for the Axis to win the game is for the Germans to conquer and hold huge amounts of territory. Doing this requires buying large numbers of offensives and replacing quite a few casualties; both of these processes are expensive. Early in the war, until the North Atlantic U-boat menace is cleared up, the British player will also be faced with a number of uncomfortable choices regarding how to spend what little wealth is available. No country ever has enough resources to do everything that is desired; decisions must be made and how well

players do on the battlefield is directly tied to how carefully they spend their money.

As in the real war there are two areas of immense strategic importance in the game; the Eastern Front and the Mediterranean-North African theater. Unless the German player is very lucky, Russia will not be defeated militarily in this game. The trick is to hurt the Soviets badly enough that they cannot launch any meaningful counter-attacks until sometime in late 1943. If the Wehrmacht can push to a line running roughly Leningrad-Moscow-Stalingrad without taking serious losses, the Germans stand a good chance of holding sizable portions of Russia at the end of the game. While it is tempting to go for a quick kill against the Red Army during the early months of the war the German player must be very careful not to become overextended. In order to do well on this front both players must have a well developed sense of when to attack and when to defend — anything less will lead to disaster.

The Mediterranean-North African theater, while it will never have the glamour of the war in Russia, is the one area where it is possible to win or lose the war relatively quickly. It is important for the Italians to push the British to El Alamein as quickly as possible. Only here do the Italians stand a chance of holding their positions once the Americans join the war and start providing their British cousins with war material. After the eastern flank of the North African shore is taken, Malta must be invaded or at least reduced to rubble. The little island is in far too commanding a position to be left alone — only if its power is reduced may the Italian Navy seek to control the western areas the Mediterranean.

If the British player is not very careful early in the war in the Med, the Western Allies may find themselves spending most of the war fighting to regain a shipping route through the area so that England's economy can get going. It is vital that British forces not be pushed

out of the Eastern Mediterranean because it is very difficult to regain that area once it is lost. Without the extra economic points which Britain gains by keeping the sealanes between Alexandria and Gibralter open it will be very difficult for the Allies to launch an invasion of France or the Low Countries on anything like a historical schedule. Control of the Med is the key to a successful US-British strategy.

Unfortunately, as I alluded to earlier, this game is not without some problems. the mapsheets have a variety of minor difficulties and one major mistake; East Prussia is rendered as East Russia. Also, some areas of the rules show signs of insufficient or hasty development. If you should get a copy of this game be certain to send for the errata which is available from TSR. Some of the points covered by the errata are minor, but there are also some, such as the rules covering the Iraq Land Transit Box, which are needed before serious play can begin.

However, in spite of the rules mixups and omissions and the length of time needed to play this game I find myself drawn back to it time and again. There are so many things to try in this very playable semi-monster that I seriously doubt that it will ever collect dust on my, or anyone else's, shelf.

Axis and Allies
Lite War by Milton

Published by Milton Bradley
$20-25 at better stores everywhere!
Reviewed by W. A. Salieri
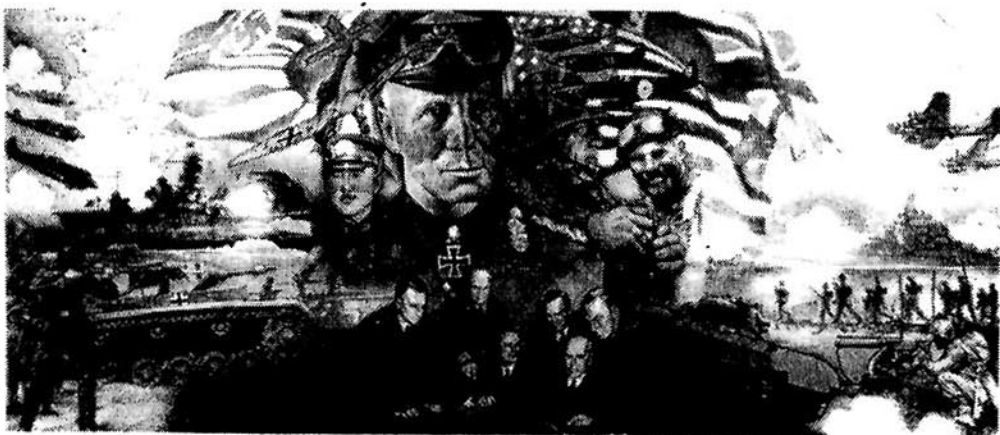
For all of us who grew up fighting World War II in our backyards with model soldiers, toy tanks and dirt clods as artillery, Milton Bradley has given us the new improved **Axis & Allies (A&A)** to play with. The packaging of this game is good (the cover is really nice), the rules are designed for beginners, the systems used to represent this greatest of wars seems on the surface to intermingle **Monopoly**, **Risk** and **Diplomacy**, and the whole thing, while fun for a game or two (or three), is most definitely **not** balanced evenly, being an Allied victory in the making.

One plays at this game with a load of Lite beer and pretzels handy. Players buy new units, move, conduct combat, place the new units on the board and collect money (rent?). Combat is simple. Each unit having an attack and defense factor. The little infantry, plane, tank, ship, etc. markers each get a die roll when engaging in combat, which means some of the fights in Russia will call for a whole handful of randomizers.

Strategy? Well yes, there are some strategies to keep ahold of. spending money on a combined arms approach is probably best, but since one can build factories (to supply armies) anywhere one has troops, ships are not a great buy after the first few turns. You can gamble and try for super weapons (jets, super subs, etc.) but you can spend a lot of money and still come up with nothing. As for factories, the Allies want to put them in wherever they send troops, period. Naturally, there are some great places to put them to destroy the Axis powers. For example, the US player starts with troops in China (!?!). Put a factory there and you reduce the chance of the Japanese fleet interfering with the build up of American forces in the Far East. No need to send reinforcements across the Pacific when you can ready-make them in China for less!

Frankly, once the Allies get troops across the ocean and established on the far side, the game quickly becomes a slide downhill for the Axis. To prolong the agony, the Japanese can get lucky and put a factory into Asia, thus negating most of the need for a navy later on, and there fore devote a lot of attention to the Russians. To forestall the invasion of the factories, the Axis must go all out for the kill early, using those tanks and bombers well, and get a victory, quick. Or else it is time to watch the factories pop up like toad stools and poison the Axis player slowly.

Now, if we want to get "serious" here, we could, as seasoned gamers, put a little balance into **A&A**, Here are some simple changes to consider. First, factories may only be built in the home countries (US, USSR, UK, Japan, Germany/Italy) or in areas that are pro-home country. This makes ships and shipping more important and makes the US player build ships to cross the seas and get in the war. You could even limit factories to just the home countries to make things even more "historical".

Next, the Axis player (or players) need a shorter game (as there is no turn or time limit to be found) to stop that long slide. Assuming two turns per year and making 1939 & 1945 a half year each, you can set the game at 12 turns. Allow the Axis a minor victory if they can control one of their capital cities by the conclusion of the 12th turn. This tilts the pro-Allied slant back towards an even keel. These are the major points, many other minor points could be addressed. (Example: the original **A&A** had elite troops like Marines, SS units and Kamakazis. Why not add some of them back in?)

Summing up, **A&A** is a good starter game and a knock-about game for the more seriously inclined gamer. It won't teach you a thing about WWII, but you will find it fun and it is available most everywhere where toys are sold. You might recruit some new folks into the hobby with it, or just while away those witner nights creating "perfect" strategies.

MacArthur: The Road To Bataan (MRB) Variants/Rules/Additions

Design by Jack Greene
For World Wide War Games (3W)
Operational study of the Philippines
Campaign Dec '41 to Jan '42. One 21" x
33" map with 300 counters, $9.95 in
Wargamer #44.
Variants by G. E. Smith

MRB is proving to be a good selling game for 3W, as it covers a campaign not done well before. However, there are some OB problems and design omissions in **MRB.** This short article will give you some more options for play.

USAFFE/Navy

Delete one P-35 unit. Only one served in the Philippines.

Add one A-27 unit. These are T-6 Texans that were modified for the export market as divebombers. They were sent to Manila after being seized from a shipment going to Thailand. Make a counter as follows: Starfing 0, Air Attack 1, Air Defense 1, Movement 45, Bombing 2. Base at Clark or Nichols. Only nine were present and they never did operate as a squadron.

The US Navy had Patrol Wins 10 stationed at Cavite and Olonsapo. It comprised 24 PBY-4 seaplanes in in two squadrons. Historically contributing very little to the defense of Luzon, the Japanese destroyed most of them and the rest were evacuated. Make two counters, each as follows: Strafing 0, Air Attack 1, Air Defense 1, Movement 75, Bombing 4. PBYs may only "bomb" ships and airfields. When one counter is lost thru combat, roll a 6 die. On a 1-4, the other counter must "evacuate" at the end of the US 3.2.5 sequence. Roll every turn until the remaining unit either leaves or is destroyed.

Note; the Corregidor airfield is named Kindley Field. Only P-26 or (maybe) P-35 aircraft may base there. Anything else is too large for this field.

Optional B-17 Rules

General Brereton was under orders to base all B-17 bombers at Del Monte field in Mindinao, once the field had been prepared. He never got the chance to move or improve. Assuming he had, create Del Monte on the Luzon Airfield Chart. It has two boxes, each a "B". No fighters can base there. B-17s may stage out of there to bomb Janapese units on Luzon, but may not attack Formosa. Reinforcing B-17s stage out of Del Monte to Clark as usual. You cannot overstack at Del Monte. Reinforcements are held up a turn if Del Monte is full up at the start of the 3.2.2 air movement segment. Assuming no improvements were made to Del Monte but that B-17s were moved there, allow one squadron to base there at any one time.

One squadron of B-17s was scheduled to arrive at Clark in December as reinforcements. Head winds delayed its flight two weeks and when the squadron reached Hawaii, it ran into the Japanese at Pearl Harbor. Assuming it left on time, bring it in as another reinforcement on turn 4. Delete one B-17 from the Pensacola Convoy.

Brereton wanted to bomb the Formosa airfields immediately upon hearing about Pearl Harbor. MacArthur and his staff vetoed any action until the Japanese made the first overt act in the Far East. Well, the first "overt" act noticed by MacArthur and his staff was the overt one decimating his airforce. Giving the situation some common sense, the US player may elect to bomb the Formosan airfields as a special "first action" of the game before any Japanese turn phases start.

The Japanese player arranges his aircraft per the rules on the fields. If the US player does attack right at the start, shift 2 columns left on the Bombing Table to account for heavy ground fog present this day.

US Army/Philippine Army

Two Philippine Army regts were sent to Mindinao from Luzon after hostilities broke out to bolster the defense there. Keeping them on Luzon would have been smarter, since there were not enough troops to cover all the approaches anyway. Make two regts, each of 1-4-5. Mark one as the 73rd Regt of the 71st Division, the other one is the 93rd Regt of the 91st Division. Stacking for both is 9. Start them with the rest of their divisions.

The rules call for the Philippine Division to be placed at specific points on the map. However, not all the units indicated in the rules as part of the division are marked with the PH sign. I would consider the following units as part or attached to the PH Division:

Inf. Regts: 31st, 45th & 57th
Inf. Btns: 43rd & two btns 26th Cav
Artillery: two btns 24th, one btn 23rd, one btn 88th & one btn 85th
Tank Units: 192nd & 194th
Engineers 14th
Trucks: 3 units

Place any units as called for in the rules, place the rest per 16.24, final paragraph.

For a more colorful mixture, you can add as reinforcements the "scratch" btn of Marines and sailors formed at Mariveles about Jan, 1st. Make the strength factors 1-2-4, stacking of 2, available turn 9 at the red dot on the Bataan peninsula. Mark them as M/S. Also, a "rest" of unemployed airmen was formed to put the manpower to use. Make the strength factors 1-3-4, stacking of 9, available turn 12 at Mariveles. Mark as U/A.

Hopefully, these changes will add to your pleasure in playing **MRB.** Players should remember that MacArthur "knew" where the likely landing points were and had disposed his forces accordingly. As MacArthur, the US player may wish to optionally keep the PH Division together as a counter attack force. Try the game with the Japanese making historic landings and the entire PH Division starting at Camp O'Donnell, with an air force that was not caught on the ground. This is an entirely plausible event and is a real test for the Japanese. Enjoy.

Why Tactics II Should Have Been Tactics III

by Larry Bucher

The center of the mapboard contained a large empty square which may or may not have had some game function. That was surrounded by several ranks of smaller squares, about the size of our customary hexes. All of this was ocean. On either side of the board were more squares of another color, representing each player's homeland. Two neutrals occupied the remaining sides, allowing the game to be four-player if desired. The playing pieces were metal ships, remembered distinctly, and some form or forms of land units — wooden blocke? The idea was to transport your army across the ocean and conquer your opponent's country while, of course, preventing him from doing similarly unto you. There were some cards involved, some of which gave you a "secret sub" on some ocean square. If the opponent moved therein you displayed it and blew him up. I received the game for Christmas in 1942, give or take a year. Its name was **Tactics.**

Before there was wargaming, there were war games. Another gift, a year or two later, was **Battlecheckers**. It should have been named Battlechess, being in essence a variant of chess using military pieces. The board consisted of circular spaces in a hexagonal pattern — picture the center of a Chinese Checkers board without the points and you've got it. The "pawns" were plastic foot soldiers. The most powerful piece was, appropriately, a B-29. There were two tanks on each side; memory fails on the others.

In 1945 (give or take two years this time) I found a dusty dark blue box, with a corner or two broken, on an obscure back shelf in a bookstore in Springfield, Illinois. It was marked down and, uncharacteristically, I had the pocket money to indulge. Its name was **Diplomacy**.

It bore no resemblance to today's **Diplomacy** and was more of the Monopoly family. Six or eight great powers had home spaces on a bridge across the middle of the board. As your playing piece progressed around the board edges, you planted your flag in an

assortment of lesser countries and colonies with resource point values: Spain, Mercury, 40 points; Congo, Lumber, 10 points. There were four strategic sites akin to the railroads of Monopoly: Singapore, Suez, Gibraltar and Pearl Harbor.

Tactics and **Battlecheckers** didn't really turn me on, but **Diplomacy** did. I spent countless hours with it — and with **Pigskin**.

Pigskin — more accurately **Tom Hamilton's Pigskin** — would, I think, be applauded today for some aspects of its game system. (Tom Hamilton was a Navy star in the mid-20's and Navy coach in the '30s.)

Each player had a number of cylindrical wooden "players", labeled with a star, a "2" (second-string), or an "S" (substitute or "scrub"). With the board set up, you could see the rating on the backs of your own players but across the line of scrimmage your opponent's men were uniformly blank. Offensive ability played no part in the game. You called a play at one of your opponent's men, he turned over a card and told you the result. As the game progressed you could begin to make some intelligent guesses about the strength of each opposing player. By there were complicating factors which allowed for subtle strategies. Substitution was allowed with some limitations, keeping you guessing. There were injury cards which would knock out a player of the opponent's choice for a while. You had exactly enough stars and "2's" to field a starting lineup with no scrubs. You could do this and take your chances on what happened when you had to place an "S" in the lineup. Or you could hold back a superior player or two, hoping that your opponent wouldn't discover the scrubs in your defense too soon. Then, when you had to replace an injured player, you could shuffle in the withheld star and enjoy your opponent's discomfiture as he tried to gain yardage against what he thought would be a scrub.

The game played amazingly well and yielded believable results, not the

scoring circuses or scoreless ties that were and are all too characteristic of poorly designed games. But I reserve my highest priase for one of Pigskin's components, a playing aid called a **Chart-o-Graph.**

The **Chart-o-Graph** was simply a pad about 10" x 10" containing a football field, much wider than the ordinary, with every yard line shown and ample space in the end zones. One team was represented by solid circles, the other by open circles. Using a variety of simple symbols (solid lines for running plays, double lines for passes, dashed lines for kicks, X's for fumbles, etc.), you charted the entire game play-by-play. I ran through the original 50 sheets and ordered replacements several times. It is invaluable in reconstructing and understanding a game, and the significant statistics can be readily calculated from it.

I used it not only for games of **Pigskin** but also to chart my high school's games and games heard on the radio; I use it to this day when I know I'm going to watch a game from start to finish. It became to me what the scorecard is to a baseball fan and I am surprised that neither the print nor television media have ever discovered it. You don't need a special chart if you know the system; any piece of lined paper will do. Turn it on its side and number the lines at five-yard intervals. See the accompanying illustration.

A recollection even dimmer than anything above is of a game I never played and examined only once. In 1962, during the wait cycle of a naval hurry-up-and-wait evolution, I found myself with plenty of time on my hands in Newport, Rhone Island. I spent much of that time in the base librarty, which had bound copies of the Navy's magazine **All Hands** going to way beck when. One contained, if not exactly a game, directions for making and playing a game. It was strategic in scope, worldwide, and surprisingly complex for its era. That was back before every library had a handy copier, alas. I remember scarcely any details, but

I believe natural resources were worked into it somehow. It would be of interest to wargamers, if only for curiosity value. If any reader has access to a library containing the magazine and is interested enough to .dig, I would recommend starting at about July 1941 and working in both directions from there.

Solid State kicks off to Open University's 41, the ball is returned to the 46. A running play gains three, Open is penalized five yards (double crosshatch) then has no gain and a loss (single crosshatch) of two on running plays. Open punts, Solid returns from the 42 to the 44. Solid runs for 11 yards but on the next play fumbles on the 47 and Open recovers at the 50. Open throws an incomplete pass then completes one to the 46, the receiver going to the 44. The next pass is intercepted on the 41 and Solid returns to the 46. Solid completes a three-yard pass, completes another for no gain, then fumbles on Open's 49 but recovers it on the 50. Solid's punt is then blocked, Open taking possession on the 41.
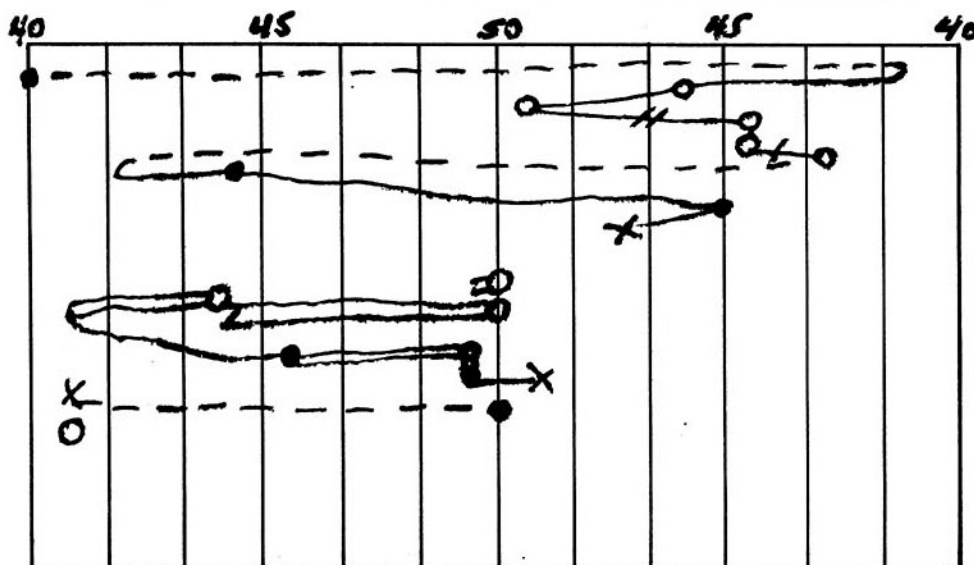
Mosby's Raiders
Solitaire Guerrilla

Reviewed by Gerard A. Palmer

Victory Games, Inc. has made a commitment to having a large percentage of solitaire games in its line, the latest of which is MOSBY'S RAIDERS. The game recreates Confederate cavalryman John Mosby's successful guerrilla campaigning against the Army of the Potomac during the Civil War. The designer, Erick Lee Smith, has adapted a system for the game which is quite a bit different from his successful solitaire design used in Victory's AMBUSH series.

As Mosby, the player starts out with an initial recruitment of 25 raiders (this rises as the game progresses) moving by area movement a la A HOUSE DIVIDED. He then attempts to sneak behind Union lines where he has a score of options as to how he will harass the enemy forces. This movement is over a 22" x 32" mapboard which serves chiefly as background since the only terrain which effects play is the Potomac River. The map as well as the counters are functional and up to VG's usual excellent graphic standards.

The object of the game is to harass the enemy to the point where he has to tie up troops in the pursuit and curtailment of your activities. As your success mounts you gain "notoriety points" for completing certain tasks. To advance to the next turn, a quantatative level of notoriety is needed after each turn, and also after eight turns in order to win. However achievement of short term goals is indeed a two-edge sword because as you succeed, not only is there a higher likelihood of you being found, but more and more bluecoats try to foil your operations.

The heart of the game is the decisions available to the player. The probability of success is largely dependent on the external help given by the "action cards". These may take the form of reconnaissance, added firepower, the ability to hide, or deception as to numerical strength. These aids help you to determine your most beneficial course of action.

Your options range from the demolition of bridges, supply depots and rail lines to kidnapping a Union officer and bringing him back to your lines. Points are also awarded for triumphs in combat. This is rarely a chosen course but most often defensive in nature. Also adding variety and flavor to the game are 60 historically-based random events, which either help or thwart your chances.

MOSBY'S RAIDERS fulfills two very important criteria in solitaire games; One, it doesn't play as if you are "administering" to the design and consequently the game doesn't seem to be playing itself, like many other one-player offerings—your options are many and varied. Secondly, it will not grow stale quickly due to "cracking" the design and finding a proven strategy. In fact once the optional rules are layered on, you will be hard-pressed to win more than 20% of the time!

If a challenging opponent appeals to your gamer instincts than this game offers one to you in the form of its design. I heartily recommend MOSBY'S RAIDERS to not only solitaire gamers but anyone who previously turned up their noses at them because of their general lack of depth, playability or challenge. A great design well worth its price!

Interview with John Astell, one of the master Europa series designers from Game Design Workshop.

The **Europa** series of games (on WW II in Europa) will, when completed, be the largest inter-connected game of its type ever conceived and implimented. No other company, even if it had a similar concept, is likely to be willing to devote the resourses, time and effort necessary to do the job right.

John Astell, along with Frank Chadwick, Marc Miller and Paul Banner, has worked to build, step by step and game by game, this series. It is not finished yet, neither in covering every front nor in producing definitive rules. GDW and John are constantly working to add, modify or delete rules to improve the entire package, not that this acclaimed system isn't great, but only that it can be better.

VIP:

John, we thank you for this opportunity to talk to perhaps the major **Europa** *designer/developer. Now that* **Torch** *is done, what's "officially" next? A revamped* **Unterschieden? Second Front?** *Maybe* **Battle for Germany 44-45?**

John:

Now that **Torch** is done, the next **Europa** project is **Scorched Earth**. This will pick up where **Fire in the East** left off (April 1942) and cover the Russian Front to the end of 1944. Look for tank and mech corps, artillery divisions, upgraded panzer divisions, partisans, and, yes, even the return of the Rudel rule. When? Sometime in 1986.

Second Front will follow after **Scorched Earth**; it's planned for release in 1987. **Second Front** will be a campaign game, a western front counterweight to the Russian front games. It will cover western Europe 1943-45. The game will start in mid-1943 with the Allies in Britain and

Interviewed for VIP by Gary E. Smith

Tunisia. Axis-dominated Europe lies before them: France, Italy, Germany (up to Berlin), and the nearby areas. Where and when to invade is up to the Allied player, whose goal is the total defeat of the Axis. The Axis must attempt to defeat the invasions, or, failing that, stalemate the Allies. I think it's going to be a great game.

Also in the **Scorched Earth/Second Front** design period, I hope to do a module on the naval war in the Mediterranean. It would cover the Italian Navy and part of the Royal Navy and would provide a naval campaign game that would mesh with the **War in the Desert** campaign game. (**War in the Desert**, for those who haven't heard, is the campaign game included in **Torch**. for those who haven't heard, is the

Also in the **Scorched Earth/Second Front** design period, I hope to do a module on the naval war in the Mediterranean. It would cover the Italian Navy and part of the royal Navy and would provide a naval campaign game that would mesh with the **War in the Desert** campaign game. (**War in the Desert**, for those who haven't heard, is the campaign game included in **Torch**. It links **Torch, Western Desert**, and **The Near East** into a single campaign game covering North Africa and the Near East from late 1940 through mid 1943.) GDW hasn't completely decided yet if this game will be done for **Europa**, but I think it will be.

VIP:

Seeing how far **Fight in the East** *has come over* **DNO**, *is a revamping of the*

entire **Europa** line contemplated? Where would you start? Why?

John:

Well, it depends upon what you mean by revamp. The first four Europa games (**Drano Nach Osten, Unentschieden, Nervik,** and **Their Finest Hour**) had to be revised. They were published when the physical quality standards of the hobby were much lower than they are now. Also, **DNO/UNT** did need redevelopment to bring the great ideas of the first **Europa** game up to their full potential and to revise the OB research. Three of these games have been revised, and the fourth (**UNT**) will soon undergo the transformation into **Scorched Earth**.

However, the other **Europa** games won't be revised. That is, the copy of **Fall of France** you bought in '81 will have everything you need for **Europa**. There will be some minor revamping from time to time. Currently, the rules to **Case White** are being brushed up. For example, the new air combat system will replace the old wave system. However, this doesn't qualify as a revision: **Case White** is playable with either rules set and gamers who already have **Case White** won't need anything at all from the brush-up to play **Europa**.

Also, when all the separate **Europa** games are completed, they will all be tied together by a module. (Can you guess its title? It starts with "E".) This module will include a standardized set of rules for **Europa**. So, in this sense, the **Europa** rules module will do any needed revamping for all the games in a single shot.

VIP:

With all these projects floating around, just how do you folks decide which one to focus on? Player feedback? Ease of research? Production costs?

John:

None of the above. There's no formal method for deciding. I think it's mostly a combination of what the designers feel like doing and how far the research has progressed. When both are ready, it's a go. There's also been a tendency to do games on the early period of the war before doing the late-war ones. Right now, the interest and research are ready to go into **Scorched Earth. Second Front** also is generating a lot of enthusiasm, and the research for it is under way, too.

VIP:

*Do you ever see the **Europa** Project as being finished? Or is there always going to be something to fix, improve or add?*

John:

Europa be finished? Well, yes! There are four big projects to go (before doing the overall **Europa** module) and some small ones. The big ones are **Scorched Earth, Second Front**, the naval war, and the strategic bombing offensive. The small ones include the Partisan campaign in the Balkans, the Russo-Finnish War (which will also cover the '39-'41 Soviet forces), a '45 wrap-up, and probably a Mediterranean naval module. After these, the overall **Europa** rules can be done.

Europa be finished? Well, no, it doesn't have to be. There's many possibilities for additional **Europa** material once mainline **Europa** is done. Scenario books are a possibility, as are alternate or variant rules. All this would be supplemental: **Europa** can be played with or without it.

VIP:

*Well I guess there's always the Pacific! Turning personal, just what does John Astell get out of helping create items in the **Europa** world? Aside from vast dollar quantities and public respect.*

John:

Personal satisfaction. I enjoy doing the research and learning new facts about World War II (among many other things). Sometimes, it's like solving a complicated puzzle: you have to piece fragmentary bits together to build a picture of what it was like then. I also enjoy turning this research into a playable Europa game. This involves working with the rules, building a working model of the significant events of the campaign.

While I work on many other projects at GDW than just **Europa**, **Europa** is the one I enjoy the most. I think the level of research that goes into **Europa** makes it almost unique in wargaming. For example, for many games, a designer simply finds out how many aircraft a side had in a campaign and then assigns generic air points to represent them. Sometimes, they are divided into fighters and bombers. In Europa, you have to find out how many of each model are flying and you have to rate each model individually. This sort of thing occurs in all aspects of **Europa**, from OB research through map analysis to rules writing. The end result is, I believe, games with a depth to them that you rarely find elsewhere. Thus, I get a real feeling of accomplishment when I finish an **Europa** game.

VIP:

How do your "non-gaming" friends view your line of work? Are they curious, supportive or do they look at you as some sort of curiosity?

John:

Almost everyone finds the idea of someone making his living by designing games to be very interesting: most think it must be a lot of fun. (Well, in many ways, it is fun.) I've come to expect many questions about game designing from people I meet; it's a subject few know anything on but many are curious about. While there's the occasional "You make money doing that?", friends and acquaintances don't regard my occupation as an oddity. I must confess that ones they do find odd are the people who actually play these games!

VIP:

When you get involved in designing/developing these simulations, what are you, John Astell, attempting to focus on? Historical accuracy is a given, but what else?

John:

The three things are accuracy, importance, and playability. They're all interconnected, as decisons that affect elements of one affect all.

Accuracy is a given, as you say. Total accuracy can't be achieved (especially in game anyone would want to play for enjoyment), but this doesn't mean accuracy should be ignored (as some designers have suggested).

By importance, I mean significance. What are the significant features of the campaign? Which ones are insignificant? The answers to these questions depend upon how complex the game is to be and the game's subject. For Europa, a high level of complexity is allowed. Still, this doesn't mean every event is included. For example, German mountaineers climbed to the top of Mt. Elbrus during the 1942 campaign in the Caucasus, but this doesn't mean that there'll be some sort of special rule allowing units to cross high mountain hexsides in **Scorched Earth**. This stunt simply is not significant for the game. I try to take "player overload" into account when determining significance. Fire in the East could have had a TFH style naval system, requiring a lot of attention on the part of the players. However, **FITE** focuses on the significant aspects of the campaign in the Soviet Union: the ground and air actions. The naval aspect simply isn't as important, so I tried not to overload the players with naval rules.

Playability is the other important consideration. Despite the level of detail present, **Europa** is fairly easy to play once the system is mastered. I think this is one of **Europa's** strongest points. Playing the game isn't work: it's fun. Many other complex games have ignored this point, and thus aren't around any more.

VIP:

*Has the **Europa** concept hindered/hurt GDW?*

John:

In a very real sense, **Europa** has made GDW, not hurt it. **DNO** was GDW's first game, and its success went a very long way in insuring that the Workshop survived its initial years. Still, I see the point of your question, but I find it difficult to answer. In general, it hasn't hindered us, as we've consistently done what we've wanted to do, such as other wargames, role-playing games, computer games, and rules for miniatures. I think **Europa** (and other complex games we've done) has slightly hindered GDW's full line of wargames. We do games at all levels of complexity, from introductory through master. It's often been difficult to convince gamers that some of our games aren't very complex.

The Skirmish Line

Reviews of Products for the War, Miniatures, and Adventure Gamer

Product reviews, however objective one might try to be, are exercises in subjectivity, personal prejudices inevitably coloring the resulting writeup. However, criteria can be established in advance to provide a framework and help keep a reviewer hewing to the semi-straight and approximately narrow. Accordingly, the factors which will figure into my evaluations of war and adventure gaming miniatures in this section of V.I.P. will now be discussed.

First will be conformance to the advertised scale. At the turn of the century William Britain established the height of his figures as being measured from the sole of the foot to crown of the head, the world according to the military miniature designer being populated exclusively by six-footers. If this was good enough for the man whose name became synonymous with the lead soldier, it's certainly good enough for me. Still, since each manufacturer seems to approach the matter of establishing a standard geight for his figures in a different manner, this datum will simply be presented for your information.

Accuracy of anatomy is the second criterion. Whatever consideratons might figure in setting overall height, there can be no valid excuse for getting the basic appearance and proportions of the human body wrong (with due allowance for adding bulk to the limbs to prevent their snapping at a touch) when we all have an example available for detailed study. The horse will also be scrutinized very closely, since it has been intimately associated with Manking throughout recorded history,

and is almost as easy to examine first-hand.

Third is the quality of sculpting, for this is the key to painting any miniature, regardless of scale or nature. Sharp-edged, clean details and moderately exaggerated folds and creases in clothing make the job of painting a figure as much of a pleasure as this time-consuming task can be. These can also make the difference between a comleted miniature on the shelf or unit on the tabletop and an abandoned project gathering dust in a drawer.

Fourth, and the most important factor in my opinion, is the accurate reproduction of costumes, accoutrements, and weapons. More information on these subjects is available today than at any previous time, ranging from rediscovered primary references housed in scores of libraries, through scholarly theses representing years of research on their authors' parts, to lavishly-illustrated popular books such as Osprey's Men-at-Arms titles and the Blandford Colour Series. Additionally, color plates by artists of the caliber of Lucien Rousselot, Eugene Leliepvre, H. Charles McBarron, and A. Rigondaud ("Rigo") are readily available and inexpensive, and once-rare collectors' items are being reprinted in reasonably-priced popular editions. Uniform errors are, therefore, as inexcusable as those involving anatomy.

Since unsupported statements are worthless, references consulted in the course of writing reviews of historical miniatures will be listed for the convenience of collectors and

manufacturers alike. Most of the books should be available from libraries, but if you want to add them to your own collection I should point out that not all are still in print. Some, in fact, are quite scarce, highly desirable, and generally carry a price tag which reflects this state of affairs, but one of life's little pleasures is prowling the stacks of used-book stores, searching for the unrecognized treasure. It **does** happen, and more often than you might think.

Now that the general ground rules for this department of V.I.P. have been established let us, without further ado, get on to...The Reviews!

- Robert L. Trimble

HAVE I GOT A DEAL FOR YOU!
CITADEL MINIATURES "BLOOD ON THE STREETS" ($10.00)

Just as Nature abhors a vacuum, the more perceptive gamer, whatever his (or her) interests, finds the sight of a tabletop barren except for masking-tape roads, a few bedraggled plastic trees, and a scattering of indifferently-painted figures equally distasteful. Fortunatley, a number of firms on both sides of the Atlantic have made it their mission in life to make such a sight, at least particlly, a thing of the past (lead, trees, and the like are the gamer's responsibility). Citadel Miniatures in England, publisher of the "Warhammer" fantasy gaming system, has just released its second supplementary scenario package, titled "Blood on the Streets," following up on "Bloodbath at Orc's Drift." (Horrible puns are a Citadel weakness, for "Warhammer"

includes a scenario titled "The Magnificent **Sven**;" that's really sick!) "Blood" is intriguingly subtitled "Archaic Architecture: Village Pack One," the inherent possibilities geing quite exciting.

The ten bucks spent on "Blood in the streets" gets you a dozen buildings, printed in full color on stiff card stock, the components of each color-coded on fold-down tabs used to glue .them together. all are in a "Tudor" style, with exposed beams and plastered walls, while roofs are covered with slate, all convincingly simulated by a first-rate printing job. The artist, Dave Andrews, has included a number of signs keyed to characters in the accompanying booklet, titled "The Riding" after a local area in the Warhammer countryside, and has indulged himself by adding a bit of unnecessary fraffiti plugging the product on a wall. The scale is nominally 25mm, making the buildings suitable for use with all adventure-gaming figures of this size. A bit of work with a fine-tipped Rapidograph or similar drafting pen and a good brand of marker or colored pencil will cover up both the graffiti and a few signs nailed to doors, enabling historical gamers to als use the buildings, which are suitable on their own for use ofrom eht Medieval period to the English Civil War and Thirty Years War. By studying Citadel's design techniques and copying later styles of architecture they could be supplemented with scratch-builts to provide an arena for Napoleonic battles.

Teh gamesmaster's booklet includes excellent assembly directions, keyed to some of the best drawings I've yet seen in a model kit, and if followed carefully (the first rule of model-building is **"Read the instructions!"**) a first-class job will result. While the card stock is failry sturdy to begin with, adding internal bracing and mounting the completed buildings on mat-board bases will insure that they will stand up to a great deal of use. Citadel has also provided alternate parts and included suggestions for adding external details such as smoke jacks, so with a bit of extra work you will have a village which will knock your eyes out.

"Blood on the Streets" presents the gamesmaster with 59 NPCs, each described at length and provided with a character profile for his use; more than that I will not say, to preserve the element of surprise. These are illustrated in full color on the booklet's front and rear covers, but to make use of them the covers have been cut apart, leaving the buyer with a vulnerable, and soon to be shredded, publication unless he tucks it into a folder for protection from handling damage. By combining these with the buldings from "Orc's Drift," which also coasts $10.00, you would have enough structures to make up virtually unlimited arrangements to supplement the trio Citadel provides for villages in The Riding. With more sets projected, it will not be long before gamers can lay out small cities in a matter of minutes equally suitable for use with dwarves, men-at-arms, and Old Guard grenadiers. Citadel Miniatures has done the gaming community a great service, and deserves both a round of applause and active support for its efforts. I wish the company the very best of luck with this venture, and look forward to examining future releases with a great deal of interest.

TABLETOP GAMES 15MM "PONY WARS" FIGURES
($2.85 PER SIX MOUNTED OR TWELVE FOOT)

UGH! KIMOSABE, THESE REALLY BAD!

When I was a young 'un, back in the days when The Idiot Box was only a novelty, the big treat was to go with my father to our local theater to see the latest Western, generally a black-and-white B (or worse) horse opera starring someone now unknown outside of "Trivial Pursuit." Over the years my fondness for the shoot-'em-up remained intact, so when Tabletop Games first began advertising its range of 15mm "Pony Wars" figures in the English magazine "Military Modelling," my interest was piqued, and I looked forward to a chance to examine them first-hand. Unfortunately, the opportunity to do so has arrived.

At present, the "Pony Wars" line consists of a dozen figures, cast and distributed in this country by Alliance Miniatures of Des Moines, Iowa, who must be held blameless for what Tabletop Games has done; however, I think they would be wise to drop this line like a bad habit and make arrangements to produce Freikorp's 15mm miniautres instead. I will not describe each miniature individually, aside from a brief description of its pose, since what applies to one applies to the entire series. I do not know who is really responsible for Tabletop Games' figures, but will refer to the deisgner throughout and trust that I ahve laid the blame at the proper doorstep.

What we have here are Generic Indians, lacking any identifying tribal features and apparently designed without benefit of research more extensive than a look at a little boy's Indian suit. All male Noble Redskins wear fringed buckskin shirts and trousers, although PW12 has shed his shirt to reveal countersunk nipples and a navel formed with the jab of a pin. The "whangs," as white trappers called the fringe of thin leather strips running along seams, defy gravity for the most part, standing out stiffly from the limbs. Four have saved up the requisite number of box tops and sent in their dimes, for they wear their Official Tonto Headbands, although none has stuck a feather in the back just yet. What look suspiciously like Masonci aprons are tucked into waist belts fore and aft, and hair styles follow no particular pattern. The chief is, of course, identified by his feather war bonnet, which has come to be the universally recognized symbol of the American Indian whether appropriate for a particular tribe or not. However, this example apparently consists of a fringe of hot dog buns, arranged to frame the face, lacks a crown completely, and reveals that its wearer is among the lucky foursome, for he has **his** headband (autographed by Jay Silverheels, perhaps?).

Taking the costume elements separately, the "trousers" are in fact separate leggings, tied to the waist belt with long leather things when worn. The aprons are an attempt to depict the nearly universal breechclouth worn by Indian males, a strip of leather or cloth

of varying width and length worn snugged up into the crotch, its ends pulled through the waist belt and allowed to hang to the knee or farther at front and rear. While the shirts are a bit too neat for clothing made from animal skins which varied markedly in both size and shape, they aren't inaccurate on that account. The war bonnet is, however, an exercise in rampant fantasy, taken from that Indian suit mentioned earlier. The designer is also obviously ignorant that the Indian warrior commonly stripped to breechclout and moccasins, and any
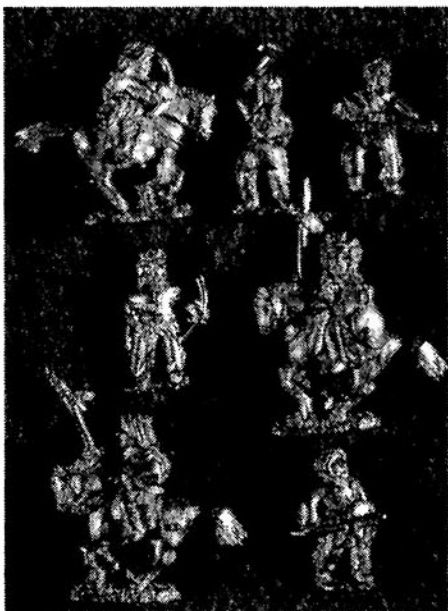
symbols of earned honors, before going into battle, to prevent debris being driven into wounds to cause infection. He has his people and periods confused as well, for the two figures armed with bows (PW2 and PW4) carry their quivers hanging from their belts, as though they were longbowmen in the army of Henry V, awaiting the French charge at Agincourt. (No letters, please; I know too.)

Measurement of bare-headed standing figures, both male and female, gives a uniform height of 16.5 mm, close enough to the advertised scale, and sculpted detail is both sharp and clean, but the figures are so poorly done as a whole that ease of painting becomes of no moment. Body proportions are those of a dwarf, with limbs which bend like spaghetti to accomodate a post or stratch like the eyestalks of a snail. The faces are the worst feature of all, corpse-like, with pits for eyes and gaping mouths. The horse presents Tabletop with an equal mystery, for

their concept of this creature is just identifiable as a quadruped, with a pop-eyed miniscule head grafted to a body with the proportions of a Shetland pony. The range currently consists of the following figures, and it is to be hoped that this marks its full extent.

Tabletop Games has not bothered to make a new line of soldiers to oppose its Indians, letting its American Civil War cavalry fill in; I would not have believed it before I saw them, but these figures are even worse than the "Pony Wars" line, with grotesquely oversized heads and torsos mated to minute legs. At least it can't be said that the company is inconsistent. One figure purports to represent George Armstrong Custer as a wartime general, but it appears to be clothed in fringed buckskins. In addition, large saddle bags have been hung on the horse and a scabbarded rifle stuck beneath the rider's right leg to allow its being alternatively used as a mounted civilian.
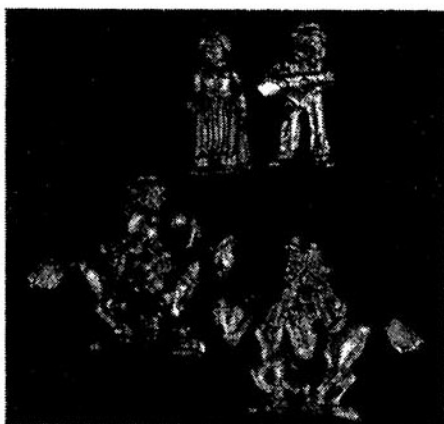
Fortunately, wargaming miniatures inspired by the Indian Wars of the 19th Century have not been exhausted as a topic, for a number of manufacturers appreciate this period's potential, and more reportedly have their own lines under development. The Old West forms an arena the equal of any for fanciers of the colonial era, and one which is, in vital respects, unique. Additionally, it does not require vast numbers of figures to play — no dusky hordes hurling themselves in human waves against the doughty Thin Red Line — making it practical to use miniatur~ in scales which aren't currently popular for war games. The possibilities are exciting, and no one could ask for a more spectacular stage upon which to play out scenarios.

In sum, while it would indeed be fun to spring ambushes, fight skirmishes

between raiding parties of hostiles and patrols of Texas Rangers or Army troopers in "dirty-shirt blue," or play out campaigns aimed at running recalcitrant Red-skins to earth and returning them to their justifiably loathed reservations. I plan to save my money and wait for something far better than Tabletop Games' "Pony Wars" figures to come onto the market. The only way these can be turned into anything worthwhile is to melt them down, cast the metal into little blocks, and begin cutting away everything which doesn't look like an Indian. Even if you copied Tom Ryan's Poohawks you could do no worse than the supposed professionals.

Anatomical abnormalities and grossly inaccurate proportions are the designer's responsibility, but there might be some excuse for costume errors if information on the American Indian was either scanty or difficult to obtain. Such, however, is not the case, even in a country as resolutely as England.

A WORD ABOUT SOURCES

A catalogue of the books and articles which have been written about the Old West in general and the American Indian in particular would be as thick as the average telephone book, and about as interesting to a non-specialist. The items which follow have been selected with a view to providing the collector, wargamer, or sculptor with enough information to answer his needs in adequate detail. The only difficulty encountered in putting this list together from my personal collection was in keeping the references down to such a small number in order to save space.

Anderson, Ray. "The Plains Indians." "Military Modelling" magazine. June, 1974.

Fosten, Donald S. V. "Plains Indians." "Military Modelling" magazine, June to October, 1975; useful bibliography included.

Foster-Harris; illustrated by evelyn Curro. The Look of the Old West. The Viking Press, 1955; reprinted by Bonanza Books.

Hail, Barbara A. **Hau,Kola.** The Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, 1980; exhibition catalogue, points out errors by Remington, Russell, Catlin.

Hassrick, Peter. **Frederic Remington.** Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1973.

Mails, Thomas E. **The mystic Warriors of the Plains.** Doubleday & Company, 1972; essential for the serious student of the Old West.

- - - - - - - - - **Dog Soldiers, Bear Mean and Buffalo Women.** Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973; study of Plains Indians societies, reprinted by Promontory Press, subsequently by Bonanza Books.

McCarthy, Frank C. **The Western Paintings of Frank C. McCarthy.** Ballantine books, 1974; not totally accurate, but spectacular.

McCracken, Harold. **George Catlin and the Old Frontier.** The Dial Press, 1959; reprinted by Bonanza Books.

Parker, Arthur. **The Indian How Book.** George H. Doran Company, 1927; reprinted by Dover Publications, 1975; Discusses face-painting for war.

Renner, Frederic G. **Charles M. Russell.** University of Texas Press and Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, 1966; revised edition, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1974.

Ross, Philip. "How to Paint the Horse of the Plains." "Campaigns" magazine, issue number 4, May/June 1976.

Steffen, Randy. "Indian-Fighting Cavalrymen, Part V: The Plains Warrior." "The Western Horseman" magazine, July, 1963.

- - - - - - "Military Uniforms in America, Plate No. 254: War Dress and Weapons of the Plains Indians, 1874." "Military Collector & Historian" magazine, Vol. XVII/No. 1, Spring, 1965.

Thomas, Davis, and Karin Ronnefeldt. **People of the First Man.** E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1976; Karl Bodmer's paintings, reprinted by Promontory Press.

- - - - - - - - - Thomas, Davis, and Karin Ronnefeldt. **People of the First Man.** E. P. Dutton & co., Inc., 1976; Karl Bodmer's paintings, reprinted by Promontory Press.

- - - - - - - - - Wissler, Clark. **Costumes of the Plains Indians.** American Museum of Natural History, 1915; reprinted by AMS Press Inc., 1975, with Wissler's "Structural Basis to the Decoration of Costumes among the Plains Indians," AMNH, 1916.

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

The only valid reason for passing up a book relating to a subject in which one is interested is that ol' debbil Money, or rather its absence, rent, bills and groceries outweighing even the most tempting goody (well, maybe not *the* most tempting) in the Grand Scheme of Things. Fortunately, the specialty press which caters to the needs of wargamers and military miniature collectors includes within its ranks several publishers whose stock in trade is the reasonably-priced, lavishly illustrated book on military uniforms and equipment. Leading the pack by a country mile is Osprey Publishing Ltd., an English company almost as a matter of course, which has just released its **169th** title, although the price **has** doubled over the course of the last fifteenBlandford Press Ltd. runs a remote second, and the Belgian firm of Casterman S.A. is so far back in third place that it can barely see the leaders' dust; keep in mind, however, that its output consists largely (perhaps solely) of the work of only **two** people, the team of Liliane and Fred Funcken, so it isn't doing at all badly. Almark Publishing Co. turned out a splendid, and extensive, line, examples of which can still be found in hobby shops and used-book stores. Taken together, these four companies are responsible for making more information on the subject of uniforms available today than could be found at any one time previously, present it with an unprecedented degree of accuracy.

The American Indian is no stranger to Osprey, although previously he'd shared center stage with the white man. Now, with the appearance of Men-at-Arms number 163, this situation has changed dramatically, and decidedly for the better. **The American Plains Indian** is a family effort, the text written by Jason Hook while Christa Hook jprovides line drawings and Osprey veteran Richard Hook the usual eight pages of color paintings. Jason Hook's task is the unenviable one of fitting an adequate survey of the Plains tribes' lives into only forty pages, with allowances for photographs and line art, and this he has done very well indeed. Richard Hook's color plates are beautiful, the obvious product of extensive research coupled with personal interest in the subject. Christa Hook's line drawings are excellent, and other artists would profit from a close study of her style. The only way in which the illustrations could have been improved, I feel, would have been by including a schematic depiction of tribal hair styles, these being one of the few ways in which the groups visibly differed from each other.

Mention Indians and the image which comes to mind is that of a blue-clad cavalry trooper, saber in hand, although his appearance owes more to the Western films of John Ford than to Army uniform regulations. MAA 168 should go far towards correcting this picture of the frontier soldier, **US Cavalry on the Plains, 1950-90** being the natural companion to the Hooks' book. The text is the work of Philip Katcher, who has established an enviable reputation as a writer on military matters, although he has seen fit to include the seemingly obligatory attack on Custer (of course, Yellowhair's partisans, myself included, feel it just as necessary to leap to his defense). Within the standardized Osprey format he has written a comprehensive outline of cavalry operations, including the Civil War; neatly summarized regimental histories for the Regular Army; and provided a survey of the average soldier's life on the frontier which will do little to inspire nostalgic longings for simpler days. Christa Hook again contributes the line drawings, one full-page illustration depicting the regulation arrangement of gear on a typical troop horse.

The color plates, which are always the heart of an Osprey book, are the work of a comparative newcomer to the MAA series, Ron Volstad. A professional artist, Mr. Volstad has done his research with exemplary thoroughness, a characteristic he shares with Richard Hook. Much as I like the styles of Angus McBride and the Fosten brothers, I must say that the team of Volstad and Hook has established the standards for all other artists to try to match. At $7.95 apiece, MSSs 163 and 168 are among the best bargains currently available, and I cannot recommend the pair of books too highly to any readers interested in the Old West.

(My thanks to The Last Grenadier, 335 North Golden Mall, Burbank, CA 91502, for making these items available for review; however, if the "Pony Wars" figures remain on the rack as they so richly deserve, the management may not thank **me.** I also owe a "Thank you" to Soldier World U.S.A., P.O. Box 175, Shrewsbury, PA 17361, for supplying examples of Tabletop Games' ACW range. Both stores stock an extensive selection of brands, and offer excellent mail-order service.)

— Robert L. Trimble

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RuneQuest Deluxe Edition

Reviewed By: Michael DeWolfe
Published By: The Avalon Hill Game Company
Designed and Developed By: Steve Perrin, Greg Stafford, Rudy Kraft and the rest of the Chaosium Staff
Price: $38.00
Complexity Level: Low
Rules Clarity: Excellent
Graphics Quality: Excellent

Runequest is the flagship of Chaosium's game line. This edition is published by Avalon Hill and greatly improves on the design of the previous edition. The components are impressive. The box holds an 88-pg. Players Book, a 60-pg. Magic Book, a 48-pg. Gamemaster Book, a 48-pg. Creatures Book, a 32-pg. Glorantha Book, a 16-pg. Player Notes, a 16-pg. Game Aids, a full-color map of Alternative Earth, and six high impact dice (2D20, 1D8, 3D6).

For those not familiar with Runequest, it is the fantasy role-playing game that uses Chaosium's tried and true system. Characters have seven abilities; Strength, Constitution, Size, Intelligence, Power, and Dexterity and Appearance. For each ability, you use a formula to generate a value. The formulas are defined by what race the player chooses to use. The range hovers from three to twenty. For those who favor point generation systems, there is one provided, though it is provided only for generating humans. There are some changes to the game system in RQ III.

First, POW is constant and spell use reduces Magic Points to enchant. Next, CHA ahs been changed to APP, so the ability represents beauty over personality traits.

Magic is somewhat different. The Magic Book starts with a section that discusses the psychologies around Spirit, Divine and the new Sorcery magic. Each spell is well explained. I really like the changes in this section of the game, but I wish they would include alchemy in the near future.

The combat system has not been greatly altered. The to-hit roll is a percentile roll against the attacker's weapon skill. The character has a chance attack and defend once per twelve second melee round. If the attack strikes its target and is not parried, then it causes damage. The damage hits one determined area (e.g. head, abdomen, etc.). The damage is set by rolling the prescribed dice. Combat can be very deadly, so it is also very realistic. The realistic system defers player characters from taking their swords to the first wise guy. A character cannot increase his Hit points except through raising CON. This way, you don't run into the D&D problem where a fourth level fighter can yawn off three armed orcs.

The greatest strength of Runequest III is the production and editing. The artwork is professional and in character with the section it is intended for. The layout work is impeccable. I only noticed one or two typos throughout the

308 pages of text. The decision to separate this game into five books is also good. The players at a game session can reach for the subject they need without having to wait as long. Examples are conviently placed. They estimated the places where people may get caught up. The best aspect of arrangement is concerning Glorantha. The designers listened to complaints about the second edition being a simple vehicle for Greg Stafford's world, Glorantha. So, all direct references to that world are placed in the fifth book, for you to use or ignore. Now Runequest is easily adaptable to your campaign world.

The real trouble I have with Avalon Hill's Runequest is Avalon Hill. Where are the supplements? Where are the revisions of old material? So far, I've seen only two supplements and one play-aid; both too expensive. Take a look at D&D, Traveller and Star Trek. Half of their success can be attributed to a multitude of support material. Considering the fact that licensers of products have the ability to control quality, Chaosium and Avalon Hill should license to the hilt.

This game is perfect for any role-player who enjoys adventure but not 'power gaming' (playing only to win). Runequest III is very easy to learn. I heartily recommend it to the most experienced gamer or to the inexperienced novice. Runequest III is a game that can't get any better.

The Sea Elves
A Complete Culture for Elfquest

Reviewed By: Michael DeWolfe
Published By: Chaosium Inc.
Designed By: Elizabeth Cerritelli
Developers: Unlisted
Pricef: $6.00
Complexity Level: Low
Rules Clarity: Good
Graphich Quality: Fair to Good

The Sea Elves is a supplement to the Elfquest role-playing game. It covers the culture of elfin sea-going tribes. The environment is a tropical archipelago that is filled with dangerous and interesting creatures. The package is a 48-page 8½" X 11½" book.

This culture pack expands and adds a new dimension to the entire Elfquest game. It centers around the concept introduced in "The Siege of Suncliff Island." The concept was that High Ones, fore-parents of the elfin race, escaped humans by fleeing into the sea.

The Sea Elves introduces five new magic powers specifically for sea elves. Two of these are based on the power Finding, and are so similar to the main power that they are redundant. The flora and fauna section is good. The nineteen creatures and ten plants are generally well done, but this section has a few too many mistakes. Surely the best part of this package is the scenario chapter. The three scenarios are different in some way from the others. The first scenario is short and simple and it can be used as an introduction to the other adventures. The second adventure surrounds the discovery of an unknown elf tribe. The third scenario details the same but gives it a very different angle. The caligraphy and perspective maps are well done. Wendy Pini's sketches are found throughout the book. Lisa A. Free's cover it very good; she adapted Pini's style to her own quality.

The product is not wihtout faults. The overhead maps are a disgrace. Typos are also not hard to find. For example, the character, One Arm, is listed as having lost an arm but both arms appear on the hit location tally. Better editing was needed for this product. Another problem is that no skills concerning boating exist.

Overall, I can recommend this supplement. It gives characters the room to move around; this room isn't allowed in a conventional setting. I think that Sea Elves is just the help that Elfquest gamemasters need.

UNEARTHED ARCANA
AD&D Expansion Book
By Gary Gygax

Published By: TSR
Price: $12.00
Reviewed By: Jeff Albanese

Well folks, the long-awaited expansion to the AD&D game has appeared, and let me tell you, you better hold on to your seats while reading it! UNEARTHED ARCANA packs a lot of punch for the price, with new character classes, new spells, new weapons, magic items, etc., all in 128 pages, and presented in a very logical order.

First off, let us start with the changes to the players. Comeliness (beauty) has been added as an attribute. I guess people were not happy using Charisma to determine looks. However Charisma does affect a character's Comeliness score, as well as one's race. Unless one has a high score, this stat should not affect the play of the game.

However, there are enough changes to affect play. To start off, the non-human races have been broken down even further, depending on what race they are. For example, there are six types of Elves, three types of Dwarves, and two types of Gnomes, besides the good old Half-Elf, Half-Orc, Halfling, and Human. Also, the level and class limits have been changed, thereby allowing them to reach new levels and classes. A rule to note on page nine, is very interesting. It says that a character can exceed the level limit by two if the character is single-classed and if the character could be multi-classed. This new rule and the others should end some of the gripes of non-humans being too limited, but knowing some people, they will never be happy.

Before I turn to the new character classes, new weapons and armor have been added to the game.There is a new chart showing what each character can use. There is also a change in alignments for certain classes. For example, Thieves, (along with its new sub-class, the Acrobat) no longer can be Neutral Good. The Cavalier must start out good, but can change its alignment later on. The Barbarian can be of any non-lawful alignment.

Some of the changes effect old classes. For example, the druid can now reach 23rd level. Fighters and Rangers now have weapon specialization. This rule should be looked at carefully by all DM's before they use it. Specialization can lead to super-fighters, so be careful. Rangers may now use their level to help their tracking abilities, something which should have done in the beginning. Speaking of Rangers, the "Giant Class" monster list has been put together from all three monster books, to give DM's an aid to what belongs in that group. Also, the types of weapons a Ranger must start with are stated. Finally, the Paladin is now a sub-class of the new Cavalier class.

Three new character classes have been introduced to the game. They are the Cavalier, the Barbarian, and the Thief-Acrobat. The Cavalier is AD&D's version of the knight in shining armor. And let me tell you, this guy is bad news. To start with, he/she gets gains bonuses to hit with certain weapons, going up to a +3 with 3 different types of weapons. He/she also attacks 5 levels higher with their "weapons of choice", reaching up to 3 attacks a round at 16th level. Cavaliers are also immune to fear, and have a 90% resistance to mind-affecting spells, or spell-like affects. Other abilities are included, but one of the most gross ones is the ability to raise one's stats (Strength, dexterity, constitution) when they go up levels. This is done by rolling percentile dice each time, reaching a high of 10/00. The Cavalier has one minor and one major drawback/weakness. The minor one is that they cannot use missile weapons/pole arms/two-handed swords, or wear non-metal armor. The major one is that in battle situations, they must charge the most powerful monster opposing them, regardless of anything else. This is to reflect their code of knighthood. A word to all DM's: use this one to its fullest effect, and it may give many the hint that they may not want to be Cavaliers, because let's face it, they are very powerful, and with the Paladin a sub-class of them, the Paladin gets the same abilities as a Cavalier, which now makes them more

gross than they already were in the first place.

In the case of both Cavaliers and Paladins, these classes should not be commonplace characters, as some games will have them. They should be limited in their numbers, otherwise the game will favor those players.

If you thought that the Cavalier was gross, you will think that the Thief-Acrobat is a wimp. When reaching 5th level, a character with the right stats may opt to become an Acrobat, even though I see no real reason to do so, other than having an edge in city adventures. The acrobat stops learning regular skills of a thief, and begins learning the following:

Tightrope Walking
Pole Vaulting
High Jumping
Broad Jumping (Standing/Running)
Tumbling (Attack/Evasion/Falling)

Also, the Acrobat can carry additional weight without effecting him/her. But what it looks like to me is that they took some of the skills that a monk should have and gave it to the Acrobat. The Acrobat has replaced the Illusionist as the least powerful character in the game.

Now turning the last of the new character classes, but certainly the most powerful, the Barbarian. This one is a walking, talking, killing machine. (I mean) it is grosser than the Cavalier, and in the UNEARTHED ARCANA they made it more powerful than it was in the DRAGON, where it was first brought out. Besides all of the abilities they first gave it, the Barbarian may now use magic items when it increases in levels, and use magic weapons at 4th level! They get 12-sided dice for hit points, and gain +2 hit points for every point of constitution over 14. Therefore, an 18 constitution would get a bonus of +8, resulting in a possible 20 hit points per level, up through the 8th level! The Barbarian also gains a defensive adjustment of -2 for each point of dexterity above 14, with a possible -8 if the character has a dexterity of 18! However, this bonus only applies if the Barbarian is wearing non-bulky/fairly bulky armor, in which case only -1 per point of dex is given.

Other abilities given to the Barbarian are: hiding, climbing, surprise, detect magic/illusion, first aid, saving throw bonuses, and the one which at first

made sense, but now with Barbarians able to use magic weapons, makes them bad news, is the ability to attack, depending on the level they are at, monsters that need magic weapons to hit. This ability starts at +1 at 4th level, and works up to +5 at 12th level. This power allows Barbarians to attack just about anything in the game system.

To sum it up, a Barbarian is **GROSS!** The addition of them into any game will require (I hope!) serious thought by the DM. A Barbarian is very nasty, and can easily beat a fighter of equal level without any problems, whatsoever. A Cavalier vs. a Barbarian would be an interesting fight, however.

Turning to the other additions for the players, which are the new armor, weapons, spells, and magic items, I will not discuss each and every one of them, for that is not the purpose of this review, nor do I have the space for such talk. However, some will be brought up. For example, every magic-user is waiting to use Chain Lightning, a spell that allows you to play pinball with the monsters. Chain Lightning is what most mages think Lightning is right now. And for you fighter-types, how about a +5 **AND** a +6 Defender swords, and a +6 Holy Avenger for all you Paladins out there? Let's face it, +5 weapons (The +5 Defender is already in the DMG.) should be the max, and even that's pretty gross. These are some of the new "toys" for everyone to play with.

A couple of rules that missed the DMG are in the new work. They are spell books and the acquisition of Illusionist spells. Both of these will clear up any problems that exist in your game. Also, the cost of non-player characters to throw magic-user/illusionist spells is outlined on page 80.

But something that I am not thrilled with exists on page 74. This is method 5 on how to roll up characters. This method allows the player to pick the class first, and then roll the dice, instead of the other way around. And the amount of dice that they say to roll is crazy! For example, why does a thief need to roll 9 dice for charisma? Or 6 dice for strength? Let's face it, this system will produce super-characters with 16+ stats. Gone will be the days of the character with average stats, which made the game more interesting for everyone involved.

But enough. I bet you are all waiting to see what I, someone who has been playing D&D/AD&D since its start, has to say about the UNEARTHED ARCANA. Well, I think it's a pretty good piece of work, aside from the high-powered characters and items. One must take the Cavalier, the Barbarian, etc. into careful thought before using them. But the introduction of the new armor, weapons, spells, etc. will add flavor to the game and new choices for everyone to make.

Gygax and company have put together a lot of material under one cover. And this material, like the rest, can be used in its entirety, or in bits and pieces, as is the case of many games. It is well-written, laid out in an order that makes sense. But a word of warning: use the material inside at your own risk. UNEARTHED ARCANA is worth the $12.00 price tag. Enjoy it, and use it as you see fit.

Solitaire Cthulhu
Being Alone Can Be Fun

by Lisa Cohen
Publisher: Chaosium
Designer: Glenn Rahman
Authorized: by Arkham House
Complexity level: Moderate
Rules Clarity: Excellent
Graphics Quality: Good

This is the first Call of Cthulhu solitaire module which is about an excursion to Canada to discover the strange happenings in North Hanninah. The game comes with two fold out player characters (you pick to be either the male or the female character), four pregenerated non-player characters, skill workspace area, two new skills which are woodcraft and Hanninah mythos (which does not effect sanity) and information about healing, swimming, physical shock, and sanity. The player provides the percentile dice, eight sided die, four sided die and a six sided die. There is also information about bringing in your own player character instead of the pre-rolled ones.

Against the Wendigo is a great Cthulhu module, let alone solitaire module. This is the first of its kind and, being one who has experienced many solitaire systems, this module

surpasses its contemporaries. The system is clear cut and logical. The instructions are understandable and I expecially like the way a player can trace their path through the module. At first, keeping track of everything can get confusing, but eventually the player gets used to it. The point system is grand and players gain Hanninah mythos points, which decides how well you play, even if they should die in the end.

Player interaction in the game is not just reading exceptional Lovecraftian style descriptions. It also entails getting physically into it because it is so fast paced and heart stopping that you might catch yourself babbling out loud! I love how the first layer starts off with that 1920's quaint type of horror. But people will soon realize that the supernatural does not stop there. The unthinkable will happen. Most solitaire systems can only be played once, but this system can be played over and over again with the same amount of enjoyment.

It was hard deciding whether the game level was moderate or high. I was at first weary of the adaptability, but the real concern is the reading. If the player has not played Call of Cthulhu or is not interested in H.P. Lovecraft's (for who the game is modeled after) short stories, then this game is not for them. First of all you have to have played Call of Cthulhu before (it does tell you places where you can read to refresh your memory), but the actual reading is something else. The paragraph descriptions are the way a true Lovecraftian would write. It has very long words and exact descriptions. A person not interested in this may find it boring and have no will to continue the game.

The cover art publicity by Dan & David Day, was attractive. It's an eye catcher and the back really explains what the game is all about. It makes a person really want to look inside. Once inside, though, the art gets sexist. It shows girls being captured or tortured and their "proportions" usually exaggerated. I think we can ask for a bit more taste in the future. Thanks guys.

In all, the game is excellent. I would recommend it to all Call of Cthulhu players and anyone who loves reading H.P. Lovecraft's short stories. It is worth the price. If you love the macabre, the mysterious and think the curious cat is still alive, then play!

Conan RPG
I expected less.

By Bob Kindel
Published By: TSR, Inc.
Designed By: Kim Eastland
Developed By: Anne C. Gray (CN1 only)
Price: $1.98 each
Complexity: Moderate
Clarity: Excellent
Graphics: Excellent

The first modules offered for TSR's CONAN RPG are set in the years before Conan was a king. They are designed for use as part of a continuing campaign but can also be played independently. Each 32 page adventure has a removable cover that unfolds to 11½" X 24" with a full-color outside and maps inside. The adventures are designed for the CONAN RPG — a fact that a casual shopper may miss since TSR also makes Conan adventures for AD&D. The fact that "the Dungeons and Dragons Game" is mentioned twice on the front cover may abet such an error.

Conan The Buccaneer (CN1) is a pleasant change from the "Go to room 1-A, fight monster 6 and get treasure K" type of work that still manages to plop onto gamestore shelves occasionally. I admit that I originally saw these modules (as well as the entire CONAN game system) as yet another attempt to milk the Conan name for a few more bucks. Maybe it is, but the designers of these adventures (and, for that matter, the game) give value for the money.

This is an adventure designed to accommodate role playing. The author gives us a classic Conanesque tale — a deserted island with an ancient evil, bizarre monsters, an arcane cult, a ruined city — a history, and an ecology. Each of the six pre-generated characters are given different reasons for exploring the island. These different motivations and goals can serve as a springboard to role-playing. If the players opt to generate their own characters, these characters can be given the motivations fairly easily, especially in a beginning campaign or one shot adventure.

The new cult, monsters, and magic items provided can be used later in the campaign. The island itself could serve as a base for future adventures once the evil is cleansed (if the party succeeds) and the city is repopulated. In short, the adventure facilitates both role-playing and continuing campaigns.

The cover art by Clyde Caldwell has Conan attacking a sea serpent while a scantily-clad female cowers. It's a competent work but nothing special. The interior art by Jeff Butler and Sam Grainger consists of clear, crisp drawings that illustrate various monsters and/or scenes the party will encounter. They are nicely descriptive and several steps above the sloppy artwork that can be found in many games and modules.

WELL, after the party finishes on the island — where next? TSR would like the answer to that to be CN2, Conan the Mercenary.

Players in CN2 are again given differing amounts of information and the GM is provided with suggestions to help role playing. While the adventure is designed to follow CN1, it can be played independently of that adventure. The party is channelled by means of dreams, notes, and a guide belt to get them moving. And then, it's down into the labyrinth to explore, to battle strange cults and bizarre beasts. Somehow, it fits. Such things were mainstay of Howard's Conan novels. That Conan occasionally finds himself in a room to room search of an underground area fits. The role playing material mentioned earlier serves to keep this adventure on a higher plane that the "choose a leader and he/she will call the shots for everyone" type of hack and slash dungeon.

The cover art by Larry Elmore is more along my conception of these adventures. While Conan battles three masked warriors, the scantily-clad woman with him doesn't draw back. Her sword is as bloody as his ax. Jeff Butler's interior artwork is, again, crisp and descriptive.

Of the two adventures, I prefered CN1. Taken individually or as a unit, the adventures are worthwhile — expecially to a GM who wants to get a CONAN campaign started. The material provided expands the game, gives the GM places to base recurring adventures, and provides several sessions of enjoyable gaming. Enjoyment is the key. So grab your ax and get moving. CONAN needs a few good gamers.

The Mad Scientist
A Villians and Vigilantes Adventure
by Jack Herman

The explosion could be heard throughout downtown Houston and some say as far away as Jacinto City. When the police and emergency vehicles hit their sirens, an enormous cloud of smoke was visible curling upward from the building that headquartered Houston's famous Parascience Institute. All of them rushed to the scene...

The next day the players were contacted by the Institute and called in on the investigation. Fortunately, only the top three floors of the Institute were destroyed, containing mostly administrative rooms and offices. All of the dangerous and expensive equipment was stored in the underground levels.

The place is crawling with police, reporters, reconstruction workers and FBI personnel. The players are escorted to a temporary office being used by the Associate Director of the Institute, a Doctor Carl Silverhead. A federal agent talks with him and both stand and introduce themselves as the players enter.

Dr. Silverhead looks very academic and speaks with extended inflections and exaggerated gesticulations.

"Last night a bomb was detonated here in the Institute. It was meant to serve as a cover for a serious break-in. Nearly a dozen restricted files containing valuable research records were stolen..."

"Including the plans for the Pulse Weapon Fighter that the Institute is working on for the Pentagon." the FBI man interrupts.

"Yes," says the Doctor, "but most importantly, the thief got his hands on the Electrochemical Expotentializer. The device that is the basis for nearly all of our work here at PI."

No matter how the players may prod Dr. Silverhead, they will not be able to get him to tell them exactly what the Electrochemical Expotentializer is, or what it does.

"We know who's responsible for this,"

the Federal agent pipes in. "Doctor Bennet Morrow, a former employee of the Institute." He hands the players a photograph.

"Our files on him are extensive. He is a twisted genius torn between two extraordinary talents - Excellerated Particle Physics and Crime. He had been in a mental hospital but was released under the Institute's supervision. Until recently things were fine. Then, due to a series of outbursts, the Institute had planned to ask for Morrow's resignation. Of course that meant his return to the asylum. Then last night happened.

For the last 24 hours we've been completely unable to locate Doctor Morrow. He lived in a permanent guest room here in the building, but that was destroyed in the explosion."

"Since then," Dr. Silverhead says, "everyone, and I mean everyone, is looking for him - police officers, private detectives, FBI agents, insurance investigators, doctors from the asylum, reporters. Frankly, I feel that all they will do is get in each others' way. I want someone looking for him who actually has a chance to find him. That's why I've had you called in."

The FBI man loudly clears his throat, "Not much is known about Morrow's private life since joining the Institute. We do know that he always manages to maintain some sort of contact with the Underworld."

"We also know one of his hangouts." says Dr. Silverhead sniffing loudly, "A place called the Cafe Angst. He invited me there once. I didn't like it much. Not my kind of Place."

THE CAFE ANGST
The place is a cowboy-punk bar. The players can hear strains of "I Am the Hungry Wolf" by X being played on a loud jukebox as they approach. The moment the players walk in the door they know they're in trouble. As they look around inside, they see at the bar, on the dance floor, and seated at tables

are an assortment of the most dangerous super-villains on Earth. (These should be a mix of Arch-Enemies of the players, villains taken from V&V adventures, comic books and/or altogether new bad guys that the players have never seen before.)

It would appear that all these super-criminal types are just here for the drinks, music and conversation. When the players walk in, everything in the place screeches to a halt and, in an instant, all eyes are on them. There is dead silence. If the players leave, there will be no trouble. If the players stay and make no threatening action, after a few seconds the music will start up and the place will once again fill with talk and activity. Occasionally the players will hear someone mutter a few unkind words under their breath and the players can feel the stares on the backs of their necks.

Sooner or later they will encounter Brickibrak, either at the bar, on the dance floor or at the table next to any of the tables that the players choose to sit down at. They cannot avoid him.

The moment they acknowledge his presence he will work the phrase "I could smell you ugly suckers coming a mile away" into the conversation and demand that they leave because he doesn't like their kind. If the players ignore him, Brickibrak will continue to taunt them (much to the amusement of everyone else in the bar) until they respond with violence or another comment of their own. Either will be enough to provoke Brickibrak and, in a moment, his gang, "the Toughs," are at his side. No one will be willing to listen to reason.

The other patrons of the bar will stay out of the fight at first and will be simply content to watch. But the violence is contagious. Soon they will all be shouting, cheering and jeering at the top of their lungs. Slowly, they begin pushing and shoving one another. If the players do not quickly finish up their grudge match with Brickibrak, it

will rapidly escalate into a full blown brawl.

Brickibrak

Identity: Ronald Brikowski

Side: Evil	Sex: Male
Age: 23	Level: 5

Powers:
1. Heightened Strength: +18
2. Invulnerability: 15 points.
3. Heightened Expertise: +4 to Hit with fists.

|	
Weight: 260 lbs.	Basic Hits: 6
Agility Modifier: −2	Strength: 37
Endurance: 18	Agility: 11
Intelligence: 8	Charisma: 16
Reactions from Good: −2	Evil: +2
Hit Modifier: 5.544	Hit Points: 34
Damage Mod.: −1	Healing Rate: 3 per day
Accuracy: −	Power: 74
Carrying Capacity: 6819 lbs.	Basic HTH: 2d8
Movement Rate: 66 inches ground	
Detect Hidden: 6%	Detect Danger: 11%
Inventing Points: 4	Inventing: 24%

Brickibrak
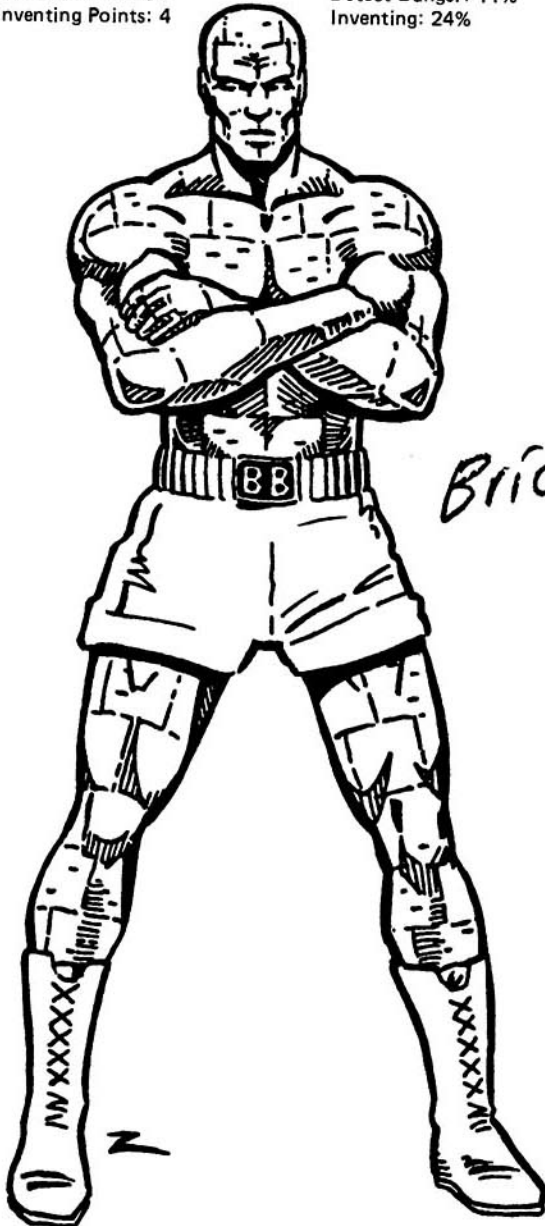
Origin & Background: Ronald Brikowski is an American with a background as a boxer and a railroad yard worker. He is currently wanted and has a criminal record.

Brawl Event Table

(Roll a d6 once per missed attack and then once again during every between turns phase for each brawl taking place.)

1. Opportunity Weapon (player-heroes)*
2. Opportunity Weapon (villains)*
3. Missed attack hits a bystander and starts another (unrelated) brawl.
4. Two grappling brawlers throw each other through a wall/floor/ceiling/window (players involved if it will make the fight more interesting).
5. Roof caves in/floor collapses/wall buckles under/fire (GM's choice).
6. Innocent Bystander interferes (bartender, villain's girlfriend, etc.).

*(This could be an empty bottle sitting on the table, or it could be the table! A live power cable could be sticking up from the torn out floor or whatever. If the players receive an Opportunity Weapon the GM should make it available to the player who seems to need it the most. If the villains get one, give it to the very next villain who has an action.)

The object is to keep enough "peripheral" things happening to prevent all of the villains from simply swarming the player-heroes and tearing out all of their internal organs. But, at the same time, the GM should keep a few villains free to keep the action going if the players win so easily that it levels any dramatic effect.

If all the players are defeated they are dumped out back in the alley with the rest of the trash. If the players win, the majority of the villains involved in the brawl will continue to beat each other senseless. The rest simply retreat.

Questioning Brickibrak will reveal that he knows Doctor Morrow very well. When he saw him last (yesterday night), the Doctor had said something about spending the weekend over at his girlfriend's house. He can even provide the address.

Toughs

The Toughs

Name	Sex	Hits	Power	Agility	Move	Damage	Accuracy	HTH	Weapon
Gene	M	9	65	15	46"	+1	+2	1d6	Bullwhip
Paul	M	8	57	14	39"	+2	+1	1d6	Electric Drill
Ace	F	7	55	16	42"	+1	+2	1d6	Fencing Foil
Peter	M	8	50	13	40"	+1	+1	1d6	Taser
Eric	M	8	56	15	41"	+1	+2	1d6	Burning Torch
Vinnie	F	7	49	14	39"	+2	+1	1d6	Brass Knuckles
Mark	M	8	52	15	47"	+1	+2	1d6	Crossbow

Weapons:
Bullwhip: 3" range, HTH +3 to Hit, HTH +1d4 damage.
Electric Drill: HTH +2 to Hit, HTH +1d8 damage.
Fencing Foil: HTH +2 to Hit, HTH +1d6 damage.
Taser: 2" range, HTH +2 to Hit, successful hit causes unconsciousness. 1 shot.
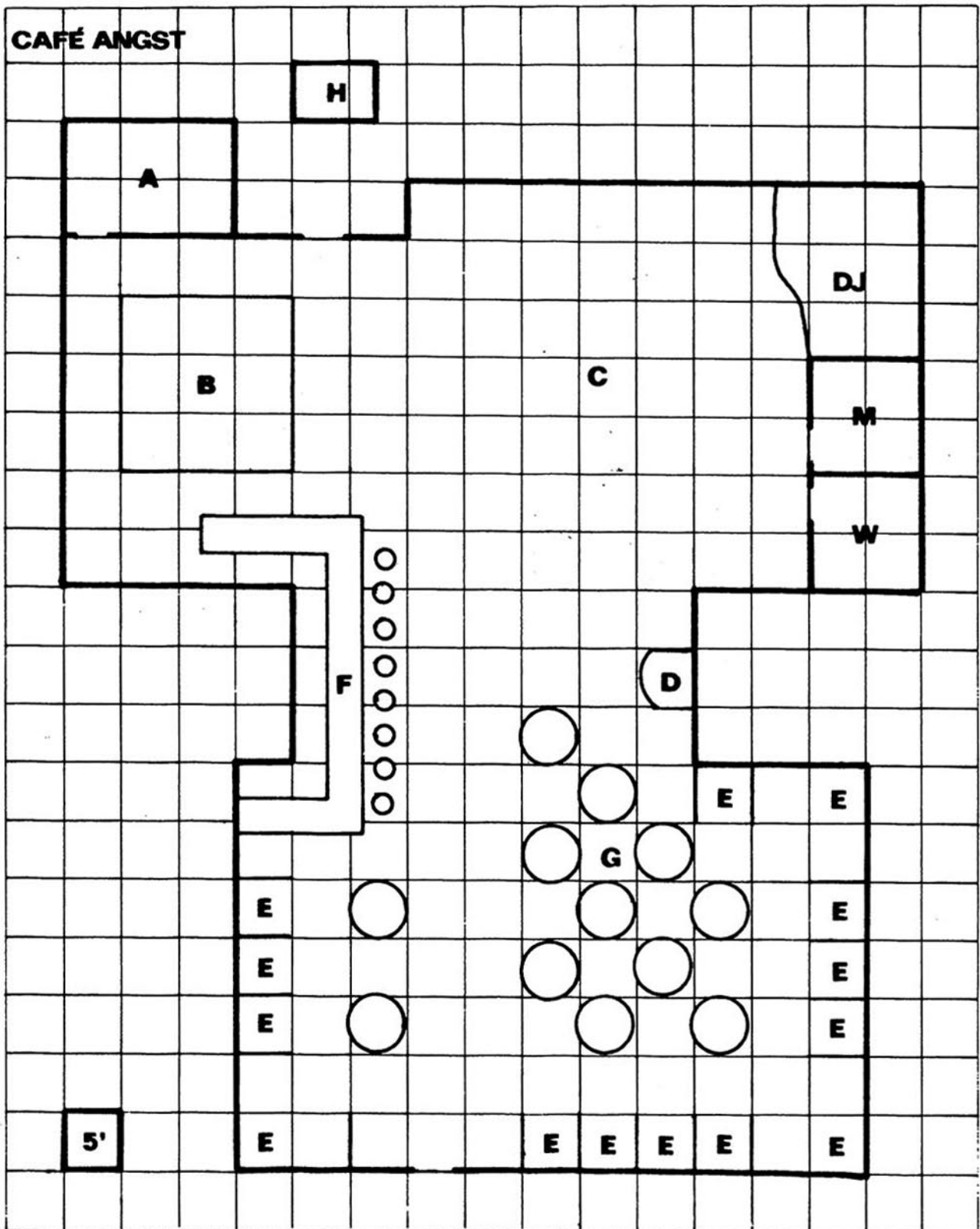Burning Torch: HTH +1 to Hit, 1d12 damage.
Brass Knuckles: +1 to hit HTH, +2 to damage HTH.
Crossbow: 12" range, HTH +5 to Hit, HTH +1d3 damage.

Cafe Angst

CAFÉ ANGST

Doctor Bennet Morrow

Side: Evil	Sex: Male
Age: 45	Level: 11

Powers:
1. Heightened Intelligence B x2: +47
2. Mutant Power: Highly dominant right side of brain, has five times the normal number of inventing points.

Phobia/Psychosis: Mutated brain is torn between 'science' and 'crime.'

Weight: 135 lbs.	Basic Hits: 3
Agility Modifier: —	Strength: 9
Endurance: 11	Agility: 12
Intelligence: 65	Charisma: 15
Reactions from Good: −2	Evil: +2
Hit Modifier: 3.7	Hit Points: 11
Damage Mod.: +10	Healing Rate: .75 per day
Accuracy: +1	Power: 97
Carrying Capacity: 75 lbs.	Basic HTH: 1d3
Movement Rate: 32 inches ground	
Detect Hidden: 44%	Detect Danger: 48%
Inventing Points: 357.5	Inventing: 195%

Dr. Bennett Morrow

GREEN RAIN

Dr. Morrow's girlfriend is a Ms. Trixy Starlight, an exotic dancer who used to perform at the Cafe Angst. She is currently living in a very expensive house in the Galveston Bay area just outside of Smith Point. The house is isolated on a big woody hill and has an excellent view of the wharf, about a third of a mile away. It is a cool overcast day and the wind is completely still.

The moment all of the players are within 30" of the house, a thunderclap sounds and a green rain starts to fall. Within a few seconds all of the players are soaked. Upon getting wet from the rain or even inhaling the moisture in the air, the players must save versus their Endurance on a d100 to remain conscious. Regardless of how one rolls, they will all be unconscious after 4 turns.

Adaptation and Life Support are no defense against this.

THE SAND TABLE

Using the Electrochemical Expotentializer and various everyday household items, Dr. Morrow has developed a device which can "shrink" objects through a systematic removal of a proportionate amount of an object's molecules, which are then kept in "free-floating" storage in another dimension. Using this he shrinks the now unconsious players to a little over one quarter inch in height. (The GM should secretly note this, dividing their movement rates by four to give the actual number of inches a turn they can move).

He then places them on the Sand Table, stretches a tarpolin over it and nails it in place.

When the players awaken, they will not immediately realize what has happened. The tarp allows some light to filter through, giving the sky above them a murky appearance. The ground is covered with a grainy yellow gravel (sand).

Suddenly, Morrow's god-like voice can be heard booming from everywhere, although he is nowhere to be seen.

"Welcome to my world, heroes! You have sought to find me and instead you now find yourselves in a fight for survival. I hope you enjoy coming to grips with your own insignificance. Know that upon my return I shall deal with you all in a more permanent manner, but for now, your present situation will provide me with much amusement. Never let it be said that I am not a sporting man. Escape is far from impossible. I will even provide you with a clue: The key lies in the Kingdom of the Earth. Farewell."
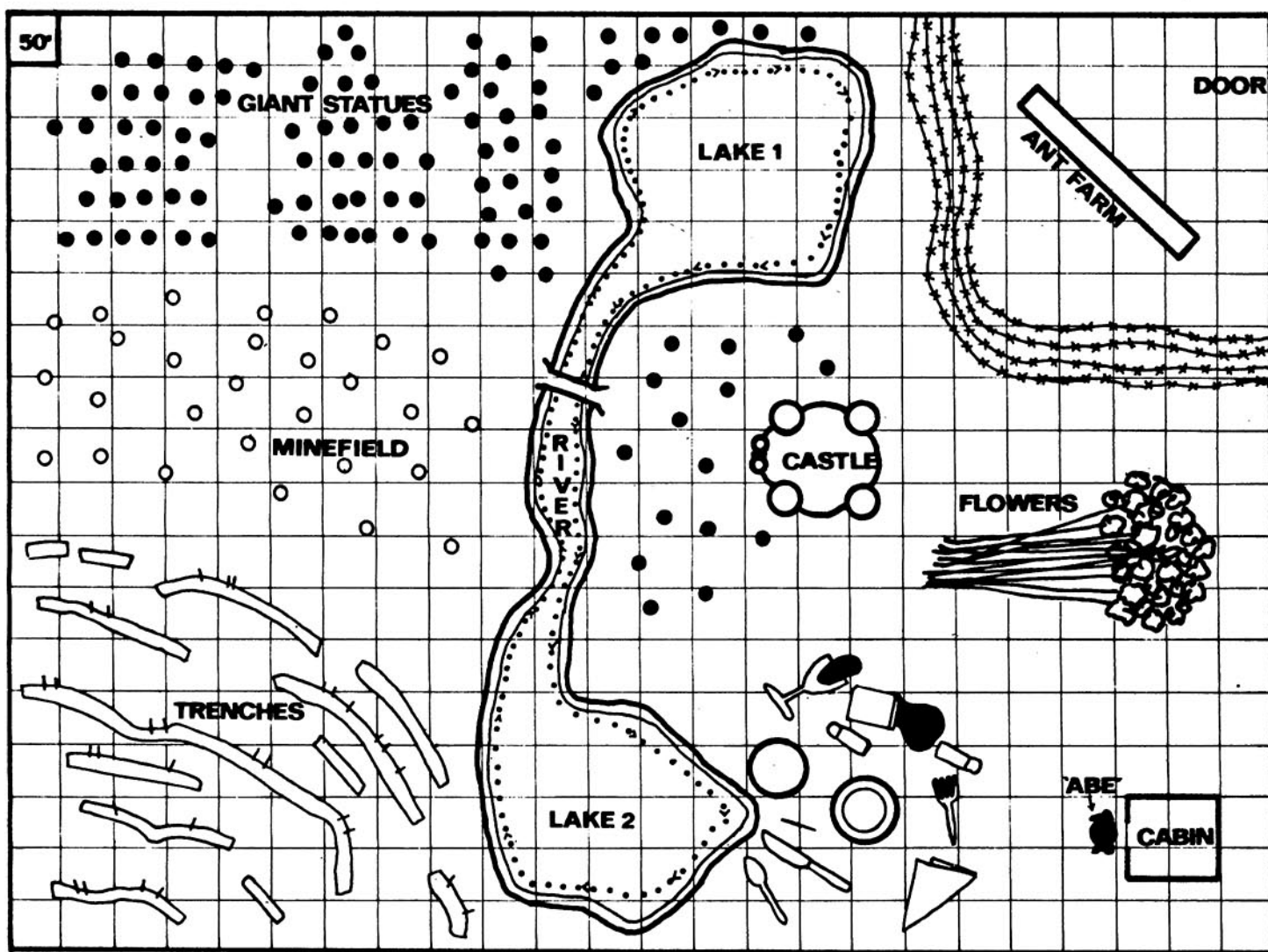
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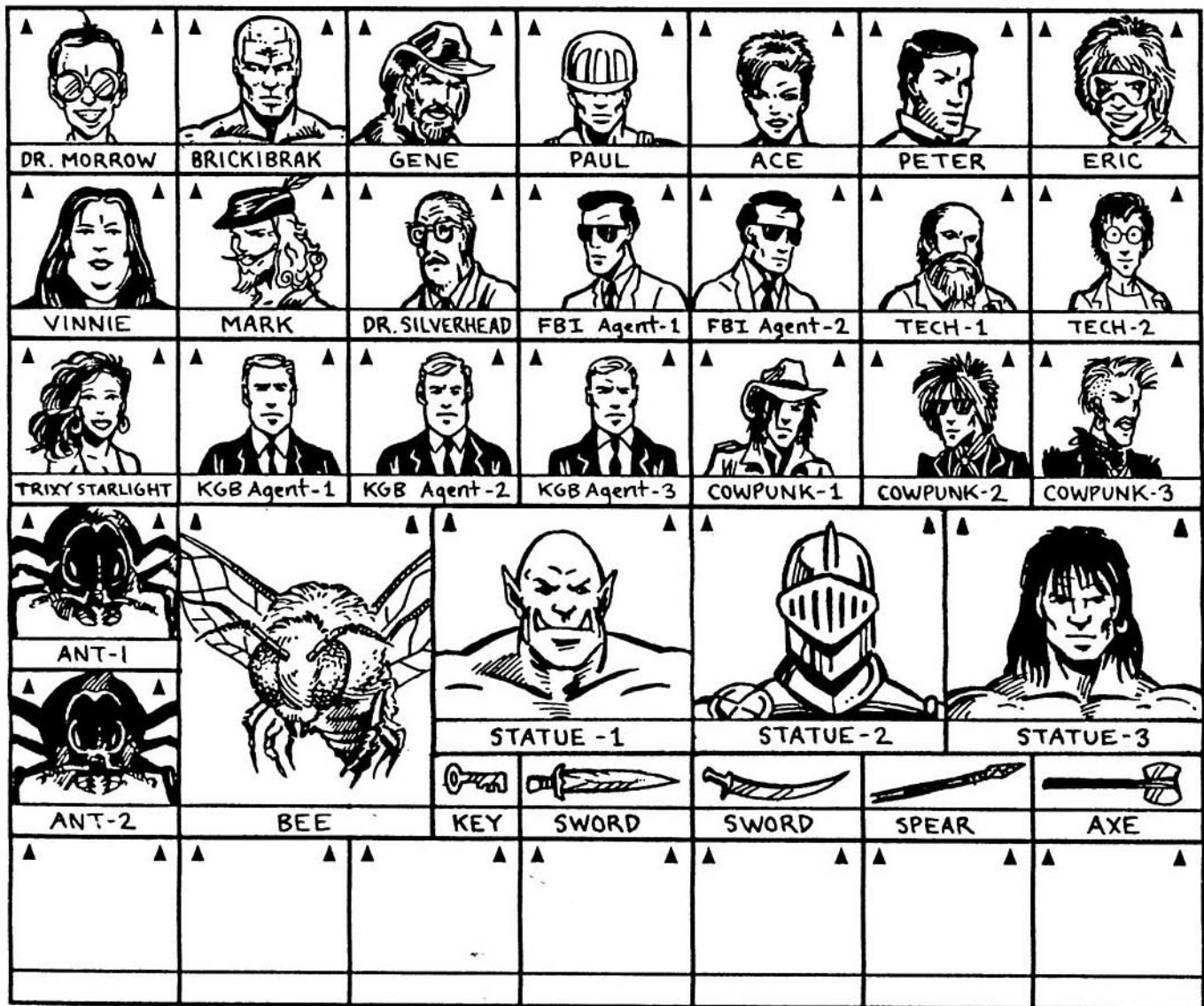
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TRIXY STARLIGHT	KGB Agent-1	KGB Agent-2	KGB Agent-3	COWPUNK-1	COWPUNK-2	COWPUNK-3

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ANT-2
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The Doctor's laugh is long and loud and fades quickly into the distance.

The Sand Table occupies a majority of the space in Ms. Starlight's kitchen. It is used for eating and so that the Doctor has "a cool place to play with his miniatures". To the players, the place is the size of an amusement park.

Due to the players' molecular reduction, some of their powers will not work. Non-Corporealness and Teleportation will simply not function and while Astral Projection still works, a projector cannot become visible or speak telepathiclly.

The wooden sides of the sand table are 20 feet thick (to the players' reckoning) and have a Structural Rating of 30. The tarp is fire proofed and molecularly bonded to have a proportionate Structure Rating of 150.

(The GM will not have to alter the stats of the players as everything will continue to be given in relation to their perspective.)

The Sand Table is divided up into rough sectors on the map because it is difficult to see from one area into another as the level of the sand is uneven, forming hills and dunes.

The Trenches: Here is where the players find themselves upon awakening. The area contains a very accurate looking replica of a World War I entrenchment complete with sandbags and large calibre machine guns. (Both are found to be fake upon examination.)

The Minefields: Any ground-moving players must make a save versus their Agility on a d20 per 6 inches of movement expended in this area. If a saving throw is missed, that character takes 1d20 damage. Anyone within 3" of that person counts as receiving an attack (HTH+3 to hit, 4th level) doing a potential 1d20 damage.

The Army of Giant Statues: Here are what appears to be row upon row of 10' to 12' tall statues. In actuality, these are 15mm figures of all types and varieties. (American Revolution, Napoleonics, Civil War, WW II, Science Fiction and Fantasy Warriors, etc.) If the players wish, they might pry away a sword or shield or other small piece of equipment from one of the figures. Guns and any other technological goodies do not actually work...except on a few select figurines, which are actually

miniaturized robots that are hidden among the normal figures. These become activated by any player coming within one inch of them. Furthermore, 1d4 robots are activated during the between-turns phase every turn after the first robot has been activated.

The GM may outfit these robots with any weaponry that he wishes. See pages 24-25 of the rules for a listing of some possible weapons.

Hit Points: 16-20
Power: 55-75
Agil.: 13-17
Move: 50"
Damage Mod.: +2
Accuracy: +3
HTH: d8-d12

The River On The Two Lakes: The "water" in these lakes is actually just a film of dried airplane glue. On the bridge across the river is a 20' tall troll statue. If the players try crossing the bridge the troll doesn't move-it's just a 'miniature.'

Any prolonged activity near or around the water attracts the attention of the Pirate Ship. It is actually a mechanical toy which rolls along rather smoothly across the surface of the water on it's wheels. Naturally, it has been modified by Doctor Morrow. Dotted lines on the map (in the lakes) show its route.

Weight: 11,000
Passengers: 12
Cargo Capacity: 300 lbs.
Speed: 30 mph
Disable: 55
Demolish: 220

Weaponry: Attacks on phases 16 and 1, every turn.

Cannons: (3 shots per action, all separate attacks, multiple attack rules do not apply) 12" range, HTH#3 to hit, 1d12 damage.

Captain Kidd: (A stationary robot mounted at the wheel, attacks all who come in reach on phases 31, 16 and 1).

He Carries Sword (HTH#3 to hit, does d4+d6 damage while spewing out vile curses and pre-recorded pirate talk.)

The ship and the robot attack as fourth level.

The Forest of Tableware: Scattered about here and there are gigantic plates, knives and forks, spoons, a cup and saucer, an overturned glass half filled

with wine, a salt shaker, a pepper shaker and a toothpick stuck half in the sand.

The Tower of the Black Knight: Here are more scattered miniature figures. All of these are of a strictly medieval style. On a roll of 5 or 6 on 1d6 any figure that a character comes within 1 inch of turns out to be another miniaturized robot complete with armor, sword, shield, etc. Towards the center of this area is a castle. Close examination will reveal that it is constructed entirely out of Lego blocks.

As the players approach they will hear a pre-recorded message from the inside.

"Yo, Varlets! Ye have tresspassed upon the grounds of the Manor of the Black Knight! Enter and face me if you dare!"

A drawbridge slowly opens and the players who look inside the castle will find it to be empty except for the image of a great man in shiny black armor. His Coat-of-Arms shows a hand holding a severed head. About twenty feet to his right is the image of a golden grail.

Upon all (or a majority, if some of the players balk at entering) of the players entering the castle the drawbridge slams instantly shut. The knight and the grail are tiny holograms which vanish if they are "touched". The inside is now totally dark, although players who can still see/sense will notice that the castle has been sealed airtight from the inside. The walls are covered with a black creosote-like coating which blocks the passage of all air. Pre-recorded laughter echoes through the otherwise hollow castle.

"Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!" it says, "Suckers."

The air inside the castle will run out in five minutes. The Structural Rating of the walls is 25.

The Flowers: Here are a large (75' long) bunch of daisies. Moving through these will be as difficult as moving through dense jungle undergrowth. Also inhabiting these flowers are 1d6 bees, which have been attracted to them by their scent. If the bees are left alone they will cause no trouble, other than to perhaps wander very close to the players on occasion. If they are provoked, they will attack.

Weight: 1200
Agility: 18
Ferocity: 14
Hits: 27
Accuracy: +4
Damage: d10+3
Power: 55
Move: 60" air

On the table somewhere beneath the flowers, a tiny picnic has been set up, complete with real, miniaturized, non-poisonous food. Some of it is spread out on a tiny blanket, the rest is packed in a basket. Two skeletons rest beside the picnic. However, these are only plastic models of the real thing.
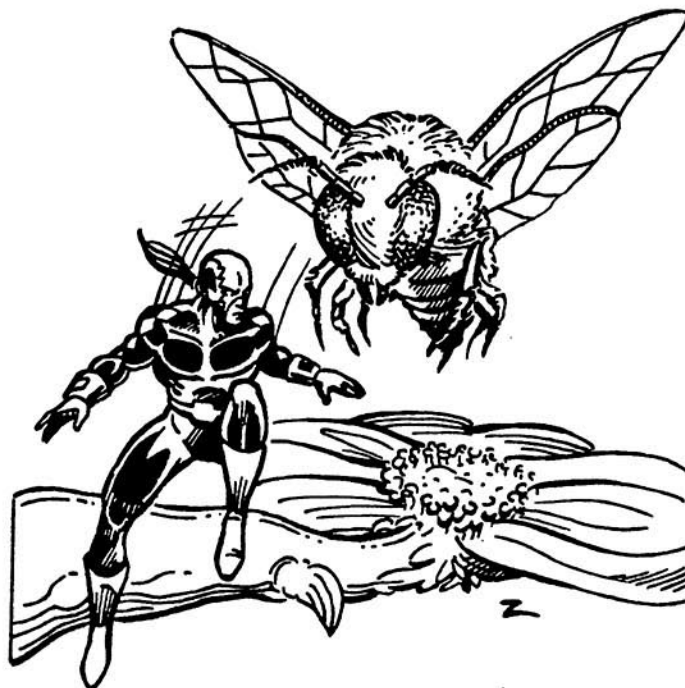
'Abe Lincoln's' Log Cabin: Here is a small log cabin constructed of Lincoln Logs. If the players listen, they can hear the soft plunking of banjo music coming from inside. In the doorway stands Abe himself, or at least an antique toy bank painted in his image. And old Abe is watching the players' every move; his head even turns to follow them. If anyone makes a hostile gesture towards Abe or tries to enter the cabin, he attacks. Abe acts on phases 30 and 15, shooting a searing jet of flame from his mouth. This counts as a Flame Power attack, 4th level, Accuracy +4, doing 2d12 damage. It takes 120 points of damage to disable Abe Lincoln.

Inside the cabin is a tiny gramophone music box, the source of the banjo music. Taped to its side is a piece of paper. On the paper is a picture of an ant.

The Barbed Wire: Anyone crossing this section on foot must save versus Agility on 1d20 once per 6" to avoid taking 1d8 of damage. Inside the tangled mess of barbed wire is an enormous overturned can of Cherry Coke. The sticky soda forms a small pond around which mill 1d4 ants.

The Ant Farm: This is basically two long thin sheets of clear plastic held about half an inch apart by a metal frame and filled almost to the top with sand. Inside, a colony of ants have dug out their nest. One can vaguely determine that there are tunnels running through the dirt all the way to the bottom. Painted in red on the side of the ant farm is a big red arrow pointing


to the top with a small picture of a key next to it. The arrow points to a section of air holes along the top, too small for most ants to get out through but just big enough for the players to squeeze into.

If the players go inside they will undoubtedly have to face the wrath of the ants (or, if they are unbelievably quick, avoid them). The exact layout of the tunnels cannot be determined from the outside. All passageways are about one quarter inch wide. Note that the location of worker ants is shown by the letter "X", while "Q" is the Queen ant.

A: This is a room where various odds and ends are stored. Big stacks of food crumbs and hairs lie next to mounds of miniaturized money in currency from all over the world, gold and jewelry, diamonds, illegal drugs

THE ANT FARM
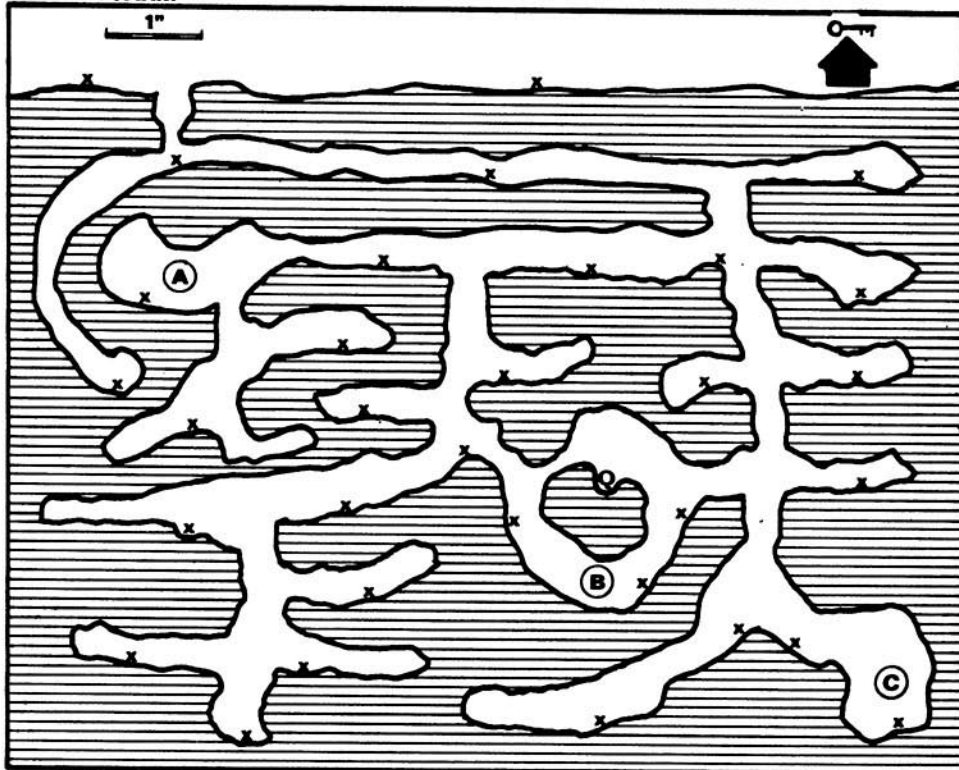
and other booty. Amidst other junk, the players will find the Mona Lisa. (Should they ever get out and investigate this, they will discover that the one in Paris is a remarkably well-constructed forgery.)

B: This is the chamber of the queen of the ant colony. She has limited telepathic capabilities and will seem sentient. Anyone with telepathy or insect control will be able to freely converse with her. She is an extremely intelligent and strong-willed individual. Mind Control, Emotion Control and Animal/Plant Control will have no effect over her. She is very reasonable and can be bargained with, however. She will agree to turning over the key that the players need to escape in exchange for them helping her and her colony breaking open the ant farm, thus giving her kingdom access to everything else on the table. If the players react with hostility towards her or the other ants she will consider them a threat to her colony and do whatever she can to destroy them.

C: This is the Egg Chamber. Here dozens of fertilized eggs are incubating and the time of their hatching draws near. Placed here by the ants is a package the size of a hatbox, which has been specially scented to match the scent of the ant eggs by Doctor Morrow. In the box is the key to opening the door of the sandtable and the crucial missing curcuit of the Electrochemical Expotentializer. Any player who enters here without the permission of the queen will be considered a predator who wants to eat the eggs. This will cause all nearby ants to "go berserk" with rage. See rules, page 27.

The Ants:
Weight: Workers - 170, Queen - 300
Agil: Workers - 18, Queen - 16
Ferocity: Workers - 14, Queen - 15
Hits: Workers - 61, Queen - 91
Acc.: Workers - +3, Queen - +2
Damage: Workers - 3d10+2, Queen - 4d10+1
Power: Workers - 107, Queen - 105
Move: Workers - 93", Queen - 30"/120" air

The Door: On the box a small map is drawn leading them from the ant farm to the door. Once the players reach it

and use the key to open it, they will look out onto a vast open space, a breathtaking vista that dwarfs the Grand Canyon. They are looking out into the kitchen.
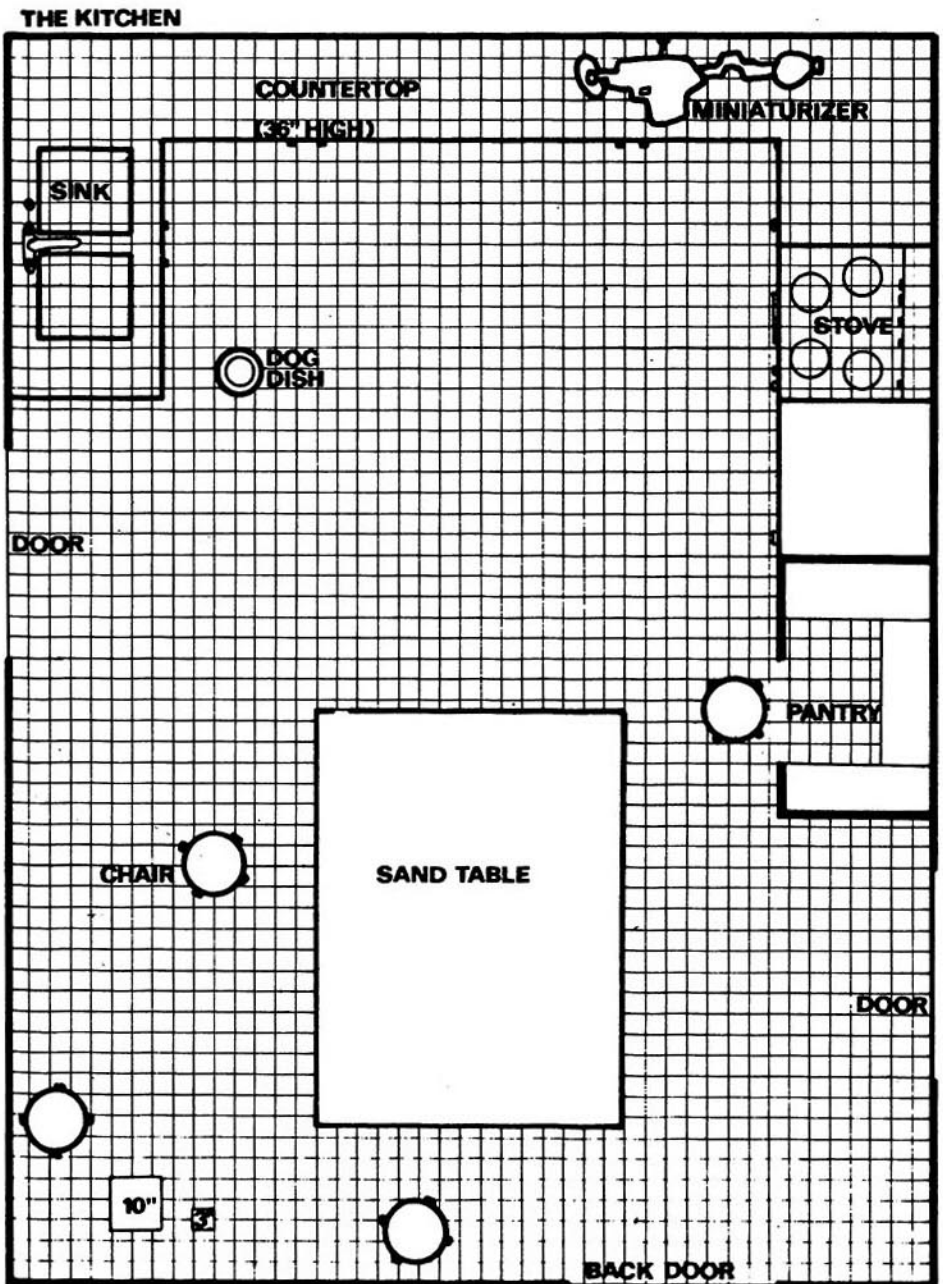
THE KITCHEN

HELL'S KITCHEN

Getting down from the Sand Table and crossing the kitchen should prove to be quite a trek, but if the players need inspiration they need only look across to the kitchen counter. There a small machine sits waiting. It bears the label "MORROW MINIATURIZER™" and it looks as if it has a "reverse" setting!

How this epic crossing is made is up to the players but the GM should arrange for them to have this encounter in the meantime.

While crossing the floor the players will come across some Texas-sized Cockroaches. The exact number depends on how sadistic the GM feels.

Cockroaches:
Weight: 980
Agil.: 14
Ferocity: 16
Hits: 75
Accuracy: +2
Damage: 2d8+3
Power: 87
Move: 75"

If the players become involved with the cockroaches for more than a turn, this will attract the attention of the Household Maintenence Robot. This is a one foot tall programmable device similar to the kinds made available in the Sharper Image catalogue. Part of this robot's programming is "Indoor Pest Control" and it will try to wipe out the players with its can of Bug Spray. (Count shots of Bug Spray as Chemical attacks.) Robot attacks on phase 15 every turn.

Due to its tremendous size in relation to the players, fighting the thing will be practically useless. The only way to avoid being wiped out by this is for the players to work their way inside of it. Perhaps they will even be able to change its programming and somehow use the thing to their advantage.

Eventually, they should reach the kitchen counter where the Miniaturizer is located. Players should make Intelligence saving throws or Inventing rolls to be able to figure out how to install the missing microchip to the Electrochemical Expotentializer. Without it the Miniaturizer will only be able to miniaturize things even further. (Another shot of miniaturization at this size and the players risk losing themselves forever!)

If properly repaired, the Miniaturizer will pluck the players' missing molecules back from the other dimension and reintegrate them into their bodies, restoring them to proper size and mass.

By this time many hours have passed since they were initially left on the table by Doctor Morrow. Searching the place will turn up most of the Institute's missing files and a burnt-out teleportation device (a one-shot invention). From the longitude and latitude of its last set coordinates, Doctor Morrow has used it to travel to Paradise Island in the Bahamas.

THE ISLAND OF DOCTOR MORROW

Paradise Island is a beautiful place and the GM should allow the players to search there as long as they want. They will have a hard time keeping their minds on their jobs; there is so much to see. With the help of the Bahamian police they will be able to learn of a hotel that Doctor Morrow has checked into. If they go there, they will not find him in his room. The bartender at the hotel bar last saw him go out to the beach. And there he is!

Morrow lies sunning himself next to his girlfriend Trixy as he talks to three KGB agents. They argue loudly over the price to the plans of the Pulse Weapon Fighter. If the players burst in on the scene, the Doctor will not be the least bit worried or excited. The KGB agents will respond with force. (Treat them as normal pedestrians armed with Automatic Pistols.)

The Doctor, on the other hand, will offer no resistance. He says he is tired of haggling with the Russians. He will hug the players, shake their hands and treat them like old friends that he hasn't seen in ages. If they accuse him of shrinking them, he will deny all knowledge of it. If they arrest him, he will agree, saying that he would like to go back to the Mental Hospital now.

Upon his return to the hospital he will be instantaneously rereleased in the cognizance of the Houston Parascience Institute. Doctor Silverhead, the FBI and the Pentagon, having seen the Doctor's miniaturizer, want him to begin further research immediately...

THE END

Space Gamer

Romulan Ship Recognition Manual

ROMULAN SHIP RECOGNITION MANUAL (FASA); $7.00. Designed by Forest G. Brown. 8½" x 11" 48-page book. Published 1985.

The third in FASA's series of starship recognition manuals for **Star Trek: The Role-Playing Game** focuses on ships of the Romulan Star empire. However, the format of the **Romulan Ship Recognition Manual** is somewhat different from that of the previous Federation and Klingon manuals. Gone are the slick color interiors, but in their place is a lot more useful data, both in game terms and for use as background information. In fact, the Romulan manual features about twice as many ships as did its predecessor — 40 in all. Several ships have more than one variant listed, and the manual includes a full repair station and a border station! Data for use with the **STIII Starship Combat Game** is listed for each ship and variant, along with a silhouette and top, side and front views. In addition, a full column of background information gives a description and history of each vessel. The latter includes cultural data on how the ship class got its name from Romulan mythology or zoology. The book includes a center pullout page of Romulan ship silhouettes backed with a timeline showing the relative stardates in which each vessel in the book was deployed. There is even a page of counters for each ship that may be photocopied for use in starship combat situations.

The **Romulan Ship Recognition Manual** is quite well done. It may not be as pretty as the earlier recognition manuals, but it is certainly more useful in the game. The extra information on each ship in the book enables a GM to use these ships more effectively in play, either as enemy ships interacting with Star Fleet characters, or as the player's own vessel in a romulan campaign. The timeline is an especially nice touch, as it allows the GM to avoid anachronisms in the game's history should he or she wish to stick to the established history of the ST universe. And we learn more than ever before about such ships of the line as the famous Romulan *Bird of Prey*, as well as several new vessels known only from intelligence reports — some intercepted from the Klingons and possibly of limited reliability.

The only problem I find in this book, other than a few minor typos here and there, is that the ship's data isn't differentiated between the basic/advanced and expert games for use in the **STIII Starship Combat Game**. Only one set of the variable factors in that game is given — presumably that for the "Command and Control" roleplaying part of the game, which uses the expert rules. A minor thing really, meaning only that **STIII** combat gamers can't use these ships until they move up to the expert rules.

Any **ST:RPG** GM running a Romulan campaign or one near the Romulan Netural Zone will find this book immensely useful for starship encounters and combat. And anyone interested in more background data on *Star Trek's* "other" villains will find a good deal here as well.

—William A. Barton

THE *DOCTOR WHO* ROLE PLAYING GAME (FASA); $15. Designed by John Wheeler, Michael P. Bledsoe, L. Ross Babcock III, Guy W. McLimore, Jr. One 48-page booklet, one 64-page booklet, one 80-page booklet, boxed. For three or more players; playing time indefinite. Published Summer 1985.

I have been a *Doctor Who* enthusiast for more years than I care to remember, and I have long seen its potential as an exciting role-playing environment. After fruitless attempts at adapting existing RPGs to the Dalek-infested **Doctor Who** universe, I was relieved at last by the appearance of FASA's licensed **Doctor Who** RPG. My expectations were high, given FASA's outstanding performance on *Star Trek: The Role-Playing Game.* These expectations were not only met, they were exceeded.

The game system draws heavily on **ST:RPG** (this is understandable, as the design teams for both games were virtually identical), but there are some important distinctions and improvements. Player-characters are primarily humans and Gallifreyans (Timelords). Six attributes define the PC: Strength, Endurance, Dexterity, Charisma, Mentality (essentially "intelligence"), and Intuition (similar to Psi in **Star Trek**). Scores are determined by creating a point "fund" with a 2D6 roll added to 36. Points from the fund are distributed to the attributes to determine an "Attribute Performance Level" of I through VII. Acquiring skills is similar but more complex. The "point fund" is determined by multiplying the initial attribute scores (*no* levels) by a Skill Point Bonus (which *is* determined by level!) and adding them together. These points, however, are only available for skills related to the attribute. The system is rather cumbersome, and it takes several readings of the rules to grasp it. Characters may have a Special Ability (determined by 2D6) such as Telepathy, Hypnotism, etc. Finally, Personality Traits and Appearance tables are provided to encourage roleplaying. As in **ST:RPG**, a full-length character generation example in story form eases understanding.

The best feature of the **Doctor Who** system, and what makes it an improvement over **Star Trek** is the Interaction Matrix. This is the logical successor to such flexible gaming aids as Chaosium's "Resistance Table" and the "Quality Results Table" in Victory Games' **James Bond 007.** To use the Interaction Matrix, the GM cross-indexes the Performance Level of the character's attribute or skill with the Difficulty Level of the "task" to be performed. The result (after modifications) is the 2D6 roll needed to succeed. This table is used for practically *all* game actions, from general skill checks to combat. The universality of the Interaction Matrix, and the use of familiar six-sided dice, makes the system easy for beginners to use. The movement/combat system is very similar to **Star Trek**, relying on Action Points to regulate tactical action, and Operating Endurance Levels to record damage. Locking all of this up is a bookful of gamemastering hints on scenario/world creation and the judging of game action, and an additional bookful of background material on the slightly wacky *Doctor Who* universe, including NPC stats for Daleks, Cybermen, Sontarant, The Master, and other evildoers.

I am very satisfied with the final product, but I have several complaints. The distinction between Attribute Scores and Performance Levels seems to be an unnecessary and cumbersome factor, especially in light of the unwieldly skill acquisition system. The World Generation System, as in **Star Trek,** does not provide enough data to create detailed adventures. The physics of TARDIS technology are thoroughly explored, but no interior layouts are provided to make it "gameable." I imagine that, like **ST:TRPG**, this will be available in a plethora of future supplements. Worst of all, there is no introductory adventure. I consider this to be absolutely unforgivable. It is very frustrating to plow through almost 200 pages of material, then not be able to play the game without designing (or purchasing) an adventure first.

Still, there is enough here to make the game a worthwhile investment, especially for the imaginative GM. The background material and NPC stats should provide an adequate springboard for adventure ideas. The Interaction Matrix is a joy to use; page-flipping is minimal. The experienced **Star Trek** player will learn the game quite quickly, as many of the systems are identical. And anyone who has secretly harbored the desire to use a sonic screwdriver, to visit the Panopticon on Gallifrey, or to match wits with the mad Davros, will certainly find much here to enjoy.

— J. Michael Caparula

Cry Havoc
Additional Scenarios

(Standard Games); $5.95. No designer credited. 22-page 8½" x 6" booklet. For two players; playing time varies. Published 1985.

Standard Games of England has released a collection of new scenarios for their boardgame **CRY HAVOC.** These scenarios require **CRY HAVOC** to play, and since there have been some rule changes in the companion game **SIEGE**, it is recommended that players who own both games use the **SIEGE** rules when playing the new scenarios.

The new scenarios range from some very small-scale actions such as the "Scouting Party" to a large-scale two-part action entitled "The Battle of Little Wootton." Each scenario gives the starting sides plus the locations of the various units on the maps, where applicable. As a bonus, there is a section on how to play using miniatures. Since the **CRY HAVOC** system requires the use of multiple counters to represent such conditions as wounded, stunned, dismounted, or dead, it can be somewhat difficult to adapt miniatures to such a format. The designers recommend that either you use two figures for each unit or (more sensibly) mount the wounded figures on a piece of red card to denote their wounded status. A chart gives standardized values for all unit types in the game to facilitate the use of miniatures.

The only real problem with this product is the price. Considering that you get only six scenarios, with no additional counters, maps, or rule changes, the $5.95 price is somewhat excessive for the digest-sized booklet. Considering that the **Shockwave** expansion for **OGRE/G.E.V** and many of the original **Star Fleet Battles** expansion sets cost the same or less, you get a lot more for your money.
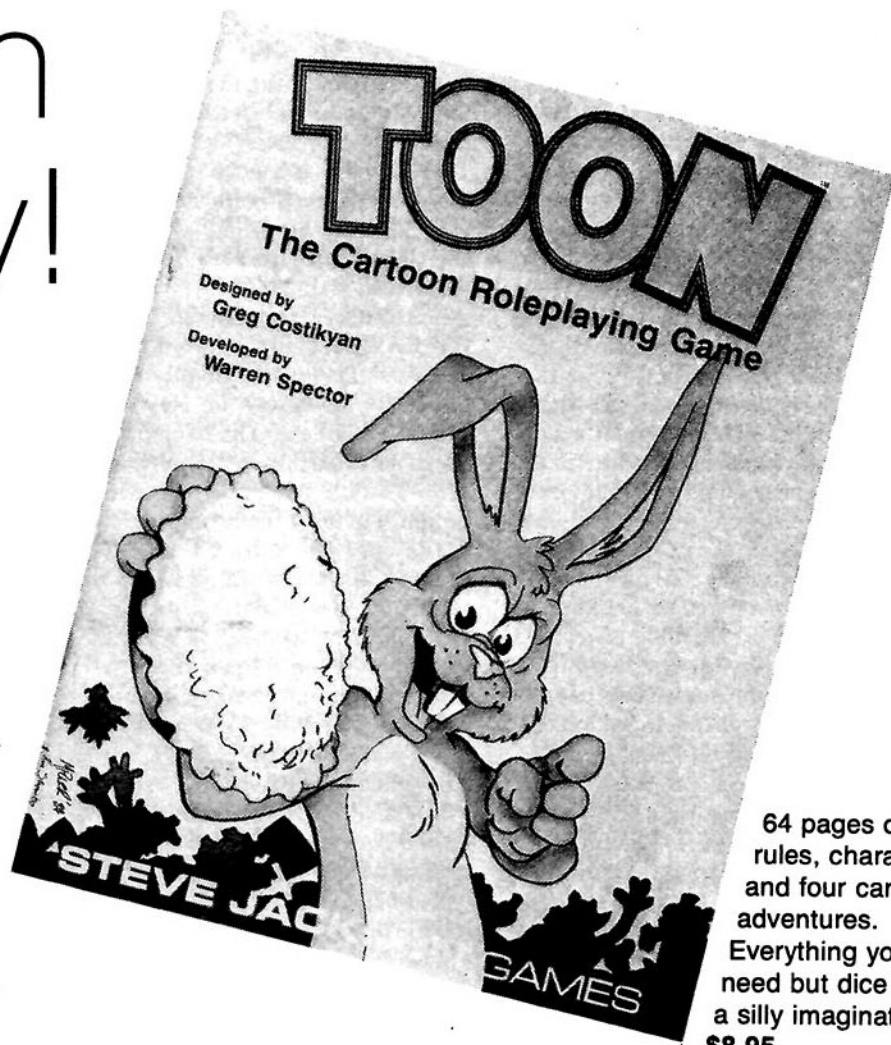
YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE (Victory Games, Inc.); $8.00. Designed by Neil Randall, edited by Gerard Christopher Klug, illustrated by James Talbot. Adventure for **JAMES BOND 007**. c/c 56-page Gamamater Guide, 8 mission sheets, stand-up screen. For 1 to 4 players, playing time indefinite. Published 1984

Released simultaneously with **LIVE AND LET DIE**. The adventure for the **James Bond 007** game features the players trying to locate a Soviet space laboratory which crashed in the Sea of Japan. The space lab holds a lethal virus which the Soviets stole from the English. The players have to locate the satellite and prevent the virus from being released on an unsuspecting world.

Despite the altered plot, most of the elements from the movie remain in this adventure intact, although to tell of them might give away a few surprises. For those with a fondness for "gimmicks," everyone's favorite autogyro makes an appearance.

Overall, though, this module is mediocre, although it is in no way an **inferior** product. Like the movie, almost all of the action takes place in Tokyo, so the excitement of varied and intriguing locales in the same module (such as Johannesburg/Switzerland in **GOLDFINGER**, or New York/New Orleans/San Monique in **LIVE AND LET DIE** isn't found here.

Despite these flaws, I recommend **YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE** to anyone who follows the **JAMES BOND 007** series. A few minor, non-demanding alterations (such as the addition of a different locale, perhaps for a "teaser" sequence, to provide the needed contrast in locales which is such an important part of the James Bond mythos) would more than compensate for its small flaws.

—Steve Crow

PROJECT: WIDEAWAKE (TSR, Inc.); $6.00. Designed by Jeff Grubb. Accessory for **Marvel Super Heroes**. 8½" x 11" 32-page booklet. Published 1985.

PROJECT: WIDEAWAKE is an official character roster of the X-Men. The booklet contains statistics for members of the X-Men (including Phoenix), New Mutants, both mutant and non-mutant persons associated with the team, plus the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants, Hellfire Club, Morlocks, Hellions, Sentinels, and the Brood. There is also a brief history of the X-Men, along with information on the mansion (defenses, map of the grounds, and floor plans), Cerebro, and Blackbird (Lockheed jet).

I strongly recommend **PROJECT: WIDEAWAKE** for any X-Men fan or gamemaster. Everything you need to know for a X-Men or New Mutants campaign is here. The background and notes on the behavior of the characters are useful for players who are unfamiliar with the heroes.

The only major flaw I have found is that Shadowcat's air walking power was not mentioned. Also, stats for Thunderbird, Mimic, and Changeling were not given. Other than that, the booklet is pretty much complete — although I wish the Imperial Guard and floor plans for the Hellfire Club had been added.

In general, **PROJECT: WIDEAWAKE** is well done. Again, if you are interested in using the X-Men in your game and have $6.00 to spare, this book is for you. It will be very useful in creating your own X-Men adventures.

—John Wu

Car Wars
EXPANSION SET #7

CAR WARS EXPANSION SET 7 (Steve Jackson Games); $4.95. Designed by Scott Haring, counter art by Kim Strombo, maps by Kyle Miller. Expansion set for **Car Wars**. 4-page 8.5" x 11" rulesheet, 30 counters, two full-color 21" x 32" maps, in large ziplock bag. Number of players and playing time indefinite. Published 1985.

Okay, in **The AADA Vehicle Guide** they gave you rules for off-road duelling, but until now you had to make your own maps for this type of **Car Wars** madness. Now there's a huge arena, the Ozark Off-Road Autoduel Arena, to tear around in. Bottlenecks, "whoop-de-doos", jumps, tree- and boulder-lined curves, streams, a hairpin turn, and a loop are among the natural obstacles that stand between you and the finish line. And for the first time the maps are in color! For that matter, so are the trike counters that come with **#7**.

The layout of the arena is very good, using most of the space on the mapsheets. The rulesheet gives notes on most of the arena's terrain even the best driver/duellists; in fact, the arena may cause more kills than the drivers (expecially on the second jump). This arena closely resembles a motocross course, only deadlier. It's laid out so that all drivers have to make at least one jump — the second, a deadlier one. If you're way too short on this one you're in the drink. If you're just barely short, you're in the mines someone has kindly placed to break your fall. If you're just right you have at least a D3 maneuver to make, because...If you're too long you're wrapped around a tree. Geez! Anyway, the counters include "new" and "wrecked" versions of eight off-road vehicles, six of which are trikes. The scenarios range from races (my personal favorite) to a raid on bandits holed up in the ruins of the arena to deer-hunting (yeah, I know, but see below).

Not much bad to say about **#7**. The deer-hunting scenarios are nothing short of absolutely ridiculous. (They don't use real deer, they have this sort of shooting-gallery thing that pops up and down for you to shoot at. Groan!) Two of the counters are for the deer (aargh!). Also, this is a "Deluxe Expansion Set", which means that if you don't have the new **Deluxe Car Wars** set, or the **AADA Vehicle Guide** and the "old" **Car Wars,** you can't use this set. This could have been easily remedied by including the page or so off-road duelling rules from the **Deluxe Set** or the **Vehicle Guide**. (And if you don't have the **Deluxe Set,** you don't have rules for crossing the streams that occur throughout the Ozark). Also, how about some rules for forest fires from unlucky cars that roll into the trees? (This is a very probabl occurrence!)

The arena itself is great, a challenge for any type of vehicle. The color is a nice departure. The inclusion of all the off-road rules would have been helpful, but most die-hard autoduellists will already have the necessary information. If you're at all interested in off-road mayhem, check this monster out. Just watch that second jump.

—Kevin A. Ross

Cat's-Paw

CAT'S-PAW (TSR, Inc.); $6.00. Designed by Jeff Grubb. Adventure for **Marvel Super Heroes** 16-page 8½" x 11" module, 21" x 33" single-sided map, wraparound cover with character outlines and character cards. Number of players and playing time indefinite. Published 1984.

In this adventure, the members of the Canadian superhero group Alpha Flight are involved in a strange mystery. It starts when a government agent is found in critical condition. The heroes' job is to find out what happened and solve the agent's case. This leads them to a haunted house, to an experimental power plant (where they meet a certain green-skinned giant), and to a final battle with one of the Great Beasts.

CAT'S-PAW is one of the better **Marvel Super Heroes** modules. More detective work has been added, and the storyline is excellent. The 2½" x 4" character cards have a picture of the hero on one side and his statistics on the other, while the gamemaster has a more detailed description of the characters on the wraparound adventure cover.

But like the previous modules, **CAT'S-PAW** does have its problems. even though more detective work was added, there is till too much combat and not enough role playing. and in one part of the adventure, if a player character is captured by the villains, the hero is not seen again until near the end of the adventure. Also, I think more examples of Shaman's magic should have been added. The same with Snowbird: more stats of the animals she can change into would have been helpful. Finally, no statistics were given for the new members like Talisman, Box, or even Guardian.

Overall, **CAT'S-PAW** is an improvement over prebious **MSH** modules, but it does have its problems. the module is definitely worth the price if you are an Alpha Flight fan (and who isn't).

—John Wu

GOLDEN HEROES (Games Workshop); $13.00. Designed by Simon Burley and Peter Haines. 56-page **Player's Book** and 84-page **Supervisor's Book**, both 8½" x 11"; three six-sided dice and two percentile dice, boxed. For two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1985.

The explosion of superhero roleplaying games is almost reminiscent of the large number of different comics lines that appeared when superherbes started gracing the pages of comic books. The latest entry in the field is **Golden Heroes**, Games Workshop's England-born game. Generate your characteristics by rolling 3d6; powers are allocated by percentile table. After you get your powers (and/or advantageous backgrounds — with those, you can be rich, powerful, talented, or even immortal!) — you concoct the origin and rationale for your hero, dropping powers/backgrounds that don't "fit." Then the "Scenario Supervisor" assigns your hero ratings being, and detective ability — general guidelines that reinforce the character's personality and indicate levels of social interaction in the game. The combats are fought with a unique "frame" system where initiative rolls dictate a kind of "see-saw" rhythm to fights: Side 1 hits, then Side 2 hits twice, then Side 1 hits again...or just the reverse. Hitting is simple (roll d20 versus armor class, with situational modifiers); damage is interesting and possibly deadly ("hits to coma" and "hits to kill"); armor serves to protect against damage as well as protecting against being hit. But the real gems of the combat system are the Combat Resonses: By forfeiting future moves, you can dodge attacks, grapple, judo-throw attackers, and even parry attacks with power blasts, fists, and pieces of the surrounding terrain! And all this is in the **Player's Book**! The thicker **Supervisor's Book** explains all the processes of character generation, social ratings, combat, scenario creation, and character and campaign development. It includes a list of 20 villains as NPCs, and features a multi-scenario adventure, complete with supporting cast.

Golden Heroes has some excellent features: The combat system, though it looks complex, plays fast and captures the comic-book feel; for those who didn't like the slowness of combat in **Champions** and **Superworld**, with their segment/action rank systems, **Golden Heroes'** system will look good. A baker's dozen of artists illustrated **Golden Heroes**; I swear I've never seen so much good artwork! But the most noteworthy feature of the game is the thrust toward roleplay outside of the combat aspect: One's public status and mental health are as important to the hero as are powers and a flashy costume; they can even govern how much experience a character gets. And experience doesn't come from beating people up, either. You have to *practice* to maintain and improve your powers. This game requires more roleplay and less of the obligatory combat.

Golden Heroes strikes me as a strange cobbling together of various superhero roleplaying games: Character creation is a combination of **D&D** and **V&V**; combat has elements of **Champions** and **Marvel Super Heroes**; powers are bought in levels somewhat like **Superworld**...a little bit of every superhero RPG is in **Golden Heroes**. Unfortunately, powers are rather limited, unlike the other RPGs. Where is Power copy? Even **Champions** eventually got that. And what can Spider-Man do when only magicians have the ability to entangle/snare targets? His opponent Mysterio is in trouble, too: Only magicians and psionics have the ability to cast illusions. These are just a few examples of the missing powers. As you see, quite a few superpersons from the comics aren't adaptable to this system.

In all, it's a shame that **Golden Heroes** came out after **Champions** and **Superworld**. **Golden Heroes** is an excellent first-generation superhero RPG, beautifully packaged and illustrated, and the price is right. The system is elegant and workable, the game is sound, and the enforced roleplaying aspect an excellent incentive, but **Golden Heroes** is just not good enough to top **Champions** and **Superworld**. It fades into the crowd scene of the other first-generation games.

—Craig Sheeley

The Guy At The Head Of The Table
Planet Building For Fun And Profit
by Dave Bryant

A friend suggested that I call this installment "Planet-Building for Aggravation and Ulcers". He contends that constructing a world from the bottom up yields a realistic result that looks nothing like what one first had in mind, and that doing it from the top down yields an unworkable version of the original plan.

Still, though, it must be done if one wishes to run a successful campaign. The general process differs from genre to genre, but some specifics are common to many types of games. This issue, we'll look at some of the variables and constants of producing a well-rounded, consistent, and realistic campaign world or planet.

Obviously, the easiest background to work with is modern-period Earth. But even here, difficulties arise. The gaming group I belong to defines "modern-period" as covering from the Great Depression to the end of the Twentieth Century, and perhaps a bit beyond. Other groups may define it differently. For the moment, though, the above is a good working definition.

Superhero universes, embodying as they do a significant chunk of the fantastic along with the everyday, can gloss over some of the less well-known aspects of our complex world. They do require a justification for the existence of superbeings, and perhaps a timeline explaining the changes made in the world since superbeings began appearing. For the most part, however, players and referees can rely on their knowledge of the world around them, and of comics as well.

The only other common type of game that is literally modern-period (in the sense that it could take place "at this very moment") is the espionage/spy genre. This requires a great deal of research if the referee is trying for a highly realistic feel — unlikely, as the real world of intelligence is a murky, occasionally violent, and frequently dull netherworld. Still, even if one is going for the larger-than-life superspy

world, that type of research would not be wasted; even the best agent can't function without an organization of clerks, lookout and listening posts, other field agents, and so on to back him up.

In addition to the usual reading, a very good pair of sources of information and scenario ideas can be found in the books of John leCarre and William Stevenson. Note, though, that these stories reflect the "real" world, and tend to be a bit on the depressing side.

Post-holocaust worlds are also, technically, modern-period. They require a bit more originality, but not much less research. The dominant facet of such a world is, or course, the disaster that caused civilization's breakdown. As such, its causes and course must be carefully charted.

Total nuclear war, a popular cataclysm for many years, is unviable for such a campaign; it would do the job far too well. Even if the "nuclear winter" theory is incorrect, the rise in background radiation and the sheer magnitude of destruction would pretty shortly dispose of most of the ecosystems on the planet; without the plant lifeforms of those systems, it quickly becomes fairly hard to breathe.

A "limited" nuclear war is also undesirable, for similar reasons. Studies have shown that if such a war were started, it is almost certain to escalate, bringing us back to the paragraph above.

If one is willing to delay until the 1900s, however, the SDI significantly changes matters. It is safe to assume that the Soviets even now have a functional, if incomplete, spaceborne defense system. The working assumption is that these defense systems would be saturated by the massive amounts of ordinance flying back and forth, allowing a (relatively) small number of warheads through. Judiciously placed, these can easily achieve the degree of destruction desired by the referee.

More workable causes include an escaped biowar agent, an errant comet shotgunning the planet (caution here, as this can be nearly as bad as a nuclear war), an extended "conventional" war, or if a more esoteric scenario is desired, various types of alien invasion or a catastrophic shift in basic physics having any of a number of effects (the magic returns?). Source material includes any of the myriad SF and the fantasy stories on the subject, military magazines and publications, and the saner survivalist literature.

The other possibilities of Earth are mainly historical (for example, '30s pulp adventure and the Old West). Like the "spy games", the referee has a choice between following the letter of history or the legend/spirit of it. In either case, finding — and reading — material contemporary with the period under consideration is most helpful.

Moving into the future, the referee encounters another complication: a starfaring campaign multiplies the same problems manyfold. Instead of producing a single highly-detailed world, it becomes necessary to crank out a number (perhaps a **large** number) of realistic cultures, peoples, and solar systems. Generating nonhuman races has already been covered by this column in issue one's "Alien Races and How to Identify Them" and "The Law of Conservation of Characteristics".

One thing to remember about habitable planets is that, except for icebound worlds (which usually barely fit the definition anyway) and perhaps hothouse worlds, "theme" planets are improbable in the extreme. Habitable worlds are much more likely to resemble Earth in having a wide variety of terrain, climatic, and habitat types.

Most sentient beings will tend to settle in places their species find hospitable. If a sizable population is found in a manifestly hostile environment, there is probably a Good Reason: unusual mineral wealth, a strategic location on major trade routes,

a nearby military (or research) base of some size, etc. This goes for fantasy worlds as well. Asteroid and orbital habitats, while frequently more comfortable than, say, a Venus or even a Mars colony, also exist for a (usually economic) reason.

Besides space habitats, other feats of macroengineering are possible. The best known are ringworlds and Dyson spheres, of course, but such structures as "beanstalks", arcologies, artificial islands, orbital "rosette" configurations, and even odder constructions can make their appearance.

Going in the other direction, we come to that old standby, the fantasy campaign world. It is only slightly less work than an SF universe, and that only because the process is not repeated for dozens of additional worlds.

The first question to be addressed is: How magical is the world or universe? If it is fundamentally magical, normal cosmology and astrophysics do not have to apply (Chaosium's Glorantha is a good example). On the other hand, if magic is "overlaid" on the universe, the campaign world probably exists in a fairly typical solar system. A fundamentally magic universe allows basically magical creatures to flourish; it is much harder to justify them in other types of universes. The list goes on.

Other considerations include: the effects of the presence of magic on society and technology, both direct and indirect; the usual problems of land, terrain, and soil type distribution; weather; historical background of the world and its various people; and the world's ecosystems, among other things.

The basic piece of advice for this issue, then, is **research.** Get information on every aspect of the world, from climatology and astroscience to archaeology and anthropology. The bigger the data base used to build the world, the more detailed and (hopefully) accurate it will be.

Correction

In "Religion in SFRPGs" (issue one), I noted that the Roman Empire was the last major polytheistic culture in human history. This is not quite correct, as a friend reminded me: Hinduism is alive and well even today. Also, Shintoism was mentioned as being an extinct faith,

which is half-true: **classical** Shintoism is indeed dead; a highly variant form of

it, though, does still exist at the present time. Apologies to all.

Traveller:
A Sliding Tech Level Scale

by Greg Porter

The Tech Level scale in **Traveller** is one of the best gaming concepts I've seen. It allows a quick-and-dirty way of comparing different technologies and their effectiveness, as well as giving gamers a convenient way to discuss what they see at the movies. But it should be expanded a bit to flesh out a planet's Universal Planetary Profile.

Only the highest tech worlds are at a single Tech Level. Others may have an average, but certain technologies may vary widely. As my only data point, I cite Earth. We are at TL7 as far as weapons go, and just about to break into TL8 in some areas. Our energy generation is several years behind, and may not get to TL8 for a decade or two. I don't know about medicine, but the use of artificial organs is surely the boundary for either TL8 or 9. Our electronics, sad to say, are "merely" at **TL11.** "Not so!" you cry? Well, I recently found an advertisement for a pocket computer with built-in radio, modem, display, keyboard, and up to 160K of memory. It would fit in your **Traveller** box with room to spare. Look at page 18 of **Traveller** Book 3, under "Personal Devices." We also have inertial (not satellite) locators for personal vehicles. That is TL9.

These variations are on one planet, isolated from ouside contact, depending only on indigenous technology. What about the situation on planets where there is constant ebb and flow of knowledge and technology? They are likely to have an even wider range.

How do you cover this? By adding a 6-digit suffix code to your UPP to give the TL of various important fields. These numbers represent the best available on the planet, usually to the military, government, and extremely wealthy individuals. On planets where the technology is developed, civilian developments will probably be 1TL lower, as will secondary governments; backward areas may be 1 or 2 levels below this. The differences become more extreme when outside technology

is bought, but from general experience, people tend to favor technology that they have some understanding of. The categories for the six digits of the suffix code are given in order below. Most of the areas are self-explanatory, and approximate the categories on pages 14-15 in Book 3.

1. **Personal Weaponry.** This category covers personal weapons and armor. These two are usually fairly close, although there may be a TL difference for a short while after a new technology is developed.

2. **Heavy Weaponry.** This category covers vehicle-mounted weaponry and armor. This category is dependent on others in a few areas, so allowances are

made for special cases, like electronics.

3. **Electronics.** This mainly covers the fields of communications and computers, but deals with all other areas as well. Weapons whose only advantage over a lower TL is in electronics may be exceptions to the Heavy Weaponry TL.

4. **Transportation.** This covers the water, land, air, and space transportation of the planet.

5. **Energy.** This shows the type of power generation that is used to produce electricity in the most advanced areas.

6. **Medicine.** This is the level of medical care possible on the planet. This category is not listed in the TL scale in Book 3, so it should be defined. The listing below is suggested.

TL	Medicine
0	Binding of wounds
1	
2	
3	
4	Germ theory, surgery
5	Transfusions
6	Antibiotics
7	Organ transplants
8	Crude organ replacement
9	Implanted organ replacement, coldsleep
10	Bionic limbs
11	Regeneration
12	Cyborg bodies
13	Anti-aging drugs
14	Aging halted
15	Rejuvenation
16+	Total cloning, personality transfers

These are optional, expecially the ones dealing with aging, but you can use this as a general scale.

The two areas characters are likely to deal with are easy to find. Personal weapons are at one end, and medicine is at the other. The numbers for Earth at the present are 78B778. From this you could make assumptions about what different areas of the planet might be

like. Secondary countries might be 67A667, and Third World countries might be 569556. These figures are reasonably close to modern-day Earth.

If you have already mastered the **Traveller** system, these extra six digits will pose no problem, and can save you a lot of trouble when fleshing out the description of a planet.

Winning (and Repairing) Super CP

by Lawrence Person

Shockwave, for those unfamilar with the game, is a wonderful expansion kit for the **Ogre/G.E.V.** universe. Being a playtester, I got my copy of **Shockwave** just after it came out, and developed a number of good strategies for many of the scenarios.

In fact, I developed one very good strategy for the defending player in the **Super CP** scenario. The problem is, the strategy is *too* good! There is no way to lose using it, save through an extraordinary run of bad die rolls. This is not too bad if you are the defending player, but the scenario really needs to be changed for better play balance. So I have listed the strategy below, as well as some of my solutions for making it a more balanced scenario.

The Strategy

Unit Selection: 8 missile tanks, 6 heavy tanks, 5 superheavy tanks, 2 missile crawlers, 2 Mark III Ogres and 40 points of infantry.

The missile tanks and superheavies have just the right amount of firepower to take out Ogre secondary batteries. In addition, the superheavy is the wrong size for an Ogre to take out with anything but its main batteries, as it takes two secondaries to get a 1-1 on it, and one missile only gets a 1-1 on it as well.

Initial Setup: Put the CP at 0801, the missile crawlers at 1201 and 0401, and the rest of your units up toward the front. You should have all of your units on the XX14 line or behind, except for about four heavys, one each at 1315, 0915, 0715, and 0315. These four tanks are essentially bait.

Next, place your missile tanks shaded towards either side of the map, just behind your baited heavys. Then place your Mark IIIs at 1014 and 0814. This arrangement makes sure that if any of your opponent's Ogres take the bait and fire a missile at one of your heavys, you will be able to get in a significant round of fire against them from either your missile tanks or your Mark IIIs. You can put your Superheavies at similar points of opportunity.

Have the rest of your Tanks and Infantry behind that and slightly clustered towards the middle. The reasons for this will become apparent when you read...

The Tactics: The main strategy here is simple; blow away the Ogre weapons. As soon as possible, close in and open fire on every major Ogre weapon. Get the main batteries with your Ogres and heavys, and take out the secondaries with your secondaries, missile tanks, and superheavies. Once you have done that, get any remaining missiles. Ignore the treads and AP guns, but destroy everything else. When you have destroyed all of those nasty weapons, pull your units back and launch a cruise missile at the now-helpless Ogre. Make sure that either *both* of the Mark V's have no weapons left, or make sure that the missile's flight path is out of range of the other Ogre's weapons. You should have no difficulty in taking out both of the Ogres with this strategy, thus winning the game.

I have never lost with this strategy.

Repairing SUPER CP

The simplest solution is to stipulate that the defending player cannot take any missile crawlers. But that's too easy.

A second, more interesting solution is to give the attacking player an off-board laser tower and the defender five more armor units. With this rule, assume that the CP has a special reflective coating on it that renders it immune to laser fire.

A third possibility is to leave the rules as is, and give the attacker eight GEVs. This makes the game much more interesting and changes tactics quite a bit. If you are playing the defense in this instance, you will want to keep some of your force near the CP to protect it in case some of the GEVs slip by. Also, you should spread your infantry out in a solid line from map edge to map edge. Since there are no overrun rules, this will force your opponent to punch a hole in the line before he can make any progress.

A final possibility, for those of you out there with **The Ogre Book:** Replace the mark Vs with Mark VIs and reduce the defending player's armor units to 20. This makes for a very balanced, tight scenario.

An Optional Rule for SHOCKWAVE

This is a rule you can use with the above scenario, or in any scenario with missile crawlers and GEVs.

When a missile detonates near GEVs, the player owning the GEVs has the option to "ground" his vehicles. Basically this is a last-ditch effort to avoid the worst effects of the shockwave, and involves cutting power to the hover-skirts. This allows the GEV to ride out the shockwave on the ground, and thus defend as a normal D2 unit. But cutting power when moving and hovering can damage a GEV's skirts. Roll once on the table below for each grounded GEV, after figuring the effects of the shockwave.
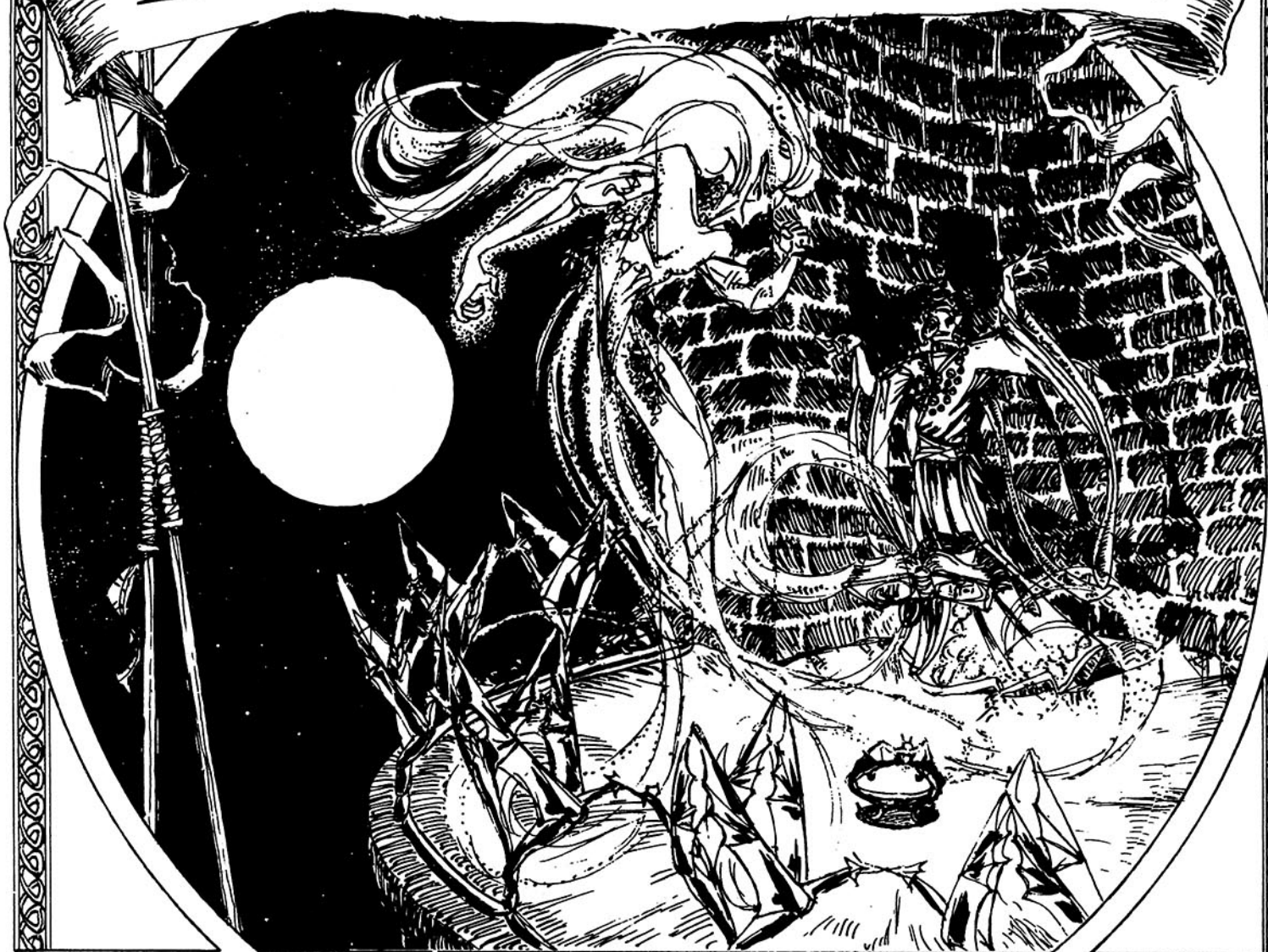
Grounding Table

1-2 Unit's hoverskirts damaged. Unit cannot move for the rest of the game, but may fire and defend normally.

3-4 Unit is disabled. If unit was already disabled, it is destroyed.

5-6 Unit undamaged. That GEV must spend two movement points next turn reviving up its skirts, but is otherwise OK.

THE COMPUTER GAMER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Byte Back

I usually don't complain about the software industry. Ever since the computer revolution the manufacturers have done their best to keep us happy, entertained, and content. But there comes a time when I can no longer remain silent, especially when I see a situation not being taken advantage of. My particular irk is about the telecommunication market.

If you have been around computers long enough, then you probably know about the modem. This little device has been responsible for the new wave in computers, what from 'electric' money to the infamous 'hackers' who break into anything that remotely resembles a computer with a phone line. Although the aura surrounding the modem has become a bit overblown, there is no denying that it has given computers a new dimension. Unfortunately for some strange reason the gaming software industry has ignored exploring this field.

The main drawback to computer simulations is the lack of a serious opponent. While most programs offer an option for solitaire play, eventually you develop a system that beats the program's predictability on a regular basis. This is not the designer's fault - artificial intelligence is still in its infancy. A human opponent is still the best option. But unfortunately many of the games require a great deal of time to finish which many people just can't afford. A game-save option, while useful, only drags the game out, forcing people to dedicate a huge block of time on a regular basis to finish a game the size of War in Russia . If any amount of distance between the two parties are involved, then you can kiss that campaign goodbye.

A game developed with the ability to communicate between computers on a phone line could solve this problem. Now people would not have to worry about getting involved in a time-demanding game. They would be able to determine a consistent and reasonable schedule to play (an hour every night with a couple more on the weekends) and not worry about the games becoming stagnant. Plus the added benefits of being able to stay in the comfort of your home and not worrying about your opponent looking over your shoulder while you plot his demise.

Admittedly there are some problems with the above scenario. It would require people to have similar equipment (there are quite a few modems out there with a few minor differences) and identical computers. You wouldn't necessarily be able to use your Apple while playing the guy with the IBM PC. If connecting with your opponent means a long distance call, then playing such a game is going to put a dent in your pocketbook. And finally game manufacturers will be relctant to sell such a game if it would mean that only one person needs to buy it. After all, why would you rush down and buy a copy of Battle for the Moon if you can call your buddy George and play for free?

All these objections aside, I still think the telecommunication field is a viable enterprise. I'm sure there are solutions to the above problems. Perhaps this is just wishful thinking on my part. But it would be nice to see the industry to at least take a shot at 'telegaming'. It would at least give the gamer something else to do.

— Robbie Robberson

An Infocomtrio

by Tom Dworschak

INFIDEL
From: Infocom
Designed by: Michael Berlyn
Price: $45.00 (Apple, IBM); $40.00 (Atari, Commodore)
Contents: — One fourteen page rulebook, Miscellaneous background materials, including map of encampment and hieroglyphics chart, One 5¼" floppy disk (copy protected)
Complexity level: Low
Rules Clarity: Excellent
graphics Quality: Not Applicable
Apple version reviewed; 48K required IBM, Commodore, and Atari versions available

PLANETFALL
From: Infocom
Designed by: Steve Meretzky
Price: $40.00 (Apple, IBM); $35.00 (Atari, Commodore)
Contents: — One twenty-six page instruction manual, Miscellaneous background accouterments, One 5¼" floppy disk (copy protected)
Complexity level: Low
Rules Clarity: Excellent
Graphics Quality: Not Applicable
Apple version reviewed; 48K required IBM, Commodore, and Atari versions available

DEADLINE
From: Infocom
Designed by: Marc Blank
Price: $50.00 (Apple, IBM); $45.00 (Atari)
Contents: — One eight page rulebook, One Documentary Evidence package, containing interview transcripts, medical reports, and other items relating to the murder of Marshall Robner, One 5¼" floppy disk (copy protected)
Complexity level: Low
Rules Clarity: Excellent
Graphics Quality: Not Applicable
Apple version reviewed; 48K required IBM and Atari versions available

"You are standing in the Chamber of Ra, a tribute to the Sun God. Even though the only natural light enters through the opening above, the room is brilliantly lit as though the walls themselves generated light. The room slopes inward and the walls meet at an open point, over your head. The heat of the desert filters down through the opening and, as the air slowly circulates, the deep, long-dead musty odors from the depths of the pyramid assault your senses...."

This adventure—and many others—await you with Infocom's interactive fiction.

Very little preparation is necessary to embark upon an Infocom journey. The amount of time required varies for each game, but generally you're provided with background materials describing the setting you will be entering, your objectives, a partially complete map, and other relevant materials. Authenticity is the watchword here, whether the item is a postcard from Nebulon, Home of the Worm People, a sealed packet of Ebullion pills, or a faded and crinkled sheet of hieroglyphics translations. All the player need provide is a pen and paper

to keep track of his location as the game progresses.

Although completing an adventure may be an arduous and involved undertaking, the mechanics of playing the game are not at all difficult. You become the principle participant in the game, communicating with the computer by typing standard English sentences; since the program recognizes over 600 words, in most instances your commands will be understood. Abbreviations are available for many of the common moves, so typing "I" will display an inventory of all the items you currently possess, while moving in a particular compass direction can be abbreviated to "N" or "SW". Players are afforded unlimited time between moves without penalty. All games are solitaire, although crowding as many kibbitzers as possible around the screen could prove helpful. Success is measured by how much game time you have expended to crack some or all of the program's mysteries.

Unlike the interactive fiction of Sir-Tech or Sierra On-Line, Infocom's games have no graphics. Instead, rich, detailed prose lets your imagination supply the kind of scenery which no

computer monitor could ever produce. These colorful descriptions are often enhanced by amusing computer responses. Make an attempt to open the locked door of your jail cell without the key, and the computer responds "No way, Jose"; try to use your bare hands to force open a recessed panel which leads to a hidden passageway and you're bluntly told "Let's face it—that isn't going to happen". The mixture of humorous remarks by the computer and the verbal portraits of places and events makes Infocom adventures both intriguing and enjoyable.

The games themselves are designed with playability in mind. In the Superbrief mode, repetitive detailed descriptions of areas which you have already entered are eliminated. Games can also be saved at any point to eliminate the chance that your next dangerous move will result in your death and force you to resume play from the very start. (The people at Infocom don't let this chance for a gibe slip by: in **Planetfall**, when you order the computer to save your current position, your robot companion asks "Oh boy! Are we going to try something dangerous now?") The screen will also

constantly display your current location, your accumulated score, and the number of moves you have made, or the time of day, depending upon the game. Should you make a spelling error, or type a word which the computer doesn't recognize, you will be informed of the problem but no time will pass; however, should you make a mistake such as trying to walk through a door without first opening it, you will be informed of your transgression and time will elapse. I have never encountered any bugs playing any Infocom game, but in case something does crop up a technical hotline telephone number is provided.

The technical hotline number will not help you if you simply cannot solve the problem the game has posed for you—that's where the Hint Booklets come in. For an additional $7.95 per title, you can acquire a completed map and a 20 to 24 page booklet which poses questions that you may have well have asked yourself during the course of play. There are no printed answers to these questions in the hint booklets; what is provided is from one to ten blank spaces beneath each question which can be individually revealed with a special marker. Since players can uncover as few or as many of these hidden clues as they need to—usually halting when the reaction "Why didn't I think of that?" arises—the combination of this parceled-out information and the fact that some of the questions are merely red herrings means that the books will only get you on your way, not spoil the trip. Bear in mind that these clue books are not essential to the play of the games, for every adventure can be solved solely by the supplied documentation and program **so long as you read both extremely carefully!**

All Infocom adventures are long. Very roughly speaking, you can plan on spending about 25 to 35 hours to complete one game. Deduct about 5 hours for non-solitaire games, and subtract another 5 hours if the Hint Booklet is occasionally referred to, 15 hours if clues are extensively relied upon.

ADVENTURE: INFIDEL
Difficulty Level: 3 (Advanced)

Infadel is kind of like Dungeons and Dragons without the dragons. After you've collected all necessary supplies and equipment and then located the hidden ancient Egyptian pyramid, you single-handedly do battle with the awaiting traps and pitfalls of the pyramid in an attempt to loot it of all its treasure. In the course of your pillaging you will encounter, among other things, walls covered with nearly indecipherable but helpful hieroglyphics and the skeleton of a less-than-prudent previous adventurer.

What you will not encounter are any other beings, dead or undead. The fact there are no villains or compatriots to interact with is a major shortcoming for two reasons. The pyramid's passiveness deprives the game of that extra dimension of randomness which would have been present had an occasional mummy or other apparition made an appearance. Secondly and more importantly, the inanimate nature of the pyramid's defenses means that nothing is going to change from game to game. After you've cracked the pyramid's mysteries once, there is no point in ever again booting the disk unless you want to see if you can ransack the same chambers a little more efficiently than last time.

But as mazes go, **Infidel**'s is one of the best. The riches of the pyramid may not be protected by any supernatural creatures, but the snares which are in place are definitely brainteasers. Even the most astute adventurer will probably need the nine lives of a cat to pilfer all of the Queen's riches, so prudent use of the save feature is mandatory. And although the pyramid's treasures need not be uncovered in any particular order, the grand finale cannot be pulled off until all the lesser puzzles have been solved, and other tasks may only be attempted once.

SCIENCE FICTION: PLANETFALL
Difficulty Level: 2 (Standard)

Planetfall has an initial appeal in that the documentary material is provided purely for entertainment and need not be consulted prior to play—you can proceed directly with the game. As the screen displays explain, you are a lowly Ensign Seventh Class in the Stellar Patrol, and you soon find yourself shipwrecked on a desolate planet which formerly was the home to an advanced but now mysteriously absent civilization. You have to figure out what happened to this planet and your ship, and then remedy the situation before the same fate befalls you.

Although Infocom has rated **Planetfall** as a less difficult game than **Infidel**, I found uncovering the enigmas of this planet far more perplexing and time-consuming than those of the pyramid. This extinct race left a lot of broken stuff lying around, and it's a major task to discover what's here, what doesn't work, what has to be repaired, how it can be fixed, and how to stay alive in the process. There are approximately 50% more areas to be explored here than there are **Infidel**; although the chance for a quick and violent death is greater in the pyramid, a stranded Ensign must also exercise some caution. There is another added twist: the game spans several days of playing time, so now sleep and sustenance are concerns.

You are assisted by a temperamental robot named Floyd who, although he

AD INFOCAMTRIO

From page 49

behaves like a two-year-old, provides assistance which is indispensable for success. Other clues can be garnered from the various signs written by this world's former inhabitants in a tortured form of PIDGIN English. But once again the problem of familiarity arises. This game, too, consists largely of dealing with lifeless, changeless objects, and as a result really isn't much fun to play twice. However, it is superior to **Infidel** in this regard, for there are outside forces at work which can compel you to deviate—often fatally—from your plan. To say any more would spoil the adventure.

Shadowkeep
A Towering Infernal

Reviewed by: Robbie Roberson
For: Apple II series, 64K
Published by: Trillius Corporation
Designer: Christopher P. Anson
Developer: Thomas L. Gale
Price: $39.95
Complexity Level: Low
Rules Clarity: Good
Graphics Quality: Good

If you are getting tired of text adventures that are all words and no action, then perhaps you should take a look at Shadowkeep. It is the first text adventure game that combines graphics with animation in a role-playing setting. Included in the colorful tri-folder package are two double-sided disks and instruction book. Before starting play, you will have to have four blank disks to make backups up of three sides of the program disks and to create a save game disk. After this first-time procedure you will then be ready to play.

The Shadowkeep was the ancient home of the wizard Nacomedon. Until his foe Dal'brad imprisoned him and used the tower for his own nefarious purposes. Your goal is to explore the tower with your band of adventurers, defeat Dal'brad and free Nacomedon.

First stop is at the inn where you generate your band of up to nine hardy adventurers. Available are four races: Roos (intelligent marsupials), Humans, Zhis'ta (Lizardmen), and Thalidar, which from the illustration look like purple elves. You may choose from five different classes: Warriors, Monks, Runemages, Shadowmages, and

Necromancers. All classes are rated in the five areas of strength, intelligence, dexterity, power (for magic), and leadership. After mustering the party, you then begin to equip them with the traditional weapons, armor, torches (don't forget these!), and magic items (if you can afford them). Then it's off to the tower to overthrow Dal'brad.

From here on the game resembles the format of text adventure games. You may enter two word commands such as "open door" or full sentences such as "Celebfin prepare the Sunburst spell and give amulet to Niniel". You must specify which character is performing the action. Otherwise all actions will be ascribed to your party leader. The parser (which is excellent) supports at least 300 words which allows your party to explore a lot of possible options.

While all characters are allowed to fight and cast spells, obviously the warriors and monks are more skilled at fighting while the Shadowmages, Necromancers, and Runemages are adept at spellcasting. Fighting and spellcasting, along with other abilities such as listening, searching and opening, are based on a percentile system not unlike the role-playing game Runequest. As characters are successful in a certain skill their percentage goes up.

As you proceed to enter the dungeon, you are presented with a first-person view of your surroundings. In order to look to the left or right, you must turn in the desired direction. Careful mapping is required since doors have a tendency to disappear and walls appearing where

there were none before. These are full screen graphics which are very pleasing to the eye. They are a definite improvement over the usual skeletal graphics employed to show the dungeon in other computer role playing games.

Alas, it is the attempt of the designer to surpass himself that hurts the game. While Trillius is quite proud to point out animation as one of the strongpoints of their product, it is exactly the opposite. The only real animation involves the battle sequence when the party encounters the unfriendlies that inhabit the Shadowkeep. You must wait and watch as each monster (as many as six) runs down the hallway towards you. While novel and entertaining at first, it becomes tiresome as it requires frequent disk interaction. The animation process itself is not pure animation but more of a jerky stop-and-go which also is time consuming. Because there are quite a few random encounters, it seems to take forever to explore one level.

There are ways around this. Which brings up the other fault of this game. There are several spells and magic items which allow the party to avoid encounters entirely if they wish. Unfortunately they **all** are available at the same time, which throws the game out of balance when the characters pool enough gold to buy these items and/or spells. I personally haven't had to encounter any monsters after leaving the second level through judicious use of these items. It also goes to show that I'm not as good a sport as I try to make myself out to be.

Overall, Shadowkeep is not a bad game. The puzzles aren't ones that will keep you awake at night (and if they do, Trillium has included a hint sheet for you) and the story line is familiar and with enough humor to keep you rolling. It is definitely a groundbreaking achievement to combine such elements as role-playing, text adventure, and graphics in one game and I applaud their efforts. If Trillium decides to re-ussue this game after dealing with the problems listed above, it will be a blockbusting seller.

One other thing worth noting is that this is also the first case of software inspiring a novel instead of it being the other way around. Alad Dean Foster has written a sci-fi/fantasy novel based on the same title and plot as the game. Sorry, I don't do book reviews...yet.

STAR WARRIORS

Attention Star Warriors of the second fleet.

Scanners show no enemy fleet present, so let's destroy this base quickly before it can sound an alarm.

Commander, scanners report a fleet of 600 enemy ships appearing from behind the planet.

Commander, they have launched missiles.

It's an ambush! Get us out of here. Fire anti-missiles.

Commander, the missiles are still coming.

We can't shoot them down, there are too many!

Impact in five seconds!

Order all hands to aban...............

Star Warriors is a play-by-mail game of diplomacy and combat. Twelve players, each with their own empire, try to conquer the galaxy using bases, battleships, carriers, fighters and diplomacy. Each player must make allies because anyone trying to stand alone will have no chance. Turns are once every three weeks with each turn costing $6.00. There are never any extra charges and the price will never go up during the game. Winners will get free turns in new games.

To enter **Star Warriors,** send a check or money order for $20.00 to the address below. Your $20.00 gives you all set-up material, a rule booklet, and the first three turns.

FINAL FRONTIER
473 Belair Drive
Lancaster, PA 17601

FIRST CLASS GAMING

"Toto, This Isn't Kansas!"
A Review of Out Time Days
by Nolan Bond

One of the problems of being an "old hand" at PBM games is that you tend to get a little jaded and cynical about all of the hoopla over "new and improved" games. Face it! How many times have you sent off your hard-earned gaming bucks to get into something "revolutionarily" different" only to get back a Tribes of Crane clone with a tacked-on magic system? It is also a fact of life that when this "ground-braking" wonder comes from a new company, the felony is often compounded. Well, Out Time Days (OTD) by Twin Engine Gaming sure shot the hell out of that theory! Please pass the crow and let's talk about one of the best initial offerings I've every seen.

Before we do our standard discussion of the nuts and bolts of the game, let's talk about a very important (and intangible) factor that is often overlooked — especially in Forward Observer reports. That factor is the GMs and their feelings about their own game. From the very outset, it is obvious that Werner and Vicki Freitas really enjoy — and even love — OTD! And they appear to have good reason to. They exhibit an obvious concern for the gamer and his awkward first turns in their "world" and go out of their way to make the starting gamer feel glad that he joined. And let me tell you, when the GMs care this much about their game and their gamers, 90% of all the

problems you normally face in a game are eliminated. Add this to a game that — by itself — is engaging and satisfyingly complex, and you have all the makings of a winner.

OK. Here are those "nuts and bolts" I mentioned earlier. Your start-up is $15.00 and includes a 64 page rulebook, your set-up turn, and five (count 'em, five!) regular turns. Turns are $4.00 each and you can run a supplemental (or follower's) turn which is also $4.00. To the best of my knowledge, there are no other fees. The rulebook is well produced with good, appropriate art work (i.e. you can tell what it is they are drawing!), excellent organization and is written by someone with a grasp of the English language and its subtlties (grammar and spelling). It seems to cover all the bases while finding time to inject personality and humor. It even has turn examples, for heaven's sake! For those of you who want even more, they include a return mailing label. Give me a break.

The game itself is founded on the premise that time travel is possible and the player is a time traveller who is side tracked to the world of Kobold to stop the foul manipulations of renegade time travellers. Kobold is populated by various races in addition to the "volunteers" such as yourself and is roughly medieval (at least in my case). Once there, you meet a creature that is

destined to be your travelling companion and best friend as you learn about the world around you. And believe me, there is plenty to learn because Kobold is not Grand Rapids with funny clothes. The developers have gone to a lot of trouble to create a world for the gamer that really "breathes" and it shows. Anyway, as you go about getting your bearings, you are faced with the everyday demands of getting food, money, and a place to stay. Add to this the pressures to take sides with a particular sect in the twisted political setting of this world and you will definately have your work cut out for you. Now add time travel to all of this, and buckle your seat belts! The premise and game mechanics of the travel seem sound and workable and are a viable part of any strategy — not just some chrome added to justify the game's name. Printouts are clear and informative and there are certainly no complaints about scarcity of information.

Before I finish, let me state for the record that I am not a big fantasy fan and OTD has a strong feel of fantasy. Also, let me further state that I could really care less for time travel and OTD is built around this concept. So why am I so knocked out over OTD? Beats me! I just know that I like the game and the people that run it. I say, if it feels good, do it. This one is a "keeper"!

Starmaster II

by Stefan Jongs

I was lying on the couch listening to a little Vivaldi when *It* came. There was a thunk and a clank as the courier dropped the package in the mailbox. I waited until he' had gone before opening the door and grabbing the envelope. I knew what it was before I'd opened the package; ah, how many times had I seen that letterhead before and smiled in anticipation! I went back inside and turned up the stereo before opening up the package. In the thick white envelope was just what I hoped and feared: a copy of the rules for *StarMaster II*!

StarMaster

Schubel & Son began as a distributor of educational science kits; they entered the world of gaming with *Tribes of Crane*, the now-classic game of adventure on a barbaric world. Run by gamemasters who could bend the rules on request of the players via Special Actions, *TOC* allowed a remarkable degree of flexibility that approached roleplaying in scope. In late 1979, S&S announced that a second game similar to *TOC* was being started, one with a science-fiction background. Starships, alien races, weird planets, vast empires . . . I was intrigued. Thus I joined my first PBM game.

StarMaster was (is; the original "campaign" is still running, now under the supervision of its designer, Richard Lloyd) an immense, detailed, intriguing game. Because it was not dependent on limited computer moderation and had a cast of thousands (the players) who all did their part in making the milieu of the game imaginative, *SM* became a "subcreation," another universe, albeit imaginary. I was hooked for many years; my empire ("The Sages of The Moodring") grew, consumed large amounts of money, and greater amounts of time. I quit after the frustrations of dealing with overworked GMs and a klutzy record-keeping system became too great. Besides, I'd just gotten a home computer that gave me something to waste time and money on (on a scale far greater than that of *SM*), and played games almost as addictive.

Then, just when I thought I'd lost all desire to fiddle with designs for new species and empires, Schubel & Son announced *StarMaster II*. Using their experience with fine computer-moderated games such as *StarVenture* and *Strategic Conquest*, S&S redesigned the *SM* system, keeping the basic premise but converting the record storage system from paper files and GM's whim to computer. Records of resources, units, bonuses for various actions, and so on would be kept in tidy files on magnetic media; a rigid turn-processing structure would allow greater accuracy. No more would "phantom fleets" course through space after being defeated in battle but not erased from the files; a monthly check of resources would keep players from cheating on how many PFs they'd looted or stored. As someone who'd suffered from such problems in the original game, I was intrigued. Could S&S pull it off? I began designing my new species . . .

The Rulebook

The initial rulebook received by new players is more a sort of "set-up manual." Details on how to design a player-species and homeworld are included, as are a few rather sketchy descriptions of how to fill out movement and production sheets. I showed the booklet to some friends who were unfamiliar with *SM* in either of its incarnations; they were rather baffled. I think that examples here would have helped, perhaps using sample copies of turn and production sheets.

Species design is virtually identical to that in *StarMaster*. The player has 300 bio-points to design a species, or lesser numbers of bio-points for each of the subspecies of a Caste-system empire. No new systems have been added, and a few seem to have been deleted (e.g., Interdimensional travel). A chart of "Mind Types" (ranging from A-Mind, which monitors involuntary body systems, to F-Mind, used for Psionic attacks and controlling the mindless vassals of Caste-System species) has been added, a minor help. More useful would have been a section with a short essay or further guidelines on species design; a lot of trial and error may be necessary for new players to get a decent species. Again, detailed examples would have helped.

The rules for *StarMaster II* are, sadly, rather vague. Leaving details on the actual play of the game to sheets sent after play has begun is a shoddy way of doing things. Supposedly, this was done to keep interesting differences between technology types a secret to all but those entitled to such information. Unfortunately, "generic" information on unit movement, planet mapping, or colonization is also included on these sheets. If *StarMaster II* proves successful, a second edition of the rules with all the basic rules included, as well as a larger Question & Answer section, should be produced. This would cut down on questions to the GM, player errors, and frustrations over vague rules.

Starting Out

I chose to run a Caste System species in my review game; besides allowing me to design three species (a great deal of fun in itself), having a weird technology based on psionics and a disposable labor force would give me a chance to try the new rules on mental powers and bio-engineering. I picked a mid-range planet size with Semi-Desert Terrain. (The Planet Class of a world determines its gravity, atmosphere, and temperature. Larger worlds have greater productivity but start out lower in technology. Note that exact Gravity, Atmosphere, and Mass are now picked by the computer, a major change from the original *StarMaster*.) My empire had an Imperial government (this affects nothing but its relations with neutrals, and how the player him- or herself views the empire), named *the Quylmian Commonwealth* of the planet *Banquastine* of the solar system *Raydiant Concourse*; its Imperial Symbol is "Ringed planet on Three Arches." Unlike its predecessor, *StarMaster II* gives full control over naming such things, a much-appreciated side effect of the computer data storage system.

Playing the Game

SMII's basic unit of play is the turn sheet. These come in several varieties. The one used most often is "The" Turn Sheet. It allows the player to move units; there are six blocks on the sheet, each allowing movement of any number of Fleets from a common origin to a common destination. A Fleet is a kind of "basket," a bookkeeping device used to cut down on the number of units the game computer has to keep track of. A Fleet can have any number of ships, and can carry cargo (such as Armies, which are "Baskets" for carrying ground units). The Turn Sheet also allows exploration and colonization, transfers of resources, and simple special orders. Those familiar with the first *StarMaster* will note that this sheet replaces the colonization and trade sheets, a real money-saver for small empires.

The production sheet is another essential sheet. It is used to turn the resources of the player's worlds (up to four per sheet) into ships, armies, forts, and megacities. Unlike the old game, *SMII* worlds produce Production Factors (PFs) and Economic Units (EUs) on a regular schedule, once each month. This effectively limits players to one production sheet a month. Another change of note is that unit-building requires FPs and EUs. The latter

are often in short supply on "major production worlds" (i.e., homeworlds and very large colonies), though colonies produce them in abundance. The transfer of EUs from colony to homeworld replaces the colorful but unrealistic trade system in *StarMaster*.

The last two turn sheets are related; special actions and special encounters. Special Actions (SAs) sheets have room for six "neat ideas." An example would be a project by the player's empire to give army units special training; the player would describe the training in the space provided on the SA sheet, and indicate what the expected benefit of the action would be. Properly supported by EUs and some clever writing, these allow players to "cheat" a bit. SAs can be used to make more detailed explorations of a world (I once had an exploration team in a ruined temple search for "secret doors"; the GM complied and rewarded my efforts with some tokens of valuable artwork), to improve production, or obtain a combat bonus. According to the rulebook, there are over a hundred areas in which bonuses can be obtained (Labor Efficiency, Land Operations Defense Bonus, Leadership Effectiveness, Research, etc.). Though expensive in EUs and real cash, SAs can give one's empire valuable "force multipliers" that add up through time. Clever SAs can be used to get tech levels on the cheap, conduct espionage, and perform unusual combat actions. All in all, a most useful turn sheet!

Special Encounters are sheets that are randomly mailed to players every month or so. These one- to two-page computer-printed mailings include a description of the encounter and space for the player to write a reply. Some SEs are relatively innocuous, and don't actually *require* a response, though bonuses and valuable trade deals can be obtained if used. (Yup, you guessed it. They cost money. More on this below.) Some SEs are nasties, though, and require a reply to avoid trouble. Properly written, either type can be useful, and entertaining. One Special Encounter I really enjoyed concerned a wrecked alien probe found in a remote valley of my homeworld; my reply obtained me a tech level boost, a sample of alien metal, and the location of the last star system visited by the probe. The quality of SA and SE replies is greatly improved over the old *StarMaster*.

Though not turn sheets *per se*, Attack and Defense reports and the Monthly Adjustment Printout are an integral part of *SMII* play. The first two are computerized printouts mailed to attacker and defender when combat occurs. Like almost everything in *SMII*, they cost money. The old game let the defender pay a reduced price for his or her combat results sheet, to avoid the tactic of depleting a player's account to oust him from the game. In the new game, each participant in a battle pays an equal fee.

The Monthly Adjustment printout is mailed to the player each month. It has a condensed description of the player's species and empire,

a status report on major production worlds and colonies, and a list of all of the fleets and armies belonging to the empire. Production and colonist attrition are recorded on the printout, also. More than anything else, the Monthly Adjustment shows how *StarMaster* has improved; everything is neat and tidy, and easily changed in case of error. The few bogeys that did crop up in my updates (a couple of misplaced fleets, unrecorded SA bonuses) were quickly corrected. Such errors became less common as I played; evidently the GMs were still getting used to things!

Units & Technology

As in the original *StarMaster*, units in the game are based on individual ships and regiments of troops. Because of the new movement bookkeeping system, however, individual units are much less detailed. Ships are all of the same speed class, can't be named, and are less flexible when it comes to carrying cargo. On the positive side, units no longer have building times, appearing instantly once resources are allocated. Units are assigned to Armies (troops or groups of colonists only), Fleets (ships), or Worlds (Forts or megacities only). These "Basket" units may be named, merged, split up, and dissolved with a fair amount of freedom.

SMII retains its colorful technological-advancement system. Beginning levels of technology in all three areas of progress (Land Combat, Aerospace Technology, and Industrial Development) commonly range from 40-70. Through expenditure of EUs or special actions, these levels can be improved. When tech level 100 is reached, a player can convert to second-generation technology. New and more powerful units and higher production levels are obtained by raising technology; these are much less detailed than in *SMI*, however.

Combat

What would an sf game be without conflict? In *StarMaster II*, ships, forts, ground units and even population units possess "gunnery factors" which can be applied to destroying other units. Fleets of ships have a fair number of combat options, including details such as battle formation and deployment of Probes (interstellar guided missiles); these options result in attack or defense bonuses, number of expendable probes used, etc. A mix of large and small units is required for success; bonuses derived from Special Actions are an important factor. Once the space defenses of a planet are removed, a player can *Bombard* to reduce ground defenses and *Invade* with armies to capture the world. Each of these three phases is a separate combat, requiring its own result sheet. Combat is handled entirely by computer; a rather drab printout describes the battle by reporting initial forces, losses,

and final forces by unit type. The reports are easy to read, but lack some of the color of the earlier game's Combat Results, which described weapons used and their effects. Still, the system is serviceable and fair and combat quite useful in the game.

News Services & Diplomacy

When player units "meet" in the game-galaxy, empire names and numbers are exchanged. The GMs are careful to report encounters. Diplomatic cards containing reply addresses or simple messages can then be sent. These cards are sent in a special mailing to the player to which they are addressed; this costs 50¢ and is a nice service, if a bit expensive.

Unlike *SMI*, the *StarMaster II* universe is awfully crowded. Almost every system I've run into has had a "Space Tech" race — a euphemism for a dropped or active player-species. Genuine neutrals seem rare. I think S&S is trying to set up a situation where combat is both common and necessary. To get ahead, a player must set up lots of colonies or start conquering. The diplomacy system, which allowed players to take over neutrals, seems to have been scrapped.

To keep players up on what's going on in the game, S&S sends them a monthly "Galactic Update." This two- to three-page mailing contains reports of battles, errata, or additions to the game, and occasionally a piece of Schubel & Son propaganda, such as a balance sheet offering stock in the company (honest!) or a letter detailing new projects. For this privilege, the player is charged $2. Gee, thanks.

Another source of *StarMaster II* news is the Schubel & Son house organ, *The Play-By-Mail Newsletter*. This is a player-supported zine, with rumors, notices, and news announcements by S&S. Quality of the newsletter is that of a good fanzine, but as it has to service the eight other Schubel & Son games, its contents are too dilute for it to be truly necessary.

Ka-CHING!

Nifty species design system, detailed combat, flexible rules . . . is there anything really *wrong* with *StarMaster II*? Alas, yes! Each movement, production, Special Action, or Special Encounter sheet used costs $3.50. An attack or Defense combat result printout costs a like amount. The Monthly Adjustment costs $2, plus 10¢ for each Fleet, Army, and World in one's empire. The non-optional "Galactic Update" sent to players each month costs another $2.

At a minimum, one can expect to pay $15 a month for a game of *SMII*. That includes just *one* movement sheet, a production sheet, a 30-unit Monthly Adjustment, and the Galactic

Update. If you want to be competitive, add $7 for a second movement sheet and a SA sheet. The really annoying part about this is that *individually*, the charges aren't that outrageous. I can *understand* why a Special Action costs so much and why a Monthly Adjustment has to go up in price as more units are added to an empire. But taken together, *StarMaster II* playing is awful expensive activity.

Service

I found S&S handling of *StarMaster II* quite satisfactory. Turnaround time ranged from 11 days for just a movement sheet to three weeks for a heavy-duty mailing of a movement, production, and Special Action sheet. Errors in turns showed up a few times, but these were quickly cured by a note to the GM. Charges for turns are tallied on a little receipt, which also lists the amount remaining in one's account.

Final Judgement

Despite some minor operating problems, I enthusiastically recommend *StarMaster II*. It's an intriguing, skillful, freewheeling game with lots of player input and action. Vast improvements have been made over the original system, albeit at the cost of some color and chrome. Alas, I don't know if many people will be able to *afford* it. Schubel & Son may have painted itself into a corner by making the game too expensive for the high school or college students who typically play these games. I sincerely hope S&S can find a way to make *StarMaster II* less expensive and thus open its ranks to those of us on a limited budget!

STARMASTER II (Schubel & Son); $15/month and up. Designed by Duane Wilcoxson and others, based on an original design by Richard Lloyd. Computer-moderated play-by-mail game. Turnaround time variable; game length open-ended. Since 1984.

ENCYCLOPEDIA GALACTICUM (Schubel & Son); $18. Written by Peter Dorman, Richard Lloyd, Duane Wilcoxson, and others. Play aid for *StarMaster II* PBM game. Three-ring binder with 100+ looseleaf pages. Published 1985.

Here's an interesting item: a collection of information sheets, fictional background, examples of play, and strategy hints for a PBM game — namely, Schubel & Son's *StarMaster II*. Included are tales from galactic-history, rules on Ringworld construction, and a collection of sample turn-sheets provided for players who haven't been able to cut the mustard. A few discount coupons for Schubel & Son games are also included.

The white plastic binder this book comes in has some catchy artwork and a neat logo. Unfortunately, this beauty only goes skin-deep. Title notwithstanding, this is no encyclopedia. It's a crudely organized bundle of "information sheets," many single-sided. Editing and writing quality are fair to abysmal. There's some terribly crude interior artwork depicting some of the alien beasties found in the game; other than this, the book is page after page of hard-to-read single-spaced text. To rub salt in the wound, a great deal of the information in the book will already be possessed by even a beginning *SMII* player!

On the good side, a fair portion of the *Encyclopedia Galacticum* is quite useful. (Indeed, a good portion of it should have been included in the *StarMaster II* rulebook and initial mailings!) The information sheets on subjects like Hypergates, Ringworlds, and Asteroid mining reveal that there is more to the *StarMaster II* universe than is readily apparent. The coupons included (good for a free *SMII* set-up, a tech-level raise, and discount rulebooks) are also welcome.

The *Encyclopedia Galacticum* is overpriced, sloppily produced, and contains much redundant information. I would still recommend it, however, to beginning *StarMaster II* players who would like to increase their knowledge of the game. Old-timers and dabblers should avoid it.
—Stefan Jones

The New PBM
(Play by Modem)

by Lawrence Person

One of the biggest problems a wargamer faces is finding another player to adventure with or play against. This may be easy if you play **D&D,** but becomes much harder if you are looking for someone who plays **Ice War,** or a group of **Runequest** players. Another problem that a wargamer faces is ·finding time to pursue his or her hobby. If you own a computer with a modem, however, both of these problems can be solved at one fell swoop. The new trend in gaming is PBM: not play-by-mail, but play-by-modem.

One of the most common places to find a group of gamers in the computer world is on a computerized Bulletin Board Service, or BBS. A BBS allows people to call a computer using a modem (a device that relays information from one computer to another over ordinary telephone lines), leave a message in one of several "message board" categories, each devoted to a specific topic (for example, a board for debate, a board for movie reviews, a board for science fiction, etc.), read other peoples' posted messages, and send and receive electronic mail. Several bulletin boards have areas devoted to one or more games. For example, I am currently running a **Fantasy Trip** adventure on a BBS called The Crystal Caverns (512-263-5805) here in the Austin area. On that same BBS, there is a game of **Call of Cthulhu** going on. Other boards have ·AD&D games, **Traveller, Illuminati, Diplomacy,** and several others. One Austin board (The Black Box, 512-835-9742) has no less than five **D&D** games going on at the same time on the same board!

The advantage to playing on a BBS is mainly in the amount of time saved. Depending ɔn how busy a board is, a gamer can call up, post his or her turn, and log off before five minutes have passed. Depending on ·the game's deadline and turnaround time, that gamer can also call up any time he or she likes, so it is easy to fit into a schedule. And it would be hard or impossible to find a time during the week when all the gamers involved in a BBS campaign

could get together and play a normal session in person, so BBSes provide a source of opponents or fellow adventurers that would not normally be available.

There are, of course, corresponding disadvantages. Playing a game on a BBS rules out a great deal of complexity for the sake of time. BBS adventures take a **long** time to finish. The game of **TFT** I have been GMing (under my BBS handle of Rael) on Crystal Caverns has already taken about six months, and it is **still** not finished. Such a game would have taken only ten or twelve hours to play "in person". You are also at the mercy of your equipment; once my game was delayed two weeks when the computer I was using started acting up. And a BBS campaign is just not as fun or satisfying as an in-person game. But some of these flaws apply to play-by-mail campaigns as well, and many people enjoy them. The cost is far less than· conventional PBM games: Most BBSes are free!

Most of this· applies to roleplaying games, but wargames sometimes supply additional problems. A System Operator (the person who owns and runs a BBS — "Sysop" for short) will usually be willing to set aside a board for an RPG, but can't take up the disk space for just a two-player game. And multi-phase games move **very** slowly. Another BBSer and I had to give up a game of **Squad Leader** because it was just too much trouble to play it on a BBS. Also, you have to have faith that the person on the other end is rolling the dice honestly.

If you have a computer and a modem but don't know where to look for a BBS that has a game, ask some of your fellow computer users. Also, Compuserve usually has a listing of local BBSes available for its subscribers.

An interesting outgrowth of BBS technology has recently appeared here in Austin. Two local systems have used a format known as a CB simulator. On these systems, a number of people (usually between 6-10) can get on the system at the same time and talk to each other by modem. Although it hasn't

been used as such yet, such a format is the ideal medium for a multi-player RPG in real time, and no one has to leave home. Another interesting board is a system format called the Thieves' Den, where all the board users draw up a **D&D** character as soon as they log on and have the opportunity to kill other players, buy weapons and armor, and gain experience while on the system.

If you are a gamer with a computer, a modem, and little time to game, then play-by-modem may be just the thing you have been looking for.

How to find BBSes in your area

If you have a modem, but don't know the number of a BBS, there are several ways to find one. First, try asking your local computer or software dealer. They are usually pretty well informed about what goes on in the local computer subculture. Also, some stores will have something like a local computer users' guide for sale (which should run about $5.00 or less) that includes not only BBSes, but local computer clubs and users' groups.

Speaking of that, clubs and users groups are another way of finding BBSes. Even if there isn't a users' group or club in your area, some of the people you know who use computers might have the number of a local BBS.

A third place you might check is your local magazine rack. Most computer magazines run articles on BBSes at least occasionally, and such articles usually have a listing of BBS numbers. In fact, **Link-Up** magazine is entirely devoted to telecommunicating with home computers — but it may be hard to find in some areas.

If you subscribe to Compuserve, they have a listing of BBSes in you area, as a download file.

In any case, as soon as you find one BBS you're home free, as almost every BBS I have been on has a text file that lists all the other· BBSes in the area.

If all else fails, you can always start your **own** BBS! There are literally hundreds of BBS programs out there. Once you have all the necessary software and equipment (which generally means a modem, a computer, and a disc drive), it is no problem at all to set up your own BBS and run an RPG on it. Soon you will have heroic adventurers setting off on a quest that takes place only in your minds...and on your disk drive.

The Weapon
Empire Builder

by Forrest Johnson

I'm losing and loving it.

There aren't many games like that. I may *respect* a good design and bewail my own stupidity, but I don't usually *enjoy* a game I am losing.

Therefore, it gives me great pleasure to review **The Weapon**, a play-by-mail game with combat, economics, diplomacy, and one very special touch. "The Weapon," you see, is a starship component that can turn world hexes into space hexes. (ZAP and Alderaan is blown into space dust.) Ownership of a Weapon is a wonderful consolation to a losing player, *if* you have a Weapon.

That's a big "if," though. A Weapon is expensive. It costs 6,000 MRs (material resources) and 10,000 credits. You also need 15 crystals (five each of three types). Since your home world produces only 3,000 MRs and a similar number of credits a turn, and since you start the game with only three crystals, a Weapon is at best a long-range goal.

Building a Weapon includes a lot of secondary expenses. You will need at least a class 4 hull, requiring 1,200 MRs, 1,200 credits, and three crystals. You will need to buy engines for your ship and sensors to locate enemy ships. You will also want to defend the ship with cloaks (which thwart enemy sensors) or deflectors (which negate beam weapons).

This gets hideously expensive. In order to afford a Weapon, you first need an empire of about 20 worlds. Since there are 15 players in a game, and 400 hexes in the universe, only about half of which contain worlds, a little math will tell you not everyone is going to make it. The game is like an elimination match; the foolish and fainthearted are wiped out in the early turns.

So resign yourself to an interstellar empire. It is no lark, being an emperor. Scheming enemies surround you on all sides. (I mean *all* sides; the map wraps around, so there are no safe corners.) You will want to garrison your hard-won worlds with troops and fortresses. In addition, you can block off enemies with "barriers," menaces to navigation which can be passed only by you and your allies. (Some hexes are "clouds,"

which block all traffic. A few, well-placed barriers can close a choke point and frustrate all attacks, barring treachery or use of the Weapon.)

As your empire grows, you may build warp gates to connect distant hexes. You can also drop probes to keep an eye on troublesome hexes.

Hanging onto worlds is important. You get five victory points a turn for each turn you have owned a world. So a world owned for ten turns brings in 50 points, while three worlds just conquered are worth only 15.

Another way to get points is to destroy enemy ships. A big ship is worth more points than a little one, but a *fully loaded* small ship is worth more than a big hulk. Destroying ships also costs points for the victim. By the end of the game, a super dreadnaught is worth more than several worlds, and risking it in combat is a doubtful proposition. On the other hand, mere scouts are expendable, and it is counter-productive, in the early turns, to irritate your neighbors by blowing away their scouts.

The Weapon has no random factors. Nothing depends on chance. All things being equal, two beams will always overcome one deflector.

But all things are not equal. While the *program* is completely predictable, the players certainly are not. At the beginning of the game, each player is given 100 attribute points to divide in four categories: combat (beam and troop strength), navigation (speed and deflectors), technology (sensors and MRs), and economics (credits). Fifty points in combat, for example, will increase the strength of all attacks by 50%.

Since everyone divides his points differently, it is impossible to guess just how tough a player is before you fight him. Since you can increase your multipliers through research (devoting MRs and credits to the effort), fighting someone once means you *still* may not know how tough he is.

All this encourages a paranoid attitude toward the game. It is commonplace for players to fortify

worlds that are never attacked, for example. People erect barriers where no one threatens them, leave probes in empty space hexes, and place warp gates near the home worlds of friendly players.

Paranoia affects ship design too. By the end of the game, ships are staggering around with so many cloaks and deflectors, there is scarcely any room for engines, much less payload.

"Is someone going to attack me?" is a silly question in this game. The only questions worth asking are *who* and *when* and *how!*

The Weapon is exceptionally well organized. The turn sheet is a model of clarity, and few flaws of any sort can be found in the rules. Moreover, the turn-around is excellent; your turn is usually in the mail three or four days after deadline. Moderator errors are less than one per cent.

There is one significant problem, if you want to call it that. Players used to games like **StarWeb** will find **The Weapon** very complicated. Your first turn involves about 30 orders, and by turn ten, the number has doubled. Expenditures of MRs and credits must be budgeted very carefully. (A background in accounting is helpful!) Even with the best planning, players will often find their MRs in some place other than where they are needed.

The consolation is, *everything is easier for losing players!* Managing an empire of 30 worlds takes considerable thought and effort. Filling out the turn sheet for a wretched remnant of five worlds is not problem. And firing the Weapon takes only one order, but, oh, so satisfying!

I candidly recommend **The Weapon** to every PBM gamer, that is, to every PBM gamer who's got what it takes!

THE WEAPON (4Sight, POB 1093, Indianpolis, IN 46206). Set-up $5.00; rule book $2.00; turns $3.25 ($3.50 for outside U.S.) Computer-moderated; playing time 15-30 turns. Turn-around 2-3 weeks; slow games 4-5 weeks. Designer Daniel B. Ealy; programmer Mark A. Brown.

OBSERVATION POINT

GUEST EDITORIAL

Bozo Gamers
or... What's a Highly Respected Game Player to do?
by G. E. Smith

You all know the type, or gamed with one: The Bozo Gamer. Checking our dictionary for a definition, we find: bo - zo gam -er, 1: a player of games who perverts, inverts and subverts the rules to their own end 2: a player of games who ignores reality and logic in order to win 3: a gamer who prefers to upset others as opposed to calm them 4: a big pain in the posterior.

A good example of definitions one and two would be a clown I played **Terrible Swift Sword** with when the first edition of the game came out. The bozo was playing the South and I the North in the 1st day scenario. Almost at once, he moved his artillery up close to my cavalry and opened up. Naturally, I strove to use my dismounted cavalry to fire on the gunners. Oh no, the bozo smugly said, you can't shoot back! Sure enough, the 1st ed. rules of **TSS** said that gunners could only be engaged by melee, not by aimed fire. (Richard Berg, the designer, later said that was done to prevent every regiment on the field from blasting away the gunners, an ahistorical happening). Obviously, this glitch was going to create unrealistic tactics, allow questionable artillery capacities and imbalance this scenario. After all, the bozo was going to stay out of melee range and shoot away, in effect an 1863 tank, impervious to all known infantry formations.

Now, I tried to reson with this guy about what was wrong here, but he had his entire victory planned out and realism was only going to rob him of it.

So, after ten minutes of fruitless discussion, I quit rather than go through with a farce. So, he found another victim and pissed **him** off in about 20 minutes.

Another example, this time for the 3rd definition, involved a female friend of mine. She took a female character into a dungeon run by a new DM to the area. This guy, strutting his stuff, had this character pregnant, raped and endowed with larger busts by the end of the night. Really great concept for introducing women to gaming. While it didn't stop her from going on in roleplaying, it's dorks and bozos like that DM that turn off women to gaming. Wargamers have this guy around too, because they try to hit on their female opponents as they teach them games, or throw the game to the woman for the same reason; scoring, and not for VP's either.

Please do not confuse bozo gamers with cheats, because they aren't. After all, everybody cheats, some. While ethically wrong, every board gamer has moved a stack one extra MP that wasn't there, every RPG'r has fudged a die throw somewhere and science fiction gamers have fired more than a few photons with less energy than they really had. It's wrong, but we are all human, and we do realize that gaming calls on us to be more than "normally" (as the rest of the world sees it) honest in our actions.

Bozos are not interested in winning by such feats. Rather, they want to win (a game or a point) by getting you to

accept their version of reality, or the rule, or the setup, or what have you. It's important to them to be right, even at the expense of the game. After all, they are out to prove something here.

Now everyone has had disagreements over rules. That's part of gaming. But, most all discussions of this type are resolved by mutual consent, a die roll, voting, etc. The bozo isn't interested in your interpretation, he has the true answer, at least by his interpretation, has built a plan around it and is loathe to admit any errors. Any discussions (or arguing) of points with them leads to only one of three conclusions. Either somebody quits, you can cave in and grit your teeth through the following mess, or the bozo snivels and whines/pouts after he gives in to the rest of the normal gamers.

So what can you do? Aside from staying away from known bozos, it's always good to agree before the game starts on the rule interpretations to be used. Which means, read your rules and know your games. If worse comes to worse and the bozo strikes, do not back down. Refuse to go along with spurious logic, one-sided rules readings and plain dumb rules gambits. You may have a poor game this time, but you will set standards for future rounds. This hobby is built on fun, but it also attracts people who think, because you're not called on to watch, you've got to think, plan and cooperate. Bozos leave off the last. Don't give in, just set your standards and don't be run over.

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Courtesy of
Software Doctors

Strategic Simulations, Inc., Leader in Strategic Computer Games, Moves to New Facility

Mt. View, CA — February 7, 1986 — Strategic Simulations, Inc., a leading producer of strategic computer games, said today that it will move to new facilities this month in order to continue its expansion, the fourth such move since it was founded on $1000 in 1979 by war games wizard Joel Billings.

The new facility consists of 15,000 square feet, located at 1046 North Rengstorff Ave., Mt. View, 94043. SSI now employs 28 persons.

Strategic Simulations, Inc. announced recently the introduction of three new fantasy simulation titles in January 1986, with two more to come later this year for a total of five games. This continues SSI's effort to dominate the fantsy computer game market as it does the war game market segment. SSI also markets sports, educational and geopolitical games.

Joel A. Billings, president of SSI, said, "Our need for new facilities is based on the continually-growing demand for our games. We've had a lot of success with war games; now we're seeing strong market acceptance of the fantasy games we've already introduced, especially Phantasie, which has been on all the charts. Now, with three new games we're determined to be the dominant strategic fantasy game producer."

Billings said that fantasy and war games were complementary for SSI as they are both based on tactical simulation, that is, individual and collective movement and control. "The kind of detailed tactical battles we brought first to the computer war game's market we're now combining with the magic and mystery of fantasy quests."

Strategic Simulations, Inc., founded in 1979, has over 60 game titles and 125 different versions on the market. Its games cover war, fantasy, sports, politics and those arenas that offer strategic game challenges. Its best-selling Phantasie™, Computer Baseball™, and Combat Leader™ games sell into mass-market and computer store outlets. SSI was recently given the Critic's Choice Award Presentation for Best Games in 1985 by Family Computing magazine; the company has earned 25 awards for its games over the past four years.

SSI headquarters are currently at 883 Stierlin Road, Mt. View, CA 94043-1983.

MacIntosh Version of Computer Baseball and Apple II Version of Colonial Conquest Released

Mtn. View, CA - February 7, 1986 - Strategic Simulations, Inc. is proud to announce the release of the best selling sports strategy game, Computer Baseball, for the 512K Macintosh computer. By entering statistics, 1-2 players can manage any baseball team in the world. Or, choose from over 20 great past and present major league teams that are provided. All the offensive and defensive options of a major league manager are included. Computer Baseball retails for $39.95 and is available for the Apple II, Commodore 64, Atari, and IBM computers.

Colonial Conquest, named 1985 Game of the Year by Family Computing magazine, is now available for the Apple II series of personal computers. Global conquest in the Age of Imperialism is the goal of this introductory strategy game, with 1-6 players participating by ordering troops and fleets to attack any number of 131 territories. Colonial Conquest has a suggested retail price of $39.95 and is also available for the Atari and Commodore 64 computers.

"Due to an inadvertent error, the copyright notice was deleted from the Star Fleet Battles article on page 19 of issue #2. That article is Copyright 1985 © by Amarillo Design Bureau."

UNDER COVER

A Selection of Previews and Reviews

TABLE OF CONTENTS

c/o P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach, CA 90808

DRAGONLANCE CHRONICLES Volume 2

DRAGONS OF WINTER NIGHT
by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman
(TSR, Inc. $3.50; 399 pgs)

Reviewed by Paula Warner

Part Two of the Tolkien-esque **Dragon Lance Chronicles** triology is often ploddingly dry, cliche-ridden, and at times too predictable; however, the well-rounded assortment of characters and the often startling imagery compensate for the tedious passages.

The plot centers around the search for the long-forgotten Dragon Orbs, whose existance is discovered by means of an enchanted pair of eyeglasses. These orbs are powerful enough to control the dragons that have been causing terror and destruction under the rule of the Dragon Highlords. Unfortunately, this same power poses a potential danger of its own.

The search is led by Tanis Half-Elven, who is struggling against more than dragons — with his mixed heritage, he feels torn between two cultures, and two women. Tanis is accompanied on his journey be several, loyal friends, most having his or her personal quest, as well as their common goal of vanquishing the forces of evil, and restoring peace. This large group becomes separated early on, and the story switches back and forth between the resulting smaller groups.

Adventure abounds, as do suspence, anguish, and a liberal sprinkling of romance. The female characters are, for the most part, brave, noble, intelligent and kind, and (with a few notable exceptions) are treated as such.

For about the first two-thirds of the book, there is far too little humor, although the childlike Tasselhoff's sparkle and curiosity add a welcome breeze in an otherwise **too** serious plot. Later on, the mood lightens with a brief but hilarious encounter with a community of gnomes. There is also the delightful appearance of a wonderful old fellow, who may be a stereotype, but he's so charming that to say more would be spoiling it.

The Iranian Rescue Mission: Why It Failed

by Paul B. Ryan
Published by the US Naval Institute
Maryland, MD Copyright 1985
185 pages $6.99 Paperback ed.
Reviewed by Gary E. Smith

Author Paul Ryan has produced a short but tightly written review on the history of and problems encountered by the US military machine in the planning and staging of this famous rescue attempt.

The official Halloway Investigation found two broad reasons why the mission went wrong. First, a trained task force was not available and one had to be brought together, training in such secret that no one would know what was going on. Which meant that each section trained independent of the others, to the detriment of overall effectiveness. Second, the Joint Chiefs of Staff did not have an independent advisory staff outside of the groups planning the raid to check said plans and make constructive comments.

Ryan's book backs up these two points quite well, especially the point on training. However, though even Ryan doesn't say it outright, there exists in his book one other major point worth noting; Murphy's Law, which came into play as almost a direct result of the training problem mentioned earlier.

Consider the following points:

The site selected as the first landing ground to refuel the helicopters (Desert One) was a remote stretch of road rarely used. Within 60 minutes of the first landing there of US forces, three vehicles blundered into the US perimeter. Two were stopped, one escaped!

Next, prudent military officers always want 100% spares on dangerous "must-do" missions to insure success, or at least 70-80%. You can't risk all because you didn't bring a screwdriver. If six helicopters were the minimum necessary to have at Desert One, then at least 10, if not 12 were required to start out from the carrier Nimitz. There was room for 11 on the Nimitz. However, civilian advisors to President Carter wanted this mission to be a quick, bold strike, and so pushed for fewer men and machines. The military gave in. But given the distance and mission and men (150+), this was certainly not a raid, instead it was an operation requiring full support.

So, if only 8 helicopters were authorized and sent, why were only 5 available at Desert One? All were very well maintained. Well, one dropped out due to an indicated imminent rotor failure on the instruments. However, this type of failure had only ever been detected three times before, and was an incorrect detection all three times! The second developed a leak in a hydraulic system in a place where it could not be fixed. While flyable, the machine had no spare system now. And lastly, the final helicopter had a cooling pump seize, causing the instrument panel to either quit or give erratic readings. Why did the pump seize? It seems one of the crew put his equipment on the cooling intake vent, cutting off the air supply to the pump and causing it to overheat and burn out! At this point the mission was cancelled.

Summing up, the mission was filled with cross-purpose directives between the military and civilian planners such that a camel was produced instead of the swift horse necessary. The civilians wanted a bold, swift strike while the military was forced to plan for a three day "invasion", sneaking around inside a foreign country. Casualties were supposed to be kept at a minimum. yet C-130 gunships were on call to spray the streets around the embassy to cover the raid. Finally, even if the hostages were successfully spirited away, there were over 200 American nationals "on business" in Iran at that time. Do you think they might have been able to get a plane flight out after the raid?

This book is good, thoughtful reading and helps to show why a big, hi-tech war machine needs to keep experts on down-and-dirty warfare trained and ready for action at all times.

Riddle of the Griffon
Crimson Crystal Adventure #1

by Susan Lawson
(TSR, Inc. $2.95; 143 pgs.)
Reviewed by Paula Warner

Riddle of the Griffon is a book for the young-at-heart — not profound, but fun, fast-paced and friendly.

The reader assumes the role of Garik, a young man who has been learning magic from his father, and is now being sent on a mission by the great wizard, Simon. This mission — to find the mysterious Blue Crystal, which will help bring about the downfall of wicked King Parthon, by neutralizing the power of his **yellow** crystal — is fraught with danger, and Garik is often faced with decisions, such as which road to take, or who to trust. The outcome of these decisions can mean success or failure.

Each choice is in the reader's own hands; a different page must be turned to for each possible decision. The Red Crystal (included with the book) can be used to reveal hidden doors, messages, etc. in the book's illustrations. These clues may help the reader to make the proper decision.

With so many different possible choices, one can read and re-read this book any number of times, with many variations and several very different endings — both successful and tragic. It's quite possible to complete the adventure without encountering the Griffon at all, though any number of other creatures may appear. Often, Garik is assisted by Andria, who is Simon's clever granddaughter. Other times, he must face the varied perils by himself.

Although some people may think red crystal itself to be an unneccessary gimmick, the book is a lot of fun; and if the ending's a little too grim at times, it's only a matter of trying again.

The Gamer's Guide
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The cost for your listing is a flat $1.00, please add an additional 50¢ for each additional **consecutive** sue you want this **same, identical** ad to run in.

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This is a FREE listing provided as a service and will be run in all appropriate issues automatically.

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The cost for your listing is a flat $2.00, please add an additional $1.00 for each additional **consecutive** sue you want this **same, identical** ad to run in.

THE GAMER'S GUIDE
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Phone Number: ( ) _____ -optional.

On a separate sheet of paper, you may write up to **thirty (30) words** (yes; a, and, the, etc. **are** words) for your ad which the copy above will follow. You might wish to include a description, set-up, rules, and first turn fees, or mention that they can write for further information about the types of PBM games you run.

The cost for your listing is a flat $2.00, please add an additional $1.00 for each additional **consecutive** issue you want this **same, identical** ad to run in.

THE GAMER'S GUIDE
Retail Sales Listing Form

Please **PRINT (neatly)**, as appropriate, on the form below.

usiness Name: _____

For more information, write or visit us at:".

ddress: _____

ity: _____

rovince/State: _____ PC/Zip: _____

hone Number: ( ) _____

On a separate sheet of paper, you may write up to **thirty (30) words** (yes; a, and, the, etc. **are** words) for our ad which the copy will after "For more information..." will follow. You might wish to include the types of ames and other supplies you carry, store hours, and whether people should send for a complete store atalog.

The cost for your listing is a flat $4.00, please add an additional $2.00 for each additional **consecutive** sue you want this **same, identical** ad to run in.

THE GAMER'S GUIDE
Wholesale Suppliers Listing Form

Please **PRINT (neatly)**, as appropriate, on the form below.

Business Name: _____

"For more information, write us at:"

Address: _____

City: _____

Province/State: _____ PC/Zip: _____

Phone Number: ( ) _____

On a separate sheet of paper, you may write up to **thirty (30) words** (yes; a, and, the, etc. **are** words) for your ad which the copy after "For more information..." will follow. You might **wish** to include the types of games and other supplies you carry, store hours, and whether people should send for a complete wholesale catalog.

The cost for your listing is a flat $4.00, please add an additional $2.00 for each additional **consecutive** issue you want this **same, identical** ad to run in.

The Counter Mix

All The News Before It's News!

by Alan Emrich

Before this year progresses another day further, I believe it is time to make some predictions about the future of our hobby. After reading obscenities in my tea leaves and chipping my crystal ball, I can begin to clearly see where we're going...

I forsee some of the major companies will be doing new things in the year ahead. Hero Games will go into the food franchise business, forming the Hero Sandwich & Game Co. A Champion on rye will become their best selling "Super Hero" sandwich, along with square cubes of onions (ie. "diced"). Hero involving interaction with different types of bread. This will simulate the Franco-Prussian war between the Kaiser and the French rolls. Look for this in your grocer's bakery section.

Others will introduce "roll-playing" food supplements. The product line will feature Hero Herbs, Villian Vitamins and the Arch Enema. Proctor & Gamble will try a hostile takeover bid for Mayfair, but Darwin Bromley, in full armor with lance, will ride through the stock exchange on a horse in an attempt to rally gamers behind Mayfair. This stunt will work, not because gamers will be rallied, but because the stock exchange buyer for P&G will have a coronary at the site.

World Wide Wargames will change their name to World Wide Warlords. This will be the direct result of a 60 minutes interview where Mike Wallace gives Keith Poulter a scathing third degree. Keith, however, will remain calm and cool in his pith helmet and shades. An excerpt follows:

60 Minutes: "How does it feel to be making a fortune marketing games about the deaths of millions of people? About war and all of the evils of mankind?"

Keith Poulter: "We don't make history, we just package it. We're working on a game right now about crusading journalists who cause plant closures and lay off thousands of people. It's about poverty and all the evils of mankind these crusading journalists cause."

Fire & Movement magazine will come out with a swim suit edition this year. Not to be sexist, there will be wargaming couples featured engaging in heated battles. F&M will also be the first to cover live role-playing wargames, wherein players ride around in tanks or fly in planes trying to capture hill #127. The first such theme park, Patton Place, will open in the California desert, and close soon afterwards from the high insurance costs.

Also cutting in on Hero's sandwich market, Steve Jackson Games will release a companion soft drink called U.R.P.S. SJG will also begin a secret black market sales campaign around their new game, SSSHH! SSSHH! is a game about gamers passing secret information along an underground black market. Most other major game companies will shake their head in wonder at this, another Steve Jackson hit game. One will even hire private investigators to provide information on "how he does it," beginning corporate espionage within SJ Games itself. SJ Games, however, will turn this whole situation into a game as well, however, and redouble their fortune.

Well, my headless chicken has stopped running around, meaning the augurs have ended. I cannot tarot any longer, so remember these words from The countermix, "APRIL FOOLS!"

The Gaming Parent:
### The Trouble with Smurfs

by Linda Woeltjen

What has the agility of a circus acrobat, is more rubbery than silly putty, and has regenerative powers to make a troll weep with jealousy? Name any cartoon hero and you're right. Sometimes Smurfs and Tiggers are thrown into a campaign by a gamemaster who wants to add some comic relief. (Aren't puns enough?) Cartoon critters are cute, but beware, for the Disneyfied dungeon has its pitfalls.

Unlike the characters in animated movies, who do get hurt and even die, the creatures of Looney-Tune-land have perfected immortality. Even the villians never perish, they can be dismembered, crushed, blown-up, or cremated and return unscathed in the next episode. (Or are we to believe that Wile E. coyote has been cloned?) They're solid plastic, like Manglors toys which can be ripped apart then smushed back together as good as new.

Imagine you're creeping through a cellar and out dance two black mice who walk upright and wear white gloves on their four-fingered paws. "Hello," the one in red shorts squeaks, "I'm Mickey, and this is my girlfriend Minnie."

They could be doppelgangers, they may be friendly, one might have vital information. Take care! You'll find attack or torture is pointless, so is starving or bribing them. They have no real needs. You must resort to coaxing, with a 90% chance their squeaky voices and playful answers will drive you mad before you can succeed.

MURPHY'S RULEZ
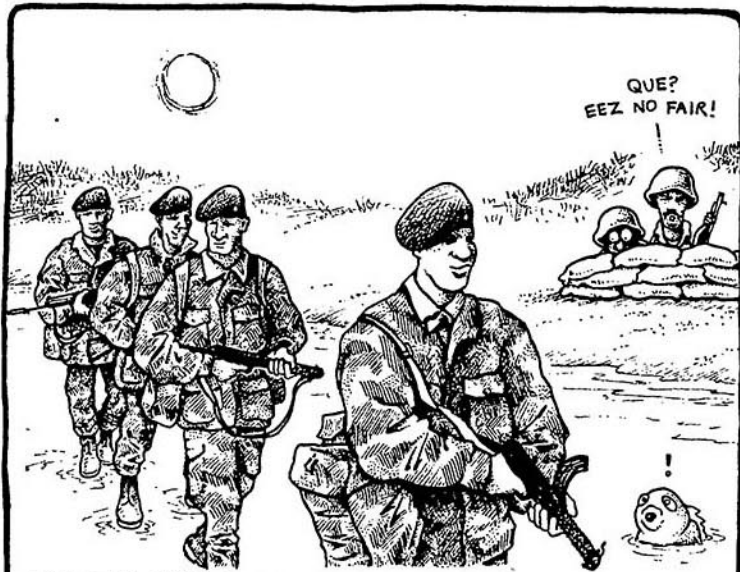
THE WALK-ON-WATER BRIGADE--
In Mayfair's WAR IN THE FALKLANDS, British infantry may move at sea without transport.
-- Steve LaPrade

QUE? EEZ NO FAIR!

THE SUBTLE APPROACH--
In Tri Tac's STALKING THE NIGHT FANTASTIC a typical agent is equipped with an exploding watch, an exploding lighter, an exploding cigarette, an exploding shoe, three exploding darts, eight exploding missiles, and ten exploding mines.
-- Michael E. Iacca

① Aaaaah...

② CHOO!

'E'S NOT DEAD YET--
In MAN TO MAN (SJ Games) a character whose body is totally destroyed is not necessarily dead.

COME BACK AND FIGHT, YOU BLOODY COWARD!

FAST THINKER--
In STAR FLEET BATTLES (Task Force) a starship captain can give 32 orders in one turn. A turn lasts one thirtieth of a second.
-- Roger M. Wilcox

Sorry, sir -- Could you run through that just ONCE more?