

GENERAL

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★ ★ The AVALON HILL GENERAL

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AH Philosophy Part 126

Summertime—and game conventions. 'Tis the season for we devotees of paper wars to get together and indulge ourselves. And, this year's ORIGINS appeared to be the best way to splurge. For this year ORIGINS was held in Milwaukee (from August 18th through the 21st) and represented, according to the organizers, the first time the "Number One Strategy Game Fair joined with the Number One Adventure Game Fair". I guess that means it was to satisfy just about everyone who likes playing games. At the very least, it was the greatest collection of dealers and distributors of games collected under one roof in this country.

The booth of The Avalon Hill Game Company was certainly a center of attention in that vast hall. There were a number of new products, and something bound to intrigue any gamer no matter his tastes. There was *ENEMY IN SIGHT* (which we sold out of)—a card game of the *NAVAL WAR* ilk, but with greater detail and challenge. There was

GETTYSBURG (Craig Taylor's design), an introductory-level wargame based on the most famous battle of our continent and intended to celebrate the 125th anniversary of this turning point of the Civil War. Richard Hamblen's *MERCHANT OF VENUS* is a multi-player, financial game of space-age wheeling and dealing, with a touch of combat for spice. (I saw quite a few folk in the open-gaming areas buckling down to learn this one.) Of course, for the "advanced Squad Leaders", *WEST OF ALAMEIN* brought the British OB and desert warfare into their hands. Too, for many gamers, ORIGINS was their first opportunity to see *KREMLIN* and *TAC AIR*. The first was released at Atlanticon to great interest and enjoyment; it makes a cut-throat, tongue-in-cheek game out of the behind-the-scenes power struggles of the ruling body of Soviet Russia. *TAC AIR* is a serious wargame about the air-land

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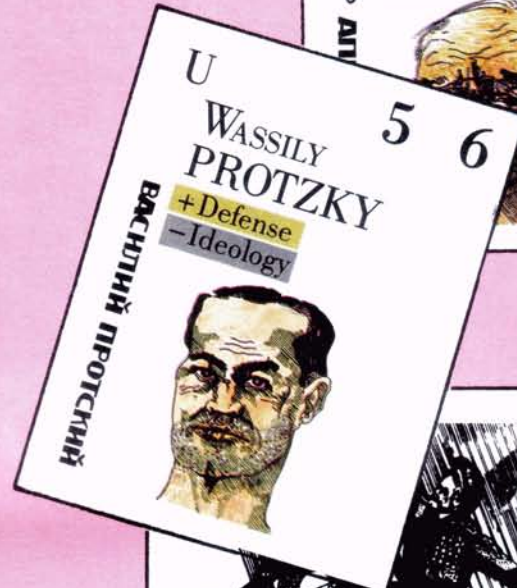
КРЕМЛИН

The very name conjures up images of power and intrigue beneath the onion-shaped spires of the world's most austere, yet powerful, capital. He who controls the governing body therein has his finger on the pulse of the world. Who is this man who holds the destiny of mankind in his hands? What is his power base? How did he become head of one of the strongest nations on earth?

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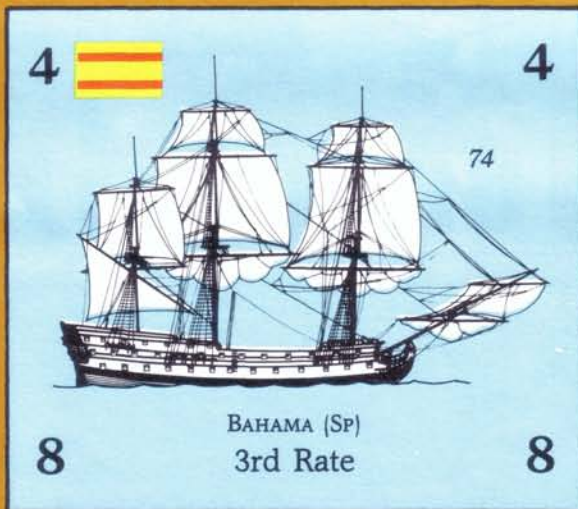
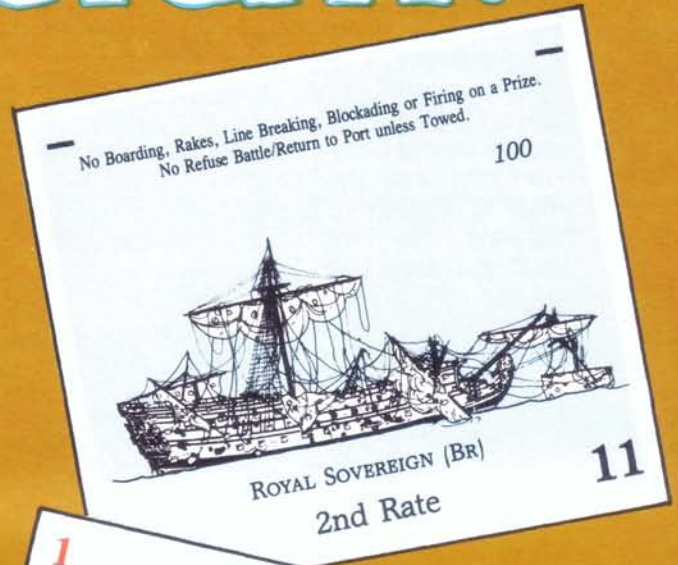
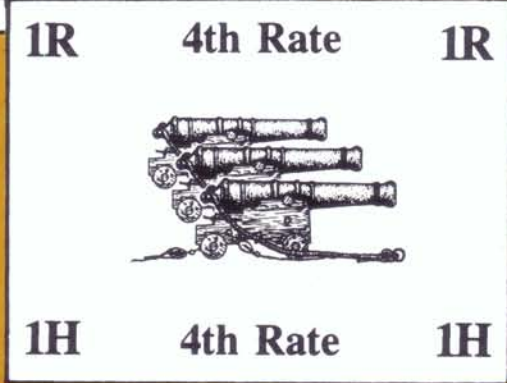
KREMLIN is now available for \$20.00 from The Avalon Hill Game Company (4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21214). Please add 10% for shipping and handling (20% for Canadian orders; 30% for overseas orders). Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.





Action

ENEMY in SIGHT!



Raise the battle sails! Run out the guns! There's an **ENEMY IN SIGHT**, broadsides to be fired, prizes to be taken and fun to be had in this exciting card game of skill and luck depicting the age of fighting sail. John Paul Jones and Lord Nelson will sail the seas again on your kitchen table in this simple recreation of 18th Century naval combat suitable for the entire family.

HMS VICTORY, USS CONSTITUTION ... Old Ironsides itself ... they're all here ... from the mighty Ships of the Line to the fast and mobile American frigates capable of making 14 knots in an open sea. Break the Line, rake the enemy's bow, set her afire and send across a Boarding Party to take her home as a Prize. Blockades, Fire Ships, Running Aground and the Weathergauge all play a role in a constantly-evolving naval battle reminiscent of Hornblower at his audacious best. So board your "Ragwagon" and join the fleet.

Each player commands a fleet of six randomly-dealt ships at start and seeks to gain points by sinking or capturing the vessels of other players. Each is free to attack any of the others, but only the player who actually sinks or captures an enemy ship gets points. So loosing a broadside at a tempting target may just make it easier for someone else to finish off your victim before you have the opportunity to do it yourself. It is also wise to keep in mind that folks tend to get upset when you ventilate their sails; before long you can expect lead flying in your direction. A bit under-

stated perhaps, but this frenzied naval free-for-all is the basis of the game. Ships are rated from 1st to 6th Rate depending on their size. The more guns a ship can carry, the more Broadside cards it can fire and the more damage it can take before it sinks. Broadside cards can be used to sink an enemy, dismast it, or used as Grape to help board it. A captured ship can be pressed into service in the captor's line or returned to port for double points. But scoring points is dangerous because it tends to unite the other players against a common enemy—you. Then too, taking a prize invites blockades of your port or the breaking of your line to prevent that prize from getting home. While you can seek refuge in Refuse Battle cards and the deep reserves of a large fleet for awhile, ultimately the combined guns of a united enemy will make any attempt to win the game a hazardous affair, because regardless of the power of your fleet, you will have only one opportunity to fire per turn while your opponents can mass several times your attack opportunities. Therein lies the trick—to convince them that their best interest lies in making driftwood of someone else. All of this is further influenced by a class of mandatory-play Action cards that not only rob players of their turn but beset their fleets with all manners of calamity.

ENEMY IN SIGHT is now available for \$12.00 from The Avalon Hill Game Company (4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214). Please add 10% for shipping and handling (20% for Canada or Mexico; 30% for overseas). Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.



THE BATTLES FOR CASSINO

The Hollow Victory

By Courtney Allen

Since the invasion of Italy in September 1943, the Allied Fifth and Eighth armies had been slowly fighting their way toward Rome. It soon became all too obvious that the Germans would not relinquish this Axis capital without a stiff brawl. Even with under-strength and weakened divisions, the German command was determined to stand at every defensive position. Their whole Italian strategy became one of selection of suitable natural defensive lines. One such line stretched from the Aurunci Mountains to the south, through Monte Cairo, and finally to the Simbruini Mountains to the north. Through this line ran the obvious route to Rome: the old *Via Casilina*, or more appropriately "Route 6". Dominating this highway was Monte Cassino, at whose base nestled the town of Cassino. And atop the 593-meter hill sat the enormous, historic Benedictine Monastery. (Saint Benedict selected Monte Cassino in 529 AD on which to build a house of God, a retreat for worship that could be readily defended against men bent on death and destruction.)

The Germans spent three months reinforcing these natural defenses, turning the line into one of Europe's most formidable obstacles. North of Cassino, the Rapido was dammed and the valley flooded. Across the Liri Valley, emplacements and tank turrets were protected by steel and concrete. Minefields and barbed wire were liberally spread. The town of Cassino itself was turned into a fortress, with self-propelled guns and machinegun nests hidden inside buildings. Up on the mountainside, mortar and gun positions were blasted out of solid rock. This was the "Gustav Line".

In January 1944, the Allied advance pulled up short in front of this barrier. For the next six months the G.I.s, Tommies, Kiwis, Gurkhas and others would slam themselves against it in a series of agonizing battles. In the end, the Allies characterized the fighting for the town of Cassino and the Monastery as some of the worst of their war, much of it reminiscent of the bitter trench warfare of World War I. In the end, the Allies would describe the fight-

ing in terms of four separate and distinct "Battles of Cassino"—or more accurately, of the Gustav Line (in January, February, March and May of 1944).

The first, in January, and the fourth in May planned to outflank the Monte Cassino bastion. The second battle in February and the third in March were direct, frontal assaults on the town and both were preceded by concentrated bombing on one selected target, the Monastery itself and Cassino respectively. My game, *THUNDER AT CASSINO*, details the third battle. But first, a few words on the preceding battles to set the scene.

THE FIRST BATTLE

The first battle of Cassino took place over the period between January 12 and February 12. The general plan of attack called for a three-pronged drive: through the mountains north of Cassino, a left hook across the river Garigliano near the coast, and a thrust up the center of the Liri Valley. Defending the Garigliano front was the German 94th Infantry Division, and stationed in the Liri Valley was the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division. General Alexander's directive to the Allied commanders stated the objective as "to make as strong a thrust as possible towards Cassino and Frosinone (on the route to Rome) shortly before the Anzio assault landing to draw in enemy reserves . . . and then to create a breach in his front through which every opportunity will be taken to link up rapidly with the seaborne operation."

After some initial successes, the advance of the British 10th Corps over the Garigliano and the advance of the U.S. II Corps up the Liri Valley were halted. Kesselring, acting with alacrity, had ordered the 29th and 90th Panzer Grenadier divisions, along with elements of the Hermann Goering Panzer Division, to drive south to help the hard-pressed defenders. On 21 January, these formations counter-attacked the British 10th Corps, halting it. The next day, the Allies came ashore at Anzio; but Kesselring

again reacted quickly and at once threw the 29th and 90th divisions in to seal off the Anzio beachhead. And thus began the see-saw relationship between Cassino and Anzio for the German command.

Even as the British and American drives faltered, the Free French in the mountains to the north made slow but steady progress. To support this slow-developing success, Mark Clark decided to envelop the whole Cassino sector from the north. General Juin's French Corps was redirected, and the U.S. 34th Division was to attack across the Rapido, wheel inside the French position, and take the mountains north of and behind Monte Cassino.

Although the Rapido region was a quagmire, the U.S. 135th and 168th Infantry regiments succeeded in capturing the village of Caira and two nearby high points. The French continued to make unspectacular but consistent gains, clearing Monte Belvedere and Monte Abate. But they were unable to fight their way into the town of Terelle. To crack the developing deadlock, the U.S. 34th Infantry Division—reinforced by elements of the 36th—would force itself up the rugged and rocky slopes, wheel left and attack southwards toward the monastery. But the terrain they faced was formidable, and the enemy (which now included units of the 1st Parachute Division) dug in.

The two American divisions did manage to capture the first obstacle, Monte Castellone. And, fighting with the greatest determination, the G.I.s advanced yard by yard to take Monte Maiola beyond. From there, they assaulted and captured Point 706 and Point 175—just opposite Castle Hill (Area 9)—by February 3rd. But furious and gallant attempts to take Points 193 and 444 were beaten back by the German paratroopers. With the average strength of some rifle companies in these two divisions down to 30 men, the Americans had come to a standstill. Their efforts had brought them to within a few hundred yards of the crests of Monte Cassino and within one-and-a-half miles of Route 6 below.

The first Battle of Cassino drew to a close with a grim accounting. The cost was tragic: battle casualties among the British numbered 4145, and in American divisions totaled a staggering 10230. The Cassino sector now became the responsibility of the New Zealand Corps, consisting of the 2nd New Zealand Division and the 4th Indian Division. Because the U.S. troops had come so near to victory at Cassino, it seemed that a further attempt might well readily succeed. The groundwork was laid for the second battle.

THE SECOND BATTLE

The new effort called for the deployment of the 4th Indian Division, which was experienced in mountain warfare, to capture Monte Cassino coordinated with an attack on the town by the 2nd New Zealand Division from the southeast. Dominating the positions atop Monte Cassino lay the Benedictine Monastery. Various Allied officers believed that the Germans were using the monastery for military purposes; in the end, it was decided to precede the attack by bombing the monastery from the air. On the morning of February 15th, a total of 443 tons of bombs were dropped. Some 222 heavy and medium bombers, in a remarkable bit of precision bombing, leveled the complex—an act destined to be of no military advantage to the Allies except for the temporary lift in the morale of the troops who witnessed it.

Following the bombing, the Royal Sussex Battalion was committed to clear Point 593. For two days and nights the English struggled, but in the wild and savage fighting, the German paratroopers of the 3rd Parachute Regiment could not be dislodged. With the withdrawal of the Royal Sussex, the New Zealand Corps assigned new tasks and

objectives. At midnight on February 17th, the Indians moved out. The 4/6 Rajputana Rifles made for Point 193, Castle Hill (Area 9). Covering their left, the 1/9 Gurkhas would attack towards Point 444, while the 1/2 Gurkhas had the monastery ruins as their objective. In the valley below, two companies of the 28th Maori Battalion were to cross the Rapido and capture the railway station for Cassino town (Area 23) as a preliminary to forcing entrance into the Liri Valley.

Although each Indian battalion fought hard for its objectives over the next day, none were attained. Advances like that of the 4/6th came within a hundred yards of the summit, pinned there by intense machinegun and mortar fire. Although Point 193 was neither captured nor neutralized as planned, the 1/9th began its attack towards Point 444 at 0215 hours. After an advance of some 300 yards, they too were stopped cold by the intense German fire. Finally, at 0330 the 1/2nd Gurkhas opened their attack against their objectives, no more than 500 yards away. They dashed forward into dense thickets, but it proved to be sown with anti-personnel mines and trip wires. Only a handful of men forced their way through the hazards, only to be halted by fierce German crossfire on the other side. With the dawn, the battalions had no option but to withdraw and take up defensive positions among the rocks on the bare slopes.

While the Indians had been fighting hard on the hills and mountains, the Maoris in the valley below had attacked along the railway line. After a slow but resolute advance, one company managed to capture the station. Later that day, the Germans counterattacked with infantry and a handful of tanks, supported by heavy fire from artillery and mortars. The two Maori companies, weakened by casualties

and unable to receive reinforcements, were forced to retreat back across the river.

Thus the second battle, like the first, so nearly succeeded that the Allied commanders were impressed. Although there was less gained in this instance, they began planning for a third attempt. It was clearly necessary to adopt new tactics if the Gustav Line was to be breached.

THE THIRD BATTLE

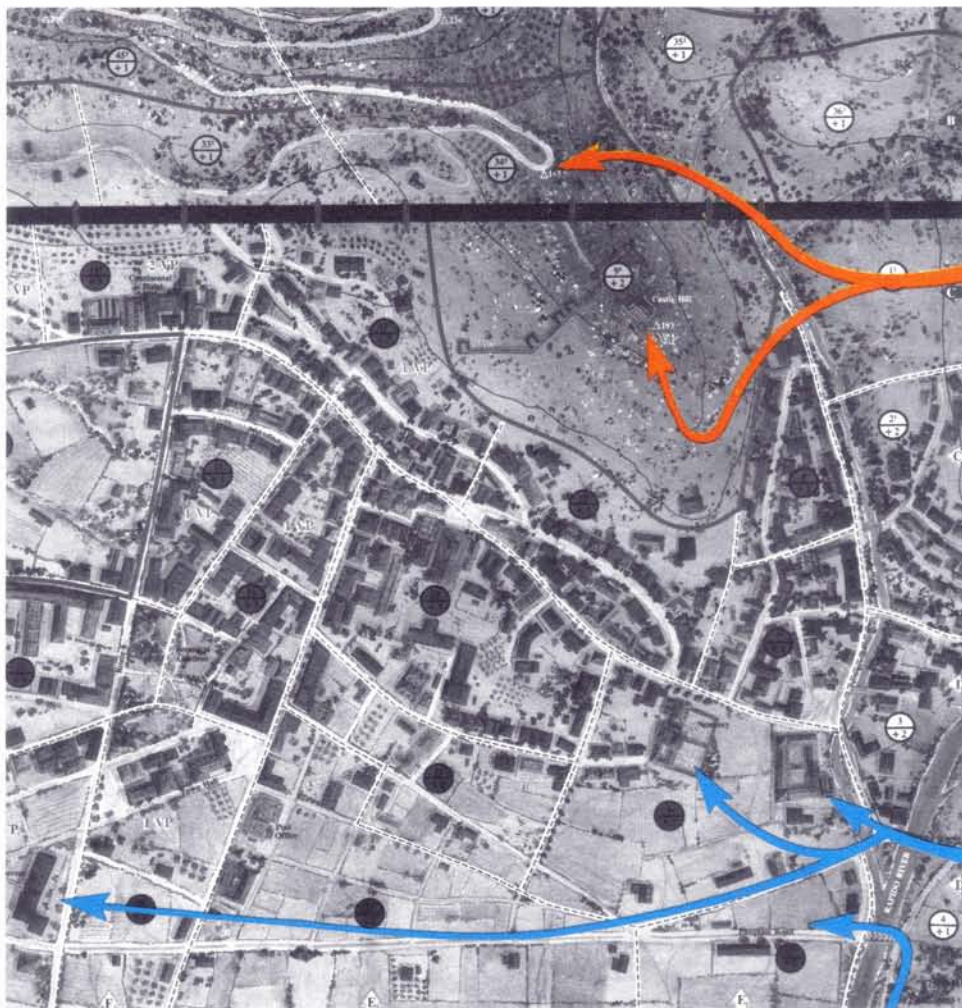
The third battle for Cassino (and the one depicted in the game) was known as Operation *Dickens*. Its avowed aim was to capture Cassino and Monte Cassino, and so to develop a bridgehead in the Liri Valley for the spring offensive that was to break the Gustav Line. Preparations were completed, and the operation was scheduled to begin on February 24—but unscheduled weather postponed the opening for three weeks. New Zealanders and Indians clung to their dank and unsanitary holes, even as the Germans carried out relief of the troops in place until the whole area was firmly in the hands of Oberst Heidrich's 1st Parachute Division. The vile weather finally lifted, and the attack was fixed for March 15th.

As with the previous assault, the battle would start with a massive air attack. This time the town of Cassino, from which the Germans had evacuated the civilians months before, was reduced to rubble in a three-and-a-half hour onslaught. Some 445 bombers laid 992 tons of explosives in the area, almost half of which fell within one mile of the town center. It was inconceivable to the Allied soldiers watching that anybody could survive, but although half of the 2nd Battalion of the 3rd Parachute Regiment perished, the remaining Germans struggled out of the ruins and readied themselves for battle.

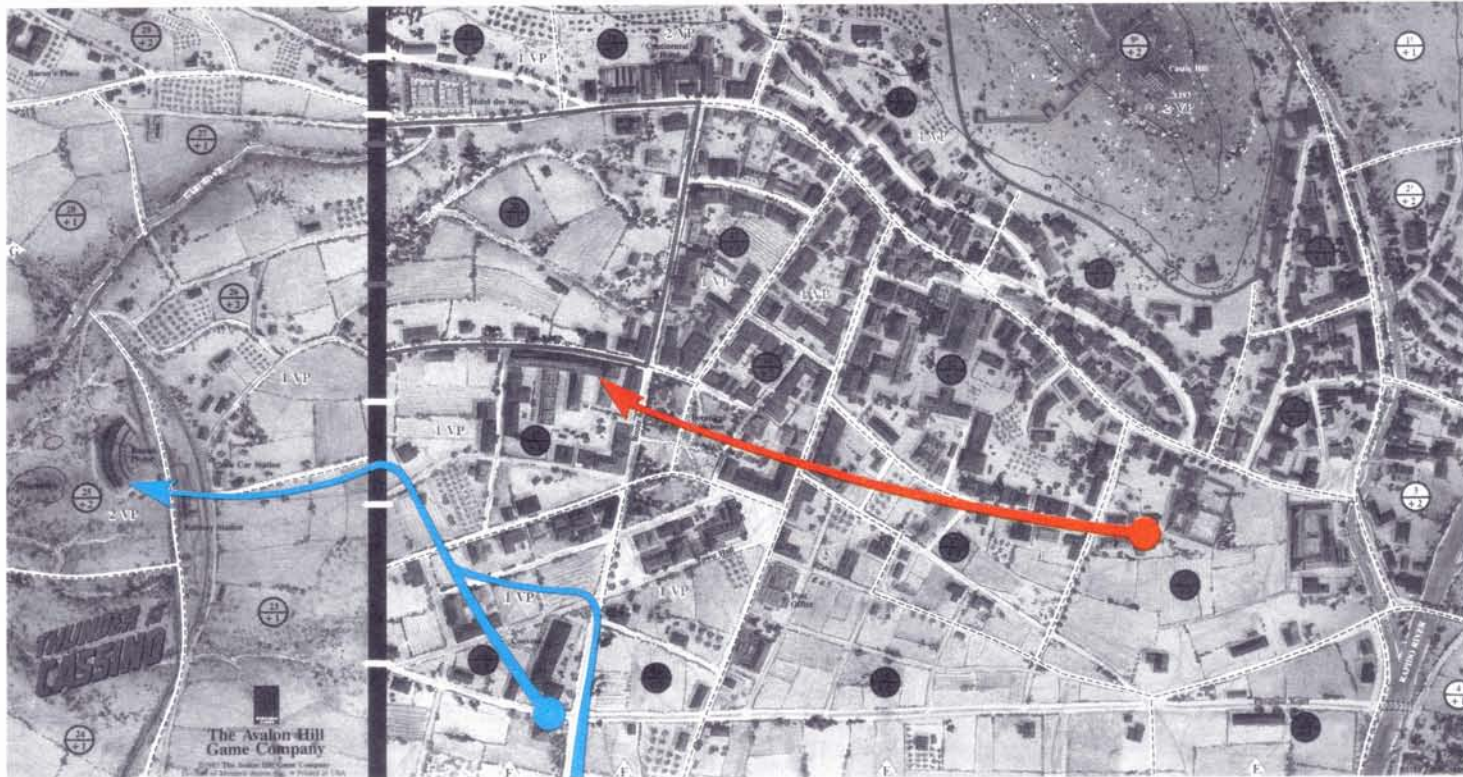
Next the Allied big guns opened up (some 195000 rounds would be dropped on Cassino between noon and 1900 hours). Companies A and B of the 25th New Zealand Battalion entered the town along the Caruso Road (Zone C), followed by a squadron of Sherman tanks from the 19th Armored Regiment. Their immediate objective was along Route 6, a line designated on planning maps as the "Quisling Line". But, as the leading soldiers passed the prison (Area 6), the Kiwis were met with concentrated rifle and machinegun fire. The advance slowed, as they were forced to fight their way forward at a rate of about 100 yards an hour. By dusk, only one company had managed to crawl forward as far as the Convent (Area 22). The Sherman tanks had proved of little worth, as these made no headway in the piles of masonry and cratered rubble.

In the meantime, a brilliant attack by D Company of the 25th was successful in capturing their objective—Castle Hill (Area 9). Approaching the hill from a ravine, half the company scaled the rocky walls and flanked the enemy positions at Point 165 (Area 34). Rushing the "yellow house" there, the New Zealanders secured that position but now came under fire from Point 236 (Area 44) above them. Even as all this was taking place, the remainder of the company had worked its way around the foot of Castle Hill, scaled the rocks and, after a prolonged grenade battle, captured the strongpoint. The units on 165 were now withdrawn into the castle because of their exposed position.

As night fell, it brought with it rain, slowing all operations to a crawl. After darkness came, reserves were brought up by the New Zealand commander. The 26th New Zealand Battalion moved around the east side of the town and joined up with the 25th. The 1/4 Essex arrived, relieving the battered D Company on Castle Hill; and in fact captured Point



March 15: The red arrows show the advance of Company D of the 25th Battalion; blue, the advance of Company A, supported by B Squadron of the 19th Armored.



165 in the rain as well. Two companies from the 1/6 Rajputana Rifles arrived, were committed, and captured their objective (Point 236) but were driven off; the remainder of the battalion was scattered in the dark by a German artillery concentration and were lost for the rest of the night. In the meantime, Company C of the 1/9 Gurkhas infiltrated the enemy positions and reached "Hangman's Hill"—Point 435 (Area 65).

During the 16th, the Allied commanders worked frantically to reinforce the Indian troops for their final drive to the monastery ruins. To secure the flanks, A and B companies of the 1/6th Rajputana again stormed Point 236 but again had to withdraw back to the castle after holding it for a short time. And during the night Gurkhas, after some eight hours, were able to reach their comrades on Hangman's Hill just in time to beat off a determined attack at about 0500.

Even as the battle was raging on the hill, the fighting in the town continued unabated. The 26th New Zealand was ordered to pass through the 25th and capture the railway station (Area 23) and the "Hummocks" just beyond (Area 25). But the tired soldiers were unable to make much progress beyond capturing a few houses and clearing the Convent (Area 22) in the tangled ruin of Cassino. Both battalions stood just south of Route 6 now. As dawn broke on the 17th, the 25th New Zealanders and B Company of the 24th, led by Shermans, pushed towards the Botanical Gardens (Area 16) and the Continental Hotel (Area 18). Block by bitter block, they fought their way to within two hundred yards of the hotel. This allowed the 26th to attack toward the south towards the railway station. With tank support from A Squadron of the 19th New Zealand Armored, the 26th was able to seize both the station and the "Hummocks". With this success, the uncommitted elements of the 24th were ordered to sweep the area from the Continental Hotel to the Colosseum ruins (Area 29). By nightfall, it had become thoroughly entangled with the 25th in clearing pockets of resistance throughout the town.

The fourth day of battle began with only a small portion of the town remaining under German control: that around the Continental Hotel and the *Hotel des Roses* (Area 19). Capture of these areas was

necessary because they not only dominated the exit of Route 6 from the town, but enemy troops there could fire into the flank of any moving across the slopes of Monastery Hill towards Hangman's Hill. Therefore, in the early hours of the 18th, Company C of the 24th New Zealand Battalion left the region around Point 165 to assault Point 202 (Area 45), and then turn to attack from the rear the Continental. The New Zealanders reached 202 without difficulty, but the assault on the hotel failed. Further attacks by the 25th Battalion also collapsed, although a few strongpoints and machinegun nests near the building fell. At the railway station, sharp counterattacks by the Parachute MG Battalion kept the 26th busy, preventing them from making any progress of their own.

In the early hours of the 19th, companies C and D of the Maori Battalion were thrown into the battle in hopes that they, along with the wearied 25th New Zealand, could take the Continental Hotel and *Hotel des Roses*. The Maoris made some progress, notably between the twin arms of Route 6, and some troops even reached the bottom of Monte Cassino. But, as dark fell after the bloody afternoon and with the pace of other developments, they were forced to withdraw.

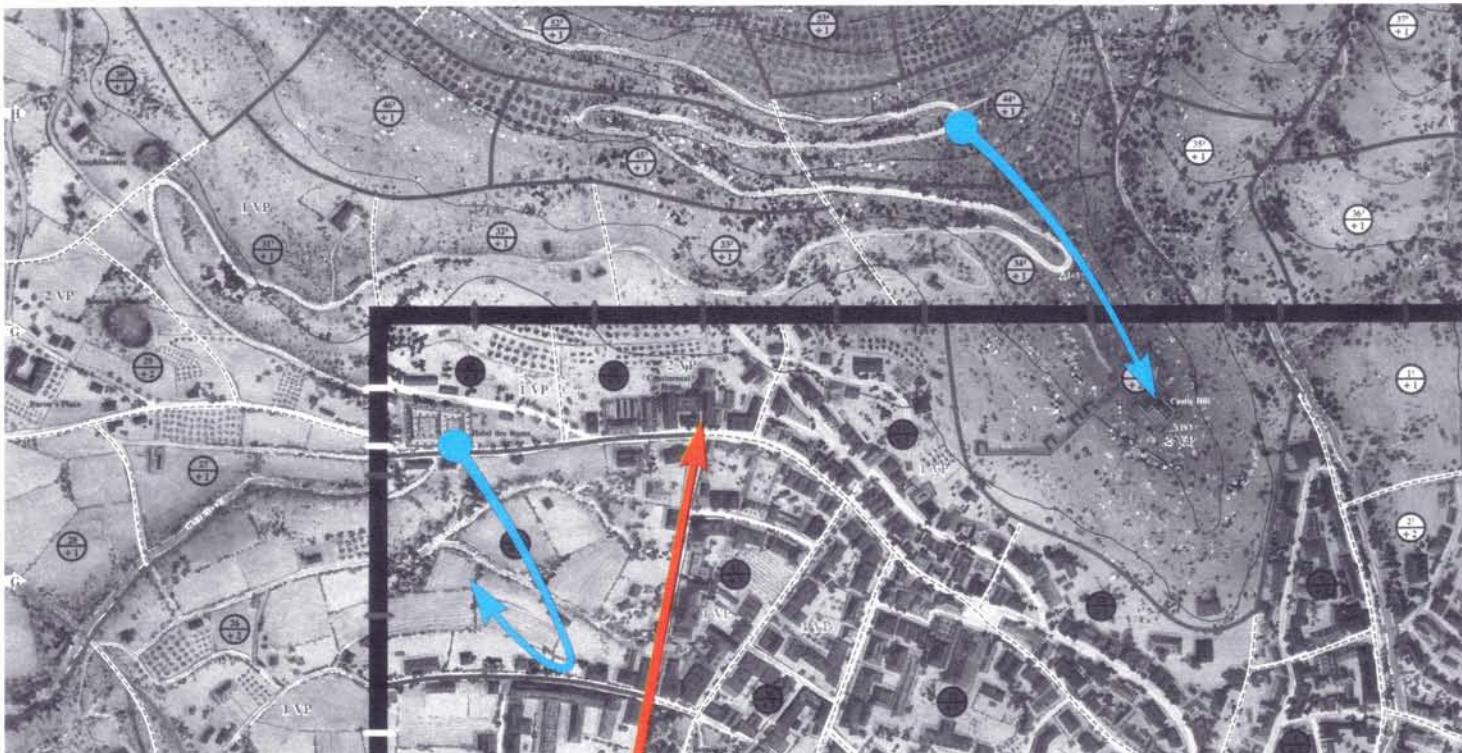
With German reinforcements arriving daily, the German command felt strong enough on the 19th to launch their own attacks. The first hit Castle Hill even as the 1/4 Essex were moving out to reinforce the Gurkhas at Hangman's Hill for an attack on the monastery ruins. Companies B and D had already left the shelter of the castle when the massed 1st Battalion, 4th Parachute Regiment swarmed down from Point 236, overrunning the defenders at Point 165 and the two British companies, and up to the very walls of the castle. What followed was an extraordinary fight for the castle itself, which resembled a medieval siege waged with modern weapons. After several assaults, the German attack tailed off—although A and C companies of the 1/4 Essex and a company of the 4/6 Rajputana which defended the walls had suffered heavy casualties. The remnants of 1/4 Essex B and D pushed on to Hangman's Hill, but only forty men remained in condition to fight and the attack on the peak was again postponed.

March 16: The red arrows show the advance of the 24th Battalion; the blue, that of the 26th with support of a Squadron of the 19th.

Although the Gurkha and Essex attack on the "front door" was not to occur, an armored thrust up the Cavendish road was not called off. On the morning of the German counterattack, Shermans and Stuarts of the 20th New Zealand Armored Regiment, the 7th Indian Brigade and the 760th U.S. Tank Battalion struggled up the track from Caira and attacked Albaneta Farm (behind Snakeshead Ridge). It was intended that they then push on and arrive at the "back door" of the monastery. With such a two-pronged attack, it was confidently expected that the ruins would be cleared. Having suppressed the Germans at Point 593 and Point 575, the armored force continued on to a line less than a thousand yards from the summit. But, as the Germans recovered from the initial surprise, tanks began to be knocked out. With no infantry support, it was a lost cause. At 1730, this attack was cancelled and the force withdrew with six tanks destroyed and 16 damaged.

By mid-day on the 19th, the Allied command realized the battle was a lost cause. Casualties and exhaustion had brought most of the involved units to the point of collapse. Instead, however, of ending the struggle, it was decided to commit the last fresh units (which had been retained till now for the exploitation of the breakthrough). The 23rd New Zealand Battalion of the 5th Brigade relieved the 25th in the north and central parts of the town. The 6th Royal West Kents of the 36th Infantry Brigade took over Castle Hill. Finally, the 26th New Zealand was relieved at the railway station by the 5th Buffs.

On the night of March 20th, the 6th Royal West Kents attacked Point 165 (Area 34) even as a single company of the 2/7 Gurkhas attacked Point 445 (Area 57). Weak in numbers, both attacks failed miserably. By this time, the 21st New Zealand had been committed alongside the 24th New Zealand for one last attack to seize a line between Point 202 and the Continental Hotel. Although it made an impression on the German defenders, it too petered out during the daylight hours of the 21st. Despite these setbacks, the Allied commanders continued their efforts throughout the 22nd in fighting that at



March 19: The red arrows show the advance of the 25th Battalion; the blue arrows, the attacks by German paratroopers.

tives passed the merely "savage". But the German strongpoints around the hotels could not be destroyed, and by evening the new Allied units had been exhausted as well. Sporadic fighting continued into March 23rd, but the third battle was over. In one final courageous action, the Gurkha, Essex and Rajput survivors on Hangman's Hill withdrew from the isolated knoll they had held since March 18th.

In the end, there was no clear victor of the third Battle of Cassino. The small bridgehead carved out by the troops was not used for the spring offensive, Operation *Diadem*. But the damage inflicted on the 1st Parachute Division was in line with the avowed purpose of the entire Italian campaign—the destruction of German divisions and diverting of replacements from other fronts. Only in this light could the Allies claim the battle a victory, a "hollow victory" indeed.

THE FOURTH BATTLE

Clearly the stalemate at Cassino and at Anzio (which continued to drag on) could only be broken with a supreme effort. The fourth Battle of Cassino was to be on quite a different scale than the previous three attempts to break the Gustav Line. This final battle in turn would be only a small, and indecisive part, in the massive Operation *Diadem*. Where a single brigade had served in the first battle, two entire divisions would be used in the fourth. The basic plan was fairly straightforward, depending more on sheer numerical and material superiority than on finesse. The 2nd Polish Corps, comprised of the 3rd Carpathian and 5th Kresowa divisions, was to take the ridges north of Monte Cassino and the monastery itself. The 13th British Corps was to force an entrance into the Liri Valley. On their left, the U.S. 85th and 88th Infantry divisions and the French 1st Motorized, 2nd Moroccan, 3rd Algerian and 4th Moroccan divisions were to sweep through the Aurunci Mountains between the Liri and the sea.

On May 11, all four Allied corps went into the attack. The men of the U.S. II Corps (the 85th and

88th divisions) made no significant headway; but the French began to make some spectacular gains in the mountains. In the Liri Valley, the 3rd Indian Division successfully crossed the Gari River, south of Sant' Angelo, by the 12th but was unable to enlarge its bridgehead and was forced back to the east bank. The first attack by the Polish forces jumped off at dusk on the 11th. Although they succeeded in completely capturing Snakeshead Ridge (Zone A), General Anders feared his forward troops too exposed, and they were withdrawn in the face of strong German fire. Rather than order a renewed attack, Anders settled in to wait for the 13th British Corps to make some progress in the valley.

By this time, it was evident that the German defenders of the Gustav Line were fighting desperately but could not withstand the onslaught. The French, fighting with great elan, captured Monte Maio and Ausenta; the German right flank collapsed and the 71st Infantry Division was in flight towards Esperia. The American divisions drove the German 94th westwards along the coast. In the Liri, the German defenses were penetrated on the 16th; the next day the British 4th cut Route 6 and isolated the town of Cassino. At mid-morning the next day, the Poles attacked once more—only to find that the majority of the defenders had withdrawn down the hill during the previous night. At 1015 on the 17th May, a patrol of the 12 Podolski Lancers hoisted the Polish flag over the ruins of the monastery, now deserted but for a few wounded German paratroopers. The fourth and last Battle of Cassino was over.



AH Philosophy . . . Cont'd from Page 2

combat of a hypothetical Third War in the Hof Gap region of Germany.

As for the competitors among the attendees, we had a full slate tournaments hosted by Avalon Hill. Craig Taylor oversaw the *FLIGHT LEADER* three-round tournament and the four-round competition in the new *TAC AIR*. And, of course, he tested the mettle of a hardy few with a two-round tourney for *FIREPOWER*. Charlie Kibler headed the single elimination *ASL* tournament making use of the com-

ponents of *PARTISANI* and *BEYOND VALOR*. Don Greenwood was kept busy hosting competition in some of our latest releases—*MERCHANT OF VENUS*, *DINOSAURS OF THE LOST WORLD*, and *KREMLIN*; quite a range with something for everyone's tastes I should think. The designer of *ENEMY IN SIGHT*, Neil Schaffer, first led quite a few folk in a demonstration of his new game, followed on Saturday by the tournament. I "volunteered" to watch over the competitions in *PLATOON* and *BRITANNIA*.

If the pressure of competition put attendees off, we also hosted a number of "hands-on" demonstrations for several of our new games. This gave them a chance to play, or watch being played, one of the new titles—to ask questions, to pick up pointers for play, and generally to learn about some of our favorites. It was undoubtedly the best way for convention-goers to decide if they liked the games of Avalon Hill—*MERCHANT OF VENUS*, *ENEMY IN SIGHT*, *KREMLIN*. As well, Charlie Kibler introduced participants to the joys of playing *ASL* with miniatures, even as Craig Taylor did for *FLIGHT LEADER* enthusiasts. We wrapped up our convention events, as usual, with an open seminar, giving attendees the chance to meet and grill the designers, artist and editors of Avalon Hill. Hopefully, we were able to answer some of the tough questions posed there to everyone's satisfaction, and give them a peek at upcoming projects. For my part, a free "Special Issue" of the *GENERAL* (containing a number of reprinted articles on a wide variety of games) displayed some of the format changes to be instituted when we expand to 64 pages next issue.

Readers can see that we hoped to make our presence at ORIGINS felt, and to make it one of the best conventions for all gamers who attended. It might have been cool outside the Mecca Convention Center this August, but things were a lot hotter inside—new games, straight talk, tough competition. If you missed the convention, you missed one of life's more enjoyable weekends. Perhaps next year, you'll make plans to attend ORIGINS in Los Angeles. We'll promise to try to make it as exciting as this year's show in Milwaukee.



DIGGING IN

Setting Up to Survive the Thunder

By Donald Greenwood

Preparing to start a game wherein the first act is the observation of 460 enemy bombers thinning your ranks is hardly a confidence builder. But that's the hand the Germans are dealt in *THUNDER AT CASSINO* and like it or not those bombs are going to fall, so they had best be prepared for it. My first few trials with saturation bombing were pretty sobering experiences as half a battalion was regularly pulverized before the first Allied unit entered the board. Experience has brought wisdom, however, and with it survival for more of my paratroops in subsequent games. It is the results of this trial-and-error experience that I hope to share with fellow German commanders who have not yet experienced the horrors of the Allied bombing. (No doubt a careful reading by Allied players will reveal some pitfalls to be avoided by the green, red and tan units as well.)

It should be obvious from the outset that the results of the Allied bombing will vary the start of each game. How could it be otherwise with 32 dice rolls being made to determine initial casualties and rubble before play commences? Discussion of strategy beyond the initial setup is therefore dependent on variables too myriad to consider here. Consequently, this discussion will be limited solely to an analysis of the German initial setup—or "Digging In" if you prefer.

The overwhelming goal of this setup is to minimize casualties from the bombardment. While that may appear ridiculously obvious to many, it is easy to lose sight of the importance of preserving troops in one's blind zeal to defend territory. And while the matter of deciding what price to pay for real estate—be it on offense or defense—is integral to all wargames, in *THUNDER AT CASSINO* it is important for the German to realize that he can't realistically expect to hold the town. Its loss is only a matter of time and the price exacted. Troops lost in the first turn are never available to retard the Allied advance in subsequent turns, so each unit lost increases the momentum of the Allied steamroller. It is better to bend in the opening turns than to break in the middle of the game and surrender everything. This setup follows that advice strenuously. The only way to further lessen expected casualties to the bombardment would be to abandon Castle Hill and withdraw three units from +2 *Terrain Effect Modifier* (hereafter TEM) areas into the hinterlands of Areas 17 and 18. Such a defense would be passive to the extreme, and I dismiss it as unworthy of consideration.

You'll notice that I've resisted the urge to place more than two units in any of the bombardment areas. Not only does concentration of four units in an area increase casualties, it can actually lessen the chance of holding an area. Casualties are determined by rolling one die for every two units in an area and subtracting the TEM for that area. As the TEM is applied only once in each area regardless of the number of dice rolled, it doesn't take an Einstein to quickly realize that two units is the most efficient initial garrison for any area. The maximum *Casualty Points* (hereafter CP) in a +3 TEM area is three (6-3=3) if occupied by two units, and nine (12-3=9) if occupied by more. On average, you can expect to lose four CP in a +3 TEM area if fully occupied, but a mere .5 CP with only two units occupying it.

At the risk of being pedantic, I'll now state what should be obvious to those well-versed in this game. If economy of force is the primary goal, defense

of Castle Hill is not far behind. I've found Area 9 to be the key to most battles. Not every game will feature a struggle for Castle Hill because the Allied player should take what he is given. Forcing an assault into the teeth of a defense is rarely beneficial. But if the setup, the bombardment, or both leave an opening for Allied troops to take Castle Hill, it invariably becomes the focal point of the battle. Not only does its occupation allow the Allies to bypass Areas 6, 7, 8 and 10, and give easy access to the Quisling Line Victory Point bonus of Area 11, it provides an elevation TEM advantage against all fire from the town. More important, however, is the perch it provides Allied observers from which to direct artillery fire into the Continental Hotel and halfway up the mountain. I don't believe any assault on the Monastery can be successful without control of Castle Hill. Climbing that mountain in the face of German artillery fire with only +1 TEM terrain to soften the blow is just too costly a proposition if Allied Observers have to spend half their time scurrying from one observation area to another just to obliterate German rear guards. Castle Hill is real estate worth dying for.

Not surprisingly then, if my setup errs, it is in its zeal to defend Area 9. Facing such a German defense, as an Allied player I would dismiss Castle Hill as too costly a proposition and concentrate my efforts in the south—taking what is given. But at this point in my evolution of *THUNDER AT CASSINO* play, I am more willing to safeguard Castle Hill than tempt fate by presenting my opponent with a balanced defense—even if it would put the Allies on the horns of a where-to-strike dilemma.

Having expounded upon my overall strategy, let's take a closer look at the components thereof by discussing the garrison of each Area in the order that the bombing will be resolved. The choice of how to administer Casualties is largely dependent on previous losses sustained and the fall of rubble, but some generalities are applicable to almost all situations nevertheless.

AREA 6: [2x3-4-5]. Infantry is called for in the Jail Area simply because it is the area most likely to be assaulted. The overall defense funnels the action in this direction because the defensive firepower is concentrated around Castle Hill. A prudent Allied player is forced south. Infantry is best suited to survive the Close Combat that will inevitably ensue. There are no tough decisions as to how to distribute bombardment CP; the only possibility which offers any choice is whether to commit two or kill one to satisfy a two-CP loss. This is no choice to me. I always opt—here and in every other area—to take CP in the most efficient manner (barring a pressing reason to do otherwise) and consequently would never kill a unit if I could commit two instead.

AREA 7: [3-4-5, 4-2-8]. Most players have a tendency to think of armor as their most valuable units. In this game, armor is the German's most expendable force. Rubble severely limits the mobility and retreat options of German vehicles. This makes it very susceptible to loss and its low defense value invites artillery parties that neighboring infantry inevitably foot the bill for. That, and their high CP absorption rate of four, make them prime candidates for early loss. The M42 is placed here rather than the stronger StuG III so that the more powerful armor is available to cover Castle

Hill. Bombardment losses are extracted as follows: 1—commit infantry; 2—commit both; 3—kill infantry; 4—kill armor. The worst-case scenario of four CP might be better addressed by killing the infantry and committing the armor if rubble in Areas 2 and 3 is light. You'll soon see why.

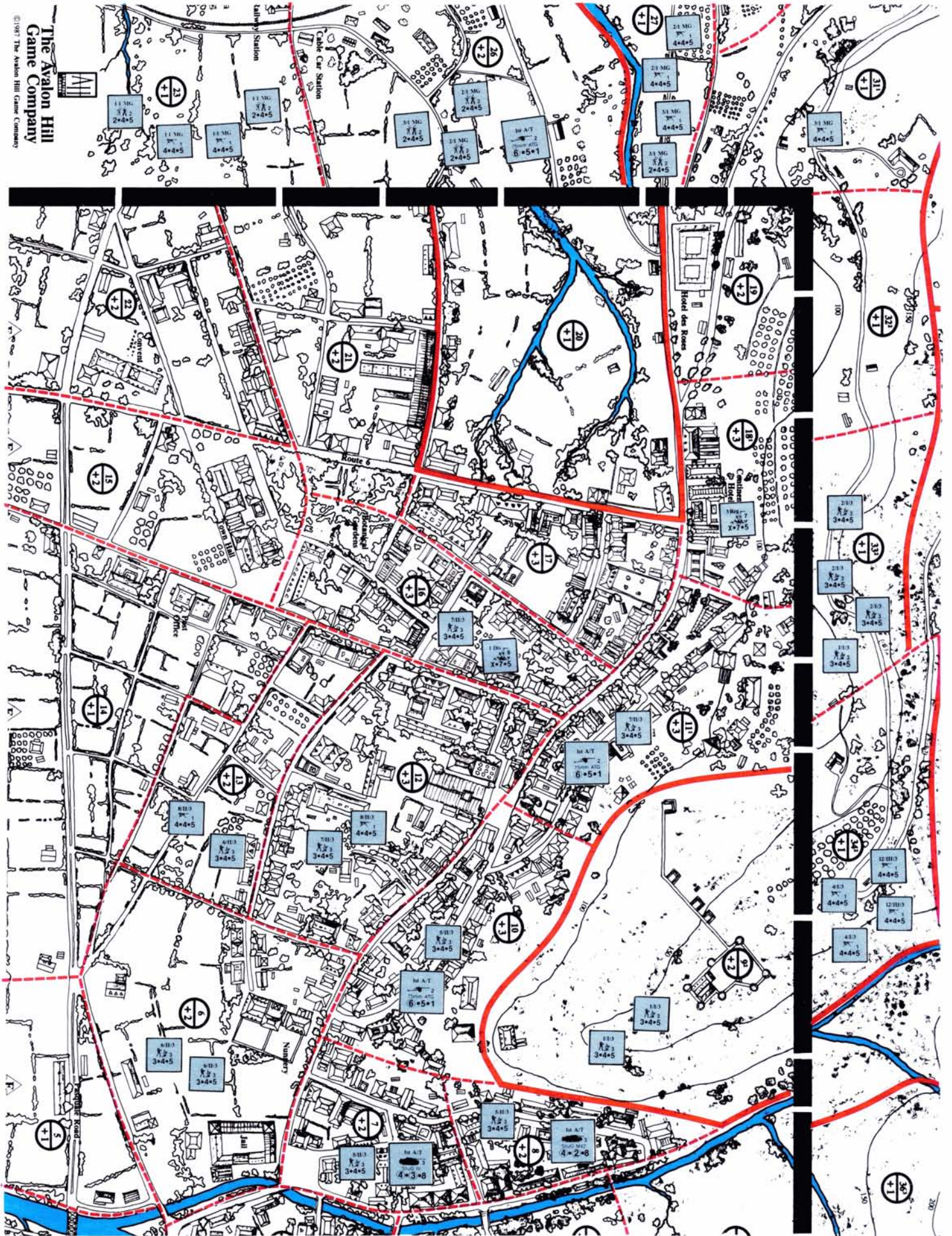
AREA 8: [3-4-5, 4-3-8]. This is almost the mirror image of Area 7. If the M42 in Area 7 is still among the living, the StuG III takes on added importance in inverse proportion to the rubble in Areas 2 and 3. A daring German player who can successfully negotiate the rubble in those areas can move his armor into Areas 2 and 3 on the second turn and thus hinder the arrival of the massive Allied forces that arrive then.

AREA 9: [2x3-4-5]. Only infantry is posted here because of the likelihood of an assault. It is a precept of the game to avoid putting MG units anywhere they can't be adequately screened from Close Combat possibilities, and by keeping a MG out of the bombardment area, an additional 4-Attack Factor unit is guaranteed to be available to fire on Castle Hill. As the MF-influence of German MG units is ignored on the first turn, it makes no sense to leave them in the front lines where they can be picked off. However, unless writing off Castle Hill to a successful first turn assault, the German player must be sure to move a MG onto the hill before Turn 2.

AREA 10: [3-4-5, 6-5-1]. The Anti-Tank Gun units are the German's most powerful pieces and one is positioned here safe from the Turn 1 mayhem but in position to fire on any of four areas—one of which is almost sure to contain a target. The interesting question here is how to handle a two-CP loss. As already stated, I am loathe to kill a unit unnecessarily, but if Castle Hill and Area 8 have been hard hit it is probably wise to sacrifice the infantry unit to save the AT Gun's 6-Attack Factor for Turn 1 covering fire on Castle Hill.

AREA 11: [3-4-5, 6-5-1]. At first glance this appears to be a carbon copy of Area 10, but this placement is more subject to question. Obviously, the AT Gun is sited to afford optimum covering fire for Castle Hill; the accompanying infantry guarantees that it will remain there unscathed throughout the bombardment (although committing units to satisfy a two-CP loss is acceptable if Areas 8, 9 and 10 have not been hard hit). The controversy arises over whether this is too much protection for Castle Hill at the expense of an Allied southern penetration made too easy. Placement of the AT Gun in Area 21 would go a long way towards discouraging a southern thrust. If one was sufficiently clairvoyant to foresee relatively light rubble dispersal in Areas 15, 22 and 21, I'd agree. While I admit that Allied armor penetration as far as Areas 17 and 21 is possible against my defense, it is highly unlikely—requiring passage of at least a "Rubble 1" dice roll (≥ 7) in Zone E and probably more of the same or more severe tests in each subsequent Area entered for each unit attempting it. Consequently, any armor incursions here are undertaken at great peril and likely to be rendered piecemeal by rubble dispersal. Therefore, I am willing to risk the rare possibility of a strong Allied armor thrust here in hopes that the effort will be made only to be strung out by rubble passage failures and thereby afford easy Close Combat opportunities against isolated armor

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by masses of German infantry from Areas 23, 26 and 27. If no attack develops on Castle Hill, the AT Gun should probably be moved into Area 16 or 17 if possible before Allied advances make it impossible.

One of the more interesting placements I've seen for Area 11 is the placement of one or both of the Observers here so that they can reach the Monastery on Turn 1 and be in position to direct fire from the Abbey. I dislike this option because it affords no first-turn protection for Castle Hill, and I am not all that fond of putting all my eggs in one basket—even if it is a +4 TEM basket. I've never had problems finding targets for German Artillery and have experienced few hardships by keeping my observers in the town for the start of Turn 2.

AREAS 12/13: [4-4-5, 3-4-5 each]. Finally, the MG units make their appearance—in areas where they cannot be attacked by Close Combat but can take their 4-Attack Factor shots at Allied encroachments in Areas 6 and 14 respectively. When taking casualties, committing units is preferred to outright eliminations, although it is tempting to try to prevent any Allied MG from starting Turn 2 in Area 14.

AREA 16: [3-4-5, X-7-5]. The Divisional Observer is placed here because it is the least likely forward Area to be afforded a firing opportunity on Turn 2. Being unable to fire at the outset, its main goal is the opportunity for survival afforded by the presence of the infantry and the +3 TEM. The infantry unit takes the first CP; but in the event of a two-CP loss, I'd advocate eliminating the Observer and committing the infantry, rather than killing the infantry for the same reasons espoused below.

AREA 18: [X-7-5]. Players often express surprise that I would leave an Observer alone to face the bombardment. Unfortunately, with 17 red units to post, someone has to be the odd man out and I'd rather lose an Observer who will reappear on Turn 2 than a combat unit that is gone forever. The loss is further mitigated by the fact that German artillery can't fire anyway on Turn 1, and the replacement Observer will be able to move into the Monastery on Turn 2. Thus, the loss is limited to one Turn 2 fire mission.

BLUE AREAS (23, 26, 27, 31): My placement of the 13 blue units is with an eye towards rapid deployment into the town on Turn 1. The infantry is concentrated to the south for possible Close Combat use against any tanks that stumble into 15, 21 or 22. The AT Gun unit should be placed in Area 26, not only to facilitate its move into Area 21 but also to provide it with the better +2 TEM should the move fail. Lone committed AT Guns are the favorite prey of the MATAF air strike.

YELLOW AREAS (33, 34, 43, 44, 55): The purpose of my placements on the hill is twofold: to provide quick reinforcement of the town and bar a rapid Allied advance towards the Monastery. Area 34 is obviously the most important—being the only yellow area that can fire into Castle Hill or reinforce it once an Allied MG unit arrives. For this reason, all four yellow MG units are concentrated here to maximize covering fire for Castle Hill. Such an imbalance of MG units in one area is usually ill-advised for all the same reasons that tacticians expound on a Combined Arms approach. However, their presence here should dissuade any serious

attempt against Castle Hill, and if so, they can be deployed into a more balanced defense for the start of Turn 2. One should be moved to Area 55 to present a picket line defense of a MG in every other Area to slow Allied advances up the mountain. If this is not possible due to a *battle royale* on Castle Hill, the MG unit in Area 31 can be substituted. Any opening move by the Allied player which does not include movement onto Castle Hill should be parried by German reinforcement of Castle Hill with three units from Area 55—leaving the forces in Areas 27 and 33 to reinforce the southern areas—possibly to the inclusion of Close Combat against enemy armor.

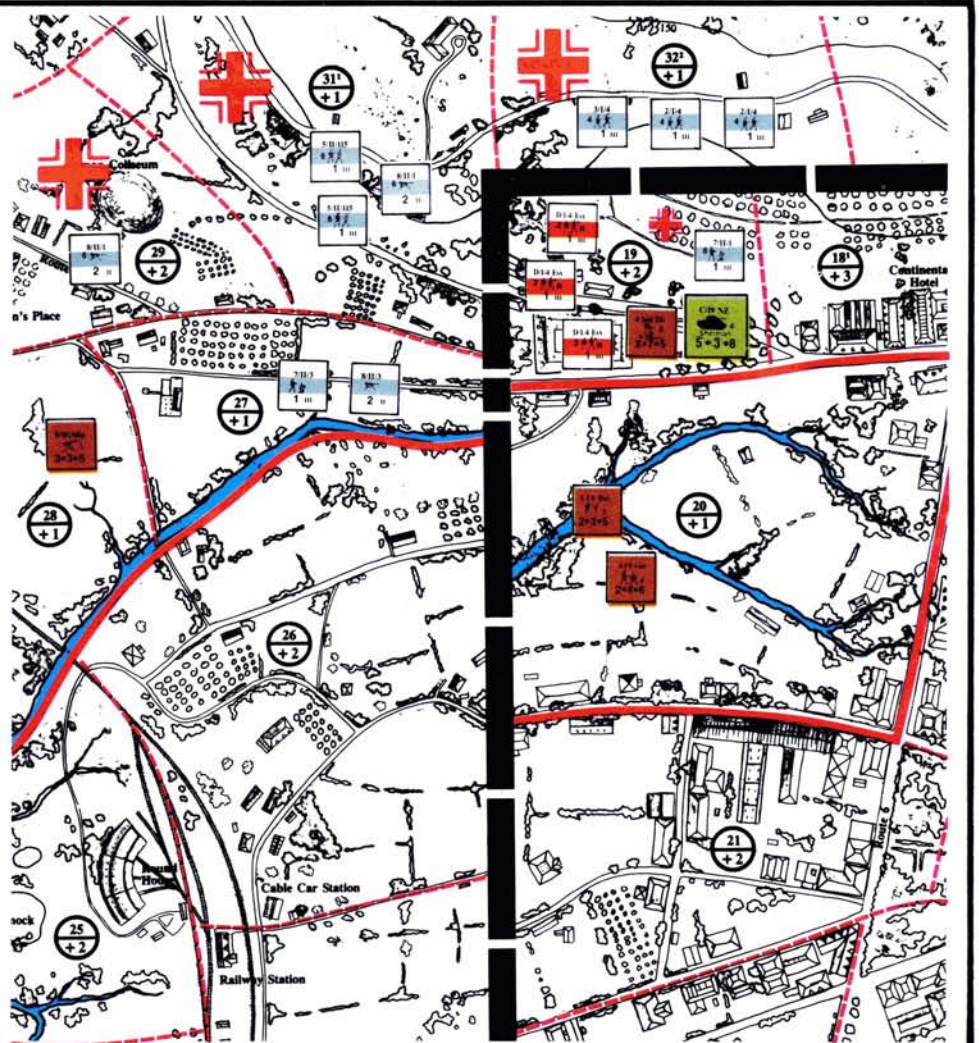
In conclusion, always remember that *THUNDER AT CASSINO* is a game of reaction. Every Allied move has a possible German countermove—but it does not necessarily have to be carried out immediately. The advantage usually lies with he who moves last, provided he hasn't passed up any critical opportunities in the interim. The burden of the offensive lies with the Allied player. Don't be too quick to remove this mantle from his shoulders. Make him pay the price for forcing the action. Your job is to react, but only when it is in your best interests to do so now as opposed to later. The Pass option should be your most frequently used impulse—but before uttering that fateful word always stop to ask yourself whether you are willing to end the turn at that point. Never assume that the Allied player will continue the turn. Make sure it ends at a point to your liking.



CONTEST 142

It is the ninth (daylight) turn of a *THUNDER AT CASSINO* game, with the Allies needing one more victory point for a draw and two more for a win. All the German units are Committed and only remaining Allied uncommitted units are the five illustrated here. The three remaining VP areas (19, 29 and 31) are all in tenuous German control—as is the Tactical Advantage chit. Your task as the Allied player is to devise a combination of impulses that will give the *best* chance of wresting sufficient control from the German to gain a victory—using only the mapboard space illustrated here. After specifying the action(s) to be taken by your five units, in the order these are to be carried out, check the box indicating whether the most likely result of your move is a German win, a draw, or an Allied win. As a tie breaker, estimate your chances of victory to two decimal places.

The answer to this contest must be entered on the official entry form (or a reasonable facsimile) found on the insert of this issue. Ten winning entries will receive merchandise credits from The Avalon Hill Game Company. To be valid, an entry must include a numerical rating for this issue as a whole and a listing of the three best articles in the judgment of the contestant. The solution to Contest 142 will appear in Vol. 25, No. 1 and the list of winners in Vol. 25, No. 2 of *THE GENERAL*.





SERIES REPLAY

THUNDER AT CASSINO

COUNTERATTACK AT THE ROUNDHOUSE

German Player—Rex A. Martin
British Player—Don Greenwood
Neutral Commentator—Tom Oleson

For those among the readership not yet aware, *THUNDER AT CASSINO* is heir to the *STORM OVER ARNHEM* system. As can be expected, *THUNDER AT CASSINO* is a much more involved game, with many facets of WW2 warfare not found in the street fighting around the Arnhem bridge simulated well in this fluid battle. However, our attempt at a replay of the full game became unwieldy (the accounting of the moves alone took a mere 33 typed pages), so we chose to use one of the two short scenarios as an introduction for the readership to this new classic. "Counterattack at the Roundhouse" has much of the tension and demands all the skill that the full game does, but these two truncated turns take only a few minutes to play. As both replay players have pitted themselves against each other innumerable times in playtesting and both are comfortable with either side, we let the die decide sides. Don Greenwood took on the role of the defender, and I have the role of the attacker.

While casting about for a neutral commentator on *THUNDER AT CASSINO*, we wondered who better to ask than the master gamesman, Tom Oleson. He of the ANZIO credits and lofty AREA rating (built largely on dozens of victories in the Italian theater). We were right . . . perhaps a little too right. We got no wishy-washy "nice move" commentary from Tom, who instead handed us an incisive, indictive analysis of our stupidities. Of course, Don is now calling for a neutral commentary on the neutral commentary. In the meantime, he has challenged the commentator to a grudge match to show him the wisdom of the passive defense. I'll let the readership know how it turns out.

When not identified at the outset, German comments are always the odd-numbered Impulses; Allied comments are even-numbered Impulses. Neutral commentary is in italics. Each player's move is listed on the line below his comments for that impulse. An attack is listed in the form: Attacker [area attacking from] vs Area attacked (*italized numbers represent a committed group*) at odds [British chit:German chit; # of Casualty Points] [Results list eliminated units behind a "K"; units retreated and area retreated to behind an "R"]. Movement impulses are listed in the form: unit moved [number of Area moved from] *number of Area moved to*.

Initial Set-up:

German: Zone G —2×15PzGr, 3×5/II/115, 3×7/II/115, 3×9/II/115, 8/II/115 MG, 6/II/115 MG, 10/II/115 MG
Area 20 —2×5/II/1, 2×7/II/1, 8/II/1 MG, 1st Regt Observer
Area 27 —3/1/MG, 2/1/MG
Area 28 —2×6/II/1, 1/1 MG
Area 66 —1st Div Observer
British: Area 25 —2×A/26 NZ, B/26 NZ
Area 26 —B/26 NZ, 2×C/26 NZ, 2×D/26 NZ, C/27 NZ MG, 6th NZ Observer
Area 21 —3×A/19 NZ, 2×A/24 NZ, 2×B/24 NZ, D/24 NZ, B/27 MG

Area 22 —D/24 NZ

(German holds Tactical Chit)

With only one MG unit to defend two areas, one has to be susceptible to daylight, multi-area moves. The only logical choice for his attack is Area 25—the one which can be entered from only one area—as opposed to Area 26 which can be entered from three. But my stronger force in Area 26 is necessary because it is subject to fire from three areas as opposed to only one. More importantly, it is probably the area which will be hammered by his artillery and will need lots of cannon fodder to protect the MG. A better setup might be to strip one of the infantry units from 26 to 25 for better balance; but overall, I think it best to protect the MG and Observer's position and rely on the tanks to come running to Area 25! That lone infantry unit in Area 22 is necessary to prevent a German forward "retreat" out of 21 from seizing the area and the game.

Area 25 is the most vulnerable because it is somewhat isolated on the Allied left flank, and because it has two VP points to adjacent Area 26's one. Of course, the Germans only need one point to win, but since they have two 1-VP areas of their own to defend, capturing a 2-VP area would give them a cushion. There are ten Allied units divided between these two areas, and it is obviously better to put the machine gun and the observer in the central area (26) where they are more effective than they would be in a corner (25). That leaves eight infantry units to allocate. Since 26 is bordered by German areas on three of its six sides, while 25 is surrounded by one German and three Allied areas, it makes sense to divide the infantry into three for 25 and five for 26. I rate this set-up "9", on a scale of ten.

As between areas 21 and 22, here too not a lot of thought is required. Area 21 is on the front line, so it should take nearly everything, leaving just one unit to occupy 22 for the reason Don explains. But which unit? Since the tanks have mobility, why not take one of them? I rate this set-up "8" on a scale of ten (i.e., OK but open to criticism). No grading on the curve here.

The impossible thing to convey in any replay of *THUNDER AT CASSINO* is the sheer scope and range of one's thoughts while playing. This game presents one with literally hundreds of tactical options each turn—ranging from the movement of large bodies of troops across vast areas of the map-board to the shift of a single counter to one vital area, from the massed fire attack of combined companies to a solitary surgical burst from a MG. And these tactical options are constantly changing with the evolving action. This system applied to this battle presents the player with the most fluid of games; it rewards those who can quickly evaluate these relationships, readily recognize threats and opportunities, and seize the ever-shifting initiative. It is, for any wargamer, one of the best challenges I can think of.

The key to "Counterattack at the Roundhouse" for the German player is found in pressuring all three adjacent Allied VP areas (21, 26, 25)—and having a modicum of luck. The trick lies in coor-

inating it all so it comes together on the last turn. Even diversionary attacks on two of the three areas serves, if you can isolate and concentrate overwhelming force on one; the German only needs to gain one VP area to win. I intend to repeat that broad strategy and yet remain flexible enough to take advantage of any difficulties that the New Zealanders may get themselves into.

Turning to the specifics of my set-up, note the weighted flank in Area 20. As it is furthest from my offboard reinforcements, I like to concentrate here to develop a two-pronged attack. Its task is to attack 21 (or 26 if sufficiently softened up). The 1st Regt. observer is placed in 20 to give me the potential for back-to-back artillery strikes in 21 or 26 (the artillery from 66 can hit anywhere); I have no intention of shelling 25 as I fully expect to be in there quickly. My infantry reinforcements will strike at 25 as Don has no MG there to slow them down, giving me a toehold I hope to exploit on the next turn. And my armor moves into Area 28 to fire on 25 and/or 26 in support. If all goes well, this scenario can be most exciting when on the offensive.

Rex has 11 units to spread among three areas. His set-up is less obvious than Don's, but there are some aspects which are near mandatory; for example, the observer in 20, and one of the two machine-guns anchoring each flank. This leaves eight units for the three areas, six stronger (3-4-5) and two weaker (2-4-5). Also bear in mind that, since Rex moves first, he can do whatever he wants with 14 units in Zone G before Don can do anything at all.

The burden of attack is on the German, and the time to do it is brief. The set-up and first move have to be right, or he will lose. Contemplating the German set-up from the perspective of the game as it developed, we can see that Rex tried to win by taking Area 25, while mounting a feeble challenge to the other flank, Area 21.

His set-up is not bad, but not particularly imaginative, nor the only conceivable alternative. He put the two weak units in the central Area 27, two of the strong units to anchor his right flank (28). Suppose instead, he had put everything in Area 20! That would surely give Don more concern about that flank, while as the game developed, Rex gave him little to worry about over there. On his first move, Rex could then have moved four units (or whatever necessary) into areas 27 and 28, still leaving ten units in G to allocate. I am all the more convinced that this would have been a better start for him, looking back from the perspective of the end of the first turn which left most of his units unused.

Here is another, less sweeping alternative: weaken 28 in favor of 27. Rex mentions that he likes to have a defensive line, and against a more aggressive player, it would have been needed. It is at Area 27 that the Allies could attack to threaten the German VPs behind it. Here again, there is no particular need for 28 to be strong at the start, since Zone G is right behind it.

TURN 8

[1] The first German artillery strike is crucial. I am

firmly convinced of that; it must cause the enemy some discomfort. As the defenses of all the target areas is identical, I like to use it against Don's central concentration in Area 26 as from here he can reinforce either flank. Besides this, if the chit differential is high enough, Area 26 may open up for me as a viable alternative to attacking 25 (although 25 is easier to isolate due to the board edge).

G—1st Div Art [66] vs 26 at +3 [8:5 = -]

1—Linda Carter liked to play the librarian-type, wearing a conservative suit with the collar buttoned up to her chin, heavy glasses, hair up in a bun. When she unbuttons half the buttons, discards the spectacles and tosses her hair free, wow . . . Wonder Woman! The Arnhem/Cassino game system is like that; well, a little bit like that. Like many gamers I suppose, when I first looked at SOA, I saw unfamiliar concepts I was too lazy to learn, so I put it aside to catch dust. But with this second version, Wonder Woman has emerged for me. It forces you to think ALL THE TIME (which most games don't), but it is worth it. One of the things to think about is when to use your artillery: early, when you may knock out units which therefore lose their chance to hurt you, or later when a situation may have developed which could permit you to clear an entire area (and of course these are just a few possibilities).

I think Rex is right to strike on the first impulse, but I disagree when he says that "Area 26 may open up for me" as a result of this artillery attack. Area 26 is too strongly garrisoned and could easily be reinforced from Area 21. Particularly since he is already thinking about the vulnerability of Area 25, I think he should've attacked there. It has only three units to 26's seven. Moreover, it is harder to reinforce. In theory, Don could move everything he could spare from 21 to 25 on his next turn, but Rex should know that Don is too conservative to do that. Rating: "2" (sound idea done in the wrong place).

[2] The failure of his opening Artillery Barrage is a big plus, and allows me the luxury to pass and wait for the situation to develop.

B—PASS

2—When they finished "Casablanca", they left a scene on the cutting room floor. It is the back room of Rick's Place. The lazy-turning overhead fan cuts through the smoke ascending in languid spirals from the card table where Bogey is playing poker with Claude Raines, Peter Lorre and Sidney Greenstreet (too bad he got cut right out of the film). At stake are "the papers" which Ingrid Bergman needs to leave for America. Lorre is wearing a green eyeshade and Bogey a tux with black bow-tie undone. A cigarette dangles from his lips. At the crucial moment, he mutters "Pass". Don, is this how you see yourself when YOU pass, and why do you like to do it so often? I agree it is a beautiful feature of this system, but there is only one reason to use it: when there is genuinely nothing better to do, not just to "wait and see". In impulses 6 and 8 of this turn, Don makes defensive moves which threaten Rex in no way but are necessary reinforcements of the Allied rear. He should have made one of those moves instead of passing here. If you are going to "see how the situation develops", pass only when it is a crucial stage and you do not need to do anything else. Not true here.

Another criticism. The victory conditions for this scenario imply that the Allies might capture one or more VPs from the Germans. Don never even feinted at doing this. On this impulse he could have blasted Area 27 with artillery or moved a blocking unit into it. Either move would at least have forced Rex to take a point or two away from him. Rating "0" (wrong move).

[3] I'll shove the tanks forward—more to see how he reacts than for any other reason. If I draw his

artillery, so much the better. Armor doesn't win this scenario for the German, infantry does; once his artillery is committed, my future options are much less hazardous.

G—2×5-3-8 [G] 28

3—Since this scenario has but two turns, there is no movement to waste. Tanks are the strongest and fastest units, and the only ones able to move between areas containing the enemy. Moreover, this scenario is finely balanced. Therefore, Rex, how can you say that "armor doesn't win this scenario for the Germans"? Anything, however tiny, may win or lose this scenario, and armor is not insignificant for the reasons explained. And if the idea is just to "see how he reacts", why not just one tank? A final point: the tanks would also be the ideal reinforcement had Don tried to break into the German rear. Rating: "0" (and Don's impulse 10 shows it).

[4] There is no need to react yet.

B—PASS

4—There was no reason not to do now what he did in impulses 6, 8 or 10, and save the "Pass" for later. He could also have feinted an attack. "0"

[5] Since Don hasn't committed a unit into 28 to block me (I haven't enough strength there to insure shooting it out), it's time to open the offensive into 25.

G—3×3-3-5 [G] 25

5—Rex makes the excellent point that Don could have blocked Area 28 but instead chose to pass twice. Maybe Don will wake up and block 28, so perhaps Rex should have moved more of the 14 units in G into the crucial Area 25, but this is OK: rating "8" (at last somebody does the obviously right thing).

[6] I can no longer afford to pass. If he were to pass also and end the turn, in his first impulse of the second turn he could move to 23 and block the route of my tanks to 25. Now that he has made a partial commitment of forces to 25 it is tempting to try moving a blocking unit into 28 to trap them there, but I haven't found this particularly effective in the past. The NZ Infantry has a Committed strength of 0 which covered with the +1 TEM of Area 28 makes it an easy target. The Allies can't afford to waste units like this. Besides, it really doesn't gain me anything. His forces in G could just move into 28 for an automatic victory in CC over my blocking force, and be in position to move into 25 or 26 on the final turn when it counts. If this type of option is still open next turn, I'll consider it, but not now.

B—3-3-5 [21] 23

6—By now Don and Rex should know each other. Don excuses himself for not blocking 26 by saying that a unit there would be "an easy target", but he should know (as Rex says later) that he likes to go for the sure thing: a higher odds attack. Sure, Rex could knock out the blocking unit, but he would probably use two of his units to do it, and in this scenario that would be a good trade-off for Don. Also, Don speaks of Rex moving this turn from G into 28 to unblock, and then next turn into 25. Possible, but risky not to soften up 25 this turn. All told, I find unconvincing Don's argument for not trying to block the area.

As for Don's move itself, apart from the fact it shouldn't been done on impulse 2, OK: "6".

[7] Don couldn't risk passing this time—a wise decision. If he had, I'd have been tempted to "Pass" as well and then plug his interior lines with a first move into 23. He would have wasted vital units in Turn 9 trying to dislodge it. But we've played against each other so often that he spots such tricks

much too readily. I will spend the turn looking ahead and move a MG into 27. Merely positioning myself for the next turn. I don't think Don will expose his troops by firing on this lone unit.

G—4-3-5 MG [G] 27

7—And so probably ends any chance Don might have had to attack 27 to threaten the VPs beyond: rate this a "5", as it could've been done earlier at no cost. This is because units moving out from an area or zone can fan out into different destinations.

[8] It is necessary to prevent his units in 25 from retreating into 24 when fired on, lest they be able to move into 23 in the next turn and block the armor's path into 25.

B—3-3-5 [21] 24

8—See comment on impulse 6 above.

[9] He continues to "rob Peter to pay Paul", a common dilemma in this game—so much to do and never enough time and units to do it all. If he continues to weaken 21, I will certainly think about dropping my remaining artillery onto it and open the fighting for that VP. Meanwhile, I'll simply build up the pressure on 25.

G—3×3-3-5 [G] 25

9—Rex should know that Don prefers repeated low-odds attacks, so why not add to this movement the dispatch of a blocking unit into 26? It would have a committed strength of "1" (vs. NZ's "0"). Not only would such a unit block reinforcement into what is fast becoming the make-or-break area (25), but every unit Don used in 26 to dislodge it would be one less unit available to fire on or reinforce 25. Rating: "3" and a half (half a good move).

[10] I believe his moving his armor into 28 alone is a minor mistake; if I win the chit draw by even one, it will effectively remove both of his tank units from the game—thus depriving him of his best fire support for the second turn. Although Committed infantry in with the tanks would lessen the area defense, it would allow him to accept casualties in a more efficient manner. Retreated infantry units can still be a factor during the second turn. Retreated German armor can't because it cannot cross the river. Therefore, I'll fire my artillery now before he retreats or moves infantry into the area.

B—6th NZ Art [26] vs 28 at +4 [12:6 = 6] [K 2x5-3-8]

10—Don makes two good observations: Rex erred in moving his tanks where he did and in not later reinforcing them with infantry in a free "tag-along" movement out of G. Since this attack was so good, however, Don, why not do it earlier? As you point out, you might have lost your chance. Those tanks firing next turn into 25 or 26 might have won the game for Rex. Rating: "10" minus "2" because Don should have done it earlier and minus another "2" because Rex could (without loss of other movement have corrected his error) for a net of "6".

[11] The loss of the armor is certainly a blow, but not a decisive one. Given his draw, if he had dropped it on uncommitted infantry I might have been thrown offstride. He has been exceedingly lucky so far however, and that bodes ill for me. As is, I forge ahead into 25 and move a MG unit in to guarantee that only his armor can reach the area from 21. Too, if he passes at this point, I may well be able to sweep 25 in Close Combat—effectively giving me the game as I both move first and hold the "Tactical Advantage". Hence, Don won't pass but will reinforce the area—but from 26? Or from 21?

G—4-3-5 MG [G] 25

11—I always like to downplay my goofs too. Since Don is too timid to block 28, Rex continues to reinforce 25, while himself overlooking the possibility

of blocking 26. An important point to remember in this scenario is that, although it is important to have somebody left to fight in the second and final turn, all you need in the end is one surviving unit to deny control of an area to your opponent; therefore casualties are less important than they would be in a longer scenario. That is why I think it is worthwhile to block. An OK move—"6".

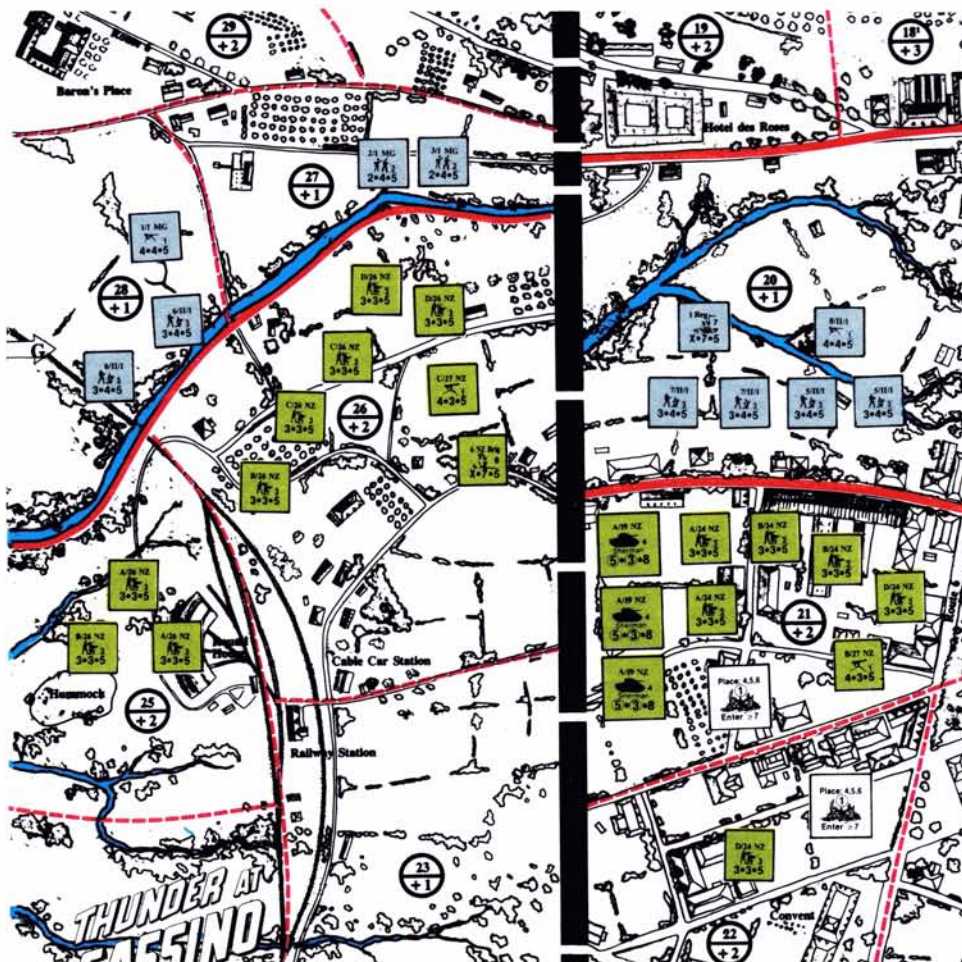
[12] It is too dangerous to fire and present a committed target to his waiting MG, but also too dangerous to pass when I'm outnumbered in Area 25 seven to three. So I'll move a tank into 25, whose committed status does not lessen the defense of the area.

B—5-3-8 [21] 25

12—You could call this the turning-point of the game. Rex has committed so heavily to Area 25 that he now has no other choice, though eventually he will also make a feeble stab at Area 21. Don, on the other hand, still has a choice: to reinforce 25 and slug it out there, or to abandon it and try to take 20 in order to threaten the three VPs behind it. Don's choice to slug it out is probably sounder, but certainly less imaginative and exciting. Having made his choice, Don could also have considered reinforcing 25 with an infantry unit from 21, as the tanks could still go later. True, this might weaken 21 too much, but it still could be reinforced from 26 unless blocked. Give the man an "8" for a sound move but take away "2" for dullness, leaving a rating of "6".

[13] This lacklustre Allied reinforcement opens possibilities. At the instant, I have a CC advantage in 25 and am assured that my MG will be there next turn. If, in CC, I could eliminate two of his infan-

Figure #1 Initial placement of on-board German and New Zealand forces.



try and block reinforcements from 26 at the beginning of the next turn, then I think the game is mine. On the one hand, if the turn ends now I give up the movement and fire of a number of my units, not to mention my second—but weaker—artillery barrage. On the other, Don gives up the action of the bulk of his command and I would hold the CC advantage in 25. Bottom line, we'd both sacrifice in favor of a serious early-game gamble—although I've more to gain from it than he. I don't think he'll pass; and if he does, I am satisfied to live with the results. If I lose this gamble, the Germans will have to be very opportunistic next turn (my favorite style) and moderately lucky to pull out a victory. Let's see if my "Pass" throws him into a quandry (always a useful thing to do to your opponent in any competitive game). I expect, however, that he'll play cautiously and move more armor into 25—both to weather this turn and beef it up for the next.

G—PASS

13—Rex, Don's reinforcement is not lacklustre but cautious. You can't stop him from sending over the other two tanks later if he wants to. In impulse 7, Rex says they know all of each other's tricks. I wonder. If that were true, Rex would realize now that it doesn't pay for him to pass first. Don loves to pass, and the chance that he will pass again is very high: especially since he doesn't expect it from Rex. Rex should've waited for Don, and then have the option himself to decide to pass and end the turn. Instead, Rex could have sent a blocking unit into 21, 26 or perhaps the latter combined with another unit from G into 25. Later he will wish that he had. Below "0".

[14] "Pass?" This bears some thinking. Were I to pass now, he'd lose his second artillery fire mission and will leave four units (including a MG) offboard where they reach only Area 25—unless he declares

a Night Turn, which will cost him the Tactical Advantage and give me the option of the all-important reroll. While I am giving up the movement/fire of 16 units to Rex's 15, I believe I am coming out ahead because I really can't afford to fire while he holds such strong return fire opportunities. The danger is, of course, that he will do well in Close Combat. In our last game, he rolled three "5's" in the climactic CC round to eliminate my three defenders in Area 25 and win the game (a 1-in-27 chance). If he does that well now, I'll be dead; but if he rolls that well, I can't win anyway. The chance to escape Turn 8 without a single casualty is too overwhelming to ignore. Screw his artillery—I'll pass too!

B—PASS

14—And so Bogey lays down the full house and the papers are his. Claude Raines leaves to "round up the usual suspects". If you pass often enough (three impulses out of seven), you get it right some time. A perfect "10".

CLOSE COMBAT

Area	Attacker(s)	Defender	Needed	dr
(German:)				
25	2×3-3-5	3-3-5	5	4
25	2×3-3-5	3-3-5	5	3
25	3-3-5, 4-3-5	3-3-5	5	3
25	3-3-5	5-3-8	6	4
(British:)				
25	3-3-5	3-3-5	6	1
25	3-3-5	3-3-5	6	2
25	3-3-5	3-3-5	6	1
25	5-3-8	3-3-5	5	5

Damn, this ploy hurt me more than him. As but one instance of the ramifications of every action in this game, note that the loss of a single 3-3-5 here in 25 in CC robs me of the possibility of getting one of two "Combined Company" (4.24) bonuses if I'd wanted them. I think my only chance now lies in isolating Area 25 and conducting a single thrust while pushing on 21 just enough to hold his attention. I can, for example, drop the 1st Division artillery on his single unit in 23 looking to beat his chit draw by only "1"; he would then have to commit a unit to the area to hold me from moving in on my next impulse. But... we'll see what develops.

Actually, winning the Close Combat when I was at a disadvantage leaves me in a very strong position. Rex's luck has deserted him. Serves him right for rolling those "5's" in the "warm-up" game. Now he'll need to score big with his artillery fire this turn if he is to have any chance. It just points out the importance of that first artillery shot in this scenario. Having failed to score with it, he obviously felt forced to press his luck and it backfired when I passed rather than give him any easy targets.

I can only underscore Don's comment that Rex's artillery was wasted, and you can't afford to do that in this game. If he had managed (for example by using his forfeited artillery strike) to kill a unit or two in Area 25, it could've made the difference in the end.

TURN 9

[1] I will "throw away" one of my lesser infantry units to tie up his forces in Area 26. This should keep them out of my hair for awhile.

G—2-4-5 [27] 26

1—Excellent opening move: "8".

[2] His move pins my forces in 26, cutting off most of my reinforcements to 25—presumably preceding a German move into 25. I still have four units

capable of reinforcing Area 25 though, so I'm not worried.

B—PASS

2—Don knows that he has to reinforce 25, and it makes no sense to permanently let one unit tie up his strongest area, 26. Therefore, on this impulse he should either reinforce 25 or clear 26. A proper "Pass" option can be the most elegant move in this or any other game. Don showed it in the last impulse of Turn 8; but when you know you have to do something, passing afterwards is better: a rating of "0". Also, Don, isn't it time to move a blocking unit into 20? Make that an absolute "0".

[3] There is no longer any reason to be subtle, since I am sure that Don realizes as well as I do where my best chance of victory lies. In goes the last company in reserve. This also serves to keep him from passing—which can be as important a ploy as any other in this game. Often a "Pass" forces your opponent to take an action—any action—to keep the turn proceeding; occasionally, you can take advantage of such impromptu moves. Alternately, an action such as this can force your opponent to take an action in response for he fears you passing next while holding an advantage in some critical area. Knowing when to "Pass" and when not to is a game unto itself, and likely one novices must fail at a few times to master.

G—3×3-3-5 [G] 25

3—An obvious move which Don could have prevented but chose instead to (what else?) pass: "8".

[4] I no longer need to keep Germans out of Area 24, so the blocking infantry there reinforces 25 rather than give him a 9:4 CC ratio.

B—3-3-5 [24] 25

4—Could have been done as the second impulse. Also, he could use his artillery now and do this later. The equivalent of one of those pawn moves when you can't think of anything better: "5".

[5] Much as I'd like to, I can't drop artillery shells on my own troops. Let's see if I am lucky and can KO some armor. It may also distract him into looking to his defenses in Area 21.

G—1st Regt Art [20] vs 21 at +2 [4:9 = 5] [K 5-3-8; R 3-3-5 to 22]

5—Perhaps if Rex had first reinforced 25 a bit more, Don would have had to match this and weaken 21 a bit more too. Then he could've bombarded it, but not too bad: "5".

[6] The decision to eliminate armor wasn't taken lightly. It is one of my few units capable of reinforcing 25, but it allows me to retreat a unit to Area 22 which can serve as my blocking unit for any attacks I make into 21 when he eventually moves into that area. If his final artillery fire mission does as well, I could have a problem in 21 where he can commit five units. I should be able to survive a 9:5 CC in Area 25, so I pass. I doubt whether he'll give up his second artillery shot again. A cataclysmic chit draw is his best remaining hope of pulling this game out of the fire.

B—PASS

6—I share Don's doubts about killing the armor. Here again I see nothing to be gained by not doing one of a variety of other things. "0".

[7] I want to free the MG in 27 for other potential opportunities. One of my precepts in this scenario is to maintain some form of line protecting my own starting VP areas (18, 19, 29, 31) and this unit serves well for insuring that 27 will never be inadvertently vacated by my troops. As before, I don't think he'll waste a shot on a lone unit.

G—4-3-5 MG [G] 27

7—One of the worst moves Rex has made. It is probably too late for Don to daringly counter-attack, and it isn't his temperament. It is all or nothing in 25, and hope for a miracle in 21. I started out with the wrong scale to rate this game. I need a minus category.

[8]?! That MG unit appears to be wasted. All it does in 27 is block the area so he can move two units out to 25. Of course, I'd have to eliminate the lone German unit in Area 26 first anyway.

B—PASS

8—There is no point in repeating my criticisms of Don's infatuation with the pass option.

[9] My first artillery barrage worked so well this turn at eliminating a potential threat to my plans for 25 that we'll do it again.

G—1st Div Art [66] vs 21 at +3 [8:15 = 7] [K 5-3-8, 3-3-5]

9—A good move which gets its deserved result: "9".

[10] Ouch! His 7-CP barrage hurt, but not enough. As long as my MG remains in 21, his maximum invasion of the area is five units—and I can defend with at least four. One more CP would have hurt a lot more. The ability of armor to soak up an extra CP has saved me two units this turn.

B—PASS

10—Don, why pass when sooner or later you have to kill off the blocking unit in 26? Doesn't it make sense to have those units free now that they have nothing to fear from artillery? "0".

[11] With my last artillery result, our losses thus far are equal. Unfortunate that Don drew so well on impulse #9; this area might have been mine for

the taking if he had one less unit there now. Again, Don has "lucked out". Personally, if I were he I'd think seriously about dropping the NZ barrage into Area 20 hoping to cut down the threat. Looking to my own resources, I'll take advantage of this perceived lapse and will infiltrate 21.

G—2×3-4-5 [20] 21

11—If Rex had those "superfluous" tanks backing him up in 18 and 19, he could probably move everything but the observer into 21. As it is, he weakens 20 and invites the artillery barrage which eventually comes: "3".

[12] Moving the now-free garrison of Area 22 into 21 reduces his present Close Combat possibilities in this area to zero.

B—3-3-5 [22] 21

12—Right. An "8".

[13] No reason not to press on. I'll shove another unit into 21.

G—3-4-5 [20] 21

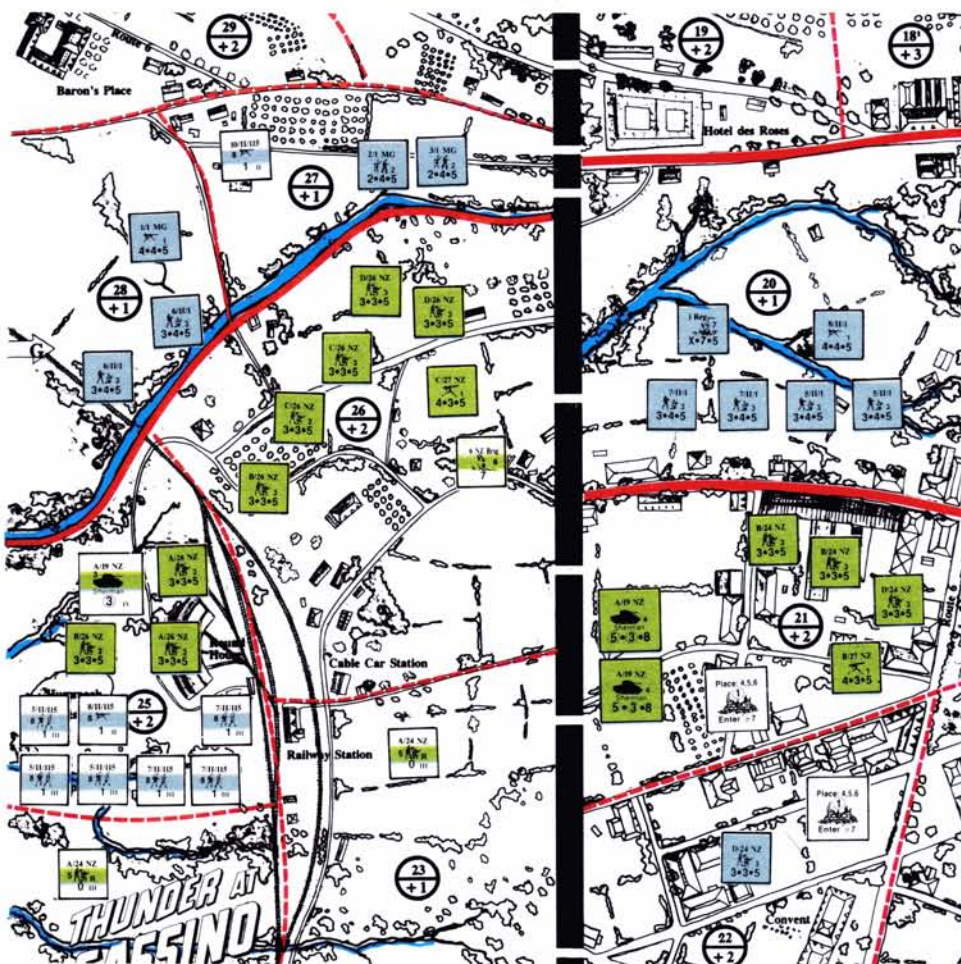
13—There isn't much else for Rex to do, since Don cannot retreat into his VP areas, but would instead have to unblock 26 in order to move there. Perhaps Rex should have been really daring and moved two units. It is time to be daring. A "6".

[14] If I can knock out the units in Area 20, it frees my units in 21 to fire on the Germans in their area. Otherwise, they dare not fire lest a big chit draw by the MG wipe out my advantage in Area 21.

B—6th NZ Art [26] vs 20 at +3 [10:8 = 2] [K 1st Regt Observer; R 3-4-5 to 19]

14—An obvious move. "6".

Figure #2 The situation prior to resolution of Close Combat in Turn 8.



[15] I think his artillery was tardy, but what do I know? Don only has one unit free to move now, so I'll up the ante in 25.

G—3-4-5 [28] 25

15—*It has long been obvious that the struggle for 25 will decide the game. It seems to me ridiculous that Don has done nothing to free up his strongest force (in 26) and then block 28. Surely his argument that he can't afford to fritter away units that way is no longer valid. An inevitable move ("7") by Rex.*

[16] Losing the MG in Area 26 would now free only one unit—the German MG in 20 to reach Area 25. Big deal. Such a move removes its fire threat to Area 21 which worries me more. So it should be safe to fire it now.

B—4-3-5 MG [26] vs 25 at 0 [6:4 = 2] [K 3-3-5]

16—*Good—a "7".*

[17] Area 21 is still a sideshow. Another unit slips into 25.

G—3-4-5 [28] 25

17—*Same comment and rating as for impulse 15.*

[18] Rex has freedom of movement with only one remaining infantry unit. If I get rid of the blocking unit in 26, he may be hard-pressed to keep replacing it—eventually freeing up my units in 26 to reinforce either 21 or 25. This strikes me as a better tactic than taking -1 shots vs 25.

B—3-3-5 [26] vs 26 at 0 [6:8 = -]

18—*As they say, "a day late and a buck short"—"4".*

[19] Don finally attempts to untangle himself in Area 26—with a series of low-odds shots I suspect. For my part, I prefer larger firegroups—more at risk but often bigger results. I'm going to try to knock out his uncommitted units in Area 25 with my combined company. Any hit will eliminate at least one unit from further consideration, and thus put ever more pressure on him.

G—3×3-3-5 [25] vs 25 at +1 [7:5 = -]

19—*I agree with Rex. Also, Don should know that he "prefers larger firegroups", and that therefore Don could have profited by blocking Rex's areas to tie up those groups. Rex's move ("7") is obvious and deserves better luck.*

[20] Firing the tank doesn't weaken my defense at all and only deprives me of one reinforcement in Area 21, which I really don't need.

B—5-3-8 [25] vs 25 at +2 [8:3 = 5] [K 2×3-3-5]

20—*Nice move Don: "6" for skill and "3" more for luck makes "9".*

[21] Don is unbelievably lucky this game. But my mental count of the chits drawn thus far (something automatic with experienced players, and a reason I prefer die rolls to chit resolution) leads me to expect that I have an edge in that department now—I've more "high" chits in my cup and Don has a number of low ones in his. Might as well exploit that assumption.

I'll fire on his uncommitted units again (rather than making three +1 attacks on his committed units) in 25 in hopes of eliminating a couple from his plans. After all, his uncommitted units are more of a threat to me than are the others. His committed units are just spectators now. Another gamble—again for high stakes.

G—4-3-5, 2×3-3-5 [25] vs 25 at +1 [4:10 = 6] [K 2×3-3-5]

21—*The time for subtle maneuver is over and the lead starts flying: "8" for a good result which restores some hope for the Germans.*

[22] The CC ratio in Area 25 is suddenly 8:3! Despite the 6CP attack, I believe Rex erred in attacking with his last three remaining units in 25 as one attack rather than opting for three separate attacks against my committed units. By opting for one attack, he allowed me to concentrate all my losses in eliminated units rather than forcing me to lose units one at a time to retreat results. I still think my best chance of taking heat off Area 25 is to force him to replace his blocking unit in Area 26.

B—3-3-5 [26] vs 26 at 0 [6:4 = 2] [K 2-4-5]

22—*Don's argument has some merit, but in the end it comes down to what the player feels more comfortable with. Don likes to nibble, Rex to bash. No point in rating any more, as the combatants just flail away at each other.*

[23] Again he was lucky! If the differential had been but one more, his last uncommitted unit in 25 would also be "history". And he follows that up by shooting down my inoffensive sacrificial lamb in Area 26. That can't go unanswered, so I send in his brother.

G—2-4-5 [27] 26

23—*The most obvious move in the game. He can't let 26 go unblocked.*

[24] His last "cheap" blocking unit has been used. If I can dislodge it, he'll have to replace it with a MG or allow me to reinforce Area 25.

B—3-3-5 [26] vs 26 at 0 [8:8 = -]

24—*I find something unfair about low-odds attacks succeeding, so I applaud this result. If it is necessary to free up 26 now, why not earlier?*

[25] While Don's busy popping away in 26, I might as well speculate a little elsewhere. So, a weak shot at the committed New Zealanders in 21 hoping to even the odds here for the nearing close combat. If I succeed, a touch more pressure for him to consider.

G—4-4-5 [20] vs 21 at +1 [9:8 = -]

25—*Worth a try. Running out of options.*

[26] Having expended his last shot on Area 21, I am now able to safely fire my units there. Dislodging even one German unit will guarantee Area 21 for the Allies.

B—4-3-5 [21] vs 21 at +1 [4:11 = -]

26—*In this and his next impulse, Don tries two low-odds attacks which both fail. I agree with Rex that it is better to attack at superior odds.*

[27] And now for the obvious shot at 25 looking to really put the screws on.

G—4-4-5 [28] vs 25 at +1 [4:7 = 3] [K 3-3-5]

27—*Good luck.*

[28] The CC ratio in Area 25 is up to an alarming 8:2! My last uncommitted unit in 21 is out of it anyway, so he might as well try to guarantee the area for me by attacking 21.

B—3-3-5 [21] vs 21 at 0 [7:8 = -]

28—*See my comment on impulse 26 (although, in fact, combining would not have helped).*

[29] No reason for me to press any further; I want the turn to end now! But I doubt that Don wants that. All I need do is weather his fire for several impulses and, even if he moves a last unit into 25, I have a slightly better than 50% chance of capturing it.

G—PASS

29—*Passing at the right time.*

[30] Rex's "Pass" was the correct choice. I can no longer hope to reinforce 25 from 26, so I'll just take my shots and hope for the best.

B—3-3-5 [25] vs 25 at 0 [10:5 = 5] [K 3-3-5, 4-3-5 MG]

30—*When you're hot!!!*

[31] Damn, damn, damn! But still no reason to commit my last unit. I'll hold it back to jump into 26 just in case he clears out my 2-4-5 there. I certainly don't need all these folk in the Roundhouse too.

G—PASS

31—*OK.*

[32] Even a cataclysmic chit draw couldn't win Area 26 for him now. The only question is whether I should take one 4:4 attack against 25 or two 3:4 ones. I favor the latter because a retreat is as good as a kill now.

B—3-3-5 [26] vs 25 at -1 [6:7 = -]

32—*Too late to change character now: more caution.*

[33] Don can't possibly be lucky enough to do it again; it's not in his personality profile.

G—PASS

33—*Still OK.*

[34] I need to win one of these low-odds shots!

B—3-3-5 [26] vs 25 at -1 [6:9 = -]

34—*You already did, Don!*

[35] And so, at long last, the MG must rush into Area 25. Might as well as Don will commit his remaining unit there regardless.

G—4-3-5 [27] 25

[36] No choice left; I can't let him have a 7-to-2 CC advantage. I must reinforce 25 with my last unit. That will leave him with a 1-in-18 chance to win in Area 25 and a less than 1-in-72 chance to win in Area 21 before trading in his Tactical Advantage for a re-roll.

B—3-3-5 [23] 25

35-36—*The unavoidable final moves.*

NO UNITS LEFT TO MOVE/FIRE

Rex: And so it comes down to Close Combat again, as it always seems to in this scenario. I'll attack in Area 21 first just on the off chance I luck out and hit that 1-in-72 jackpot. I must save my best chance for last because I'll only be able to use the Tactical Advantage once to force a reroll. Ideally, I want to use it on his last remaining unit so that he can't turn around and use it against me.

As luck would have it, I'm forced to use the Tactical Advantage on my second attack in the battle for the Roundhouse in 25. But it works, and the reroll keeps me in the chase. The third battle—a 33% chance—is also successful. I win—for a brief moment. Don wastes no time passing the Tactical Advantage chit back to me to force a reroll. I lose. How close can you get?

CLOSE COMBAT

Area	Attacker(s)	Defender	Needed	dr
(German:)				
21	3-3-5	3-3-5	6	1
21	3-3-5	3-3-5	6	2
21	3-3-5	4-3-5 MG	4	4
25	2×3-4-5, 4-3-5 MG	5-3-8	4	4
25	2×3-4-5	3-3-5	5	1
reroll			5	5
25	2×3-4-5	3-3-5	5	6
reroll			5	3

British attacks are not listed as they are inconsequential to the Victory Conditions at this point.

What can I say but, "Give me another turn and I'll clear everything up to the Convent". Don's luck on the chit draws seemed impressive at the time, but the final tally shows that he actually has more high chits remaining in his cup than I do in mine. That means my average chit draw was higher than his. I think though, that as this replay stresses, it is the *when* and *where* that luck occurs in this game that is crucial. There is nothing more frustrating than to see a good attack be just one CP short of devastating, or to see your "12" wasted on a defensive draw against an opponent's "3". Too, this replay shows nicely how carefully balanced this game can be (in similar CC circumstances in our previous playing, I won); even with so much going wrong, the Germans actually had a modest chance of emerging triumphant at the end. And, lastly, this replay shows the skill and attention *THUNDER AT CASSINO* will demand to play well. Yet we finished this game in less than an hour—an hour of the most intense concentration I've engaged in for awhile. And that, to me, is what wargaming is all about.

When two players as experienced and skilled as Don and Rex clash in a game they know better than anyone else, it isn't surprising that the match is one that Karpo and Kasparov might envy. Has a nice ring to it, doesn't it? Too bad it isn't true!

Don's play was completely passive and reactive. Throughout the game he was much stronger in 26 than in the German area opposite, 27, but he never gave the slightest indication of any sort of counter-attack. In fact, for most of the game, the Germans economically paralyzed Area 26. Due to the portion of the board used, the Allies have a nice compact

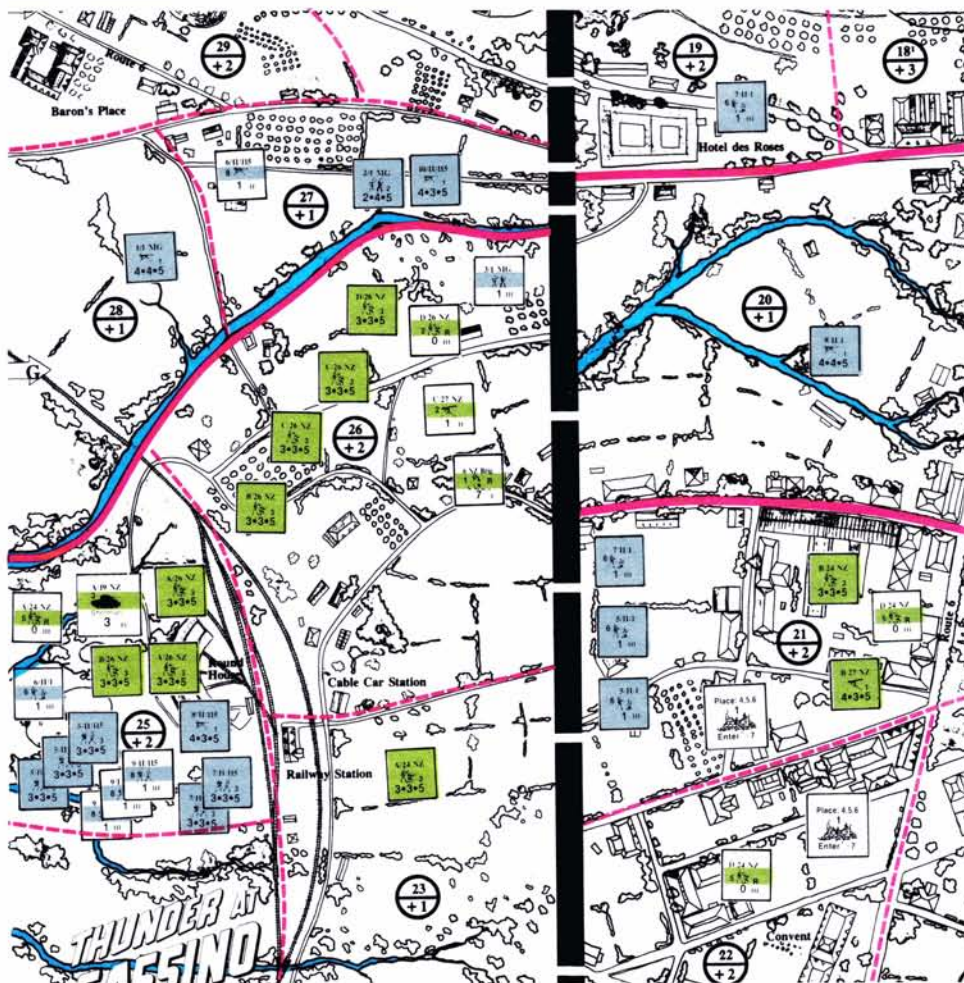
area to defend, mutually reinforcing, and Don made sure that his rear communications were protected. On the other hand, the German left flank is a bit out on a limb, particularly since it is distant from the majority of German units off-board in Zone G. After Rex threw away his tanks, and showed that he was concentrating on his right flank (25), Don should have mounted a counter-attack on the German left, if necessary yielding two VPs (25) to threaten three.

Despite what I consider excessive use of the "Pass" option, and a complete refusal to block the Germans (surely as valid a tactic as "Pass"), I think Don's tactics were a bit less bad than Rex's.

Rex did well to come as close as he did after shooting himself in the foot in the first turn. Had he not sacrificed his tanks for nothing, he might have won. I think that his initial set-up was unimaginative, and lost the advantage given him by the first move and the concentration in G. But most of all, I think Rex made an unforgivable mistake; he divided his efforts between 25 and 21, coming up just a bit short in the former and way short in the latter. Since the Germans need only one VP, I think they must concentrate. Don dealt with the Area 21 attack without breaking a sweat. The fact that he nearly succumbed in 25 is more due to his own passivity than Rex's skill. Were I to play the Germans in this scenario, I would like to start out with a one-two punch artillery and Night Turn designed to really isolate Area 25.



Figure #3 The situation at the end of the 18th Impulse, Turn 9.



AREA TOP 50 LIST

Rank	Name	Times On List	Rating	Previous Rank
1.	K. Combs	61	2563YOW	1
2.	D. Burdick	60	2305HHP	2
3.	J. Kreuz	55	2190IGR	3
4.	J. Beard	50	2188IIR	4
5.	B. Sinigaglio	46	2179GIJ	5
6.	J. Noel	14	2168DDJ	6
7.	P. Siragusa	55	2112FHK	7
8.	D. Garbutt	59	2108HJP	9
9.	E. Mineman	31	2073DFG	8
10.	P. Flory	37	2039EHL	11
11.	P. Gartman	26	2030HHK	12
12.	H. Newby	26	2029UJP	13
13.	P. Landry	35	2029HIO	14
14.	S. Sutton	28	2029GHN	10
15.	R. Beyma	36	2041DDG	16
16.	G. Schnittker	8	1983DFG	15
17.	C. Corn	10	1970FEA	17
18.	F. Preissle	58	1967MNY	18
19.	T. Oleson	70	1965ZZZ	19
20.	J. Spontak	5	1963DCE	20
21.	B. Remsburg	44	1960HIQ	21
22.	T. Deane	13	1947EBB	22
23.	R. Berger	1	1932DEE	—
24.	F. Reese	41	1931IDJ	24
25.	J. Eliason	9	1910FIM	26
26.	W. Scott	58	1909MKW	23
27.	L. Barlow	8	1896JKU	31
28.	M. Rogers	21	1880CEH	27
29.	K. McCarthy	15	1872CFI	28
30.	B. Salvatore	28	1871GKO	29
31.	E. O'Connor	20	1866FGM	25
32.	E. Miller	8	1849HKR	32
33.	D. Mattson	3	1844JJV	37
34.	K. Kinsel	6	1837GGJ	38
35.	S. Johns	14	1831HFI	33
36.	R. Shurdut	6	1827FHL	34
37.	G. Smith	15	1826FGM	35
38.	M. Frisk	15	1818CEI	36
39.	F. Ornstein	44	1786GHM	39
40.	J. Lutz	6	1783HGP	40
41.	L. Carpenter	6	1781CEF	42
42.	K. Blackwell	2	1775GFB	43
43.	D. Kopp	6	1774GIN	44
44.	M. Cox	3	1771GDA	45
45.	M. Dultz	3	1757OSZ	47
46.	D. Greenwood	6	1756GFK	46
47.	M. Mitchell	4	1751FHM	41
48.	M. Simonitch	3	1743EFH	48
49.	R. Schilb	3	1732EHK	50
50.	R. Costelloe	1	1725CDH	—

MEET THE 50 . . .

Mr. Peter B. Landry is 24, married, and tutors in math, physics and electronics while working toward an associates degree in electronics in Fairhaven, Massachusetts.

Favorite Game: Cobra
AREA Rated Games: AK, WAT, STAL, DD, BB, TRC
AREA W-L Record: 37-12 **% Time PBM:** 70%
Gaming Time/Week: 3 hours **Play Preference:** FTF
Hobbies: Photography, Hiking, Reading
Pet Peeve: Not having enough time to play, and when I have the free time not having an opponent available nearby.

Mr. Landry looks at the advantages of PBM and FTF gaming:

"PBM is a great way to truly learn a game. By playing by mail against several opponents, one usually gets exposed to most of the tricks and traps relatively quickly—allowing you in turn to improve on them (or try to) and use them yourself. PBM allows you to study all your options before that irreversible die roll. I enjoy PBM greatly, but I prefer FTF gaming. Against a live opponent you are in the driver's seat. You must use all of your gaming skills quickly and efficiently as possible. You can't study each and every situation; you must act or react immediately. Instinct and skill shine through in a good FTF player."

Dear Mr. Martin:

Since I am sure that you receive plenty of letters of this ilk, and have quite a few more of these to go today, I'll try to be brief.

In responding to your survey, I have noticed acknowledgement to the SOLO players amongst us, along with a recent increase in the games designed to be played purely solo. This is an excellent trend which I will work toward encouraging. The sprinkling of solo games in recent years has led me to increased hours gaming rather than designing solo systems for games which I will then play—once I get the "system" to "work". Since this letter is an attachment to the survey, I would like to offer a suggestion related to your entire line of games, solitaire gaming, and *THE GENERAL*: how about adding or devoting a single column in every other issue to adapting an existing game to solo play? I have been making do with some of my own ideas for such classics as *FRANCE 1940*, *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN*, *PB/PL* and others for quite some time now and have developed some interesting solo "systems" for each of them. I am also quite sure that other solo gamers have been doing the same with these eminently playable FTF games.

Since each article in *THE GENERAL* is presented with the hope of increasing the playing and playability of a specific game, allowing contributing authors a regular opportunity to present their solo methods would serve the same purpose. Sharing the ideas of how a gamer in Idaho plays *WS&M* solo would definitely pique my interest in that classic, and certainly encourage me to dust-off the old girl for another go! The Avalon Hill suite of games is quite extensive, and while some of those games may have lost their appeal to those of us who no longer have the time for FTF gaming, the interest just may reappear should a workable solitaire alternative surface.

Speaking of "surface", I tend to recall an excellent recent article on *SUBMARINE* which presented some further solitaire items. A few years previous, another good article presenting a (single) solo scenario for *RICHTHOFEN'S WAR* which centered on the "flying torpedo" was also (in my opinion at least) a good starting point for further "home-brewed" scenarios. Even further back, yet another article by a learned gamer presented his method for playing *TOBRUK* solo. That article alone provided the incentive for me to buy the game and attempt to embellish the ideas presented in playing it solo.

Such articles appearing on a more "regular" basis would be greatly welcomed, especially when dealing with games which have no solo scenarios but require (at least) another individual in the FTF mode. If I were to know about another gamer's method for playing *CAESAR'S LEGIONS* solo, or *BULGE '81*, or *SQUAD LEADER* (God how I truly lust for a really good system for that baby) or *BULL RUN* or . . . well, you probably get my drift by now. A few years ago, you ran an excellent column called "Designer's Notes" which set forth some very good ideas on the reasons why game systems were the way they were. A column along that type of format dealing specifically with solo play would be very welcome.

For the past few years, I have been a member of the British-based SWA—the "Solo Wargamers Association". This hardy band of lads (and lassies?) deals specifically with solitaire gaming but alas, seldom with boardgames—and if then, rarely with titles from Avalon Hill. Unfortunately, I have recently decided to allow my membership to become inactive since there was such a dearth of such articles. It might be nice to imagine such a "group" starting up here in the USA; however for the present it seems that even the original SWA in Britain is having some difficulties in maintaining interest—and those guys are the real zealots!

I appreciate you taking the time to read my proposal. I am looking forward to many more enjoyable years of reading *THE GENERAL* and playing your quality games—albeit solitaire.

Ray Letkiewicz
Hoffman, Illinois

★★★★★

Mr. Martin:

I have just received *THE GENERAL* Vol. 24, #4. Let me congratulate you on taking the bold step of devoting this issue to a solitaire game. I suspect that you based your decision on sales statistics and the continued popularity of solitaire games in the "So That's What You've Been Playing" feature of *THE GENERAL*. Regardless, to devote an issue of the magazine to a solitaire

Letters to the Editor . . .

game is chancing the wrath of the readership. Only time and the rating of this issue will decide if you made the right decision.

Presently I own *B-17*, *PATTON'S BEST* and *RAID ON ST. NAZAIRE*. I have enjoyed hundreds of hours of exciting play from each game. To be able to sit down with a quality solitaire game that gives you the challenge and excitement of FTF play is an answer to prayer for many "isolationists". However, as you well know, owning a solitaire game does not make a gamer an "isolationist". I am a member of a well-organized and well-led game club near Boston. The North Shore Game Club holds monthly meetings at which multi-player games are very popular. It is when I am between meetings that I enjoy turning to a quality solitaire game. These games fill a void. It is therefore encouraging to learn that Avalon Hill is planning to continue publishing solitaire games. I look forward to your next game release with anticipation.

It is also encouraging to learn of the upcoming changes in *THE GENERAL*. I own over 14 years of back issues of *THE GENERAL*. They represent my own personal reference library for Avalon Hill games. Any improvements are welcome and should more than compensate for the price increase. The subscription rates are still a bargain!

Edward Campisano
Norwood, Massachusetts

★★★★★

Gentlemen,

Boy, are you asking for trouble.

"Please take a few moments and jot down your thoughts . . ."

"Finally, a spot for you to sound off . . ." Remember, you asked for it.

I'm 24 now, and have been gaming for over twelve years. I have over seventy games in my collection, about half of which are TAHC. I subscribe to two gaming magazines and I pick up three or four others whenever I see them. I expect wargames to continue to consume a good sized chunk of my disposable income for quite a while yet. Thanks for the chance to provide some input.

The "AH Philosophy" and "Letters to the Editor" are always interesting to read. It would be nice if the "Question Box" was expanded, and covered more than one or two games at a time. This might help to cut down on the "nut mail". The AREA "mini-bios" are interesting as they show what other gamers are like; the Top 50 listing could be cut down to ten or fifteen without any great loss.

As far as "types" of articles go, keep 'em all coming. Designer's Notes are always welcome, as are those dealing with tactics, rules analyses, and history. Humorous articles ("They Shall be Playtesters" and the ramblings of Herr Moon come to mind) are a nice change of pace—in small doses. One thing that I hope you keep is the featured game concept. It's sold me on several games that I might never have looked at otherwise.

Whatever you do, please don't start using cartoons. I mentioned earlier that I follow five or so hobby-related magazines. I have always felt that *THE GENERAL* was the most serious and professional of them all. This applies to both presentation and content. Cartoons would not fit, especially as a regular feature. If you get a real gem, stick it on the insert, or collect and release them as a special insert every couple of issues.

I have a feeling that the yearly variant counter sheet is going to be a very popular idea. I certainly like it.

The presentation and physical quality of *THE GENERAL* has never failed to impress me. The heavy, matte paper and beautiful full-color illustrations make it a joy to read. I have issues that are eight years old and are still in excellent condition, despite countless re-readings. I will be disappointed if these points change. Please don't go glossy; also the present typeface is fine. I am also pleased to see that subscription issues are mailed in heavy envelopes. I subscribe to six magazines; those that arrive in plastic (four) rarely do undamaged.

One last piece of "wisdom". I'm a radio technician in the military; much of the equipment that I maintain and repair is old and touchy.

When it works, which is most of the time, it works beautifully. When it doesn't, look out. There is a line we use; you've probably heard it: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!"

I hope that this has been useful to you, and I look forward to seeing the results of the survey.

V.P. Lewington
San Diego, California

★★★★★

Dear Rex:

While additional comments may be superfluous—given the fairly thorough nature of the "1988 Readers' Survey" on the reverse side—I am taking the liberty of including a few remarks. May I say that I very much appreciate TAHC's enclosed readers' survey and am certain that others who read *THE GENERAL* feel similarly. Despite the presence of numerous companies in the gaming field, I continue to feel that TAHC sets the standards by which the hobby is measured.

Although I am certainly not an "insider" among the hobby's leadership, and I am not privy to an "insider's" awareness of hobby intentions, I have nevertheless been a wargamer of long standing. I have been a devotee of TAHC games since 1960, an attendee at the ORIGINS conventions since 1980, and have about two dozen assorted articles published in various historical board-gaming oriented publications since 1977 . . . including one or two in *THE GENERAL*. In addition, I own nearly 400 "wargames" from a wide variety of publishers, and subscribe to eight periodicals. I mention this because I feel that I do possess a certain perspective on the hobby as a result of my own level of involvement. Otherwise, of course, my opinions are no more valid than those of any other hobbyist or consumer.

Of late, my sense of things is that TAHC is undergoing a period of reassessment. These concerns include the direction which future game designs ought to take, the changing demographics of the hobby's devotees, and the fear that the hobby may be losing a measure of its earlier dynamism. All of these matters also have potential implications for economic "bottom lines" of existing and would-be publishers. While *THE GENERAL* is contemplating a "face lift" to increase its attractiveness, I sense that similar considerations extend throughout TAHC. The intent is to present a more attractive product to the public, and to rejuvenate a company and a hobby that are inexorably related.

I applaud these efforts. Despite the fact that some changes may be largely cosmetic, a "new and improved" presentation is probably wise. Although most gamers whom I know still consider TAHC as the standard for quality, there is also a perception among many that TAHC has become increasingly insular. *THE GENERAL* seems occasionally to be dominated by "insiders" and unresponsive to the more general gaming public. Obviously you cannot publish what you do not receive and there is a natural tendency to be more receptive to top-drawer submissions. In the process, however, it appears that *THE GENERAL* has lost a measure of its humility.

The enclosed "Readers' Survey" is an excellent first step towards reconnecting *THE GENERAL* with the hobby population. For this reason, my survey responses advise an extension of the "AH Philosophy" and "Letters" columns. Many of your recent "philosophy" pieces have been excellent because they address questions which are integral to the hobby's future (e.g., the demise of game clubs, the restructuring of the awards formats, etc.).

Should you decide to publish a 25th Anniversary issue as described in the "Readers' Survey" sheet, I would be happy to submit "a few words" for inclusion. Whether the submission would be useful is something that only you and the compilers would decide, and I certainly would not expect any form of remuneration. After all these years of quality service, perhaps it is time for we gamers to give something back for all of the underpaid, under-appreciated hobby assistance. In fact, a future "AH Philosophy" might do well to address this very issue, however unpopular. Perhaps hobbyists need to be reminded that this is indeed *their* enterprise as well. Gamers may need to be encouraged to advance the hobby in

personal terms, rather than simply assuming that the publishers will provide this service. The publishers are here because the hobbyists are here, not vice versa.

In any event, I appreciate your willingness to read these additional remarks. I understand that your time is very valuable and that "nut mail" does not ease your burden. May I close by saying that I stand ready to assist TAHC and the hobby in any way that I can to foster growth. If I can help in any reasonable way, please feel free to write.

Terry Alan Baney
Waterbury, Connecticut

★★★★★

Dear Mr. Martin:

Enclosed you will find the completed 1988 survey, some additional comments to the survey, an order for \$10.00 (less the \$2.00 for the survey), and a completed contest entry form. I believe that the idea of a survey is a good concept, and one that should be made a permanent feature. A single, yearly survey promises to be an excellent way to obtain a great deal of feedback on many topics without undue difficulty on the part of the reader or yourself.

For myself, this survey was greatly appreciated as it provided an opportunity to express my feelings and opinions on a wide variety of topics. There have been numerous times when I have been tempted to write a letter to the editor, but have declined as the topic did not seem important enough to warrant a letter. I hope you find my comments constructive and not too voluminous.

Having read *THE GENERAL* for nine years now, I have seen a number of changes occur in format, layout and size. I have generally (no pun intended) been pleased with the quality and quantity of the articles. As to the rather erratic publishing and distribution schedules, I have not found them to be too irksome. Your primary business is one of creating and marketing games, not one of publishing magazines. At least from my vantage point, the additional work required of you to publish *THE GENERAL* is appreciated.

James M. Boileau
Jacksonville, Florida

★★★★★

Dear Sirs,

As you might be able to tell from the way I completed the survey, I am an avid *SQUAD LEADER* fan. In fact, it was the first wargame I ever played (that was nine years ago) and it has become the only game I play. I felt, however, that I should write a letter and expand on my survey answers.

Firstly, the question about the percentage of *SQUAD LEADER* coverage in the *ASL* Annual interested me. I feel, as I indicated in the survey, that all of this publication should concern *ASL*, except perhaps for a portion devoted to encouraging *SL* players to upgrade to *ASL*. I feel that *ASL* is such a completely superior product, due both to content and organization, that any *SL* player, once properly introduced to the newer system, would never go back. If I had not had a friend buy *ASL* first, I too would have clung to *SL*; but now I've found that due to the relative ease of the *ASL* system that I'm playing more games (mostly solitaire) with more enjoyment.

Concerning the question of a scenario pad vs. inserts, I feel—if time allows—that both should be done. I have developed a strong faith in the quality of *ASL* products and I would buy any set of scenarios that Avalon Hill put out for *ASL* (and \$10.00 for 16 updated scenarios is a bargain). I would also like to see new scenario inserts in *THE GENERAL*, particularly if accompanied (even if in a subsequent issue) by Series Replays or just simple discussions of the scenario. I especially enjoyed the four tournament scenarios and the accompanying short analyses.

Lastly, I would like to compliment all of the writers who have presented analytical articles in *THE GENERAL* concerning *ASL*. The articles have invariably been interesting, though some have required multiple readings to fully grasp. And finally, all my respect goes to the *SL* and *ASL* designers and playtesters; I can honestly say that each time I play the game I am more pleased with the system and have a deeper respect (and sometimes awe) for those involved in its creation.

Douglas Blandford
Columbia, Maryland

THEATER MODIFICATIONS

More Expansions for B-17

By John E. Ockelmann

B-17, QUEEN OF THE SKIES is the game of high-altitude tension and roaring excitement. It nicely simulates the bombing operations carried out by the 8th Air Force based in England, or by the 15th Air Force based in Italy (Vol. 23, No. 1), during World War II. You, as player, are the aircraft commander; you must make the decisions regarding the fate of your B-17 and crew. It is, quite simply, the most fun you can have in solitaire gaming. It highlights the *adventure* in "Adventure Gaming".

But there are some shortcomings in simulating the real tension of certain facets of a mission. How good a formation flyer is the pilot? Is the target recognizable to the navigator and bombardier? Will your B-17 even make it to Zone 2 before a mechanical fault forces an abort? Questions like these plagued every B-17 commander, and have yet to be integrated into the game. I enjoy *B-17* immensely. But I also believe in tinkering with a game to make it even better. [What wargamer doesn't?] After some weeks of research and several pads of paper, I offer the following modifications for devotees to this great adventure.

GROUP FORMATIONS

When the B-17 first flew in combat against targets in Europe in August 1942, a six-plane squadron formation was used for combat. When a "bombardment group" (two or more squadrons) were sent aloft, the group formation had a lead six-plane squadron followed by the second squadron at a three mile distance. The other squadrons involved were spaced four miles apart at the midpoint between lead and tail squadrons. While risk of collision was low, the squadrons were usually unable to get a concentrated bomb pattern on the target or to support each other with defensive fire.

In September 1942, a new group combat formation was instituted, based on a nine-plane line-abreast squadron organization. The group formation consisted of a high squadron, with a lead squadron offset to the left and some 500 feet lower. While more compact than the previous formation, flexibility suffered. Collision risks were higher with pilots un-used to the rigors of formation flying (a specialized skill), and the fire from the waist gunners was greatly restricted to reduce the risk of hitting neighboring friendly aircraft. Also, in the early missions, aircraft aborts due to mechanical failure were so common that these formations were often terribly disrupted before even reaching the French coast.

Colonel Curtis LeMay, commander of the 305th Bombardment Group (Heavy), had noted the flaws in the group formations his men were using. Being new to the theater, he didn't immediately speak up against them. But after flying several practice flights and some combat missions, he introduced what would become known as the "high-lead-low" group combat formation. While harder to fly, demanding better pilots, the new formation was much improved in two respects. The gunners were able to fire in all directions unimpeded, or to concentrate defensive fire in a single direction if the need arose. And the bombing pattern was relatively compact, leading to more substantial damage to the target.

After reviewing this information on the early group formations, here are some proposed modifications to the rules of *B-17* for those who might wish to use these earlier formations to simulate the historical first missions:

1. Since group defensive fire, for the most part, will be ineffective against enemy fighters—when rolling for any fighters on Table B-3, ignore results of "16", "36" and "56" and roll again if not using the April 1943 formation.
2. With the August 1942 formation, bombing accuracy will not be as effective. Apply a "-1" modifier to the Table O-6 die roll.

EVASIVE ACTION

Upon initial entry into the skies above Europe by the B-17, the theory was that flying straight and level on the bomb run was simple asking for the flak guns to send you and your aircrew a personal invitation to join the *Luftstalgas*—or worse. So evasive action by the formation was a standard tactic on the bomb run. While certainly good for morale, there was one major drawback. Dropping bombs while jinking to evade flak sent the bomb-on-target accuracy rate way down.

Again, it was Colonel LeMay of the 305th who set the new standard for performance. He established the rule, and enforced it, that from now on evading flak on the bomb run was forbidden. On the very next mission, personally commanding his group, he flew a straight-in bomb approach.

No muss and no fuss, evading no flak bursts. It was a practical and effective solution. While flak damage to the airplanes rose, so did the accuracy rate. For those who, playing early scenarios, wish to recreate the dictum of evading flak in 1942 common to all pilots, here are the modifications:

1. While using evasive action, you may apply a "-2" modifier to the O-2 Flak Table die roll.
2. While using evasive action, you must apply a "-3" modifier to the O-6 Bomb Accuracy Table die roll.

FORMATION DEFENSIVE GUNNERY

Occasionally, the tight formations produced accidental hits on a B-17 by the guns of another. When rolling for enemy fighters on Table B-3, should a "16", "26", "36", "46" or "56" be rolled, roll one die and check for possible hits from friendly fire: "1-5"=no hits; "6"=hits. Should a "6" result, roll for number of hits and location using two dice and the table below:

Hits by Friendly Fire:	Location of Hits:
"2"=two hits	"2"=Nose
"3-11"=one hit	"3"=Pilot Compartment
"12"=two hits	"4"=Bomb Bay
	"5"=Radio Room
	"6"=Wing
	"7"=Waist
	"8"=Wing
	"9"=Tail
	"10"=Bomb Bay
	"11"=Pilot Compartment
	"12"=Nose

CREW EXPERIENCE

Another problem for the 8th and 15th Air Forces in those early days, one totally unforeseen, was that of target identification. There was a significant difference in finding a town in America, with easy checkpoints on training runs, and finding one in war-time Europe where the close proximity of towns to each other and enemy action meant sometimes the wrong target got bombed.

Once again LeMay devised a solution. He started a "Lead Crew" school that taught teams of bombardiers and navigators to recognize certain sets of targets from the air. If a target that a particular "lead crew" was familiar with was selected for a mission, they were placed in the lead bombers on the belief that they would most readily recognize it—and thus that the entire group would bomb it with a reasonable chance of success. And it worked, as these specialists became an elite and important facet of the American effort. Modifications for recreating the impact of these lead crews are:

1. Anyone who has flown in the lead bomber position in the lead squadron at least twice against the same target is entitled to apply a "+1" modifier to the O-6 Table die roll.
2. Anyone using the lead crew concept can designate the target system they wish to use the bonus against (i.e., marshalling yards, industries, dockyards).

Pilot experience was a major factor in formation flying. Flight schools in the States had concentrated on the basics, and did not teach the finer points of flying, leaving indoctrination to formation combat flying to the group theater schools. Subsequently, the first few missions of a new pilot were somewhat riskier in terms of possible collision. Implyment the following:

1. Any novice pilot (five or fewer missions flown) must apply a "+1" modifier to the die roll of Event 12 of the Random Events Table.
2. Any veteran pilot (ten or more missions flown) can apply a "-1" modifier to the die roll of Event 12 of the Random Events Table.

Gunner experience was also a prime factor in air-to-air combat, when the bomber was beset by the enemy. Lack of adequate training Stateside led to some gunners who simply didn't understand the fine points of their guns, or how to use them effectively against oncoming fighters. After a

Figure 1: Three views of the August 1942 formation.



few missions (and intensive theater training), aerial gunnery always improved remarkably for those crewmen who survived. The modifications:

1. Any novice gunner (five or fewer missions) must apply a “-1” modifier to the M-1 Defensive Fire Table die roll.
2. With a novice gunner, an unmodifier die roll of “1” jams his gun. A repair die roll of “1” clears the jammed gun and a “6” permanently breaks it; any other result has no effect. Only one repair attempt is allowed per zone entered, immediately after entry of that zone.

AIRCRAFT MODIFICATIONS

In the B-17E version, the nose gun was originally a .30-caliber light machinegun. It’s drawbacks were obvious—a lack of range and insufficient hitting power. If flying the 17E, institute the following changes:

1. Due to lack of range, a “6” is required to hit an incoming enemy fighter on the M-1 Defensive Fire Table from the nose position.
2. Due to insufficient hitting power, a “-1” is to be applied to the M-2 Table die roll.

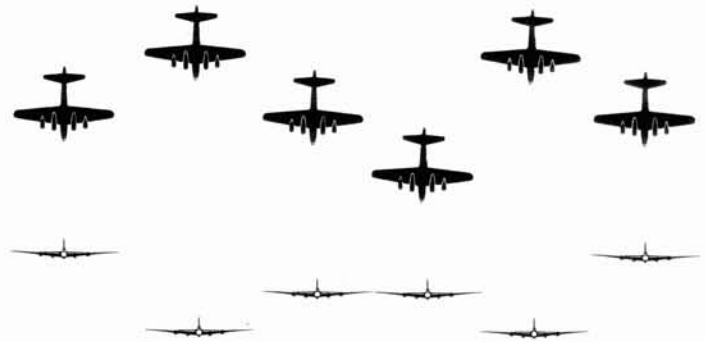
The B-17G had some, primarily defensive, changes made to it in design. While the chin turret was a major improvement, other changes were also implemented. Ammunition was increased by 50% for the cheek guns and 100% for the waist guns. The tail guns were fitted with an improved sight and given a better field of fire. Modifications for use of the B-17G in combat are as follows:

1. With ammunition increased by 50%, the number of shots by the cheek guns is changed from 10 to 15.
2. With ammunition increased by 100%, the number of shots by the waist guns is changed from 20 to 40.
3. With improved sights, a “+1” modifier is applied by the tail gunner to the M-1 Defensive Fire Table die roll.
4. Due to the improved field of fire, a “+1” modifier is applied to passing shots.

THE DAMAGE TABLES

The B-17F had extra fuel tanks installed in the wings, just outboard of the outer engines. These “Tokyo” tanks were susceptible to damage and fire. So, should #10 be rolled on the B1-1 Wings Damage Table, roll one die to determine which fuel tank is hit: “1-2”=Tokyo tank; “3-4”=outboard tank; “5-6”=inboard tank. Damage is then determined normally.

Landing gear proved to be very vulnerable to damage. So when a “12”



is rolled on the B1-1 Wings Damage Table, roll one die and apply the following:

- “1-2”=Brakes out (h)
- “3-4”=Landing Gear Inoperable (i) (j)
- “5-6”=Landing Gear Drops Down (j) (k)

- (h) = “-1” modifier applied to roll on Table G-9.
- (i) = “-3” modifier applied to roll on Table G-9.
- (j) = manual operation of gear: on a die roll of “1-2” gear raised/lowered; otherwise considered inoperable. One attempt per zone entered.
- (k) = Speed reduced due to drag—two turns per zone

For extra-long range missions (Zone 10 or beyond), a fuel tank was occasionally carried in the bomb bay. Helpful as this tank was, it was not self-sealing. And the close proximity of aviation fuel and high explosives had many crews wondering about the benefits of the bomb bay tank. Should a “3”, “9” or “11” be rolled on the P-3 Bomb Bay Damage Table while on a mission of extreme range, roll one die: “1-3”=check bombs normally; “4-6”=bomb bay hit and roll one die. A roll on this second check of “1-4” means “leakage”, or of “5-6” means “fire” (immediate bailout of crew and loss of plane). If a leak occurs, should this section of the plane be hit again before the bomb run, roll one die: “2-5”=fire and bailout of crew; “6”=bombs explode with loss of plane and crew.

Bomb bay doors proved to be vulnerable to flak damage on the run in, as well as damage from fighters. Should a “5” or “10” be rolled on the P-3 Bomb Bay Damage Table, roll one die and apply the following:

- “1-2”=Bay Doors Inoperable, jammed shut (c)
- “3-4”=Bay Doors Inoperable, jammed open (c) (d)
- “5-6”=Superficial Damage, no effect

- (c) = manual operation of bay doors: on a die roll of “1-2” doors opened/closed; otherwise considered inoperable. One attempt per zone entered.
- (d) = Speed reduced due to drag—two turns per zone.

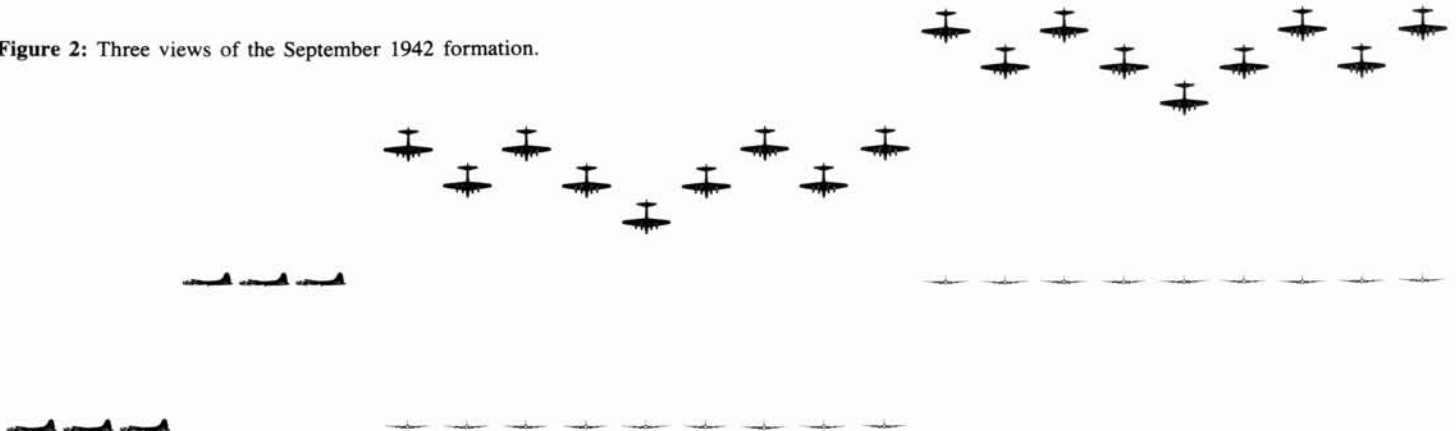
WEATHER

Occasionally, the target designated was not able to be attacked, due to weather or other reasons. Hence, an alternative target was always selected for this contingency. Once you have determined your primary target, select an alternative target along the route to it as your secondary target.

In “poor” or “bad” weather, it didn’t always mean that the weather was such that bombers couldn’t hit the target. It often meant that the target was obscured by cloud cover, forcing a “timed bomb run” with a far greater chance for error and misses. So, when rolling for Weather along the route to and over the target, use the following modified table by rolling one die:

- “1”=Clear conditions; apply “+1” modifier to rolls on Tables B-1, B-2, M-4, O-2 and O-6.

Figure 2: Three views of the September 1942 formation.



- "2-3"=Haze conditions; no modifications apply.
- "4"=50% cloud cover; apply "-1" modifier to rolls on Tables B-1, B-2, M-4, O-2 and O-6.
- "5"=1000% cloud cover; apply "-2" modifier to rolls on Tables B-1, B-2, M-4, O-2 and O-6.
- "6"=Storm conditions; bomber may abort. Alternate target may be attacked if desired but no fighter protection possible; apply a "-3" to rolls on Tables B-1 and B-2.

Weather over England also needs to be handled more realistically. While it could be clear for takeoff, the weather there often deteriorated in a few short hours to an alarming degree. Upon your return to England, make another roll for weather over the base and apply the following: "1-4"=poor weather; "5-6"=bad weather.

At certain altitudes under certain conditions, the engine exhaust of a B-17's four engines become visible to the naked eye. "Contrails" (as these came to be called) tended to attract enemy fighters and helped flak crews determine the bombers' altitude quickly. Upon reach Zone 2, roll one die: "1-4"=no contrails; "5-6"=contrails form. If contrails form, apply a "+1" modifier to the die rolls of Tables B-1, B-2 and O-3.

MECHANICAL FAILURE

While the B-17 was a reliable aircraft, the English (or Mediterranean) weather often had a frustrating effect on the engines, turbo-chargers, and other systems of the aircraft. Upon reaching Zone 2, and every turn thereafter, roll two dice; a roll of "12" means a mechanical failure has occurred in your plane. Should such a failure occur, roll two dice and consult the table below, implementing the effects given:

2=Engine Failure. Roll two dice to determine which engine:

- "2", "3" or "7"—engine #1
- "4", "10" or "11"—engine #2
- "5", "6" or "12"—engine #3
- "8" or "9"—engine #4

Then roll one die: "1-3"=engine restarts; "4-5"=engine restarts but not at full power (may stay in formation only by jettisoning bomb load); "6"=no restart, must jettison bomb load and abort mission. If the engine restarts, but not at full power, the pilot may choose to abort the mission.

3=Turbo-Supercharger Failure. Roll two dice to determine engine as above. Aircraft cannot fly as far or as high, and must drop out of formation. Pilot may choose to abort the mission.

4=Heating System Failure. Heat fails throughout aircraft. May drop out of formation, or must risk frostbite. Pilot may choose to abort the mission.

5=Fuel Transfer System Failure. The crew is unable to transfer fuel from one tank to another, or to engines. Roll one die to determine remaining fuel available: "1-2"=four turns; "3-4"=three turns; "5-6"=two turns. Pilot may abort mission. Upon exhaustion of remaining fuel, the plane must either be landed (Table G-9 or G-10), or crew bailed out.

6=Oil Tank Failure. Roll two dice to determine engine as above. Aircraft must drop out of formation, and pilot may choose to abort the mission. Roll one die: "1-3"=fire, roll to extinguish; "4-6"=leak, engine feathered and plane's speed reduced to two turns per zone.

7=Intercom Failure. Bomb run automatically off-target; gunners may hit on Table M-1 only with a "6" (tail gunner with "5-6"). Pilot may choose to abort mission.

8=Oxygen System Failure. Plane must drop out of formation and pilot must abort the mission.

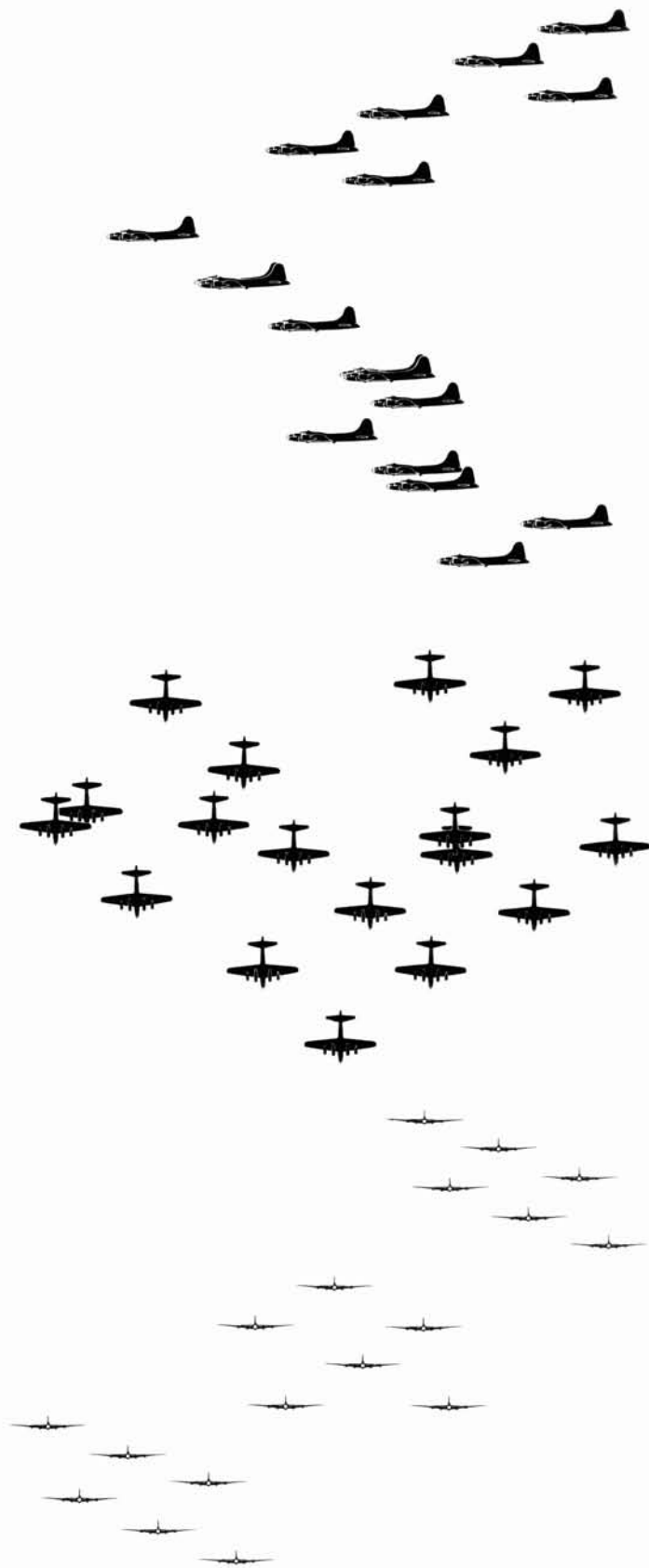
9=Electrical System Failure. Crew must bail out and abandon aircraft.

10=Top Turret Power Failure. Top turret gunner cannot traverse or elevate guns. Gunner may manually traverse and elevate guns (successful on a die roll of "1-2"). If manual attempt successful, the gunner hits on Table M-1 with a die roll of "6".

10=Ball Turret Power Failure. Ball turret gunner cannot traverse or raise/lower turret. Gunner may manually traverse and raise/lower turret (successful on a die roll of "1"). If manual attempt successful, the gunner hits on Table M-1 with a die roll of "6". If unable to raise turret, a "-1" modifier is applied to landing roll on Table G-9 or G-10; gunner is trapped inside. Pilot may choose to abort mission.

12=Bomb Release Mechanism Failure. Bombs fail to drop during bomb run. Bombardier may manually release bombs (successful on a die roll of "1-2"). If manual attempt successful, bomb run off-target. If unsuccessful in manual attempt, plane must leave formation and attempt to jettison (successful on die roll of "1-2"); may attempt one per zone. If bombs onboard upon reaching England, apply a "-4" to the landing roll on G-9 and pilot must remain aboard for landing attempt (remainder of crew may abandon craft). If bombs still aboard in ditching attempt, apply a "-4" to landing roll on G-10 but entire crew may bail out.

Figure 3: Three views of the April 1943 formation.



HOLDING HITDORF

Another Way to Rally

By David A. Schaffer

David Schaffer is, of course, the gentleman who pioneered the "dramatized SR" approach (his "The Bend in the Corridor" in Vol. 22, No. 3 convincingly won the Editor's Choice Award for that year). Now he turns his attention to Scenario 10 of SQUAD LEADER. And he uses the drama to pose a challenge for all would-be ASL designers.

Corporal Uhl moved the Hitdorf Garrison platoon into the factory on the northwestern side of Hitdorf. He chose this Map 3 position because the building's stone construction would protect his men, and because his objective was to keep Americans from occupying stone buildings. He also chose the factory because he knew it would give him a commanding view of the approaching Americans. Curiously, when he hid his one squad and one crew inside the factory, he did not occupy the 2nd level.

"They're coming," the veteran light machine-gunner said wearily. The corporal crossed the spacious, machine-filled room to the northwestern corner. Here he could see out through windows in two walls. But he had no time to even look. The trees outside the west wall erupted in geysers of earth and flame. Shouts and cries followed. Now Uhl could see, through the smoke, that an American squad had walked into the minefield he had placed. The squad lay broken.

The American squad was one of three probing alone for minefields. Another one walked into Uhl's second on the road to Hitdorf. That squad was KIA'd.

But the third squad found an open route to the village through the trees. The G.I.'s ended their move nearby.

"They've got the satchel charge," the veteran called out. "And here come two other squads out of the woods behind them. One of the leaders is with them and they're carrying a bazooka. They've stopped on the other side of the probing squad."

"Isn't that a road?" Corporal Uhl called from across the room.

"Ja, Corporal," the veteran replied.

"Why don't you defensive fire then? Those would be good odds, you know. With penetration you probably could break both squads."

"I would like to do that, Corporal. And if you had positioned us on the second level of this factory we could defensive fire at those squads in the street. But since we're down here on the ground floor we can't do anything. The stone wall out there in the courtyard blocks our line of sight."

Corporal Uhl bit back his tart reply.

"Also Corporal, you had better hope the American doesn't have those four other squads on that side of the map. If he does, they are going to waltz into Hitdorf like their comrades in the street and we won't be able to do anything to stop them."

Corporal Uhl's mouth dropped open in amazement. He hadn't thought of that.

The veteran shook his head. "No wonder we lost this war," he said.

The other four American squads had not known where the Hitdorf Garrison was, but they did set up on Corporal Uhl's side of the map. Organized in two groups of two squads each, each led by a good leader and armed with an MMG, they began their move on the factory.

The group with the lower leader moved out of its position on Map 4, sprinted around the wooden building and moved into the factory at the back. The group led by the better leader moved on a straight line through the woods and tried to get into the

factory from the west. They couldn't because the Hitdorf Garrison was there so they returned to the shelter of the trees.

Corporal Uhl decided instantly. The Americans in the factory were the greater threat. Quickly he moved the platoon to the interior walls and doorways. He directed their doubled attack factors into the Americans filling the rooms.

The Americans caught the fire head-on. The leader broke first. The two squads broke in quick succession. The G.I.s scrambled to get out of the building or to find cover behind machinery.

Then the Americans on the west side of the factory were shooting at Uhl, advancing fire. The fire had no effect.

Uhl turned back to the broken Americans in the factory. They were routing now, but not into the wooden building. They routed into the woods instead—right into Corporal Uhl's third minefield.

Uhl watched the broken American leader go down as cries that Uhl could not understand arose from the Amis. The leader was the only KIA to result, however. The other two broken squads held their morale and remained on the map.

Then the American advance began. Corporal Uhl saw a man with another satchel running toward the broken squads in the minefield. He made a mental note to check the rules of engagement. He was sure the Americans were supposed to have only one charge.

The American group with the ranking leader was closing for close combat. Because Corporal Uhl had already moved his men behind machinery at the west end of the room, his interior position seemed favorable. The odds weren't favorable though.

American grenades sailed through the windows and bounced wildly on the floor. Uhl's men hurled some of them back frantically and tossed some German ones as well. The Americans poured inside after their grenades, spraying the rooms with automatic fire from Thompson sub-machine guns and M-2 machine pistols.

Uhl watched them come in: two big squads led by a big leader. Uhl stood his ground; he controlled his smaller force and met the American 2-1 attack with his own fierce 1-2 attack.

Each side fought desperately. At this range there was no time to think. In the end, it was mad luck that determined life and death among the machines. In the end, this time, it was the Germans who won and the Americans who lost.

Corporal Uhl and the veteran stared dumbly at each other. They had survived. Other platoon members crawled out from under machinery and other cover. As they became cognizant of their survival and that of their comrades, as they became cognizant that, as a unit, there were intact, they couldn't help it: they began to laugh.

The booty from the skirmish was impressive. The Americans who had routed out of the factory had left behind an MMG. The Americans who had been KIA'd in close combat had left another MMG. The veteran claimed this one for himself and turned over his German LMG to a crew member.

Corporal Uhl walked over to the fallen American leader. The man was still breathing. "It was a good attack," he rasped, "I'd try it again." Again Uhl didn't understand the words, but when the American became still, Uhl became curious. He looked at the leader's dogtags. The man's name was Shaw.

Corporal Uhl figured the American had only one leader left, the one sighted slipping into Hitdorf.

Shaw was another and the third had fallen dead in the minefield when the Americans had routed out of the factory.

Now to rally. Uhl noticed the cries of the Americans in the minefield had stopped. He paid them no more attention. They had no leader to bring them back into the fray.

Uhl began to consider prep fire. The thought of moving into the second level did not occur to him. So he couldn't fire into Hitdorf because his line of fire was blocked. The two targets he could fire at were both in minefields. Uhl decided not to fire into the further one, not because there were American wounded there, but because with two broken squads in the other minefield his chances of scoring a KIA there were doubled. Although there were no leaders in the hex, Uhl knew that Americans would bring more on later. He didn't want broken American squads lying around waiting to be rallied.

At the corporal's direction, the platoon fired into the minefield.

"Where are you going, Corporal?" the veteran with the American MMG asked.

"Into the other room," Uhl answered. "I'm going to get that other American MMG."

The veteran shook his head and hunched back over his own MMG. He wondered how Uhl figured he was going to move that thing; but he didn't say anything.

With three American squads in Hitdorf, Captain Tienham split up his arriving force of Volksgrenadiers. He sent the halftrack containing Corporal Pitz and a squad and two LMGs to cover the south side of Hitdorf. The remaining squads would move on foot into the buildings nearest to form a fire group. Tienham himself rode in the truck down the road on the north side of town. He took a crew counter and the HMG with him. He had already established radio contact with German 81mm mortars, so fire support would be forthcoming. He wanted to get the HMG operational in the stone factory with Corporal Uhl. And he wanted to establish an artillery OP there.

Corporal Uhl found the American MMG in the northwestern corner of the room, where the Americans who had routed into the minefield had tried to get it out of the building. They hadn't been able to do that, and it was suddenly clear to Uhl that he wasn't going to move the weapon either. Not alone.

The sound of an approaching vehicle drew him to the eastern wall. He looked through a broken window. A German truck was moving up the road. It turned into the courtyard and stopped next to Uhl.

The corporal watched as a crew jumped out of the truck with an HMG and a radio. Then a German captain got out of the cab and stood motionless on the ground. He was staring toward the woods where the American squads had routed into the minefield.

"Don't worry about them, Captain," Uhl called. "We didn't finish them with our prep fire, but they're still broken." Uhl was about to ask the officer to help him move the MMG when Americans of the "broken" squads rose up in the woods and laid down a barrage of small arms fire.

Uhl watched in horror as the German captain broke, and then the crew too. The HMG and radio tumbled uselessly to the ground.

Corporal Uhl left the MMG and ran to his platoon. "What the hell happened?" he demanded of the veteran. The veteran shook his head.

"But those American squads in the woods . . . in the minefield . . . were broken!" Uhl cried.

"They *couldn't* fire. There weren't any leaders there to rally them."

"Maybe they found another way to rally, Corporal," the veteran said. "By the way, I notice you didn't bring back that American MMG."

Corporal Uhl glared at the veteran.

"There's your answer, Corporal." The veteran pointed out the window as the American movement began again. A lone figure was running through the German minefield toward the wooden building. Uhl tensed in anticipation of a mine going off, but the man made it safely through the field and continued across the grass.

"He's the same one I saw with the satchel charge earlier!" Uhl exclaimed.

"Look again, Corporal," the veteran said sarcastically.

The man came out on the east side of the building. As he sprinted into the sunlight on that part of the lawn, Uhl finally saw the white circles and red crosses on the man's helmet.

At the same time Uhl realized what it was the broken Americans in the minefield were yelling. And it was obvious now that was where this crazy American was heading.

"Medic! Medic!"

"Aren't you going to defensive fire at him?" Uhl demanded again of the veteran.

"Not on your life, Corporal." The veteran looked down the barrel of the MMG and fired at the rallied American squads in the other minefield.

Can medical corpsmen rally troops to fight?

According to Eloise Katherine Engle, author of *Medic*, the answer is a resounding "Yes." Pages 136-139 describe the heroics of three Congressional Medal of Honor winners, all Marine corpsmen serving in the Pacific theater during World War II. "Pierce inspired the entire battalion," Engle writes of Francis J. Pierce, a corpsman in the Fourth Marine Division. Of George Edward Whalen, a corpsman with the Fifth Marine Division, Engle writes, "By his dauntless fortitude and valor, Whalen served as a constant inspiration and contributed vitally to the high morale of his company." And of John Harlan Willis, a corpsman also with the Fifth Marine Division, Engle notes, "By his great personal valor in saving others at the sacrifice of his own life, he inspired his companions although terrifically outnumbered, to launch a fiercely determined attack and repulse the enemy force."

Of the European theater, Engle writes on pages 86-87: "There was often close contact between German and Allied medics, particularly toward the end of the war. Both sides took care of friend and foe alike. Each of them hung onto captured medics to care for their wounded, and records indicate a great mutual respect between the two forces. The Germans who wore Red Cross armbands and bibs went to the same heroic ends as did the Allies so that casualties might be saved."

More recently, General Lewis C. Walt, Commanding General of the Third Marine Amphibious Force and the Navy Component Command of the Military Assistance Command in Vietnam, said of medical corpsmen, "They out-Marine a Marine by volunteering for all kinds of jobs including more than their share of patrols. The spirit they have is absolutely amazing. They are proud and dedicated and the Marines think the world of them. Why, a Marine platoon would no more go into battle without corpsmen than without weapons. The fact that they know corpsmen are out there to take care of them is a tremendous morale factor."

Unlike platoons in Vietnam, *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER* units deploy without medics. In actual fields of fire, medics made a difference. SMC counters should be implemented so their role isn't ignored on the boards of play. Something for you *ASL* fanatics to think about when you finish with such trivial matters as ROFs and TPBFs. ☆

GENERAL SPECIAL ISSUE

To celebrate the 25th Anniversary of wargaming's oldest professional periodical, and to give a preview of some of the layout changes in store with the increase to 64 pages, we put together a **Special Issue** of the magazine. As those readers who attended ORIGINS '88 are aware, we offered this free to all attendees at this year's convention. It is only fair that it also be offered to our loyal readership.

In the **Special Issue** of *The GENERAL*, all the articles are reprints from among the many fine pieces that have graced our pages over the past 24 years. These range from Craig Taylor's original article on *WOODEN SHIPS & IRON MEN* (Vol. 13, No. 2) to a recent *SQUAD LEADER* Clinic (Vol. 24, No. 1) with scenario and from a *MIDWAY* Series Replay (Vol. 11, No. 3) to *TITAN* Design Notes (Vol. 20, No. 2), by authors famous (Jerry Pournelle) to infamous (Richard Berg). The **Special Issue** contains some 15 articles, each dealing with a different game, and many from issues long out of print. These "Best of the Best" are intended to show the great scope and range found in the pages of *The GENERAL*, as well as being fun and informative reading for any dedicated wargamer.

To give our thousands of fans a chance to see what the page increase means in practice, the editors decided to lay out this **Special Issue** in the new format. However, due to the fact that this issue was outside our normal publishing schedule, certain features that regularly appear but are timely in nature (the Convention Calendar, the "Opponents Wanted" ads, the contest, the "Avalon Hill Philosophy", and such) were left out. Other features, such as the AREA Top 50 listing and the "So That's What You've Been Playing" column, were included to introduce newcomers to what the magazine—and Avalon Hill—has to offer.

As this **Special Issue** was due to be released at ORIGINS, I took the liberty of devoting a significant percentage (about double the usual) of the pages to advertising some of TAHGC's newest games. Since we've no articles on these yet, and since these games are certainly deserving of a close look by any true gamer, this seemed the best compromise. It was my hope that, if an advertisement for a game caught the reader's eye, he'd keep his other one peeled for articles on it in future issues of *The GENERAL*. For articles on it there will surely be; that is the reason for *The GENERAL*'s long existence and its continued success.

But, first and foremost, this **Special Issue** is a celebration. A celebration of our 25th year of continuous publication; a celebration of those many writers who have contributed to the magazine; a celebration of our hobby. Thus, we decided to—despite the cover price—give the issue away to one and all at the hobby's biggest party. The issue bears a cover price of \$5.00, and will be carried in our newest catalogue at that price; but we felt that the readers deserved some special consideration. For \$1.00 (to cover shipping and handling costs), we'll send you a copy of the **Special Issue** if you'll but take the time to fill out the form below (a reasonable photocopy will serve).

Please, only one request per reader. Offer void after December 31, 1988.

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FAME & FORTUNE

Well, maybe not much fortune . . . but certainly a little fame. We want you to write for *The GENERAL*. If you can string words together, and are knowledgeable about our games, there's a good chance you're just the person we're looking for. You can supplement our literary staff with articles on strategy and tactics, game analyses, Series Replays, historical commentaries, new scenarios or variants for any of our extensive list of titles. If you've ever had the urge to see your name in print, and feel competent to write on your favorite game, consider submitting your efforts for the consideration of our editors. *The GENERAL* was founded on the efforts of gamers themselves, and for over 25 years has relied on their good works. We encourage all such free-lance submissions.

The *GENERAL* will pay \$6.00 per running ten-inch column of edited text upon publication. (Letters to the Editor are not subject to remuneration.) Alternatively, authors may elect to take their remuneration in the form of our products, paid at the rate of 150% of the cash remuneration. At the end of each volume year, an EDITOR'S CHOICE article is selected by the readership. The author of this best article of the year will receive a \$100.00 bonus and a lifetime subscription to *The GENERAL*.

If this whets your appetite, set pen to paper. But first, write requesting a copy of our "Guidelines for Submissions" detailing the format and procedures for submitting articles. This may be obtained by writing to Rex A. Martin, Managing Editor. The "Guidelines" may save you some wasted time and effort.

CONVENTION CALENDAR

The *GENERAL* will list any gaming convention in this space free of charge on a space available basis provided that we are notified at least four months in advance of the convention date. Each listing must include the name, date, site, and contact address of the convention. Additional information of interest to our readership such as tournaments or events utilizing *The Avalon Hill Game Company's* games is solicited and will be printed if made available.

OCTOBER 8-10

NOVAG IV, Sterling, Virginia
Contact: Northern Virginia Adventure Gamers, 101 East Holly Avenue, Suite I6, Sterling, VA 22170.
Note: *AIR FORCE* among other tournaments.

OCTOBER 14-16

RUDICON 4, Rochester, New York
Contact: Michael Closser, Rudicon 4, c/o Student Directorate, One Lomb Memorial Drive, Rochester, NY 14632.

OCTOBER 29-30

UMF-CON, Farmington, Maine
Contact: Thomas Kane, Table Gaming Club, Student Life Office, 5 South Street, Farmington, ME 04938.

NOVEMBER 4-6

QUAD-CON 88, Rock Island, Illinois
Contact: Alex F. Key, RiverBend Gamers Association, P.O. Box 8421, Moline, IL 61265.
Note: Competitions in *ASL*, *CIV*, *DIP*, *B-17* and *CM* among others.

VICTORY GAMES, INC. Presents...

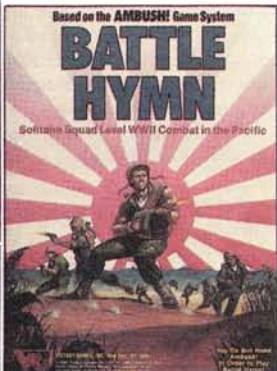
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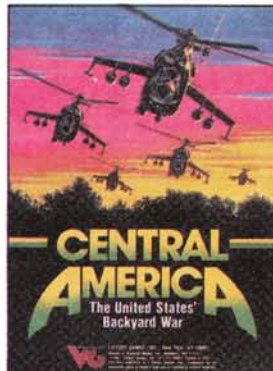
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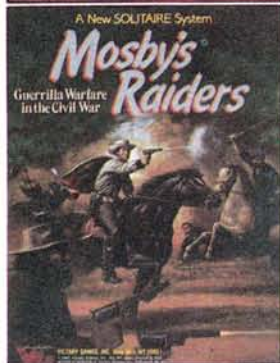
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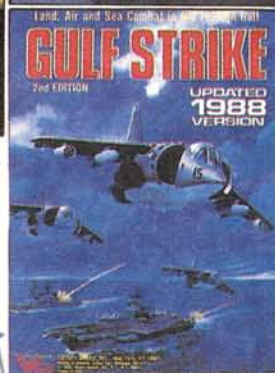
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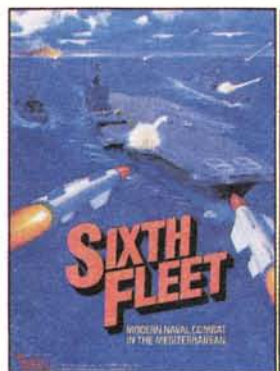
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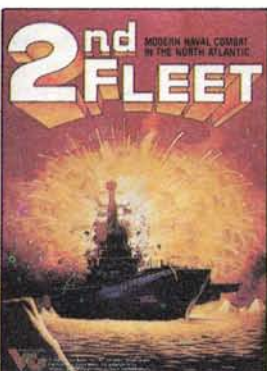
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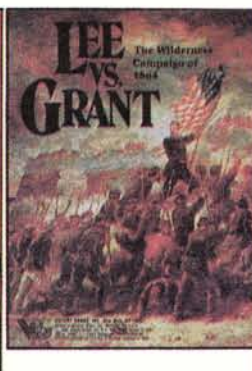
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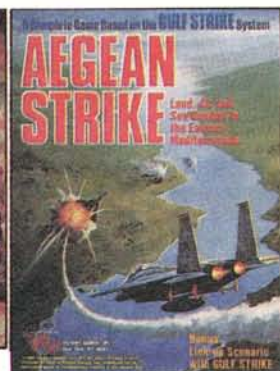
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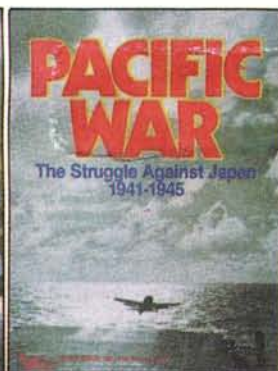
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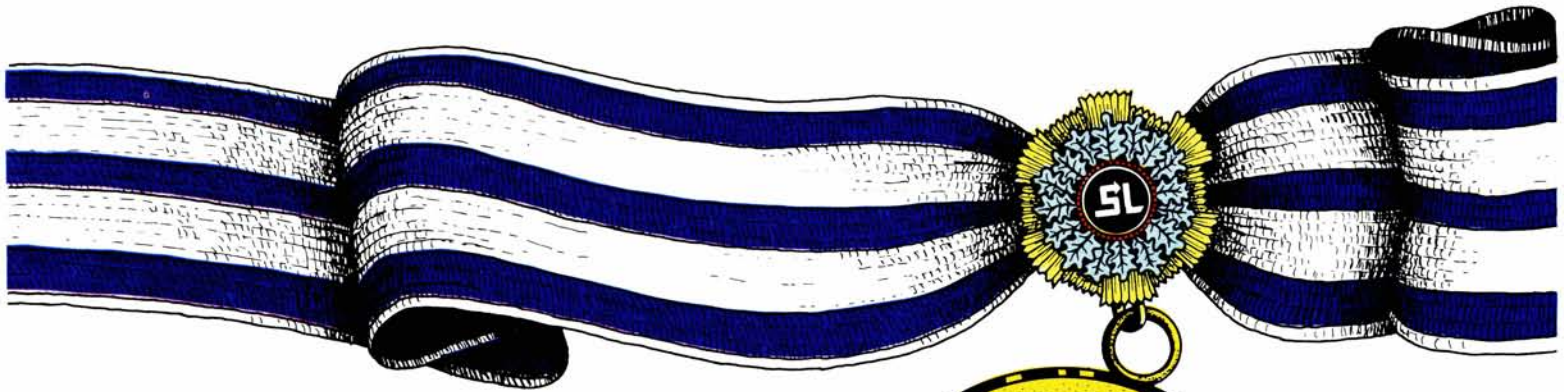
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Squad Leader Clinic

NO HOLLOW THREAT

By Jon Mishcon

Hollow-charge explosive devices were developed before World War II. Also called "shaped-charge weapons", they developed their potency by generating a "super-hot" flame that explosively burned through resistive material. As the flame is hottest, and therefore strongest, at its tip, hollow-charge devices required three preconditions in order to be most effective.

First, the fire had to ignite at a specific distance from the material to be penetrated. Should the fire start smack adjacent to the target, or worse if the hollow cone is cracked, the flame will be diffused and without strength. Second, the fire is disrupted if spun; therefore the device's flight should be without any rotation. Thus the "rifling" that lines most barreled weapons dramatically degrades hollow-charge ammunition effectiveness. Thirdly, if possible, nothing should be in front of the flame. Anything that stands in front of the flame requires energy to burn through, thus naturally diminishing the penetration.

For use as demolition charges, a hollow-charge weapon could approach the ideal. The Germans early had a series of cup-shaped charges with base fuses and fold-down legs for use as DCs. The prospect of delicately folding down three legs and standing 30 pounds of explosives atop the target must have been somewhat daunting however, since many countries developed hollow-charge *projectiles*. Standing off and shooting at the target may be safer, but it did compromise the weapon.

The use of hollow-charge projectiles requires a balancing of tactical needs against the best possible penetration. A fuse in front of the explosive is

needed to achieve the stand-off distance. As the "shape" of a shaped-charge is an inverted cone, some form of ballistic cap is necessary to allow smooth flight. Finally, due care must be exercised to avoid having the energy that propels the weapon disrupt the hollow-charge shape.

Luckily, the burn-through effect of a hollow charge doesn't require a high velocity. Indeed, low velocity is actually preferable as it allows the fuse to work best for insuring proper stand-off and minimizes the risk to the hollow charge's shape. Three basic approaches were followed to direct the flight of these low-velocity projectiles.

First, fin-stabilized shells were developed experimentally for conventional rifle-barreled weapons. These shells had tail fins and a roller-mounted band attached that reduced the spin to approximately 30%. Nice, but even 30% of the normal spin was still disruptive.

Second, spigot dischargers allowed conventional explosive propulsive charges to "squirt" out hollow-charge projectiles. The British made a special study of spigot dischargers starting in the early 1930s. A spigot device had the hollow base tube of the shaped-charge projectile placed *over* the firing pin. Trigger the pin and the resulting explosion sent the shell on its way, with the distance traversed by the base tube over the pin giving direction to the weapon's flight. Also nice, but the practical limitations of carrying around a large number of long-tubed projectiles shortened the base-tube length, and therefore the accurate range of the spigots. Although the *Panzerfaust* was not a spigot device, as the discharge tube surrounded the propel-

lent, the same limitation in accuracy applied since the head of the device stuck out beyond the guiding tube.

Thirdly, rockets were seized upon as an effective mechanism for delivering hollow charges to their targets. In 1918, Goddard actually developed the precursor of the bazooka with a light-weight rocket launcher. As there were no shaped charges at the time, the idea was held in limbo until World War II. The American shaped-charge projectile had a far smaller explosive head than the *Panzerfaust* but, since the rocket travelled the relatively long length of the launcher, the bazooka was more accurate.

Lastly, some comment is required about the anti-personnel effect of all shaped-charge weapons. Assuming, as noted in Hogg's *German Artillery of World War Two*, that the most effective size of anti-personnel fragments is 0.04 oz (1.1 gram), hollow-charge weapons do a generally lousy job. Given the need for a light ballistic cap that provides few effective fragments, and a "super-hot" directed flame that tends to burn through, rather than break up, hollow-charge weapons were not valuable for disrupting infantry in the open. Moreover, the projectile's impact fuse would not detonate unless it struck a hard surface, and had to hit it at an angle more perpendicular than not. (Unlike the graze fuse of an artillery shell, the SCW projectile's fuse would not be detonated by a glancing hit.)

All of the above is reflected rather well in *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*. Rule C8.31 requires that SCWs be directed at hard targets (although the 16 FP of the PF is probably a better reflection of later models with the anti-personnel

fragmentation collar). Rule C13, which contains essentially all the other rules on SCWs, demonstrates the power of the ubiquitous 'faust and range-accuracy advantages of the bazooka. Gone are the days of huge stacks of PF counters, as this is now an inherent weapon for the German when available. Of special note is the fact that only German *squads* can get two cracks at firing Panzerfausts in a single fire phase. Additionally, there is a +1 drm for PF availability for half-squads. This is of paramount importance in considering the tactical usage of SCWs. Remember, however, the +1 availability drm for firing one at a non-AFV target.

We have a few tactical hints for the use of SCWs in ASL play. First and foremost, if you got 'em, use 'em. We've witnessed many the tournament game in which the German player, unless faced with tanks, never fires a 'faust. Even recognizing the 16% chance of being pinned, the potency of these weapons against adjacent enemy infantry in a building or behind a wall shouldn't be ignored.

Second, don't forget Deliberate Immobilization (C5.7). The '44 BAZ is still good for a "4" at two-hex range (DFPh against a large, non-moving target). If you can't bust his front armor, you've still got a 16% chance of detracking him, with the bonus that he may abandon ship in that case. Third, we always sing the praises of WP. A wonderful combined offensive and defensive tool that costs you nothing (barring possible weapon malfunction) if you blow the availability roll (C8.9).

Fourth, for the Germans, stick with squads for best PF availability. Players are advised to use crews, when available, for bazookas and *Panzer-schrecks*. Once again, this is strictly in keeping with the tactical doctrine of the 1940s. Bazookas and PSKs were seen as "special weapons", while the Germans considered PFs as part of the basic squad armament.

Fifth, although rocket-propelled SCWs may be fired from buildings without the risk of backblast by using Case C³ (C13.8), it is preferable to take wall advantage (B9.32) when possible. Even when you are in the hex with a building, if you claim wall advantage you are considered in the open behind the wall (example B9.321). Less modifiers, more hits.

Sixth, don't forget that Guns are acceptable SCW targets. Even if you don't knock out the gun, the SCW may affect the crew (C11.4).

Seventh, remember the difference between PIATs and the other SCW. The PIAT used a spring-loaded spigot to hurl its HEAT projectile. Although it can't be used at targets one or more levels lower in the same or an adjacent hex (C13.61), the fact that it can be manned by one man (Heroes!) and can be used inside a building (it has no backblast; C13.8) will make it a potent weapon indeed.

Lastly, some mention of Desperation (C13.81) is worthwhile. If you're in a *single-story* building and about to be overrun, think twice before firing at that oncoming AFV. If you fire from within restrictive terrain with a rocket-propelled SCW, then you'd best plan on having everyone therein break. Ours always do. If you wait and "take" the overrun (and survive), not only do you get a better target (0 Range, rear shot) but you also have a decent chance of having the AFV turn your nice little hovel into rubble—thus avoiding the backblast dr. Nice.

We have included a new scenario, "Rocket's Red Glare" on the insert to allow readers to experiment with some of the ideas described above.

These notes continue the series of commentaries in the Clinic pertaining to the scenarios published with the previous installment of the column (Vol. 24, No. 4 in this case). The intent is to provide the ASL player with one of numerous possibilities for defensive setup, attacker intial placement, and basic tactical approaches for both. Having had several

months to examine your own approaches to our Clinic scenarios, the reader can now compare his findings with our summation.

After Action Report—Buchholz Station

Setup for BOTH sides is fixed.

ATTACKER'S TACTICS: It is not worthwhile for the Germans to loop either west of Hill 498 nor east of Hill 522. Drive as fast as you can between them trying to cause as many U.S. casualties as you can on Turn 1. Use the Advance Phase with several groups to "winkle" the U.S. player out of his defensive positions. At some point you must rush through 3AA2, so plan to use smoke there. Try to win by knocking out 13 American victory points, but to do so you'll have to threaten to exit.

DEFENDER'S TACTICS: Don't try to hold on Turn 1. Pull the GIs back and use the fall-back defender tactics as per our prior Clinic installment (Vol. 21, No. 6). Use a 9-1 leader with the .50-cal. in the building and put the 9-2 with your best up-front stack. Remember that he has to come to you, and that time is on your side. Also note that 3W4 covers 3Y1.

The Bitch Salient

AMERICAN: The water-cooled .30-cal. goes into the stone building, one bazooka into Z1, the .50-cal. goes into J4 with a bazooka in H5. I try to set up an assault force with two MMGs and a bazooka in G1, G3 and F4 to put pressure on the Germans. Good locations are S2, T3, U2, V3, X1, Z1, BB1 and Z3 for your holding force. You're going to take some lumps, so try and be sure that units can rout to a leader.

GERMAN: Place an 8-0 and radio in foxhole in 2R2, pre-registered on 4X1. Three squads with LMG and MMG and 9-1 in foxhole under the wire in W10. Wire across the edge of board Q to X in hexes 9 or 10. Place a squad with MMG in foxhole in 2Q6. And squads with LMGs in foxholes 2W5 and 2K5.

ATTACKER'S TACTICS: The Americans must defend around 4X1 while attacking uphill around 4G1. Capture the hilltop defenders. Once you have the heights, you can use your HMGs and OBA to try to rack up more victory points and win.

DEFENDER'S TACTICS: The Germans should cover the hilltop with as few pieces as possible. Attack onto Board 4 and capture building X1. Use the troops that come on the south end of Board 4 and dig in around the road.

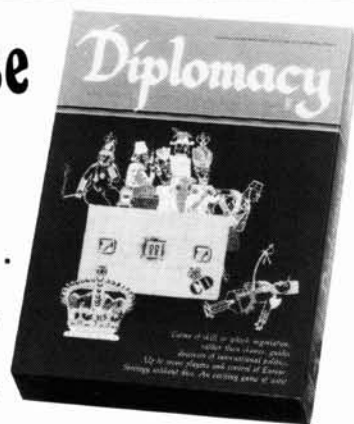


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Charles Grenville, *London Daily Mail*, wrote back in November 1962, "they play it in the White House. In fact, it's the rage in America. And at Cambridge, the Dean of Trinity College, John Gallagher, is an expert. In ecclesiastical circles, the Bishop of Woolwich knows all about it ... IT? The game called **DIPLOMACY!**"

Angus McGill, *London Evening Standard*, claims that the Kennedy's were said to play **DIPLOMACY** at the White House.

Well ... there ain't nobody playing it today at the White House ... obviously.

YOU CAN HELP

It's not too late to salvage the situation. If every person reading this would send one copy of **DIPLOMACY** to the White House, someone surely would get the message.

Better still—why not send one copy to your best friend! Who knows, the person you introduce to **DIPLOMACY** might end up as Secretary of State himself.

ASSAULT ON ITALY

The Beaches of ANZIO

By David R. Smith

Sunny Italy. That's the way it's advertised. But that's certainly not the way the men who waded ashore at Salerno or Anzio remember it. I've met some of the men who visited those beaches. They remember the rain, the cold, the mud and the nights without sleep. Hardly a pleasure trip.

Italy was the first Axis country to fall to the Allies. And Salerno was the first invasion of the Axis-held mainland. But suppose it hadn't been Salerno; what if it had been further north? Or on the east side of the peninsula where the Allies waded ashore? What would the chances of success have been? *ANZIO* is the Avalon Hill game that lets you find out. Let's look at the beaches in this great game to see what your chances of getting ashore, and staying ashore, are if you're the Allies during that second week of September 1943.

First, some ground rules. For this article, I'll assume that the game is being played with all Advanced Game Supplementary Rules except "German Free Deployment" and "Fog of War". This gives us a known basic German set-up to consider. I'll also discount the 16th Panzer Division and first turn German air support. To be able to make any projections, we must assume that you won't fight the 16th Panzer on the beach chosen; and since air support is part of the German initial placement, I'll assume that each beach chosen was without any. And lastly, we'll plan on the maximum amount of forces being sent onto the board at Taranto and Messina, but this has little impact as no Allied units enter the board from there until the second turn anyway.

Now, let's look at the beaches of Italy:

RIMINI

Rimini is a tough place to invade. The only advantage it offers is a good port, easily captured. Rimini handles 52 stacking points of supplies when both the beach port and the city port are used. This, along with supply brought on through Messina and Taranto, gives support for the entire Allied army through the end of 1943. But, through both city and beach you can bring only ten stacking points per turn as reinforcements.

However, this may not matter, as there may not be opportunity to bring more units on. The invaders are without air support or paratroop coverage, and two German garrison units are immediately released into play, each able to reach the Allies on the first turn. This units will not be held up by Italian formations friendly to the Allies, because all the Italians disband except the Rome garrison. It appears that to be successful, an invasion here demands a small beachhead with strong defensive positions.

One problem is that the Allies are cut off from forces coming from the south, and neither can take an airfield easily. This makes it difficult for the Allies to throw a line across Italy with any real chance of holding it. German reinforcements will be able to reach the Allied positions at Rimini quickly, and only a small force should be able to tie up the southern Allied troops while the major battle is fought in the north.

The Allies must take an airfield quickly, to take advantage of his airstrikes. This is hard to do with the Allied units in the south. And if the northern force should attempt to do so, they give up all advantage of landing in the north as well as their secure supply line. What the Allied invasion at Rimini should strive for is to establish a line across the peninsula to another port and so cut the supply lines of the enemy in southern Italy. In response,

the German player will almost certainly choose this maximum order of battle, and then it will be very difficult to hold such a line.

The only thing in favor of this invasion is that, if by some miracle it works, the Germans won't be able to hold out long.

PESCARA

Pescara is an excellent choice for an invasion site, except for one thing—the Termoli site just south of it.

If you invade here, it is important that Ortona be captured quickly if possible. If the Allies gain a port on the next turn, it can be used immediately. The use of Pescara and Ortona, along with Messina and Taranto, could solve the Allied supply problem for the rest of the game. With two ports from which to build up forces, and the distance from any strong opposition, the beach at Pescara should be safe. And linking up with the southern units and capture of an airbase should not be too tough.

As stated earlier, the only thing wrong with this site is that a better one exists right beside it.

TERMOLI

Termoli has everything a general could want for an invasion—except air support. But it's close to an airbase and two other ports. Parachute support can be used. It has fair "initial lift", build-up and supply capacities. And if the Allies get Ortona and/or Pescara in operation as a port, these capacities go from fair to "superior". There is an easy link-up with the Allied southern forces, as well as the ability to put pressure on Foggia from both sides. This is one of the narrowest places in the peninsula, making it relatively easy to set up a line across it. Along with all this, the beachhead is easy to defend and has some distance between it and strong enemy formations. It's the best invasion site on the east coast.

SALERNO

This is, of course, the historical Allied invasion site. And for good reason, if this game is accurate. It has the best initial lift, build-up and supply capacities of any beach in the game, and an excellent city port nearby. The easiest link-up with southern forces can be had, as well as air support and access to Napoli (easily the most important city in southern Italy). It is a near perfect, if safe, target.

NAPOLI

The *Golfo di Napoli* is another good site for an invasion. It would be an excellent spot, except for the strong enemy units in the area. It offers excellent initial lift and the best port in the game (which happens to also be an airbase) on the turn of invasion. But you will likely lose any units sent onto that beach in an invasion attempt.

If all the Hermann Goring Division and the Nebelwerfer brigade are in Napoli, the southern region should be open to you. However, the 1st Parachute and the 15th and 29th Panzer Grenadier divisions are within reach of the beach on the first turn (assuming that the 1st Para isn't held up by Italian defencions). So you can expect a strong German counterattack on his first turn.

Worse, the objective of the Allied assault must be Napoli. Without it, build-up will be limited to the initial Allied forces and commandos due to the supply restrictions. Of course, the Hermann Goring and the nebelwerfers will contest that city. If Napoli

doesn't fall on the first turn, it will be even harder to take. The best odds possible against Napoli on the turn of invasion is 1-1 since you won't have the movement to surround it. The German won't retreat but one hex, so the city will still be in enemy zones of control and unusable as a port. All this means that it will probably be a couple of turns before you can clear Napoli and open it as a port, even under the best of conditions. If the Germans mount a strong counterattack in the meantime, chances are that you will be driven into the sea.

However, there are two things that may keep the German from a counterattack in strength. The first is the Italian defections. If the Italians in Roma, Mondragone and/or Foggia defect, the German player will have to take some action against them (particularly if the Allied player places them between possible German reinforcements and the beachhead). Allied landings at Messina and Taranto may also hold up the German counterattack. The enemy faces a real problem here, for if he strips the southern area of troops, then even if the Napoli invasion fails you will have the units and supply lines on the board. The help in staving off the German response to an invasion at Napoli depends on your luck with defections and what the German feels is the greatest threat.

MONDRAGONE

An invasion at Mondragone, like any at the *Golfo di Napoli*, has the city of Naples as its prime objective. Mondragone also offers identical chances for defection and disbandment of the Italian units. But not the same chance of being overrun by the Germans. This beachhead encompasses more area, giving you better maneuverability. Should the German split the forces available to garrison Napoli, the chance for you to take the city on the first turn is much better than with the same defensive situation in an assault at the Golfo. Overall, I'd say this beach offers good prospects as an invasion site.

TERRACINA

Terracina is a bit too far north for my tastes. However, it does offer a good port, easily gained, and plenty of cover from which to defend the beachhead. With this you also get good initial lift and a strong chance of help from defecting Italian forces.

While the drawbacks of landing here may not be fatal, they are enough to make most experienced players shy away from it. The Allies may get ashore, and stay ashore. But no matter what the objective, it can be handled better from other beaches. Beach areas to the south of Formia (and the 15th Panzer Grenadier) give better opportunities to take Napoli and link with the southern drive; beach areas to the north offer quicker access to Rome. You won't get air support at Terracina, while any airborne cover is dangerous at best.

ROMA

Roma's best asset for the Allies is the airbase nearby, followed closely by all the Italian defectors. It has adequate port facilities; and there are roads to quickly carry your forces across the country and cut off German supplies to the south. A successful invasion here, with Allied forces pressing up from the toe and heel of the country, could trap a lot of Germans.

However, the German player won't take any threat to Rome lightly. He will probably use his strongest order of battle to crush a landing rapidly.

And if he has any sense at all, he will block the roads between Rome and the east coast. These facts will make for a hard fight for Rome, and might well make it impossible to cut off the enemy in the south. All in all, an invasion at Roma is not the worst available, but it is doubtful that the risk is worth giving up the opportunity to invade near Napoli instead.

CIVITAVECCHIA

This beach has two advantages going for it as an invasion site. A good port, and a fair distance from any German force that could trouble the landings. The objective of any invasion at Civitavecchia would seem to be the capture of Rome. If, indeed, this is the case, the Allied player wastes about three turns while moving south (which an invasion at Roma wouldn't entail). While it can be argued that this gives you the chance to build up forces, thus attacking Rome with a stronger army, you also give your opponent time to overcome the Italian garrison there and organize his defense with reinforcements. In short, the Allies give him plenty of time to react.

As with Terracina, there is nothing you can do from Civitavecchia that can't be accomplished more efficiently from another beachhead.

GROSSETO-CECINA-LIVORNO-GENOVA

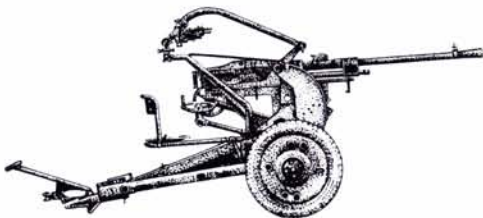
These beach areas can be considered as a group since they basically present the same problems. They are so far north that they'll cause the German to call on his strongest OB. And, as if that weren't enough, almost any move you make will release German garrison units into the game. There is no air support or airborne cover; nor can the airstrike be used later unless you move south to Rome or your southern units capture an airbase. Either of these are unlikely. Linking up with the Allied southern armies will be almost impossible.

While the northern beaches have excellent ports, just coming ashore insures a strong German response. Neither of the other two beaches even have a port that can be reached on the turn of invasion, and only at Grosseto can you come ashore without activating garrisons. To any who would choose one of these four beaches for his initial invasion, I can only offer my sympathy and suggestion that he try another game.

CONCLUSION

These then are my views for Allied invasion of the Italian beaches in ANZIO. Others will certainly have different views, but I believe that for the Allies to win the game they must get ashore and seize a good port quickly, then grab an airbase and link up with the southern forces within two months. If the German player can keep any of these things from happening, the Allies will be forced to react defensively, losing units and time all the while.

Being thrown off the pace this early in ANZIO could mean the Allies will not be ready when their second invasion and airstrike turns arrive. Even with a large number of turns, the Allied player can't afford to spend the whole game slugging it out in the trenches of his beachheads. There is simply too much to do and too much ground to gain to reach the north in time to win the game. And that is the crux of this most fascinating game.



BACK ISSUES

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 16-4: *MR*—A, V, DN, Q; *COI*—S; *3R*—S; *TRC*—SR
 17-4: *FE*—S, P, DN, V; *MD*—V, Q; *COI*—SR; *VITP*—S; 1776—Sc; *WO*—A; *SST*—V; *NAP*—S
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 18-3: *GOA*—S, DN, V, Q; *AOC*—V, Sc; *AK*—S; *VITP*—V; *SL*—S, Sc; *WS&IM*—SR, P; *DIP*—S
 18-4: *GL*—H, V, A, Q; *SL*—Sc, A; *LW*—V; *W&P*—SR; *AOC*—S, P; *FE*—V; *WAS*—S; *AK*—S
 18-5: *3R*—S, A, V, DN, Q; *SL*—S, A, Sc; *TRC*—V; *TB*—V; *RW*—V; *CL*—A; *DUNE*—V
 18-6: *FT*—A, Sc, V, DN; *VITP*—V, Q; *MD*—S, Q; *SOTN*—A, Q; *SUB*—Sc; *BL*—V
 19-1: *SOA*—A, V, DN, SR, Q; *TLD*—A, Q; *3R*—S, Q; *DWTK*—DN; *TB*—A
 19-2: *BB*—H, Sc, S, DN; *TLD*—A, Q; *SL*—V; *3R*—S; *SOA*—SR
 19-3: *GSL*—A, Sc, V, SR, Q; *DIP*—A; *RW*—Sc; *GE*—V; 1776—Sc; *LRT*—V, Q; *SL*—A
 19-4: *CIV*—A, V, DN; *CM*—V; *DIP*—A; *GL*—V; *AL*—V; *TR*—Sc; *WO*—Sc; *SLA*; *3R*—S, Q
 19-5: *SON*—A, S, H, Q; *W&P*—S, Q; *DIP*—A; *WAT*—V; *WS&IM*—Sc; *SL*—A
 19-6: *VITP*—PBM, SR; *3R*—V, Q; *DIP*—A; *FT*—V; *BIS*—V; *NW*—A; *SL*—A, Sc; *SUB*—V, Sc
 20-1: *GI*—S, A, DN, V, Q; *VITP*—SR
 20-2: *TT*—A, DN, S, Q; *MR*—V; *LRH*—A; *SL*—Sc; *W&P*—V; *GOA*—S, Q; *DIP*—A; *PL*—V
 20-3: *FRED*—S, V, Sc, Q; *PB*—A; 1776—Sc; *DWTK*—S, V, Q; *DIP*—A; *CON*—V, S
 20-4: *FITG*—A, V, S; *SST*—PBM, V; *AW*—A; *DUNE*—PBM; *DIP*—A; *SL*—DN, A, Q; *BL*—S; *KM*—V
 20-5: *BR*—SR, S, H, Q; *LRT*—S; *DIP*—A; *GSL*—Sc; *GE*—A; *WS&IM*—Sc; *SON*—Q
 20-6: *B-17*—A, V, SR, Q; *AF*—V; *LW*—S; *DL*—S; *FE*—S; *DIP*—A; *MD*—S; *BR*—SR; *GOA*—Sc; *SL*—A; *PL*—Q
 21-1: *UF*—S, A, SR, DN, Q; *SOA*—S; *GI*—H, S; *TRC*—S; *DD*—S
 21-2: *NAB*—S, DN; *W&P*—S, A, Q; *NAP*—S, Q; *DIP*—A; *FR*—S; *FE*—S; *3R*—S; *BFI*—S; 1776—S; *SL*—A
 21-3: *BB*—S, SR, Q; *3R*—S; *SL*—A, H; *SOTN*—V; *DIP*—A; *FRED*—S; *FE*—S, Q; *SST*—S; *TLD*—S; *PL*—Sc; 1776—Q; *SOA*—Q
 21-4: *PGG*—S, SR; *PB*—A; *3R*—S; *TRC*—S, V, Q; *DIP*—A; *STAL*—V, S; *SL*—Sc; *PK*—Q
 21-5: *HW*—S, V, A; *MR*—S, Q; *OR*—A; *DIP*—A; *3R*—A; *RB*—S; *CON*—V; *CIV*—S; *SL*—A
 21-6: *FP*—H, V, SR; *AIW*—S, Sc; *BL*—V; *TAC*—V, Q; *SL*—A; *PK*—Q
 22-1: *PAA*—A, S, Q; *TB*—A, V; *DWTK*—DN; *TR*—V; *GSL*—PBM; *DIP*—A; *AOC*—S; *WAS*—S, Q; *AK*—V; *CIV*—S; *3R*—S, Q
 22-2: *BANZ*—A, SR, Q; *FT*—A, S; *SUB*—Sc; *VITP*—S, Q; *AK*—Q
 22-3: *PB*—SR; *PL*—Sc, V, Q; *SOA*—S; *3R*—V; *DIP*—A; *CIV*—A; *UF*—Sc, Q; *AIW*—S; *GOA*—A, Q; *TLD*—A
 22-4: *RF*—A, V, S; *TRC*—V; *PK*—S, Q; *DIP*—A; *3R*—V; *SUB*—V; *PPG*—S
 22-5: *DEV*—S, A, Q; *GSL*—Sc; *BR*—S; *DIP*—PBM, A; *SC*—V; *FITG*—A; *ASL*—Sc, Q
 22-6: *ASL*—A, Sc, DN, Q; *FP*—Sc; *FE*—S, Q; *WAS*—A; *DIP*—A; *SL*—S; *TLD*—S
 23-1: *FL*—A, V; *DL*—V; *B-17*—V, DN; *HW*—S, Q; *VITP*—V; *3R*—S; *TT*—V; *LW*—V; *SST*—V; *RW*—V
 23-2: *ASL*—A, S, Sc, Q; *BV*—SR; *UF*—S; *DIP*—A; *PL*—A
 23-3: *SUB*—V, Sc; *ASL*—S, Sc; *BV*—SR; *HW*—V; *BL*—V, Q; *BB*—A
 23-4: *EIA*—S, DN; *W&P*—V, S; *WS&IM*—Sc; *SC*—V; *NAP*—S; *YS*—S; *3R*—S, Q
 23-5: *KOTA*—DN, Sc, Q; *WAT*—V; *B-17*—V, Q; *3R*—S; *RW*—V; *ASL*—S, Sc; *VITP*—S
 23-6: 1830—DN, S, V, Q; *FP*—Sc; *RB*—S; *DEV*—PBM; *CIV*—S; *MR*—S
 24-1: *ASL*—V, S, Sc, Q; *SOF*—SR; *TRC*—S; *FP*—Sc; *RF*—S, DN; *PGG*—S
 24-2: *ASL*—A, S, Sc, Q; *SOF*—SR; *PL*—S; *3R*—S; *DD*—S; *FE*—S
 24-3: *DIP*—S, A, H; *HW*—V, S; *EIA*—S; *DE*—S; *TV*—Q; *KOTA*—Q
 24-4: *RSN*—H, DN, A, SR, V, Q; *ASL*—V, S, Sc; *FE*—S; *3R*—S
 24-5: *BRIT*—A, DN, S; *CAE*—S; *CL*—S; *GL*—V; *CIV*—S; *SOJ*—DN; *KM*—V, S; *MR*—S, O

BY THE BOOK

A Manual of Advanced Tactics for PGG

By David S. Bieksza

PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN occupies a singular niche in the Avalon Hill line. Several titles portray the Eastern Front at a strategic level and several at a tactical level, but only *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* is oriented toward an operational level, (i.e., regiments and divisions). Because of its unique point of view as well as its widespread popularity, many articles have been published about the game. But the contents of these articles have addressed almost exclusively the broader aspects of offensive and defensive strategies for the Battle of Smolensk. This article examines some of the tactical aspects of *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN*.

LESSON 1: OVERRUN

To the German player the overrun rule qualifies as the most crucial aspect of the *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* system. If losses to the Red Army occurred only in the Combat Phase, the advance on Smolensk would degenerate into a hopeless slog through successive defensive positions. But overruns provide the opportunity to increase the rate of attrition, neutralizing the Soviet manpower advantage. Overruns help the German keep the situation fluid and thus capitalize on their mobility. (Lesson 5 discusses such tactical implications of Nazi strategy in greater detail.) In short, the overrun is a prime example of a "force multiplier."

Therefore German players cannot expect success unless they employ overruns in an efficient manner. Many seem inhibited by Case 9.72 (i.e., loss of divisional integration due to retreats controlled by the Soviet player). But overruns need not be limited to panzer and motorized divisions with divisional integration. Three situations exist whereby units lacking divisional integration can conduct overruns profitably.

The first case concerns a common occurrence: mechanized units jumbled together after retreating. Such a stack may still contain enough strength to overrun certain targets. German players should recognize that even 1-1 odds may yield advantageous results. Furthermore, the overrunning units in this case need not worry about losing divisional integration in a retreat!

As an example, in an actual game the Germans had been striving to break the enemy line in the clear terrain between Smolensk and Roslavl. At the end of their Combat Phase they had dented the line, but not broken it. A lowly (2)-10 headquarters held the weakest portion of the line. Panzer divisions in reserve could have stepped on it at 4-1 odds in the Mechanized Movement Phase, but they were needed to overrun stronger units on either side of the headquarters. However, earlier in the player turn, two panzer divisions had retreated due to adverse combat results; the Soviet player had correctly scattered the constituent units, but both divisions' panzer regiments ended up in the same hex. So the German player began the Mechanized Movement Phase by overrunning the headquarters with the paired panzer regiments. Both were at full strength, so the overrun still achieved 2-1 odds. That corresponded to an 83% chance of inflicting an adverse result on the headquarters. Elimination (via an "engaged" result) was unnecessary—a retreat result disrupted the defender, removing its zone of control. And without its ZOC, the headquarters opened a gap in the line through which the German reserves poured.

The second case concerns an action German players rarely consider: voluntarily unstacking a panzer division. By splitting off a regiment to cut

supply and/or retreat routes, the division may accomplish more than it could if it retained divisional integration. As an example, again in an actual game the advance on Smolensk had stalled; so the Germans, desperate to regain some momentum, had hurled the bulk of their forces against the most vulnerable portion of the Russian line, which was located in the forests northwest of Smolensk. At last, overruns in the Mechanized Movement Phase opened a hole. The Nazis now had a clear shot at the sole enemy headquarters in this area, a (5)-10. Unfortunately, by this point in the phase just a single, full-strength panzer division remained uncommitted. The division could have overrun the headquarters at 1-1 odds, with a 17% chance of eliminating it. The additional 50% chance of disruption gave no benefit to the Germans—the loss of the headquarters' movement and ZOC in the Soviet rear was unimportant and the interruption of supply during the subsequent Soviet player turn was meaningless. Instead, the division detached a panzergrenadier regiment to swing behind the headquarters and surround it. The remaining two regiments, even without divisional integration, could still overrun at 1-1 odds. That raised the chance of elimination to 67%.

Many may object that this tactic risks the elimination of the detached regiment, permanently canceling the divisional integration bonus for a precious panzer division. In the above example, the Germans faced a 33% chance of marooning the detached regiment far behind enemy lines with no damage done to the headquarters. But the German player was willing to trade the possibility of crippling one panzer division for the possibility of resuming the advance on Smolensk. To digress, the overrun did eliminate the headquarters and the detached regiment survived after all. Only one untried rifle division could reach the regiment, so for added punch a headquarters rushed down from the northern forests and stacked with the division. Incredibly, the Soviet division proved to be a 0-1-6, forcing the stack to retreat automatically (Case 10.23)! Anyway, this tactic does not necessarily condemn the panzer division to separation. In the absence of a "split" result, the overrunning regiments could have continued to move, allowing them to rejoin the detached regiment. Similarly, in the Combat Phase conventional advance after combat can re-unite a scattered division.

The third case where a unit lacking divisional integration can perform useful overruns concerns non-mechanized units. Unlike certain other games, *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* does not restrict the capability for overruns to armor/motorized units. A German 9-7 foot infantry division, for instance, can overrun after moving up to four hexes. A single such division may not appear very fearsome, but a stack of two divisions packs more wallop in an overrun than a full-strength panzer division. In addition retreat results mean less because the foot infantry have no divisional integration to lose. On the other hand, if three foot divisions find themselves overrunning at 1-2 odds, a die roll of "6" will cause much gloom in Berlin.

Theoretically the same applies to Soviet rifle divisions. In practice, fewer opportunities arise. Only the most frantic Soviet player would attempt an overrun with untried units, and a tough stack of proven units within range of a headquarters usually faces an equally tough opponent to keep it pinned in place. Even if circumstances permitted, the overrun must have some purpose. An overrun that opens

a gap in the German line will neither permit the victorious units to march halfway across the map and liberate Vitebsk nor lead them to initiate a vast encirclement of the German Army. At best, an overrun accomplishes one of three things. First, it can remove a pin, allowing the Russians to withdraw, enter more favorable defensive terrain and such. Second, it can hasten the elimination of a trapped enemy unit (see Lesson 4). And third, it may deliver such a psychological blow to the German player that he'll become demoralized for the remainder of the game!

LESSON 2: STACKING

In a fluid situation, the motorized infantry divisions act as the perfect companions to the panzer divisions. They possess the speed to keep pace, and almost as much punch. Frequently an overrun by a motorized division frees a panzer division from a pin, thus increasing the mobility of the Wehrmacht's elite. And German players seem less inhibited in splitting up motorized regiments to pin enemy units on the shoulders of a breakthrough.

On the other hand, in a static situation the motorized troops display an unfortunate weakness: a low concentration of strength. To bulldoze a hole through a heavily-defended enemy line, the Germans must concentrate a large quantity of strength in a small number of hexes, and for this the motorized divisions are ill-suited. Panzer divisions and two- or three-high stacks of infantry divisions pack more power per hex than all motorized divisions except the SS units. But if the German player is willing to ignore that sacred cow, divisional integration, the motorized infantry need not cause weak spots in the offensive line. In particular, if an infantry division stacks with a motorized division, the former negates divisional integration for the latter, yet the stack is *stronger* than if the motorized division retained divisional integration. Of course, if the foot and motorized divisions occupy separate hexes the total strength is higher still. But in a static situation the foot division may march up from the rear only to find all the critical hexes occupied by pinned mechanized units.

In a mixed stack, the foot infantry supplies the strength and the motorized infantry supplies the steps. An infantry division that absorbs two steps in losses drops in combat strength by seven points; but stacked with a motorized division, the infantry can let the motorized regiments absorb the same number of steps for a decrease of only *two* strength points. Alternatively, the creation of a mixed stack raises the total number of steps present from four to eight. Thus a mixed stack can absorb more losses before either division reaches the verge of elimination.

To illustrate this last point, in an actual game the Germans had encountered stiff resistance in the vicinity of Smolensk, so they could spare only a handful of units to press on to Roslavl. Two panzer divisions and a motorized division conducted the main attack in the woods northwest of the city. Unfortunately, the three Russian defending rifle divisions turned out to be lions. Perhaps unwisely, the Germans attacked repeatedly at 1-1 odds. The gray units absorbed adverse results as step losses, because if they retreated they would be scattered and pinned with no reserves available to restore the situation. Then an infantry division arrived in the area. Under conventional thinking, the lack of an empty hex adjacent to the defenders would prohibit

the division from joining the attack, but guided by the precepts in this lesson it stacked with the motorized division. It then absorbed all subsequent losses in order to preserve the battered mechanized units. The division was down to its final step when the attackers finally eliminated the last rifle division. (Unfortunately, by that time additional Nazi support had arrived and Roslavl fell to an attack from the northeast!)

[A mixed stack also figures in disengagement from pins. Lesson 4 discusses this at length.]

The emphasis on retaining divisional integration suggests a trick that dates back to *STALINGRAD*. If a panzer or motorized division involved in combat has a limited number of hexes into which it can legally retreat, the German player can fill all but one of those hexes to capacity. Then if the division retreats, all the regiments must end up in the same hex and divisional integration is preserved. Some may object that the cost in numbers of units—principally panzer divisions—may be prohibitive. But as Lesson 5 points out, the German player who retains reserves enhances his chance of success; and rather than spread out reserves at random, he can place them to implement this tactic. Furthermore, its use in *STALINGRAD* was intended to force German retreats eastward behind enemy lines. The same possibility exists in *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN*. True, such a retreat places the affected Germans out of supply; but the opportunity to create an encirclement should not be overlooked. Incidentally, this tactic deserves consideration whenever attacking mechanized units face the possibility of retreat. Note that adverse results are not restricted to low odds—“split” combat results occur all the way up to 9-1 odds.

Finally, a stacking trick for the Soviet player. *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* is one of the few games that provides an explicit penalty for overstacking: the excess must be eliminated at the choice of the owning player. Voluntary overstacking in the Movement Phase can overcome the effect of a pin and reinforce a hex already stacked to capacity. Oftentimes proven units occupying a key hex consist of two cream puffs and a tiger. The presence of an enemy ZOC will prevent the former's withdrawal in favor of stronger units in reserve. But the Soviet player can bring up the reserves anyway, and choose to eliminate the weak units. Although circumstances may justify use of this tactic only once in a dozen games, its rarity may deliver an unexpected jolt to the opposing player.

LESSON 3: SUPPLY

Like Hamlet, the Soviet player agonizes over a course of action: “To interdict or not to interdict—that is the question.” The question looms so large because lack of supplies is the only reliable brake on the German juggernaut, and without the presence of the interdiction marker Nazi units rarely go hungry. The question can be decomposed into two more fundamental questions: when and where.

To some players the choice of “when” requires no contemplation; they automatically use the interdiction marker as late as possible, game turns 9-11. Unfortunately, by game turn 9 the game's outcome has very often been decided. (See Lesson 6 for a discourse on how game turns 4 through 6 act as the critical period in the game.) Either the Red Tide has stopped the Fascists in the middle of the mapboard, or panzers prepare to assail the gates of Moscow. Somehow it doesn't seem satisfactory that the interdiction marker halts the enemy just short of Kaluga.

On the other hand, no magic formula exists to specify some earlier game turn for use of the interdiction marker. The sad fact is that interdiction can never interfere with a direct assault on Smolensk. So an earlier use is warranted only to temporarily hinder the enemy, gaining time for reinforcements

to reach a threatened area. For example, interdiction can curb an unexpected enemy breakthrough deep in the forests north of Smolensk or retard an early threat to Roslavl and Yel'nya. But such use of interdiction also carries consequences on a more strategic scale. The more time the Germans consume to conquer Smolensk and/or Roslavl, the less time they have to threaten Vyazma and points east—supplies or no supplies. (Lesson 6 discusses this in greater detail.)

Whereas the choice of “when” may be uncertain, the choice of “where” lends itself to some hard analysis. The table shows how placement of the interdiction marker in different hexes affects the depth to which the German supply lines can penetrate Mother Russia. The first column indicates the hex in which the marker resides. The second column shows the farthest hexrow that can be supplied, according to Case 11.11. I label this as the “beam-down method” because Case 11.11 permits German quartermasters to miraculously beam down supplies from any road hex connected to the west map edge through 20 hexes of the thickest forests. The third column shows the farthest hex along the road to Roslavl that can be supplied according to Case 11.12. I label this as the “truck method” because units must “send trucks” with a finite number of movement points back to the west map edge. Note the listed hexes assume mechanized units draw the supplies; because infantry divisions gain no benefit from movement along the road, their supply lines gain no benefit either. The last column clarifies the exact route traced by the truck method.

The trend with the “beam-down” method is straightforward. The interdiction marker prohibits the use of this method when it occupies the road hex at the map edge. Then, as the marker moves eastward, the “beam-down” hexrow moves eastward proportionately. But once the marker passes the crossroads in hex 0518, the German supply range in the northern part of the mapboard increases dramatically because the road to Velizh now connects to the western map edge.

In contrast to the “beam-down” method, no trend is discernible with the “truck” method. One interesting observation is that truck range reaches its minimum when the marker occupies hex 0219 instead of the hex at the edge of the map. Another interesting observation is that truck range varies little with changing placement of the marker. Even if a line of German units forces the marker out to hex 0617 (due to Case 13.45), truck range extends no farther than if the marker abides in hex 0319.

The conclusion to be drawn by the Soviet player is that hex 0219 represents his best choice for placement of the interdiction marker. Hex 0120 becomes the better choice only in the unlikely event that important action, supplied exclusively by the “beam-down” method, takes place on the flanks west of the 2100 hexrow. The conclusion to be drawn by the German player is that two units represent the optimum garrison for the road, keeping the interdiction marker out of the above two hexes. If for some reason a major thrust pushes through the northern woods, he must garrison the road to the crossroads in order to activate Velizh; and if the advance on Roslavl requires supplies imperatively, the more units in garrison the better.

(Of course, if the Soviet player waits until the Germans reach the eastern half of the mapboard to initiate interdiction, placement of the marker becomes inconsequential. Beyond hex 3314 in the north and beyond Roslavl in the south, supplies run out for the Germans no matter where the marker ends up.)

As a footnote to the topic of supplies, an easily-overlooked entry in the Terrain Effects Chart may have important repercussions. Note the effect on supply of a swamp hex: “May trace into, but not through.” Case 11.21 implies that this affects not only the Line of Supply from a Soviet headquarters

to the east map edge, but also the Line of Communications from the headquarters to combat units. The significance pertains to the Soviet first-turn defense—the swamps in hexes 0615 and 0716 may block the Line of Communications to part of the line. For example, if Gen. Kurochkin, a (4)-10, moves to 0715 on the first turn, he cannot supply units at the crossroads (hex 0518); Koniev or Remezov must keep those units in supply.

LESSON 4: PINS

Two key features of the *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* system are “locking” Zones of Control (i.e., no voluntary movement out of an enemy ZOC) and voluntary combat. Together they create the tactic of “pinning” enemy units simply to prevent them from moving. In the past such a tactic had occasionally appeared in rules for operational-level games, but nowadays it has become a rarity. Thus newer players may feel uncomfortable at seeing a substantial portion of their forces frozen in place by the enemy. They shouldn't. The pin is a valuable tactic for both sides.

The Soviet strategic objective is defense of territory. Widespread pinning of Nazi units contributes to that objective by reducing the enemy's ability to mass decisive strength against vulnerable locations in the defensive line. In a static situation, the Soviet manpower advantage triumphs. However, the pin acts most effectively when conducted by troops in the main defensive line—their strength ensures that the pinned enemy unit remains pinned. Haphazard pinning by scattered units in a fluid situation usually results in serious Soviet losses after a cascade of overruns. “Harrassment” pins are best reserved as a temporary expedient: to buy time for the arrival of reinforcements, to cover a withdrawal, and so forth.

Pins also aid the Germans on the strategic level. A strong Soviet defensive line commonly implies scanty reserves. So, if German units pin the forces up front the Russians cannot respond to a rupture in the defense. But the pin acts more as a tactical level device for the Nazis, either to fix a Red unit as a target for an impending attack (usually while surrounded) or to hold the unit for mopping up by reinforcements.

In the latter regard, German players often go too far in tidying up their rear areas. If the Lehr Regiment has pinned three rifle divisions destined for Guards status in an out-of-the-way location behind the front, why not leave them there for the rest of the game? Forces spared from mopping them up reach the front lines faster. More importantly, the elimination of the pinned units may permit their return to the game as reinforcements randomly drawn from the dead pile. But pinned in place, the units cease to contribute to the Soviet war effort; lacking a headquarters they can neither attack (Case 10.35) nor overrun (Case 6.55) to gain their freedom. A paranoid German player should rest assured that the probability a Russian headquarters would ever penetrate his lines, travel deep into his rear, and put such a stack back in supply is virtually nil . . . unless, of course, he's blundered so badly throughout the game that his opponent wishes to rub salt into the wound.

German players may rightly worry that widespread pins rob their own units of the ability to redeploy, usually to reinforce a breakthrough. But a form of disengagement exists, at least for motorized divisions. Disengagement is yet another advantage: the foot division effectively relieves the motorized division of its pinning duty. The procedure begins with the foot division joining the motorized division. The latter then conducts a normal attack in which the foot division does not participate. The best odds are 1-1, which offer a 67% chance of some sort of “A” result. The motorized division chooses to accept the adverse result as a

retreat, but the victorious enemy units cannot advance after combat to pin the retreated regiments due to the presence of the foot division! Having disengaged from the pin, the motorized division can now redeploy in the Mechanized Movement Phase.

Although stacking restrictions prohibit the application of this procedure to panzer divisions, a modified form of disengagement is available to the panzers. An overrun at low odds in the Initial Movement Phase leaves retreated regiments unpinned because the defender in an overrun cannot advance after combat (Case 6.59) the panzer division can then redeploy in the Mechanized Movement Phase. Needless to say, this leaves the enemy unit free to redeploy, but in the Initial Movement Phase the German player still has the opportunity to shift a foot division to the hex formerly occupied by the panzer division and keep the enemy pinned.

Note that the optimum odds for disengagement are 1-1 because of the requirement for an "A" result. Disengagement may still fail on a die roll of "1" if the defending stack contains more than one unit, since the defenders can choose to satisfy the "D1" result by eliminating a unit so that the attackers remain pinned. Higher odds do not necessarily favor disengagement (in the sense of replacing motorized with foot infantry as the pinning agent) since a retreat by the defenders removes *their* pin as well as that of the attackers. At odds lower than 1-1, the chance of an "A" result remains constant at 67% but the attackers face the unpleasant prospect of catastrophic elimination.

Conceivably the Soviet player can also use this disengagement procedure (e.g., to unpin two strong, proven divisions in a stack of three). Unfortunately, in practice a weak unit that covers the disengagement may become vulnerable to an attack; lacking a Mechanized Movement Phase for redeployment, the strong units may just end up pinned again. As an aside, one could argue that pins are the main reason why Russian troops should attack infrequently, if at all. Though the average division musters a puny attack strength, the Red Army still possesses the potential to inflict serious damage on a sufficiently weak enemy stack by concentrating a large number of divisions against it. However, even if the troops can be spared, they most probably must attack repeatedly to dish out the desired losses. In effect the forces involved have voluntarily pinned themselves, leaving themselves unable to respond to a breakthrough in a distant sector or even to their own encirclement. So if the Russian player can't resist the opportunity to attack, he should seriously consider overruns, even at low odds, as a means of hastening attrition and thus reducing the amount of time his troops remain pinned.

Finally, on rare occasions the Soviet player can take advantage of a trick that pins an enemy unit automatically. A unit disrupted by overrun loses its ZOC. Thus a German unit can legally retreat adjacent to a disrupted Russian unit. If this occurs in the Mechanized Movement Phase, the Nazis have no opportunity to move away and thus become pinned automatically when disruption removal takes place in the following player turn. The entire Red Army can be immobilized, yet the unit in question still ends up ensnared.

LESSON 5: GERMAN STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

To be blunt, German strategy is minimal—the capture of Smolensk overrides everything else. Without Smolensk the German player faces the distinct possibility of losing the game. Besides the Victory Points (the largest of any objective on the map), occupation of the city bestows a crucial central position from which to continue the onslaught, either south to Roslavl, Yel'nya, and Kaluga or east to Vyazma and Hex X. Even if the German player ignores these facts, the supply lines

German Supply During Soviet Interdiction

interdiction marker	beam-down hexrow	truck range	comments
0120	(none)	2626	to 0119
0219	2100	2524	via 0218
0319	2200	2525	via 0419 and 0320
0418	2300	2625	via 0419 and 0319
0518	2400	2525	via 0618 and 0519
0617	2500 and 3500	2525	via 0618 and 0519

analyzed in Lesson 3 render the idea of bypassing Smolensk out of the question.

Not only is German strategy minimal, but pre-game operational level planning is nearly meaningless thanks to the uncertainties of untried enemy units. *Blitzkrieg* warfare involves the concentration of force at enemy weak points. So if the German player begins the game intending to approach Smolensk south of the Dnieper, it is folly to persist should he encounter monster units south of the river and trash to the north. Thus implementation of the "Smolensk first" strategy requires one characteristic—an opportunistic outlook. The German player remains mentally flexible and his forces retain sufficient elasticity to exploit any advantage that presents itself. And elasticity implies two qualities: mobility and reserves.

Lesson 1 touched on the value of mobility as a force multiplier. Overruns increase the rate of enemy attrition and thus counteract the Red Army's manpower advantage. Furthermore, mobility permits the German player to mass irresistible strength against a vulnerable sector of the front and cause an irreparable breach. Mobility captures territory and captured territory yields Victory Points. Lesson 4 touched on the value of reserves (i.e., unpinned units). Reserves remove enemy units conducting harassment pins. Reserves shift the center of gravity in response to an unexpected opportunity. Reserves exploit a breach in the defense to cause decisive deterioration in the enemy capacity to resist. Indeed, in few other games does the value of mobility and reserves appear so naturally, without the need for special rules.

In closing, a strategic concern of minor importance relates to German fears about Soviet recapture of Orsha and Mogilev while the bulk of the Wehrmacht is tied up around Smolensk. Principally the threat arises from provisional reinforcements popping out of Entrance Area 6. To a great extent, these fears are remnants from the previous edition of the game, which treated rail lines as indestructible. Soviet units could ride the rails through kilometers of hostile territory and detrain in an enemy-controlled city. (Indeed, in the first edition the German 1st Cavalry Division invariably did nothing throughout the game except bivouac in hex 1125 and flag down the daily express train to make sure several thousand heavily-armed commuters weren't on board!) In the current edition rail cut markers prevent such foolishness. On foot, Soviet infiltrators in the southwest corner of the map become easier targets for mopping up by the steady stream of infantry reinforcements plodding eastward.

LESSON 6: RUSSIAN STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

Much of the appeal of *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* lies in devising Soviet strategies—"The Egg," "The Quagmire Defense," and others. Lesson 6 will refrain from adding to the list and will instead discuss three points valid for a wide variety of Russian strategies.

The first point concerns the South-Western Front Reinforcements. It should be obvious that the Soviet player can *always* afford to bring on four rifle divisions from this source. The breakpoints between

Levels of Victory equal multiples of five and Victory Points for geographical objectives equal multiples of five, so the four VPs conceded for four divisions of extra reinforcements have no effect on the outcome of the game.

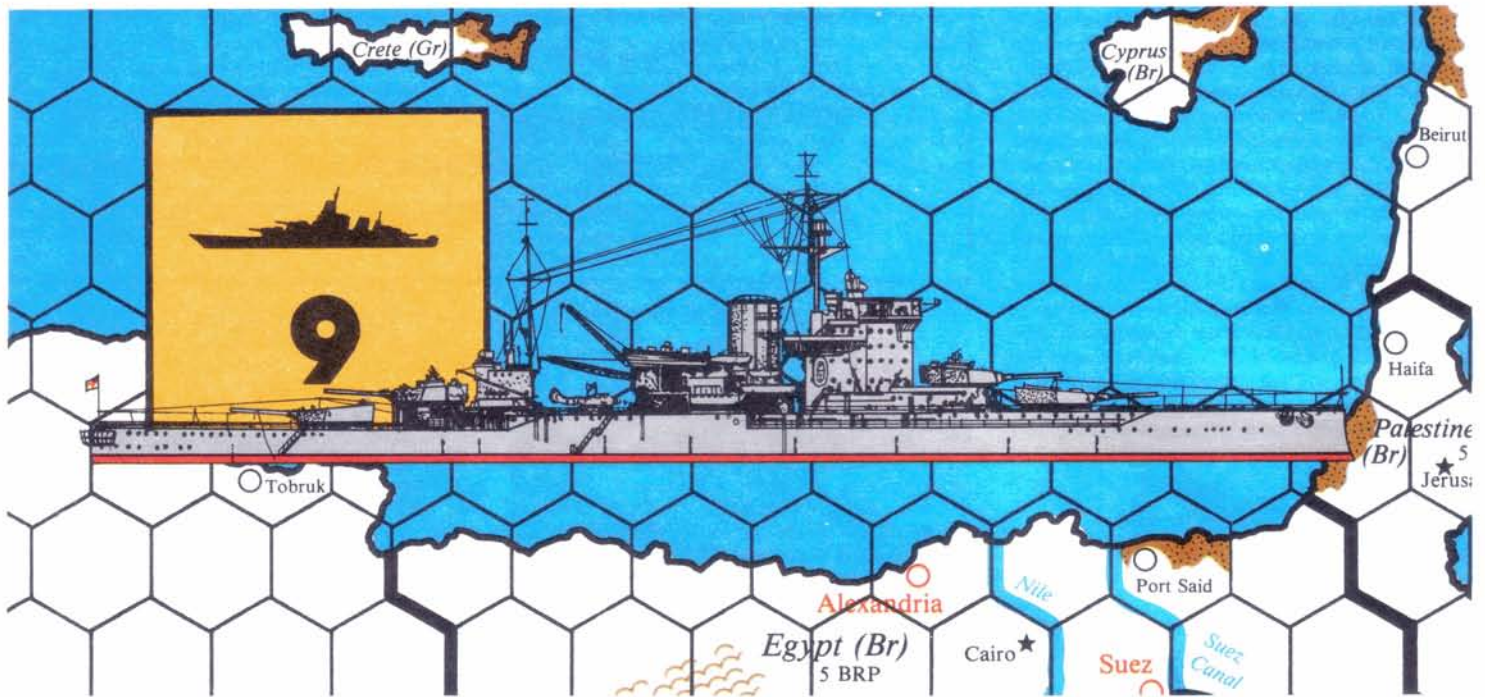
However, the Russians should seriously consider entering all ten divisions. Players may object that yielding 11 VPs from the additional six divisions to save a 10-VP objective, Roslavl, is not cost effective. But viewed from a strategic perspective, the decision provides three advantages. First, it strengthens the Soviet defenses early in the game when this increment of force has greatest impact. Second, the reinforcements reach the front without necessarily consuming the limited rail movement capacity. And third, though the reinforcements may not save Roslavl they almost certainly delay its capture, and as pointed out in Lesson 3, the longer the Germans must battle for the city the less time remains for them to run wild on the eastern half of the map.

The second strategic point concerns general game flow. In a typical game, turns 4 through 6 very often determine the outcome of the contest. During this critical period either the Soviet player successfully establishes his defensive positions, or the German player sets the stage for massive territorial gains. The notion of a critical period in the game has three strategic implications. First, use of the interdiction marker may have greater impact during the critical period than afterward, when it may simply limit how overwhelming a victory the German player achieves. (Lesson 3 discussed this in greater detail.) Second, as noted earlier in this lesson, the South-Western Front Reinforcements arrive just in time to bolster the defensive line for the critical period. And third, rail movement should be chosen with the intention of maximizing the number of units available at the front during the critical period.

With regard to the last point, Soviet players naturally prefer to squeeze all 30 hexes of movement out of transporting a unit by rail. This means they rail reinforcements to Vyazma like clockwork and then let the units straggle to Smolensk as best they can. Unfortunately, such a transportation scheme frequently results in a horde of divisions reaching the Vop River just in time to see Smolensk surrender. Alternatively, short-haul rail movement may prove more valuable in preparing for the critical period. Possibilities include riling units from Smolensk to Vitebsk on Game Turn 1, from Mogilev to Roslavl on Game Turn 2, and from Vyazma to Smolensk on following game turns.

The third and last strategic point to consider concerns a minor qualification in the victory conditions. The German player receives Victory Points for a captured city only if a line of communications can be traced from the city to the west map edge. This suggests that the Russians can negate German capture of a city late in the game by encircling it on the final game turn. Unfortunately, the likelihood of saving Roslavl or Vyazma (much less Smolensk) by this means diminishes greatly in light of the facts that the Germans move last and are almost certainly in supply. Nevertheless, Kaluga and Rzhev, by virtue of their location at the edges of the map, may provide just such an opportunity.





AXIS SOUTHERN YEARNINGS

Mediterranean Power Play in THIRD REICH

By Mark C. Nixon

In his piece "Man the Beaches" (Vol. 24, No. 4), Mr. Nixon took a long look at defending Italy and Allied options for the Mediterranean Theater. In this companion piece to that fine article, he turns his attention to what the Axis can do in the south.

REDRESS THE PAST

In his article, "Germany: The Mediterranean Strategy" (Vol. 22, No. 1 of *The GENERAL*), Nicky Palmer touched upon a concept vital to the repertoire of all 3R addicts. I share his opinion that an Axis Mediterranean strategy of conquest is feasible, and extend the opinion to encompass a belief that any Allied player unprepared for a game focused on the Med in the early years may be easily caught napping by an astute Axis opponent.

I take issue with Mr. Palmer's offhand treatment of France, however. His intention is to first knock out Turkey and Suez/Alexandria, and either in the interim or subsequently to lower the boom on France. I find this poor economy of force, allowing the Western Allies too much freedom to maneuver, permitting France the opportunity to remain in the war indefinitely, and even running the risk of an early defeat in the West. Permitting France to remain in the game (in effect ignoring the "French Menace") is a grave error.

In Nicky's defense is the fact that his was only a cursory look at the Mediterranean, with no intention to give detailed information or any step-by-step instruction of exactly "how to do it". Unfortunately, in the one instance where he does give detailed information regarding Axis unit positions at the end of Fall 1939, his entire thesis breaks down and it becomes obvious he never actually played this strategy against anyone experienced enough to correct his illegal move. Therefore, before detailing my own plan of southern aggression, I must first address a number of items Mr. Palmer has seemingly overlooked in his presentation. So, with all due respect:

Too Many Troops

Nicky ends Fall 1939 with too many factors in the Axis Minor Allies. The Axis are allowed only 20, lent Italians count, and there will usually be three factors in Finland. The offending statements are, "Italy lends her airwings to Germany, SRing them to Budapest and Plovdiv" and "Some panzers go to the Rumanian-Yugoslav border" and "... getting across the Straits is a real headache and will require the use of paratroops."

Although the exact units scheduled to attack Turkey are not listed (other than the paratroops), Nicky's prediction that correct play will find Germans "firmly established on the east bank only a few hexes from Ankara" necessitates the use of panzers, which must have begun the turn in Bulgaria, Rumania or Hungary. A conservative count makes this a total of two 5-4 air, one 3-3 para and four 4-6 panzer units—29 factors. Add three more if Finland is defended and there still aren't enough factors to put Germans "within a few hexes of Ankara" by the end of the turn.

If we back off and adjust these panzer estimates to make this force legal, there can be only one 4-6 stationed in the Minor Allies. Turkey is safe.

Clearly, Mr. Palmer completely overlooked Rule 25.6. The entire strategy is worthless due to this oversight. This is not to condemn Nicky Palmer. I wish Nicky had realized his mistake and rewritten a legal Winter '39 attack on Turkey. Maybe he, or somebody, will yet do so. I'd like to see it.

But the problem is immense. How does one attack Turkey when it appears only 17 or 20 factors are available to do so? This will be discussed later in this article.

Italian Expenditures

Nicky's Italian BRP expenditures in 1939 are potentially disastrous. He uses the Italian economy to subsidize the German, a valid enough arrange-

ment in later turns. But in Fall 1939 this leaves only two BRPs for builds. Declaring war on Yugoslavia and Turkey in Winter, only 17 factors can be built that turn—provided that Italy does not join his ally in a Mediterranean Offensive. That offensive is unlikely with all his air on loan, only one armor built, and a maximum 16 ground factors in action (five or six of which are in Libya).

The second Italian 2-5 armor can't be built until Winter, and the fifth fleet will not sail until 1940. But the greatest harm done is to the war of economies. That is, Italian purchase of a DoW against the Allies in Fall 1939 threatens Italian survival chances by freeing the enemy of that financial burden. The kicker here is that a double-turn invasion of Italy in which the Allies declare war must begin with Britain, not France, paying for the DoW. This is because Rule 21.4 has been expanded to include DoW on major powers (21.4 on Page 45 in *The Gamer's Guide to THIRD REICH*). It is, therefore, a 50-BRP expenditure for Britain, including the Offensive option. This leaves Britain only 12 BRPs for Fall builds, reason enough to squelch the resolve of most British players.

An Italian DoW removes this major hurdle and opens the floodgates of Anglo-French assaults. Although the shortcoming can be overcome, Nicky totally ignores this dilemma in his article. Italy is left extremely weak in all respects.

Defending Italy

As a consequence of the second above, Nicky's Italian situation in Fall '39 finds one 2-5 armor in Taranto, a 1-3 stuck in Albania (Italian fleets are at Taranto and Venice, so could not have SRed it out), loaned air units in Polesti and Bucharest, and "five or six" units in North Africa. I suppose these "five" in North Africa are the five other 1-3s. If "six", one 3-3 unit must also be there, or a replacement unit might have been SRed there. I'll assume only five units in North Africa, although it matters little at this point.

The defense of Italy is handled by the remainder: two 3-3s and whatever was built with the two BRPs (presumably two replacement units). Of course, the 2-5 in Taranto helps protect the AA23 beach and there are German panzers to the north. But so what? Italy is wide open to an Allied double-turn (DT) conquest. (Rather than the comical term "flip-flop", could we please adopt the more descriptive usage "double turn"?)

German armor in Venice cannot retake Rome as British and French forces pour into Italy during Winter movement and SR to block them. The few Italian defenders are vapor after two turns of combined Anglo-French attacks. Italy is conquered. How Mr. Palmer could have referred to Marcus Watney's *Guide* defense of Italy while espousing his own open invitation to Allied invasion (the "Italian Open") in the same paragraph is beyond me. I am at a loss to illustrate a defense of Italy featuring the meager forces Nicky has allocated.

Perhaps his "five or six units" in Libya are actually the two Italian 1-3s which began there, supported by three or four German units SRed there. However, availability of three or four more 1-3s will not keep the Allies out of Rome, and using the Italian navy to SR German forces to Libya makes Allied invasion of Italy easier still.

Finally, with Germans trying to SR out of Poland and into Venice, Rumania, Bulgaria and North Africa, they may come up short of SRs. Add to this her troop commitments on the East and West fronts and suddenly Germany comes up short of manpower as well. Consequently, I doubt that Nicky intended to send German troops to Libya.

Certainly, the British may not have set up to capitalize on such an opportunity, but it is pointless to consider such inferior play. On the other hand, the Italian navy might successfully skate through both French and British fleets to repulse an invasion force . . . but I wouldn't count on it. What's really needed to salvage this situation are a few of those panzers sitting in X23 guarding Rome that Mr. Palmer seems to have scattered everywhere else on the map.

A proper defense of Italy requires either abandoning the Fall DoW against the Allies, or enlisting some heavy duty German aid and enticing it much further south than Venice. Don't even think about flying the air out of Italy. (For further considerations, see my "Man of the Beaches" in Vol. 24, No. 4 of *THE GENERAL*.)

BRPs in 1940

Mr. Palmer's BRP situation in 1940 is interesting. I calculate 1940 starting BRPs as follows:

	1940 Starting BRPs			
	Germany	Italy	Britain	France
Base	150	75	125	85
CarryOver	—	—	—	5
Conquest	40	—	—	5
Intervention	—	—	30	—
Year Start	190	75	155	95
Strategic	18	—	15	—
Spring Start	172	75	140	95

The Axis start Spring with 247 BRPs; the Allies with 235 BRPs. Conquests are Poland and Yugoslavia for Germany; Luxembourg for France. The British have intervened in Turkey.

This clearly illustrates that as soon as the Axis take an Offensive option, the Allies can start maneuvering for a double turn. This will remain a possibility through 1940 until it occurs, or until Germany takes either Ankara or Paris. If Ankara, the British may choose to let it go without a last ditch fight as a means of avoiding the DT and eventual Axis retaliatory DT. The same holds true to a lesser degree for Paris.

There is also a strong possibility France could begin 1940 with 25 more BRPs for Belgium and the Netherlands, wiping out her five-BRP carryover,

for a net gain of twenty. This would give the Allies a DT over Winter 1939/Spring 1940, potentially a catastrophe for Germany.

To prevent this DT, Germany could elect to forego an amount of Strategic Warfare (SW) expenditure; but where does one draw the line? That is, how much SW do you think Britain will leave unbuild in order to maintain this Allied DT? If Britain builds only one SW factor, they retain the DT no matter what Germany does. This is exactly what will occur if Germany didn't protect against a DT in Winter 1939, and the Allies have a decent shot at Berlin in Spring 1940.

Germany's weak BRP situation can even allow Britain and France to finagle a DT without conquering Belgium and the Netherlands. The point of it all is that Germany's fate deteriorates to a guessing game, infringing on his style of play. Through it all, Britain is in the driver's seat. Once Germany concludes Winter 1939 by conquering only Poland and Yugoslavia, there is nothing to prevent Britain and France from immediately taking a DT if they so choose. Barring a catastrophe, they can retain the initiative throughout 1940!

At this point, the Allies are at their military peak while the German is as yet only partially mobilized. Total mobilization and new troop commitments on the West Front may preclude any German success in Turkey or recapture of the initiative. What it all boils down to is a free hand for the Allies, and with France enjoying offensives in the West, Germany could be in big trouble fast. DT-mania will haunt Germany in 1940 even after the fall of Ankara in some cases, yet Mr. Palmer ignores it totally.

Due to overlooking this BRP situation, Mr. Palmer has made some curious statements: "The West is bankrupt"; "To keep the three fronts going all this time the British must have scraped the bottom of the barrel"; ". . . the fall of Suez should see them plunging into the red"; and my favorite, "The year 1940 sees the Axis swing into top gear against the Allies on three fronts". None of these are substantiated by facts and figures. The final one is simply not true; Germany cannot buy Offensive options on even two fronts for a full year (120 of his total 172 available BRPs) concurrent with mobilizing his army and replacing losses. For his part, the Italian is going nowhere on his own.

With no Axis West Front Offensives consuming those bothersome French BRPs, France will go on the offensive herself in order to avoid a DT (if nothing else) until such time as—you guessed it—she actually opts for that DT. Imagine French fleets used on offense with British fleets available to intercept the Italians! Britain doesn't even spend any BRPs on an Offensive option to intercept. Availability of these French BRPs and forces in 1941 far outweighs the threat to Suez and a once-only British loss of 25 BRPs.

HIT THE WEAK MAN

The rationale for a "Mediterranean Power Play" is varied and depends, possibly, more than anything else upon one's own preconceived notions of Axis chances for success and on the ability of one's opponents. My opinion is that a "Campaign Game" between two equal opponents begins with an even chance of victory for each side. In multi-player games, the probabilities may shift to one side or the other according to attendant experience and ability of the players. Axis strategy should, therefore, gear itself towards picking on the weakest opponent. As a generalization, this means it is best to play a "Standard Game" (Poland in 1939, France in 1940 and Russia thereafter) when facing a poor Russian player; use the "Mediterranean Power Play" when facing a weak British player.

More specific, the major advantages to a "Mediterranean Power Play" are:

Massive BRP Rewards

Depending on how the French colonies go, the Mediterranean yields 110 to 130 BRPs to the Axis. This is economically more rewarding than attacking Russia, which yields only 55 BRPs on the fall of Eastern Europe, Leningrad and Moscow. Even added DoW expenses in the Med are more than offset by economically cheaper costs of waging war there as compared to Russia. There is also the possibility that Germany may save 35 BRPs by not declaring war on Russia, while Russia must spend 35, for a net swing of 70 BRPs!

Of course, conquest of Russia would be better strategically. If you feel your chances of conquering Russia are better than of conquering the Mediterranean, by all means that is what Germany should be doing.

Also, some of these Med BRPs may come your way even in a Standard Game. Figure 20 BRPs for Yugoslavia; 30 if Greece is added; and make that 35 with Tunisia thrown in. These 35 BRPs plus 55 in Russia give the German about the maximum financial reward he can expect when following a Standard Game plan, conquest of Russia excepted. But remember, chances that all 90 BRPs can be held for even one complete year are slim. Not so the Mediterranean, where Germany can enjoy 100+ BRPs for several complete years. After all, Germany still plans on 25 to 40 BRPs in Russia for at least one year.

Gibraltar & Suez/Alexandria

There is a one-time British loss of 25 BRPs each for Gibraltar and Suez/Alexandria. As Mr. Palmer has written, such loss can be catastrophic for an unprepared Brit.

Ignoring Russia

Russia does not have to be attacked until the Spring of 1942—if at all. If still occupied with consuming the Med, Germany need not even spend the BRPs to declare war on Russia, leaving that financial burden in Russian hands admittedly flush with power.

Russia's Dilemma

Whether Germany attacks Russia or vice versa, the Russo-Turkish border will prove more trouble for Russia than for Germany, even after the 1942 influx of Russian armed forces.

Germany's great advantage here is provided by that friend of all defensive two-timers, the "Two Front Defense". That is, if Russia wants to advance on both fronts (East and Med), she must pay 30 BRPs per turn to buy the options. Germany, however, can advance in both areas with a paltry 15 BRPs spent for an East Front Offensive option. That is, until Russia penetrates eastern Turkey. Even if the situation deteriorates to that point, Russia is still spending 30 BRPs for Offensive options while the German probably chooses Attritions and pays nothing. Russia is not going anywhere at this rate. At least not until 1944.

Eastern Turkey should prove a German liability only to a German still engaging Western Allied forces in the Med in late 1942. Otherwise, Russia's backdoor is open.

Italy Unbound

Once the Mediterranean is cleared, Italy is freed of her defensive burden. Her armed forces are permitted to move all over the map, not suffering the deployment restrictions of the German Minor Allies. What's more, instead of consuming Italian SRs in the Med, they can now be used to augment the German's. Those Italian SRs are ideal for reinforcing the Eastern Front, especially at the Russo-Turkish border.

Figure 1: Britain cannot stop Germany in Lebanon-Syria, and so pulls back to where the RAF reigns supreme. This leaves little for Home Island defense, but displaying her best possible defense serves to illustrate Britain's awful plight in the Middle East. When Axis air stages into forward bases at Beirut, Damascus, Kaf and airbases SR'd forward or newly constructed, even this defense crumbles.

In fact, even in a "Standard Game" not focused on the Med, it is common strategy to defend Italy with German forces at least in part, so that some Italians can be sent as cannon fodder to the Eastern Front. Much more important than any added raw strength, the real benefit is consequent usage of Italian SRs to ferry these troops back to the front once taken as losses. This SR increase is welcome relief to an SR-poor German at the height of *Barbarossa*.

Italian air need not even be "loaned" in the conventional manner. It can sit on defense in the East, able to provide DAS to any unit within range, thereby giving Germany a total of 20 usable Italian factors in Russia, plus potential other "static" Italian defenders.

In the West, Italy's forces have freedom to deploy as needed, filling a void created in the 3rd Edition by Axis Minor Allied limitations. Those 1-3 Italians often can free a German 3-3 for duty elsewhere, in cases which require a unit—any unit—no matter what strength.

The Italian fleets get into the Atlantic. Beyond the invasion of England this threatens (see "The Spanish Gambit", David Hablanian's excellent treatment of invasion in *The GENERAL* Vol. 18, No. 5), these fleets can be used as cannon fodder—this time against the inevitable Allied invasion of Europe. They may not win any sea battles, but can certainly slow Allied build-up in Europe by taking out some enemy fleets. They can also skirt the whole naval modifier issue if used to defend the port/beaches of Bremen, Calais, Cherbourg and Lorient. Italian fleet losses to air raids are not so unpalatable as German.

Notice, however, that fleets alone are no defense within range of Allied paratroops and air power. It is still necessary to defend with ground forces. The point is that the combination of fleets and ground forces will force the enemy to invade the non-port hex, or spend many expensive turns reducing the fleets by air.

Italy to the End

Quite simply, Rule 26.7, "Early Italian Surrender", can be forgotten once the Mediterranean has been conquered. Likelihood of early surrender at that point does not bear extrapolation here.

Turkey

As above, the bizarre series of events required to bring Turkey into the late war as a British Minor Ally will never materialize. Turkey is in and out of the war early.

Festung Europa

Most obvious, the Western Allies will have a terrible time getting anywhere. Not that they can't land almost anywhere within reach of their airforces; but they will not move inland well against a BRP-wealthy German player whose Mediterranean-conquest BRPs will immediately rebuild all losses and buy him plenty of West Front counteroffensive punch.

Leningrad Busters

Always remember that Shore Bombardment allows the least expensive attack you will ever make. Consider one case: 30 shore bombardment factors and two infantry factors attacking Leningrad defended by four infantry factors. This is a 2-1 attack, and on an Exchange the Russian loses at least half his defenders (depending on what units were



in the city). This leaves Leningrad open to an Exploitation attack, defending with only a maximum of eight now. Of course, the German might have won the initial 2-1 outright. The point is, if he is taking an Offensive option anyway, he risks only the two infantry factors for this chance to knock out a major Objective. I freely admit there is a remote chance the fleets will ever be available on the turn you might wish to employ them thusly, but watch for other possibilities—like Gibraltar!

Vichy

This is quite straightforward. Once past the initial danger period when Britain might deactivate Vichy France due to your trespassing, the German stands a reasonable chance to bring them in on his side. For that matter, it is unlikely Britain will feel like spending many BRPs to deactivate Vichy once her rulers realize that they are your prime target. Should you sway Vichy France to your cause, base any 9-factor Vichy fleet at Gibraltar. This is because you don't want it bombed since you can't rebuild it. If, however, you receive other Vichy partial fleets in addition, you need not be quite so parsimonious with them.

Objectives

In case anybody is interested, the final reason for plunging into the Mediterranean is the wealth of objectives available there. I count seven which don't fall in a "Standard Game": Istanbul, Alexandria, Mosul, Suez, Malta, Gibraltar and Madrid. Four more fall easier than normal: Maikop, Grozny, Astrakhan and Stalingrad. Two become more difficult to take from a "Med Power Play" situation: Leningrad and Moscow. The bulk of these fall to you immediately; there should never be any doubt you will attain a *Marginal Victory* in the Campaign Game. You have guaranteed that the Allies must attain a *Tactical Victory* to beat you.

Variants

Yes, there is even more after the "final word" above. But this might not come into play because it depends on which variant is drawn. The advantage here is that some of these variants which might normally be of only marginal use (like #1, #2 and

#9) are extremely valuable tools to throw against the British when pursuing Mediterranean victory. None of the variants suffer, except possibly #7, but you could opt not to use it should you desire. More likely, draw of that variant will decide your course upon a "Standard Game".

1939 Anyone?

If you are playing the 1939 scenario and feel like irritating your British opponent, you might use a "Mediterranean Power Play". He will hate you forever as you consume his objectives. Good for vendettas.

NO PERFECT PLAN

There are also, however, good reasons to avoid a "Mediterranean Power Play":

French Hangover

Late conquest of France can prevent you from completely conquering the Mediterranean prior to Russian and US entry in force. If you can't knock out France before Winter 1940, you may find the Med too much to handle. Even a Fall victory at Paris can leave you short of BRPs and active forces if things have not gone well.

On the other hand, a Winter '40 victory in France may be so cheap that your Mediterranean Offensive need not suffer. Unfortunately, chances that you can anticipate this in the Fall so as to set up a Winter move on Turkey are slim.

Spain and the Rock

The problem here is not whether or how to conquer Spain, but when? By far, it is best to invade the country in Fall 1941 in order to avoid the damaging effects of Rule 46.3. Just make sure you successfully bring in the Minor Allies in Summer '41 and play any of the affected variants beforehand.

At this point, the challenge is to knock out Gibraltar by Spring '42 at the latest. If unsuccessful by then, you're hurting. An Allied DT over the Summer-Spring turns will allow them to flood Gibraltar with a 4-5, a 5-6 and a 3-3 paratroop unit for a total defense of 48 factors (excluding DAS).

It all boils down to one thing really. The "Med Power Play" is not complete until Britain has been

100% excluded from that Front. If Gibraltar stands, it cannot be long before British and American forces are invading somewhere in the Mediterranean. Threat of this would tie down an inordinate number of troops and nullify many advantages previously listed for undertaking the strategy in the first place. Gibraltar truly is a rock.

Strict Timetable

For all things which befall every Wehrmacht commander on the Russian steppes, at least one bright spot seems to hold true; there is not much pressure to complete any certain level of advance in the East. Maybe it's simply because success in Russia is so blasted difficult to gauge prior to final capitulation. Maybe it's only our naive assessment that end games are just too difficult to study in depth that keeps us from laying firm dates and noting specific objectives on the map of Russia. Maybe someone will now remember that Nayer Ali (in *The GENERAL*, Vol. 21, No. 4) and Marcus Watney (the *3R Guide*) already have done this. Well, Nayer and Marcus did well, but we are yet light years away from approaching the level of East Front analysis we enjoy in the early years in the West. (This account, alas, does not have room to amend that discrepancy.)

All of which is a somewhat roundabout way of broaching the rather awful fact that the "Med Power Play" suffers a rigid timetable on the magnitude of Germany's march through Poland, the Low Countries and France. Axis hopes and fears during a "Power Play" will drag them through such highs and lows for such an extended length of time, that the very physical strain of a one-sitting playing may do them in where all their opponents' experience, talent and luck have failed.

On a more specific plane, it is a truth of wargaming that there is a geometrically progressive correlation between the precision required to conclude a task and the likelihood of a screw-up. That is, Axis play during 1939 through 1942 of the "Mediterranean Power Play" falls under a category which might be labelled "Heads-Up Play Required", mostly due to the vital importance resting squarely on the use of their SR selections and control of Declarations of War and Offensive options—not to mention overall BRP expenditures (so I mentioned them). Any slight lapse here might cost a whole season's progress. A missed SR, a poor selection, or even positioning paratroops and air forces in awkward locations could leave the Allies free of worry for a turn.

It's a rare day such subtle play is important in Russia. There, it's more a matter of pounding away season after season and grabbing the "Big Chance" when offered.

The Russian Powerhouse

This is the "Big Fear". Russia could come down on Germany like a juggernaut. For that matter, the Bear might even try a sweep into Mediterranean climes. Expanding the old perimeter and all that. What's needed here to put those fears to rest is a smashing plan to crash into Russia, suck it dry and leave it as carrion for a couple of years while Germany romps through the Med.

Of course, it can't happen. Were there a way to do that, there would be no need for the "Med Power Play" and nobody would play *THIRD REICH* anymore. I for one, would not bother to write a piece such as this, to the delight of many no doubt, on any game so easily mastered. Instead, the Russian

front will taper off into one long, extended struggle more resembling the see-saw years of 1942-43 than any normal 1941 blitz. (This situation will be discussed in general in a later section.)

Western Allied Determination

This is where an initially successful Mediterranean campaign can backfire miserably. Imagine British and US forces building up in England with no place else to stack counters. No Gibraltar. No North Africa. Not even a Malta. Everybody piles into the island and stacks to the limit.

Sooner than would occur in a "Standard Game", this powerful force will hurl itself at the continent. In fact, using both British and US armies in Europe with only a token holding force in North Africa, will be a major point of contention when the in-depth study of Campaign End Games is finally published.

Between them, Britain and America field by far the most versatile fighting machine in the game. Even were Russia conquered and all German troops available on the Atlantic Wall, the Western Allies would get ashore somewhere. They may not stay long but, then again, they would be back for more the very next turn.

All of which is to say that the "Med Power Play" forces the Allies into what is possibly their most potent strategy—"Go For the Throat"! However, as has been mentioned, getting onto the continent and staying there are two different matters. Germany possesses a tremendous facility for blasting armies back into the sea.

Turkish Delight

Britain receives 30 BRPs as soon as she intervenes in Turkey (25.22). Should this occur late in 1940, as opposed to early in 1941, it may provide the opportunity for a DT. That's not to say Britain can handle a DT at that time, but it is an eventuality the Axis players must consider.

SUFFER NO FROSTBITE

As best construed and presented here, a "Mediterranean Power Play" is no easier path to victory than a "Standard Game". Only careless play by your British opponent will allow the Axis to conquer the Med prior to Winter 1941. Consider your campaign a success if completed by Spring of 1942, which happens to herald entrance of US forces and British reinforcements. At this point, of course, WWII is far from over. It has only just begun. For one thing, you may be very hard pressed by a healthy Russian sinking his teeth deep into you in order to gain as much as possible before the Western Allies collect themselves to deliver what he may envision as a telling blow.

Yet your situation is far from the critical stage. Thanks to those southern conquest BRPs, you are in an extremely robust economic situation and can utilize all of Italy's armed forces to help combat Russia. Your armies will never be stronger than at the conclusion of a successful Mediterranean campaign, barring inordinate bad luck at Gibraltar. Once shifted to the East Front, your air, panzer and paratroops (both airborne are now available) allow the Axis Offensive options through 1942-1943 as usual.

But, none of this so far has begun to answer questions of exactly *how* the Axis are to wage Mediterranean warfare.

An excellent place to start is to read and reread David Hablanian's article "The Spanish Gambit" (in *The GENERAL*, Vol. 18, No. 5) and Marcus Watney's "The Long Road From Rome" (in the *Gamer's Guide*). Though both articles suffer minor problems in certain areas, they are in general good reading material and are, after all, well advanced of the "casual playing" levels most of us practice in friendly gaming.

Gibraltar is the objective of the "Spanish Gambit", all-out invasion of England the goal. But invading England is still a risky venture. Even Mr. Hablanian admitted that, and without realizing he had actually escalated Axis chances by illegally carrying three German panzer units on four fleets in two separate instances. That is, although four fleets certainly have the capacity to carry three 4-6s in an invasion, they could in fact carry only two since those panzers must have begun their turn in the port of embarkation (which accommodates a maximum of only two ground units). So, instead of David's six 4-6 armored units, his invasion of England would include only four. Quite a difference.

Alternatively, two stacks of three fleets might carry four panzer units while the remaining two fleets carry a fifth, or even a ninth fleet could be used—totalling three stacks of three fleets carrying six panzers. Notice however, that using this ninth fleet precludes any chance of exploitation from the beach since that beachhead would be an unsupplied hex. Also, this assumes no significant naval losses to date. The tenth fleet, Italian-built in 1942, does not enter play before US entry, and so is not considered. Finally, all this dispersal has made it easier for British naval power to defeat these Axis task forces due to mixing Italian fleets with German, and a smaller size of each group.

As Mr. Hablanian discussed, the need to knock Britain out prior to US entry means Spain must be attacked immediately after France falls. Once begun, there is no turning back as this early invasion dims the chances of activating Axis Minor Allies, greatly strengthening Russia's position. Using this gambit,

Figure 2: Italians are all on loan to Germany. This might show more British force than would be committed here. The problem is one of supply; once those three ports are captured, all British and Free French are isolated. Notice these British require designation of a fleet to carry supply from either Egypt or Gibraltar/England—as will the Free French after the fall of Tunis.



victory must come in the West for there is no chance of it in the East. In short, The "Spanish Gambit" remains a viable alternative, a very attractive one at that. But it, like the "Med Power Play", does not offer a guaranteed win, or even necessarily any better chance for victory than a "Standard Game", except as opportunity and chance might allow on any given playing. It becomes, therefore, yet another option the Axis can collect in their bag of tricks.

Thus, the key to successful application of the "Spanish Gambit" or the "Mediterranean Power Play" is flexibility. That is, if the Axis can remain on track with a "Standard Game" while maintaining the option of switching to one of these alternate plans, their chance of ultimate victory is greatly enhanced. Typically, the Axis move through the game, able to pick and choose any point of departure to one of these, or remain on line to complete the "Standard Game" as opportunity provides. This flexibility is precisely what is lacking in Mr. Palmer's Mediterranean strategy.

Mediterranean conquest can be organized into six distinct campaigns, the first four offensive and the last two defensive:

1. Poland-Yugoslavia-France-Low Countries
2. Greece-Turkey
3. Mediterranean Consolidation
4. Spain-Gibraltar
5. Russia
6. Festung Europe

Ignoring the first of these, which has received more than its share of coverage in these pages, the balance of what follows explores the remaining five major campaigns featured in the "Mediterranean Power Play". We are joining play in progress; the Axis have just scored a win in France. Poland and the Low Countries have fallen earlier.

CAMPAIGN II—GREECE & TURKEY

Beause of the weakness of Turkey's army and the 20-factor limit placed in inactive Axis Minor Allies, any assault on Turkey must be studied from a rather awkward perspective. How *does* Germany amass enough firepower to quickly smash into Asian Turkey so they can almost instantaneously dismantle the remainder of that country's army?

I am going to state from the outset that a 3-3 is in Finland, so the maximum thrown against Turkey is theoretically 17 factors. Putting it bluntly, 17 factors can attack only four enemy factors at 2-1 odds. This won't get you across the Straits on the first turn of attack, and what's the point of risking 1-1 attacks against the Turks of all people? It is not necessary anyway. There are better ways.

Don't overlook the fact that Rumania's garrison can easily join a Turkish invasion force. But watch out. It's a tightrope you walk. You must be certain that the garrison is replaced at the end of the turn or you'll be kissing Rumania goodbye.

Also, a strategy denuding Finland of its protector may be viable. There are two ways to do this. Most obvious is to simply neglect to garrison Finland at game start. Russia will almost certainly gobble up that country in 1939. Alternatively, a 3-3 can be started in Finland in order to prevent such an early conquest, and subsequently destroyed intentionally the turn of or prior to a DoW against Turkey. This has two advantages over the first option. First, it will catch the Russian by surprise. This maneuver will most likely occur in late 1940, a time when Russia is not deployed for a "Winter War". He will be loath to totally abandon his carefully prepared defenses with a German attack imminent, and may not conquer Finland that year. Thus, Finland's ten BRPs will not enter his economy until 1942 in all likelihood.

Secondly, Russia's BRP expenditure to conquer Finland will be deducted during 1940, a growth year, as opposed to 1939, a non-growth year. Everybody knows Russia has 19 extra BRPs in 1939 after

one DoW and builds. Normally nine of these go to Foreign Aid and ten are thrown into the illusory "growth" of the 1940 Year Start. By the time the 1941 YSS rolls around, these '39 BRPs are worth less than one BRP (10×.3×.3). So Russia has BRPs to waste in 1939. But look what happens to Russia's normal 1940 Base of 118 BRPs when Finland is invaded that year. It will take a DoW and two Offensive options to subdue the country. That means 118 less 40 (we're not counting BRPs spent to replace Russian losses) for a total of 12 BRPs lost at the next Year Start growth—plus the fact that Russia is missing Finland's ten BRPs in the first place.

Suffice it to say that this whole concept of how best to handle Finland, for both Germany and Russia, needs development. Consider this, if you will, a call for someone to submit to these pages an in-depth examination of the subject. I believe it bears careful study, much more than has been given here. Despite all that, for the purposes of the "Med Power Play", fancy footwork in Finland is not required. The following seven options, ranked weakest to strongest, legally amend the size of Germany's assault force.

Panzers in R34

Panzers in R34 are able to reach the X-hexrow, making them available to exploit a successful attack on Istanbul. Notice, however, that this force will not be able to do this if an alert Turk has defended all three European Turkish hexes. Such a defense precludes Axis movement into Z32 as a means of vacating factors from Bulgaria to make room for those R34 panzers, thereby maintaining the 20-factor limit.

It may look like that 2-3 in Z32 is easy pickin's. It is if you really want to kill it; but are you going to waste the effort on it? Can you even afford to leave an idle panzer unit in Z31 to isolate it (or in Y33 if you've attacked AA31 in lieu of Istanbul)?

One slight-of-hand maneuver can bring three extra factors into your assault. To set it up, either leave one factor of air out of the Minors or stage it out on your turn. This gives you 19 factors in the Minor Allies, counting the three in Finland. Three of these factors are airborne, which drop on Turkey during the Movement Phase. Naturally there must be a logical spot to drop it; you are not going to simply throw it away. The criteria of Rule 25.6 must be met at the end of movement and SR, so you can now—during movement—bring a 4-6 panzer into Bulgaria since the paratroop and air factors are not in a Minor Ally at the end of movement. Now your attack on Turkey includes a full 20 factors. But this is still not much to celebrate.

Base Albania

Somewhat better than the R34 location, Albania offers a remote base for not only panzer units, but also infantry, air and paratroops. Unfortunately, a godly number of drawbacks make this position virtually useless:

1. Ground forces must have been transported or Sea Escorted into the country.
2. Hex AA27 requires an airbase for any airpower to be useful, which can then reach only one Turkish hex (AA31).
3. Infantry can attack only AA31, and only if it can get to AA30, past a Greek army timid enough to oblige.
4. War must be declared on Greece and/or Yugoslavia in order to reach Turkey from Albania.

This last condition makes this a very chancy move against a competitive opponent who may realize your true goal is Turkey (you will, after all, declare war on Turkey in the same turn) and set up Greek and Yugoslav troops to block your drive on that

country. Unless you know your opponent, you are playing a guessing game at this point.

Of course, nothing can prevent air and airborne units from flying over activated Minors, and this may be all you need anyway. Your ground troops are free to attack Greece/Yugoslavia towards their now weakened defense of their own capitals. If, however, you are counting on ground troops from Albania to hit Turkey I can only wish you luck.

Base Yugoslavia

From Z29, Axis airpower can hit three of the four Strait hexes and cannot be hindered by Yugoslav or Greek forces. However, Turkey's defense can still freeze your ground units in place. A possible variant of this could involve a DoW against Greece with the intent of occupying AA30 to attack AA31. But again, a wise Greek can easily block AA30 with a single 2-3, denying that hex for a turn.

Airbase Rhodes

This is probably the simplest and most straightforward of these seven options. Air power on Rhodes takes some forethought, but once in place is a certain thing. Unfortunately, a four-hex range allows aircraft to hit only one of four Strait hexes. The paratroop unit, however, is free to drop on any Turkish hex of consequence.

Hit the Beach

This one may bring shivers to your spine as you picture that sleek Italian navy running head-on into those British sea-dogs. Worse yet, they may tangle with the French navy!

However, the French may be badly split between Marseilles, Beirut, Tunis and the Atlantic and have trouble intercepting. For that matter, if you have gone after Turkey before knocking out France, he may be entertaining thoughts of his own victory (only in a multi-player game) and opt to conserve his fleet, leaving Turkey to Britain. French attitude at this point is, "the more Axis forces involved in Turkey, the better." That is, however, an unlikely eventuality. In any case, if you take my advice you won't invade Turkey until France is conquered anyway.

This leaves the British navy in your path. Well, it just may happen that Britain is hard pressed in Egypt, has no extra forces in the Med due to commitments elsewhere, and faces a very difficult decision. Does she send those Mediterranean fleets out to intercept, foregoing any subsequent SR into the Med on her player turn (barring interception failure)? Does she try a partial interception with only two or maybe three fleets and hope for the best, retaining Gibraltar's fleets for SR duty? Or does she allow the mission to proceed virtually unopposed, give the Turkish fleet its shot at glory (hopefully losing all six factors to cost the Italian three), and subsequently reinforce through Gibraltar with powerful land and air forces? A tough decision all the way around.

For Italy, it is tempting to lure Britain into a Mediterranean naval engagement. After all, your intention is to eventually sail the Italian fleet into the Atlantic where naval modifiers will put you at an even worse disadvantage. But at present, the fleet is still needed to ferry reinforcements to Libya in an effort to maintain pressure on Egypt and West African colonies if those have gone Free French.

Therefore, I would risk Italy's fleets only if naval modifiers would be at least *even* if all available British fleets intercepted, or if British fleets based at Gibraltar must be used to give Britain a naval modifier advantage and the situation in Egypt demanded British reinforcement to preclude a substantial Axis victory on the following turn. Concurrent with the latter, it is helpful this turn to hit Egypt as hard as possible in order to kill ground units. In this manner, Italy is fighting British SR

limits into the Med more than the British army itself, a shift of substantial improvement for Italy's war effort.

Britain's other alternative hardly bears mention. They could totally ignore Axis movements in the Med—the "Walk Like an Egyptian" strategy. My impression is that would be the end of World War II. But anyone willing to submit otherwise is welcome to it.

As for the invasion itself, there is nothing very critical at all since the Turks have not defended the beaches. (If they have, you can forego invasion and cross at the Straits easily.) Hit AA31 if you need help breaking through; DD30 if you want to take Izmir and/or isolate the Strait defenders in BB31; and land at EE32-EE33 if you want to create general panic throughout the Middle East. Notice however, that you must leave a fleet to supply the beachhead if you want to threaten Exploitation movement from that Breakthrough hex.

Notice also that invading AA31 can be helpful even with the smallest of units as a means of utilizing Italian shore bombardment. Remember that shore bombardment is not limited to three times your attack strength as is air support.

Southern Charm

It is a rare day you will enjoy hitting Turkey from the south. To get there, you either lucked out with an invasion of Lebanon-Syria, or France fell early and Lebanon-Syria turned Vichy and you moved immediately before Britain could respond. You needn't fear trespassing on Vichy soil with your concentration on the Mediterranean. It is even unlikely that Britain will have the opportunity to attempt a deactivation roll with the BRP pressure and territorial demands (Gibraltar and Suez/Alexandria) you are forcing.

This is actually the strongest attack Germany can devise against Turkey, hitting both the Straits and the south at once. The country will not stand two turns. With a strong force in Lebanon-Syria, it could fall in one turn. But it is such an unlikely occurrence and can be stopped so completely by British air and naval presence in the eastern Med, I include it here more for completeness than any expected use. If this opening ever presents itself, by all means take advantage of it. If nothing else, you may at least succeed in pulling British fleets out of Gibraltar, limiting your opponent's SR capacity into the Mediterranean.

Base Greece

Finally, this is how I recommend the invasion of Turkey be arranged. With northern Greece available for basing both ground and air forces, you more than double the strength of your initial assault. In addition, that extra Greek hex—AA30—allows infantry to attack AA31, lessening any Exchange costs.

Faced with this deployment, Turkey may actually concede Z32 in an effort to save the unit. Abandoning the entire European shore, however, is not likely and is the only defense certain to allow Axis troops to end the turn "within several hexes of Ankara", Mr. Palmer's expected result.

Turkish (Blood)Bath

No matter how many British troops enter Turkey, the country should stand only one turn—maybe two if Germany is weak and rolled poor results. Any British which can be isolated, particularly armored units, will elicit unprintable remarks from your opponent. Suffice it to say that the more British units involved in Greece and Turkey, the better. Better that is, to draw them out and maul them on the Anatolian Peninsula than to dig them out of Egypt where they would be tougher to manhandle.

The actual dismemberment of Turkey is nothing to get excited about; it's not a pretty sight for the

Allies. Greece either holds for awhile or folds; if you're lucky one or two British units may be tied down there, not even able to SR out once you are adjacent to Athens.

But there is an extremely important decision to be made for the Axis, as this is the last opportunity to bail out of total commitment to go after Gibraltar. You must critically assess your situation and face those facts which are evident. If you have been slow taking Turkey or have been hurt, it might be best to go after Russia at this point. If those western colonies have rolled "Free French" and there happen to be a few French units over there holding your Italians at bay, you must consider your chances of taking "The Rock" considerably reduced. Why not go straight for Russia now? You have him outflanked through Turkey, and Egypt will probably fall to you sooner or later anyway. Sure, there's a lot to be said for sticking to your original plan. But for every game won due to sticking to a plan, I bet I can name ten which have been won due to flexibility. This is a great advantage, and just because I am presently dealing with Mediterranean conquest, don't think for a minute I would pass up an opportunity to knock the Russian on his can if there were a better chance of that. Flexibility is your trump card, your "Ace in the Hole".

CAMPAIGN III—MEDITERRANEAN CONSOLIDATION

The easiest part of a "Mediterranean Power Play" is conquest of the Middle East and Egypt. Once Turkey falls, Axis forces driving south and west in conjunction with Libyan pressure from the west ensure a British collapse in short order.

The biggest problem facing the Axis is deployment requirements for the Spanish and Russo-Turkish frontiers in preparation for the next round of fighting. Naturally enough, the instant something is professed as "easy", the next step is to try and do it one turn quicker than expected. In the end, nothing is really easy.

The key to Egypt, and the entire British position in the Med, is to knock out more enemy units each turn than can be redeployed into the area. With only four fleets operable out of Gibraltar, this is not too difficult. In fact, should anyone ever have the opportunity to use it (like a late-year turn when there simply aren't 15 BRPs to spare for an Offensive option), a 61+ Attrition versus Egypt and Greece might destroy as many as seven enemy ground units, and British morale as well.

There is some slim chance British air, in addition, might slip through by SRing from Gibraltar to Oran, Algiers, Tunis and/or Malta and thence by fleet to Egypt. But air has a big problem in Egypt as the Axis easily nail it each turn. There is no place for "used" British air units to hide. The air war is dreadfully slanted in Axis favor there.

The end in Egypt is hastened by the fact that once Axis forces are adjacent to the ports, no British SR in or out is possible. The pathetic plight in the Middle East is mercifully at an end; there will never be a Six-Day War. (See Figure 1.)

Much more exciting are Italy's exploits in the western desert. This often dormant forward extension of Axis expansionism is, in a "Med Power Play", of vital importance. From it, Italy must press both east and west. Although progress can be normally realized only in the west, both directions are important—for reasons I believe obvious. In the unlikely event the western colonies are unguarded, even sending a 2-5 armor there to gobble them up is worthwhile. (Refer to Figure 2.)

More likely, French infantry will preclude any outstanding progress, and even Tunisia might still be unconquered at the fall of France. It is, after all, hardly worth an Offensive option, although Italy may take advantage of combining an attack on Greece and therefore enjoy a season of Offensive

action. Should those West African colonies roll Free French, you will be glad for any advanced Italians. They must eventually work their way through these colonies to clear those vital base cities Oran, Tangiers and Casablanca if you are ever going to take Gibraltar.

Once demonstrated, your mastery of "Mediterranean Power Play" may force your competition to launch a preemptive strike at Libya early in the next game. His action may or may not convince you to abandon your "Southern Yearnings", but at least you have forced his hand. Your opponent has spent BRPs, forces and time in an arena previously considered secure. The consequent variety in your 3R games alone is worth it.

A BRP Inventory

The following is a chart detailing anticipated conquest dates for everything leading up to Gibraltar. None of these are cast in stone, but are provided as a guideline:

Country	Conquest Date	BRP Yield
Poland	Fall '39	20
Yugoslavia	Winter '39	20
Denmark	Winter '39	10
Norway	Winter '39	10
Netherlands	Winter '39	10
Belgium	Winter '39	15
Luxembourg	Spring '40	5
France	Fall '40	42
Greece	Winter '40	10
Turkey	Spring '41	30
Lebanon-Syria	Summer '41	5
Tunisia	Summer '41	5
Spain	Fall '41	30
Palestine	Fall '41	5
Transjordan	Fall '41	5
Algeria	Fall '41	5
Egypt	Winter '41	5 (and -25 for Britain)
Morocco	Winter '41	5
Portugal	Winter '41	5
Gibraltar	Winter '41	0 (but -25 for Britain)

CAMPAIGN IV—SPAIN & GIBRALTAR

There is nothing Spain can do to prevent the fall of Madrid on the first turn of invasion. I borrow from David Hablanian's article; he did a fine job illustrating the attack on Spain. (The readers may wish to obtain a copy of Vol. 18, No. 5 of the *GENERAL*, in order to refer to the illustrations and read his entire article.) Germany bulldozes Spain and SRs for a follow-up attack on Gibraltar.

The difference in a "Med Power Play" version of this attack is that it occurs in Fall 1941 in lieu of Fall 1940. Ramifications of the differences are:

1. Britain will likely not be invaded, barring extreme Axis good fortune.
2. Gibraltar will not be backed by North African airbases.
3. Britain faces loss of 25 BRPs in Egypt in the current year as well as a strained economic environment due to a year of heavy fighting in the Mediterranean.
4. German Minor Allies have a good chance to activate due to timing of the attack on Spain.
5. The Russian front is strongly held thanks to existence of the Turkish front and activation of at least some Minor Allies; Germany does not face destruction in the East.

Key features of the assault on Gibraltar are: a) capture of Oran, Tangiers and Casablanca; b) British BRP trouble; c) German and Italian shore bombardment from both the West and Med fronts; d) German paratroopers. Should Britain attempt naval interception, she must leave enough fleets available for SR reinforcement of Gibraltar or face the awful fact that any counterair and Exchange losses will not be replaced, allowing the fortress to fall in the following turn. That your attack on Gibraltar should normally guarantee capitulation of the fortress on

Figure 3: Axis forces are ready to assault the fortress. Notice Britain might have placed units in Z8, but that poses other problems covered in the text. The attack on Gibraltar is followed up with an Exploitation attack on Portugal if the fortress did not fall in order to move those extra panzers into Z8 during Exploitation. They are not there to make an Exploitation attack on Gibraltar, but to defend Z8 so a follow-up attack can be made next turn.

any Exchange result is a matter not likely to go unnoticed by the British admirals. Therefore, if it is apparent you have the power to ensure victory on such an Exchange, the British navy will choose whatever course best suits its own needs—meaning reduction of your fleets—and probably throw everything at the Kriegsmarine. So be prepared for it.

Another exciting tactic is to invade England the same turn you attack Gibraltar. This would be more of a “raid” than any full-scale invasion, but it is bound to scare the tea-and-crumpets out of the enemy. He might seriously jeopardize his Gibraltar situation trying to intercept your feint; you might actually elude or defeat him at sea; and you might even land on British soil. Unfortunately, there is only slim chance you would be willing or able to spend 15 BRPs for a West Front Offensive at this stage of the game. Nevertheless, if you alertly station troops in port with the Kriegsmarine, the enemy must always guard against this threat.

You enjoy such tremendous air superiority over Gibraltar, there is usually little more than satisfaction gained from a turn of massive counterair. Unless your air force has been reduced by SW and excessive losses, or you face excess RAF power due to failure to secure those North African bases, you can throw a maximum 24 air factors into your attack (even after allowing ten to nullify the ten RAF at Gibraltar). Remember, once you nail the fortress, enemy air remaining in the hex is eliminated for failure to change base anyway, so why waste extra energy on a “killer” counterair attack? Your extra air is much more valuable on the Russian front at this time—or even in France to lend substance to a “SeaLion” threat.

The only other reason you may opt to annihilate the RAF is on a Winter turn in which you don't expect to take the fortress but in which Britain will not be able to rebuild the air without depleting her BRP reserves, consequently suffering a BRP Base Reduction at SW Resolution. In this case, counterair attack would yield a valuable fringe benefit.

The Awful Truth

Despite all your planning, coniving and destruction of British forces and BRPs, the actual attack on Gibraltar will still usually be at 1-1 odds. Because of this, you must provide capacity to repeat the attack should the initial attempt fail. Unlike David Hablanian's situation, however, you can hit even a Gibraltar defended by two 4-5 armor units at 1-1, thanks to use of two 4-6 panzer and 24 air factors. This is because you invested an entire year to reduce the rest of the Mediterranean and those nasty North African airbases. Notice you don't have to arrange contingency plans to advance a unit on any Exchange result, provided the paratroops are held in reserve for an Exploitation Phase drop on a Gibraltar cleared of ground units by such an Exchange. (See Figure 3.)

This tactic enjoys the advantage of not risking the para unit, potentially saving the nine-BRP rebuilding cost and a valuable SR. Bear in mind, as Mr. Hablanian showed, it is also an excellent way to “cheapo” Gibraltar, allowing a 1-2 attack (17-32) 50% probability you can take the fortress. This is better than half as good as a 1-1 for only half the risk in BRP replacement costs, although the 15 BRP Offensive option cost itself escalates this expense due to higher probability that a repeat attack may be required. But for a desperate German, this 1-2 attack is not bad and might, after all, be his last shot. If it works the first time (50% chance), it is cheaper



than a 1-1 Exchange victory. A standard 1-1 attack is successful 83.3% of the time and back-to-back 1-1 attacks fail only 2.7% of the time. I wouldn't even hesitate to go for it.

Should two 1-1s result in, first, an “A” result versus two 4-5 armor units followed by an Exchange, you may regret ever reading this article as you have spent 206 BRPs reducing Gibraltar (if only land and air forces were involved.) Admittedly, the enemy loses 71 BRPs (counting ten air), but you will have to do something outstanding elsewhere; you certainly won't have impressed the competition at Gibraltar.

If you're feeling reckless, you might count on shore bombardment to augment this attack, and this would carry with it the added benefit that on an “A” result, your losses would be reduced by the amount of fleets involved as they need not be eliminated. But on an Exchange result, I doubt any of us are so anti-navy that we would relish the thought of wiping out the defenders with matching fleet losses. Trading the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* for a junkyard of Crusaders and Matildas is no way to win a war.

Notice why it is vital Gibraltar fall prior to the Allied 1942 summer reinforcements? Gibraltar's potential ground unit strength increases in the following progression:

Spring 1942: (2) 4-5 = 8 × 4 = 32
 Summer 1942: 4-5, 5-6, 3-3 = 12 × 4 = 48
 Fall 1942: (2) 5-6, (2) 3-3 = 16 × 4 = 64

Since the Allied Spring and Summer turns are taken back-to-back as a DT, you may never face anything less than 48 factors following your Spring '42 turn. At that point, if you don't “cheapo” Gibraltar, you

must pray the Russian is not as tough as feared for you must annihilate him somehow. You have lost the war in the West.

BRP Trouble

If things have gone well (I always expect them to), you have taken both Gibraltar and Egypt in 1941. Britain should be in extremely poor financial health. Here's where SW and Foreign Aid may drive a spike through the British war machine. Consider the following schedule of British 1941 BRP expenses:

1941 Year Start BRPs	= 155 (125 Base + 30 for Turkey)
SW Builds	= -15
Loss of Turkey	= -30
Loss of Egypt	= -25
Loss of Gib	= -25
Foreign Aid	= -15
Balance	45

This leaves only 45 BRPs for all of the 1941 Offensive options, builds, Vichy deactivation attempts and intelligence efforts. Something has to go.

Britain might forego Foreign Aid expenditure this year, and loss of Gibraltar may come off her 1942 Base if the 1941 BRP coffers are drained. In any case, 1942 Year Start SW losses must also be deducted, and it begins to look like Britain will finally be in the *Red* as Mr. Palmer tried to effect so long ago.

Of course, your illustrious opponent can see this coming in Spring/Summer of 1941, before the critical stage of Winter “freezes” his assets. What might he do? If he fights, he must pay the BRP bills; if he runs, you will conquer everything in sight. He cannot physically stop you, but he can de-escalate

the economic danger by avoiding combat, declining Offensive options, preserving his expensive air and fleet units, and maybe even yielding Egypt without much of a fight. All is to your advantage as it helps you reach Gibraltar in short order. Churchill pressures the Russians to take up the fight and cools his heels in London, awaiting arrival of the Yanks.

More of the Awful Truth

Believe it or not, it is important that you attack Portugal the same turn you hit Gibraltar, and you must invade that tiny country with at least three panzer units—four would be better. You might substitute loaned Italian armor, but you must make a Breakthrough attack on Lisbon and exploit to Z8, adjacent to Gibraltar, if your initial 1-1 attack on that fortress results in an "A". Why? Because failure to place units adjacent to Gibraltar would force you to drop the paratroops in that hex and hope the British fail to dislodge it.

This is not a bed of roses for Britain. There may not be enough BRPs left to finance an offensive, and it would be at best a 1-1 attack with both British armor lost on an Exchange (full) result. Britain could reinforce Gibraltar, but this might add those final BRP losses which spell economic doom for the country come the 1942 Year Start. An additional hazard for Britain is that units adjacent to Gibraltar allow the Axis to attack the fortress from a Breakthrough hex where stacking is unlimited. Fortunately for the Brit, there will likely not be enough panzers in Spain at this point to arrange such an attack; nailing the paratroop unit has obvious impact.

Lastly, one other threat the British still pose in the Mediterranean is inherent anytime they manage to base two armored units on a port with fleet capacity to invade. This is why I show four fleets still at Gibraltar. Britain threatens to land at W24 and take Rome if not guarded. After all these months of fighting and getting kicked around, the British could still wreck the war for the Axis. It's not difficult to visualize three fleets carrying two 4-5 armor to W24 with a fourth fleet providing supply to the beachhead to allow one unit to exploit into Rome. It's also not difficult to imagine these fleets skating through those Italian fleets. Why take the unnecessary risk? Garrison those beaches and put the Italian fleet at Taranto, Port Said, Oran and Malta (if that island has fallen early).

Finally, likelihood that Britain might forestall your assault on Gibraltar by attacking your positions before that fortress reflects the specific situation of each individual game. If you are pressing in Egypt or have already taken it, have forced some expensive British rebuilding and knocked out enemy BRPs for Turkey and Greece, there can probably be little or no spoiling attack mounted. On the other hand, if the British have wisely pulled back, yielding ground perhaps even too easily but saving BRPs, they probably can finally make a last ditch attempt to retain at least this age-old bastion in the Mediterranean. If nothing else, they are playing to delay capitulation of Gibraltar until arrival of U.S. forces and paratroopers allow a more formidable defense.

To prevent this enemy tactic, you might attempt to isolate any of his 4-5 armor and 3-4 infantry still in the desert the same turn you attack Spain. If these units are lost due to isolation, they will not be available to man Gibraltar. Enough of these losses, and the enemy may forfeit any chance to hold Z8 by virtue of having no-one left to man the fortress should its original defenders advance out.

CAMPAIGN V—RUSSIA

Russia begins to make a nuisance of herself as

early as 1939 when she usually spends nine BRPs on Foreign Aid to Hungary. If Foreign Aid spending is coordinated with Britain—in other words, "spending to the max"—Germany will either be in the hole as 1940 dawns or will be fielding a small army due to channeling BRPs through her diplomatic corps.

My own preference is for Germany to forget about Foreign Aid until late 1940, after the conquest of France. This is based on the conviction that maximum builds are required to ensure a speedy demise of France, Germany's number one priority in 1940. "Maximum builds" means building the most quick strike forces (air, airborne and panzer) possible without allowing opportunity for an untimely enemy DT. Naturally enough, Germany also must build large quantities of infantry and at least a few replacement units. With these BRP demands evident, Germany can ill-afford playing the Foreign Aid game while France hangs in the balance. Besides, it doesn't matter when in 1940 those BRPs go to the minors, and Germany needs them in her reserves until France is gone.

But Foreign Aid is just the tip of a Russian iceberg of troubles headed Germany's way when pursuing a Mediterranean victory. The big issue to be resolved is what Germany is to do on the East Front while putting around the Med.

First of all, Germany does not lack sufficient forces to block Russian overtures in Poland and Rumania in 1941. Due to her small air force and meager initial compliment of armor, Russia threatens little against a German player intelligent enough to defend with a double line. Russia's biggest target is Warsaw, and it can easily be covered with panzers and air power.

Second, in most cases Germany will still take an aggressive stance against Russia, and attack despite continued commitments in the Mediterranean. In this instance, the exposed southern flank through Turkey can be a nail in Russia's coffin. A couple of panzers in eastern Turkey pull as many as ten Russian units off the main line, effectively killing any Russian counterattack possibilities.

But the real test for Germany begins in mid-1942 with the entrance of Russia's '42 builds. At that point, Russia can fight back on both the main front and in Turkey. She will not be able to buy Offensive options each turn, especially if fighting in the south has flowed into Turkey itself on the Med Front, but at least Russian armies are now able to cover their front lines with a double line, and a triple one where needed. Adding four more armored and two paratroop units to their forces doesn't hurt much either. It certainly gives the German a lot to think about.

On the other side of the continent, Britain and the US also begin to make a lot of noise at this time. The situation there, however, is far less complex than in Russia, because Germany's objective is easy to understand: keep the enemy off those beaches, and tie them up once landed. As one would imagine, understanding it and doing it are not the same thing at all.

Figure 4 shows a typical East Front situation in Winter 1941, as Germany completes her Mediterranean feast. Notice the absence of half the panzers, the paratroops and all the Luftwaffe. They are still busy chewing on Egypt and Gibraltar. Lacking these units, Germany might be in trouble were it not for her extra front in eastern Turkey. Russia could ignore that region, but would still gain little on the



Figure 4: German deployment leaves nearly the entire Italian army to defend the French coast, as well as massive forces assaulting Gibraltar. The Russian "giveaway" defense in the Caucasus might bring hard times by the end of the year.

Polish front and soon would be in trouble herself.

Not surprisingly, there is really nothing new on the steppes as far as tactics; check out the previously mentioned articles by Nayer Ali and Marcus Watney. Depending on who declares war first, there may or may not be a turn or two of Russian offensive action resulting in either a German collapse of variable magnitude, or a stiff rebuff followed by counteroffensive action. Play is generally more open and balanced than in a "Standard Game", owing to the expanded war in the Caucasus and absence of substantial German forces still assaulting Gibraltar if Russia declares war in 1941.

Germany's early intention, while much of her offensive punch is committed elsewhere, is to use the Caucasus front to threaten much as a means of distracting Russian attention from her own initial objective, Warsaw. This whole battle plan can work thanks to a very basic element of this game, often overlooked in analysis because we so rarely consider Russian attacks versus the Axis so early in this game. That is, the strength ratio between German and Russian ground troops at this time in the war is slanted in Germany's favor so overwhelmingly, it becomes nearly impossible for Russia to do anything with an Offensive option.

Consider a Russian attempt to take Warsaw. Of her initial six armored units, one still sits in Moscow and there must be two by my count in the Caucasus. That leaves three to attack Warsaw, one of which is used for the initial Breakthrough attack. Should all Russian air be added to this attack, the total Exploitation attack is 21-16 factors (as two 4-6 panzer units sit in the city). Unfortunately for Russia, there are enemy air units available for DAS, and the initial Breakthrough attack on N35 could only be at 6-12 (1-2 odds) since that hex can be attacked from only N36. Should Russia opt to attack M36, she can do so from two hexes to obtain 1-1 odds, but then the cross-river assault on Warsaw must go off at only 21-24 factors (1-2) at best. In short, Russia won't take Warsaw even if she uses all five available armor units, because that would leave the Caucasus so barren that Germany could conquer the whole region in a single attack, probably even paying the DoW cost herself to take advantage of such a poor enemy deployment.

Russia, on a combined DoW and Offensive option, should still retain 23 BRPs to spend on rebuilds that turn. Should she also take an Offensive option in the Mediterranean, however, she will likely not be able to replace all her losses with the remaining eight BRPs. Her chance of going anywhere against you in those eastern mountains of Turkey is slim at best, although you would certainly need to guard against fleet action should the Russian navy be in the Black Sea with armor at a port. Such a sight would be quite welcome, though, for the ports are no place for Russian armor when Axis invasion threatens.

Notice Russia is able to form a reasonable defense both in the Caucasus and on the Polish border only by vacating her border with Finland. Otherwise, she might throw together the true "giveaway" defense in the Caucasus, designed merely to stop the Axis for a single turn in order to save units to defend against Finland. Such a defense looks to buy time, but the mountain defenses it gives away make it less than outstanding. What will Russia do once those mountains are behind German lines? Of course, the intent is that by the time that occurs, those 1942 Russians will be onboard. Unfortunately for Russia, also in the neighborhood by then are those Germans presently vacationing at Gibraltar. The situation escalates for both sides considerably in 1942.

So how does the German attack that Russian "giveaway" defense in the Caucasus? He moves two panzer units to X47, one to W46 and two infantry units to X46. It looks like he will hit Russian armor at W47 with a 2-1 attack; Russia might actually throw some DAS in to make it 1-1 odds.

Instead, one panzer unit at X47 attacks the vacant X48, occupies that hex, and the other exploits to V48. Now the Russian armor is surrounded and he must decide about throwing DAS on Grozny to preclude loss of that unit; although, since the enemy panzers could not advance into Grozny, the Russian would welcome an attack in hopes the result eliminates that panzer unit.

But the damage has been done. With absolutely no risk to themselves, these Germans have outflanked their enemy. Russian counterattacks would come with no possibility of smashing the defenders; that surrounded Red armor is probably lost.

Of course, this is one simple illustration; there are many which might be used, probably a great many better ones. I find this one typical for a Russian attempting to cheapen this front in order to strengthen others.

Crunchtime

Once past those initial three hurdles (timely French KO, Gibraltar, and the Allied '42 DT), the toughest job you face is merely to stay in the game against a two-front war. At least you can be thankful it is not a three-front war.

The key in Russia is to draw as much enemy armor and air as possible into the Caucasus. One certain way to accomplish this is to place substantial panzer and Luftwaffe formations there. A paratroop unit would be helpful. If you make your main effort here, the enemy must respond with many of his best units—namely armor, para and air. Quite simply, once you tie these up, Russia cannot mount a serious attack on your Polish front. You have pulled his strength to an area where he has little to gain; he can do no damage to you in the Caucasus other than physically destroy what forces you placed there. You need fear no loss of a Warsaw or a Bucharest as on the Polish front.

Of course, once you push him out of the Caucasus he once again, as in a "Standard Game", is fighting on one contiguous front. But so are you. Figure 5 shows a typical situation in 1943. Heavy Axis panzer and air concentrations in the Caucasus have attracted the lion's share of Russian attention. Notice how the paratroopers are divided, to threaten breakthrough against a double line on either front. Should you ever want to threaten maximum penetration in one area, both paras can gang up, but this frees the rest of the Russian line from their danger. Naturally, you must guard against enemy paratroop deployment too, both in the east and in the west.

Whenever possible, Russian air gets counteraired and intercepted to preclude wasting Axis SRs to pull spent airwings out of enemy counterair range. Always remember, a single enemy air factor can attack a spent 5-4, or even more, with a +1 modifier and possibly destroy as many as six of your air factors while risking only one of his own. Allowing such an attack might justify enemy offensive action, or some risky venture by virtue of the chance that nailing your air helps defray other accrued expenses. Once you demonstrate that exposed enemy air will be attacked, it will be the enemy's turn to waste SRs to pull out of range and suffer inconvenience with poor air coverage due to less than optimal basing.

As 1943 wears on, you will increasingly replace more and more German 3-3 infantry units with Italian 1-3 and 2-3 units in the East. This is because you need those stronger 3-3s in the West where each hex is much more important to hold, and because this allows you to use Italian SRs to shuttle replacements east. Notice that "non-lent" Italians cannot move adjacent to the Russians without using an Italian Offensive or Attrition option in the East. Since Germany will usually take an Offensive option, these Italians will generally be in the second line as they move up during SR and Pass options.

Rebuilt German 3-3s can walk to the West Wall in lieu of SRing. Once there, they lend support to

amass 61+ attritions and form what amounts to a killer infantry Exchange defense. That is, since some Western Allied attacks will result in Exchanges of one type or another, the units you want exchanged are infantry—the more the better. This puts those Allies at a tremendous BRP disadvantage every time they Exchange with their armor and air-rich offensives.

To illustrate, consider an Exchange (full) against two 3-3 infantry units. The Allies might lose eight armor and four air factors for a total of 28 BRPs to the German loss of six. That's 466% losses, in economic terms. In addition, some Offensive option cost should be assessed, so it might be more proper to refer to such an Exchange costing the Allies 500%. The beautiful thing about these Exchanges, from the defender's vantage point, is that it can happen even on a 5-1 attack.

Should the Allies roll an Exchange (CA), Axis losses are still six BRPs versus 14 Allied. But this is still roughly 250%. The Allies might claim to win this battle, but are losing the economic war.

Certainly, this same Exchange ratio applies in Russia as well, but a much higher percentage of Russian attacks involve more infantry to trade off in an Exchange. Russia does not execute as many pure armor/air Exploitation attacks as do the Western Powers. Instead, East Front combat might be more a case of Russia enjoying such an advantage facing a typical Axis *blitzkrieg*. But Germany can often bypass any three-factor infantry defense and probably never even considers attacking one of six, other than special cases like Leningrad, Moscow or Vologda. It's a different war in the East.

As for pushing the enemy out of the Caucasus, you can drive along either the Black Sea coast or the Caspian. A Black Sea offensive could eventually link up with your Polish front, driving on Rostov from the west. A Caspian offensive promises to unhinge the entire Russian defense line, if only it can push beyond Astrakhan. Coupled with concurrent effort to the west against Leningrad and Vologda to draw off enemy strength, this might knock Russia out and immediately win the game.

However, I am not suggesting there is a great chance of an outright win in Russia. Of course that is your objective, but a realistic approach is to merely wear down the Russian, force him to drain BRPs from his Western Allies, pick up some added BRPs for Eastern Europe, Leningrad and Moscow, and to put some distance between Russian forces and German eastern borders in preparation for the End Game. As stated previously, should you have good reason to believe your Russian opponent is weak, he is the one you should attack with either a "Standard Game" or an abbreviated "Med Power Play", swinging into Russia directly after the fall of Turkey in early 1941.

But even after all that, if you somehow manage to gain tremendous advantage in the East, there is yet another approach you should take which, coincidentally, addresses all those drawbacks encountered in a Caucasus campaign. Should chance provide, the easiest way to knock Russia out of the war is a direct attack across the Polish front. As in a "Standard Game", immediate objectives Eastern Europe, Leningrad, Moscow and Vologda are selected to prey on Russian BRP weakness; if only she could be isolated from those Western economies, the country should not stand long. This "Achilles Heel" is aggravated by prior elimination of Lend Lease potential and existence of the Caucasus distraction.

But chances of knocking out Russia in 1942-43 as though it were 1941-42 are almost nil, and will not be explored here in depth. It is not anticipated. The "Med Power Play" is a strategy to employ against a strong Russian, a player to be avoided. It is not the best strategy to use against a weak Russian player, and that is the only Russian who could be conquered by it (although he would be



Figure 5: Though this exact situation may never occur in an actual game, it is indicative of what might be expected in early 1943. If Germany could keep eight panzer and 20 Luftwaffe factors active in the Caucasus for a few turns, the region would soon fall. But this must happen here this turn or next, for Axis power must continue to dissipate westward to meet a new threat in France. Note that some infantry, two panzer and almost the entire Italian army are already there.

conquered much more easily by a "Standard Game" course).

The entire situation in Russia will require much more attention than it has received here. I have merely touched on some critical areas. Proper coverage must wait, as it will be a very lengthy effort which details all the points to be considered. Ramifications of a German plan to force an enemy DT over Fall/Winter 1941 alone are so profound that I have not yet even cluttered the strategic scene with such thoughts.

CAMPAIGN VI— DEFENDING THE WEST

There are twelve hexes to defend against invasion, plus six ports which could fall to Allied paratroopers. Gibraltar is the invasion hex a casual glance might not make apparent. Hex F33 cannot be invaded (3R Guide, page 44, 5.6). However, don't think you need cover all 18 of these hexes with maximum force. Gibraltar needs only a 9-factor fleet; Casablanca actually requires nothing at all; Bergen, Wilhelmshaven, Calais, Cherbourg and Lorient can all be held by 9-factor fleets and one-factor ground units. R17 is outside Allied aircover; Portugal is beyond both aircover and paratroop range. This leaves only three hexes (Rennes, Caen and Dieppe) where the Allies can invade full force, plus the six ports susceptible to a paradrop. Still a lot to cover.

The danger at Casablanca is not that the Allies can land and exploit as far as even Oran if they chose to on the turn of invasion, nor that they might continue to fight their way east. The only real danger is a subsequent paradrop into Gibraltar or even

Cadiz, which could open the entire Mediterranean to eventual Allied landings. Therefore, stopping a landing at Casablanca is not important, guarding against what might follow is.

In many respects, it would be much to Axis advantage to entice an Allied landing at Casablanca, because by retaining control of Gibraltar they ensure hard times for Allied North African exploits. Committed enemy forces could never SR back to the West. Should they actually send a paratroop unit there, so much the better. You need only guard Gibraltar against it, and consequently need not fear it dropping in France. Any overland campaign across North Africa would require a march all the way to Egypt to reach the first Allied source of supply. This would be a ludicrous operation.

Another option, probably the wiser one, is to not even conquer Morocco in the first place! Once Oran falls, no Allied action can occur in that colony for want of supply. Even subsequent invasion at Casablanca will not remedy this situation since no BH counter may be placed when it is a friendly beach invaded. So Casablanca could be secured for all time simply by not conquering Morocco, although this does yield five BRPs per turn.

And what danger might this lack of aggressiveness entail? Since no airbase could be built or remain in isolated Morocco, Britain could base only one airwing in the city of Casablanca. It has already been demonstrated that the Axis have adequate airpower to take Gibraltar with six air remaining from their total 40. Five of these could be used to offset those five enemy air factors at Casablanca. Thus, at the fall of Gibraltar, even more British air will be eliminated as any remaining at Casablanca will be intentionally destroyed for use elsewhere. They are

useless in Africa; destroying five RAF factors outweighs the value of holding Morocco for three years, plus the energy and resources spent to conquer the country.

Because of the importance of Gibraltar, it is vital you defend the Portuguese beach to the fullest. It becomes the most important beach on the continent. Should the Axis allow an opportunity for enemy landings here, it will come with a fury as any chance to open Gibraltar will be seized immediately. This is the Western Allies' best tactic to bring heavy pressure on you.

The magnitude of losing Gibraltar would be compounded by not only the absence of Axis defenders in the Med, but also by the absence of any fleets in the Mediterranean! In fact, only the fleet displaced with the fall of Gibraltar would be in the Mediterranean if the enemy caught you napping. A single enemy fleet is all it takes to keep you from using the Suez Canal to get your navy into the Med (47.3). You would be better off had you forgotten about the Med and gone after Russia in 1941.

Does anyone believe it is only by chance that the north coast of Spain is exactly one hex beyond paratroop range from Britain? This, at least, is something the Axis can cheer.

I hope to have made clear that retaining Gibraltar is much more important than holding any of the French beaches—or Paris itself for that matter. This is true for the same reason a major Allied landing at Casablanca would be welcome relief for the Axis; knowing where the Allies are committed is far preferable to wondering where they will attack. Certainly, even with a large force committed through one Beachhead, the enemy might still invade another, but it would be with reduced facility and would finally exhaust their capacity for substantial landings. It's Marcus Watney's early war Italian assessment with reversed roles. "The threat is often worse than the deed."

Once the Allied army is tied down in the West, the Axis have the opportunity to swing into gear with their #1 West Front strategy—the Attrition option. To be sure, there may be need for an Offensive option or two against the initial invasion, but only if such can blast the enemy back into the sea. Once ashore in force, however, there is usually much more to be gained in economic factors with an attrition strategy.

This is due to a number of aspects: overwhelming Allied air power, increased value of each hex in the crowded West, scarcity of Axis air and panzer units (still needed in the East), and a BRP exchange featuring no Axis expenditures and massive Allied costs for multiple Offensive options. As in the 1944 scenario, the correct way for Germany to respond is with air and panzers versus air-poor Russia, and with infantry backed by a few panzer formations attritioning the Western Allies. Each hex comes so dear in the post-invasion West, you can drive the enemy to tears by taking several back per turn with "free" Attrition attacks. Carried to the extreme, West Front Offensive options alone might cost the Allies 120 BRPs in a single year, matched against the zero spent by the Axis for Attritions. This should never happen; but it does serve to illustrate the kind of exchange ratio which wins games.

Figure 6 shows a typical Atlantic Wall defense in 1942-43. I truly expect the Allies to be ashore to stay by early 1943, but their build-up will be so slow due to your outstanding BRP situation and their escalated cost for fighting so hard so early, that you still have less to fear from them than from Russia.

Notice this total commitment is more Axis army than the Western Allies can throw onto the beach. But it allows your air and panzer formations to operate on the Eastern Front where you are still conducting major offensive actions. In any case, you want to have a substantial force on hand in the West to lock horns with the enemy on their turn of invasion. This requires about the same number of units shown. It is a good fit.

Some locations are easy to defend. Gibraltar (one fleet) and Casablanca (nothing) are the easiest. Also easy when fleets are available are the five port/beach hexes described earlier. Tough to defend are all the non-port beaches, except Casablanca. Some are tougher than others, depending on the proximity to Allied air and paratroops, but all of them can be hit at 1-1 or 2-1 odds with the most likely result landing Allied troops on the beach.

Those ports which can be hit by a paratroop drop and therefore must be defended by units in the city as well as adjacent to it, I classify as "easy but expensive" to protect. They are expensive in the sense that they eat up those wonderful 1-3 infantry you'd rather use to fill holes in the East Front. You might use Replacement units in the ports themselves; but once the enemy has landed, any on the front line are more hindrance than help. You will likely kill them intentionally to get them out of the way. Double protect these ports in linear fashion against both Allied paratroop units dropping in tandem—the dread "para-Mutual" attack.

How Much is Enough?

Once the fact of an Allied landing is accepted, it becomes a much simpler matter to defend than were one to try to stop the landing itself. For that matter, with the defense presented and the entire Axis navy available to intercept, everything possible has been done to keep those beaches clear, short of yielding in the east by stealing away the Luftwaffe and panzer corps as well. But the Allies would still land. After all, the strongest defense possible is only 39 factors (two 4-6 plus a 3-3 and 2-3 paras), until 1944 when it becomes 45 factors thanks to the addition of the 1st SS and Gross Deutschland. If the Allies haven't landed by 1944, you have won anyway. Besides, the paratroops threaten so much in Russia, it is criminal to use them for beach defense.

Even should you guard selected beaches against Allied 2-1 attack (Dieppe comes to mind), there is nothing to prevent them attempting a low-odds 1-1 designed to land lots of back-up force should they gain the beach. In fact, that is probably their best move, because it makes any subsequent Axis attempt to hurl them back into the sea much more difficult in the face of that extra Allied DAS saved by not committing it earlier as ground support. Since a 1-1 (Exchange works) enjoys an 83% chance of landing, and the Allies maintain plenty of DAS to cover this expeditionary force, chance of enemy success is high. The Axis may even go straight to an Attrition option. The Allies have landed!

The Enemy—A Brief Profile

Two great Allied advantages are at play here. Most obvious, the enemy enjoys the luxury of concentrating effort on the Atlantic Wall. This advantage is not negated by equivalent Axis ability to so concentrate, because low quality Axis units normally defending the Mediterranean are no match for the high quality stuff the Allies have saved by not fighting there. High quality, because that's the only quality these British and American armies, navies and air forces know. They use no scrubs.

Figure 6: Compare this with the previous figure. This is the situation after some German infantry have come west and some Italian 2-3s have moved east. Extra air and armor might serve better purpose in Russia, but are shown in Spain and southwest France as added precaution against enemy invasion of Portugal. No Vichy are shown, although the likelihood some will be available is high.



Second, there is a great sense of immediacy in the need for a European landing. Russia stands to win it alone or lose it for all with the kind of pressure Germany is applying. Ironically, Russian BRP strength may be such that only limited Murmansk convoys are required. Lend Lease, of course, is out of the question as Germany gobbled up Turkey, followed by Tabriz and Sarab, long ago. The point is, Russia's BRP situation might actually lend itself to enhance success of an early western landing.

Western Allied strength is a frightful thing when focused all at one point in this manner. Though I believe we will never see anyone seriously promote any deliberate capitulation in the Mediterranean, there may be some merit in developing Allied counter-strategy to the "Med Power Play", built upon the concept of enticing the Axis into going after Egypt. I feel there is a fine line of BRP expense beyond which it is to Allied advantage to allow the Axis to venture a quest to take Egypt. British loss of 25 BRPs at Suez is, after all, a fair trade for some amount of Axis Offensive options, rebuilding costs and time investment. The trick would be to identify how many BRPs and to preclude loss of Gibraltar in order to avoid the devastating "Walk Like an Egyptian" stigma. Also, it would be interesting to see what a separate Russian player might think of your goodheartedness in distracting so much Axis attention away from him. Would he be willing to lower his BRP demands, which are bound to come no matter what once the German moves east? What other concessions might Britain elicit from Russia?

Pattern Bombing the KriegsMarine

One apparent flaw in this grand strategy to defend the Atlantic Wall is Axis fleet susceptibility to enemy air attack. Simple matter for Allied air power to rain substantial damage down upon Axis fleets. Advantages the Allies wield in such a naval/air war are the year-long lag between financing fleet replacement and actual commissioning of the ships; limited replacement fleet counters might force extra fleet losses; combined German and Italian fleet losses make naval rebuilding less than optimum; Axis inconvenience in the form of SR consumption to reform full 9-factor fleets; and some Axis fleets may have already been eliminated or damaged. Hah!

Scatter bombing the fleet is an extremely inefficient method of BRP attrition and will not easily reduce the Axis fleet strength to allow Allied landings. Those Allied advantages do not overcome the fact that the Axis combined navies total eight fleets to cover the four beach/port hexes involved. Fleets nine and ten are at Bergen and Gibraltar, outside the Allied air umbrella. Unless these navies have been greatly reduced by prior naval engagement, it is difficult to envision enemy air power chasing them from these ports. Let them try!

To illustrate, consider an Allied air attack using all 45 air factors. This ought to result in 33% losses on each side; naval and air cost three BRPs each to rebuild, but the Allies also pay the Offensive option costs. So, in one season, the Axis lose 15 fleet factors (45 BRPs worth) while the Allies lose 15 air factors and pay for two Offensive options (75 BRPs worth). Outrageous, of course. This attack costs the Axis only 60% what it cost the enemy and the fleets reform, probably suffering some additional losses due to scarcity of replacement fleet counters as mentioned earlier, to once again cover those beaches.

Figure 7: With the Luftwaffe holding Russia at bay, Germany seems at the mercy of Allied air power. But why 45 factors of air? Germany moves armor to N26 and P26 and advances enough to get a 61+ attrition, making sure to occupy N29 and 29 with strong units. Despite penetrating three hexes into German lines, all of the Allies' armor is now out of normal supply. Unable to trace normal supply lines, none of this armor will be available to exploit next turn! Allied units not pictured include one British and one US armor, which are assumed either assaulting northern Italy or Gibraltar through Spain.

Should the Allies wish to attack individually, Britain could throw her four airwings into the battle and cause you only 57% of her own expenses, or the U.S. could toss five airwings at you and force 62% costs on your navies. But using only one air force per season will probably never catch up with the Axis rebuilding programs. Of course, I am assuming the Allies are doing nothing else at the same time; what could they be doing of consequence with all their air tied-up in this senseless bombing? But, were they also managing to do something else, my percentage costs should be amended since Offensive option costs could no longer all be assessed to this Strategic Command action. Notice, also, any available Vichy fleet frees yet another Axis fleet to defend these ports/beaches.

Allied expense is so high, I consider the whole thing academic. One Axis option is to not even bother rebuilding fleets. The Allies should have to spend an average 179 BRPs at their best rate (U.S. alone) to reduce enough fleets to open the first port/beach; and this only after more than a year of relentless bombing. This process can be expedited by using both air forces at a higher average BRP cost of 185, getting the job done on the third season of bombing. However, the Axis still have time to respond with conventional ground troop defense of any threatened beach, raising the question, "Why did the Allies spend so many BRPs for such little gain?"

Axis decision to not replace fleet losses, in effect cashing in on early war naval investment, is one method of directly converting armed strength to BRP advantage. And why should they rebuild any fleets? After all, these fleets are of little use in the West

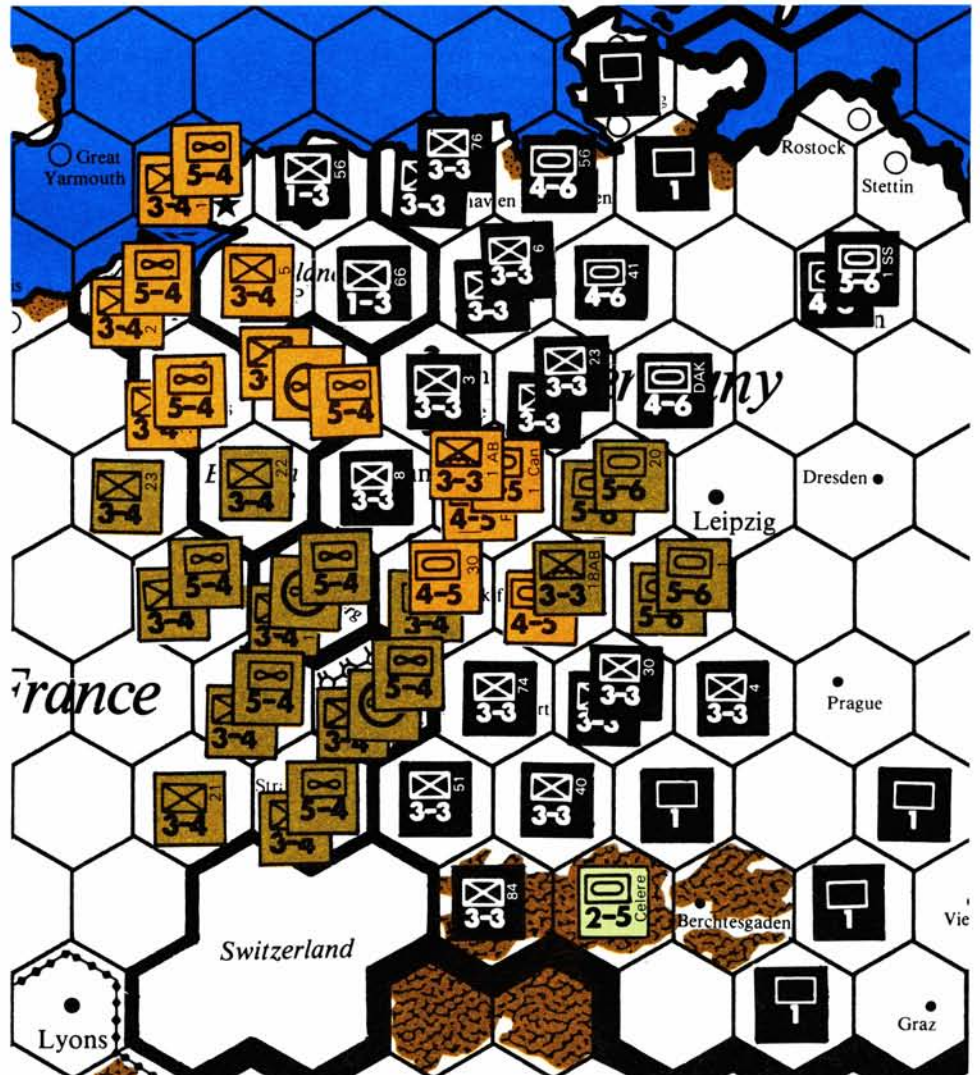
once the Allies are ashore and able to SR across the channel. At this point of the game, any remaining fleets should return to the Mediterranean where, following eventual loss of Gibraltar, they can be employed to thwart Allied amphibious landings at locations such as Taranto, Malta and Port Said.

What I'm really saying is that Axis fleets on board at the conclusion of play are evidence of wasted strength, much the same as French fleets which turn Vichy in the early war. But the Axis player may be guilty of wasting opportunity to use his fleets, whereas the French probably never had such opportunity or, upon employing his fleets, were allowed free passage by an Italian reluctant to risk his own navy. But the motto my Axis fleets sail under is, "If you don't employ them, may as well destroy them."

Enemy Double Turn Bypass

The most important thing you must do in 1942 is ensure the Allies take a DT over Summer and Spring. Should they somehow manage to spend enough in Spring to avoid it you will face one over Winter '42/Spring '43. By that time there will be so many U.S. forces ready to hit the beaches or maul you from a previously established beachhead, you may as well pack it in than face two turns of such abuse. You have lost the game.

But it is very easy to prevent such a nightmare. The Allies cannot spend 25 BRPs to open Lend Lease in Spring 1942 because that possibility no longer exists. Though not specifically denied in the rules, I feel the Allies cannot spend BRPs for something which is impossible—it seems implicit. That nullifies their most common trick to elude a DT.



But just in case your economic situation is so robust you still face danger of an Allied "DT Bypass", your outlet expenses might include DoW versus Norway and Sweden, an Offensive in the West to bomb enemy fleets, counter-air or even raid England or Ireland, a Vichy Activation attempt, Foreign Aid, an Intelligence attempt, purchase of any lost 9-factor fleets (it's illegal to spend BRPs for fleets which have not yet been sunk), and finally suicide attacks followed by construction of lost units. In short, you have ample capacity to guarantee the enemy DT.

I almost hate to mention it, but if Russia does not declare war in 1941 you may need to do so by Spring 1942. Otherwise the Allies could avoid a DT no matter what else you do.

Fortunately, once they have the initiative, the Allies dare not let you get it back, for you still could knock out Russia on a DT. This is another reason why it behooves you to keep heavy pressure on the eastern enemy. That's where you might still win an outright KIA; there is really no chance of it in the West.

Late War Western Dilemma

Figure 7 shows why attrition is the way to go in the West. An Allied spearhead in early 1944 seems to have Germany on the ropes. What happens when the Axis roll on the 61+ Attrition column? The Allies are sliced to ribbons, that's what. Despite massive DAS, you cut into the enemy penetration and stop them cold. All the enemy air is useless on defense.

Any U.S. Attrition casualties, either by choice to keep a hex or by failure to retreat, won't return to the continent for half a year! Since British armor have only five movement factors, deepest Allied exploitation penetrations will often be American armor by necessity. This plays right into your hands; you'd rather nail a 5-6 than a 4-5 for added BRP damage and enjoy the bonus of knowing the G.I. armor is out of your hair two full seasons. Any Yanks you manage to place out of supply and destroy by isolation are useless to the enemy for three full seasons. Small wonder I promote the concept of "Send them back, over there".

Where It's At

Ultimately, the real benefits of a "Mediterranean Power Play" might lie more in its threat than application. (Haven't we heard this before?) If you conquer the Med once or twice versus your favorite opponents, they will eventually try early war tactics to stop or at least hinder you. Maybe a British offensive in North Africa to spoil Italian-held Libya would be cute. The Allies might try a northern Italian invasion, like we all tried the first couple of times we played 3R. Even a pre-emptive invasion of Greece might be in order. Taken in Fall 1939, there would be nothing to fear from Italy as there is no war between that country and the Allies yet. Anyone care to revitalize a 1939 invasion of Turkey?

I maintain that throwing a "Med Power Play" around once in a while will at least diversify your 3R gaming pleasure to a degree unmatched in this "classic" for years. The more flexibility you carry into each game, the more your opponents will respect you, and even yield elements of advantage as they exercise caution in deference to your "reputation". You might even prompt them to hazard an unwarranted risk they otherwise might not even consider. They are stepping to your tune.

MORE TO COME?

I hope to have demonstrated that a "Mediterranean Power Play" has its place in your 3R repertoire. As mentioned, it's nothing at all like a "perfect plan". If we start finding such plans for this game, I'll either stop playing *THIRD REICH* or push for revisions of the offending rules.

But the "Med Power Play" is a living and breathing entity. It has its highs and its lows. There's nothing like the confidence one can feel about creating a true Atlantic Wall, or the depression of rolling death at Gibraltar on back-to-back 1-1 attacks. For many of us, the thrill of fighting the entire year of 1941 in the Mediterranean instead of on the Russian steppe is reason enough to opt for a southern approach.

I am the first to admit that this account has probably raised or left unanswered at least as many questions as it has addressed. I have not been as specific in certain areas as I would like, such as the Italian campaign across Tunisia-Algeria-Morocco or the German swing through the Middle East. These operations are basically straightforward, less abstract than others covered in greater detail—but could still use some illustration. For that matter, I believe even Axis efforts in 1939 and early 1940 could handle some coverage; but that seems like beating a dead horse, with all the effort already expended elsewhere in these pages on that topic. And I have scarcely mentioned SW, Foreign Aid, enemy variants . . . the list goes on. The situation in Russia alone might demand space equal to this "Southern Yearnings" piece.

Suffice it to say I would like to continue with more on the "Mediterranean Power Play", but not here. This is enough for one reading. I would, consequently, appreciate it if those interested in additional material in these pages on this subject would make their feelings known either to *THE GENERAL* or to me (1419 Willshire Road, Lyndhurst, Ohio 44124).



SO THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING

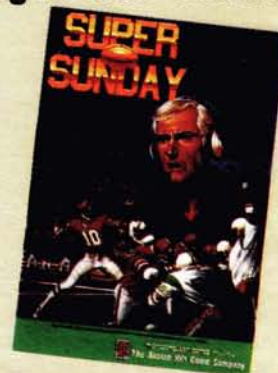
Titles Listed: 153

Total Responses: 877

Rank:	Title	Pub	Rank Times		
			Last	On	Freq.
		Time	List	Ratio	
1.	Advanced SL	AH	1	14	4.4
2.	Diplomacy	AH	2	1	3.5
3.	Third Reich	AH	16	43	3.4
4.	Russian Campaign	AH	4	43	2.0
5.	B-17	AH	3	15	1.9
6.	Patton's Best	AH	12	4	1.8
7.	Squad Leader	AH	14	43	1.8
8.	St. Nazaire	AH	13	2	1.7
9.	Russian Front	AH	15	5	1.7
10.	Up Front	AH	—	1	1.6
11.	VITP	AH	—	1	1.5
12.	Yanks	AH	18	5	1.5
13.	Empires in Arms	AH	6	6	1.4
14.	Civilization	AH	17	2	1.3
15.	Beyond Valor	AH	10	9	1.2
16.	Guns of August	AH	—	1	1.1
17.	Panzer Leader	AH	7	3	1.1
18.	Partisan!	AH	9	2	1.1
19.	Stalingrad	AH	—	1	1.0
20.	Titan	AH	—	1	1.0

Our regular survey of what's being played among the readership drew a considerable response this time, due no doubt to the fact that response to the "1988 GENERAL Readers' Survey" has been impressive. Many took advantage of the fact that both forms were on the same sheet. Thus, this issue's "So That's What You've Been Playing" is likely the most representative in some time, and provides some interesting insights. While *ASL* continues to dominate, both *DIP* and *3R* have a loyal following. All of Avalon Hill's solitaire games make a strong showing, encouraging us to look at new solitaire designs in these pages with more frequency. And, while some worthy titles drop off the listing, some of the best of the older titles reappear—*UP FRONT*, *GOA*, *VITP*, *STAL* and *TITAN*. If the re-working of the RBG brings as gratifying a response as the "GENERAL Survey", we should have an equally interesting column in the next issue.

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THE QUESTION BOX

THUNDER AT CASSINO

9.6 Can you explain "screening" better?
A. Whenever a player has more combat units in an area than his opponent, he can protect some from CC attack...

12.2 Can Anti-Tank Guns and Armor fire on Infantry in an adjacent area?
A. Yes, the circle around their attack factor is merely a reminder that they can also affect armored targets.

13.1 Why aren't infantry units affected by rubble?
A. Given the scale of the game, such effects would not be realistic.

14.3 Can Artillery be called in by an Observer who is in the same area with enemy units?
A. YES; this is not STORM OVER ARNHEM.

5.6 If there are more than two German units in an Area, is the TEM subtracted from each die roll or the total dice roll?
A. The latter.

8.3551 If the Retreat Priority calls for an Armor/AT unit to cross a red boundary, is it eliminated or is priority altered so that it may cross a passable boundary?
A. The latter. Note that if a combined force of Armor/AT and infantry were retreating...

13.2 If both Construction units occupy the same Area, can the Allied player use one impulse to remove a Rubble 2 marker by committing both Construction units?
A. No. Only one level of Rubble may be removed per impulse.

16.3 Can an opposing player's defensive "fire attack resolution DR" remove Smoke?
A. Yes.

17.2 When both players have choice of placement zones for entering units, which side places their units first?
A. The side with the Tactical Advantage places his units last.

THIRD REICH
27.42 & 49.6 If British units in Vichy were unsupplied at the start of the turn in which France...

fell, may they SR out per 49.6?
A. No. Rule 27.42 prevails unless supply is restored before the SR Phase.

33.42 May British Variant #5 be played at the start of the 1942 and 1944 scenarios?
A. Yes.

34.3 If France has a minor ally—say, Spain or Turkey—may British units stack with that minor's units before 1942?
A. No, and the reverse is equally true if Britain has a minor ally.

ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER

A8.22 A CE AFV moves and a squad chooses to attack it using Defensive First Fire. According to this rule, this General Collateral Attack leaves no Residual FP, True or False?
A. False. The Small Arms Attack is actually made versus the entire Location...

A8.26 Residual FP with an Air Burst is increased by one column; but when it is resolved versus Infantry, does the +1 TEM for woods apply too?
A. Yes; the -1 TEM for Air Burst is already accounted for by the increase of Residual FP by one column.

A9.21 If a HMG firing from a building hex has established a CA, can the HMG be used that same phase against an enemy Infantry MMC that enters the HMG's Location across a hexside that is not within the HMG's CA?
A. Yes.

A9.221 Can an MG set up an Alternative Hex Grain Fire Lane along a Continuous Slope?
A. Yes.

A9.223 If a MG has established a Fire Lane, would an enemy unarmored vehicle (with no PRC) entering the MG's Location cause cancellation of that Fire Lane?
A. No; A7.212.

A25.222 Is a commissar immune to DM when attempting Self-Rally?
A. No. A leader cannot affect his own performance (A10.7).

A26.21 If captured Personnel/equipment count as double their normal VP only at the end of play, what is their value during play?
A. They count as their normal VP value during play. For example, a captured squad is worth two VP during the game (even if Exited); only at the end of play is its value increased to four points.

AH RBG RATING CHARTS

The following games are ranked by their reader-generated overall Value rating. Further aspects of reader response to our titles are indicated by the ratings in other categories. By breaking down a game's ratings into these individual categories, the gamer is able to discern for himself where the title's strengths and weaknesses lie in the qualities he values highly.

Table with 11 columns: Title, Overall Value, Components, Complexity, Completeness of Rules, Playability, Authenticity, Shortest Length, Longest Length, Year, Sample Base. Lists 61 games from ASL to TAC with their respective ratings.

RAID ON ST. NAZAIRE Solitaire Simulation of the Greatest Commando Raid \$25.00

Despite the fact that we are revising the RBG at this time (as announced in the last issue), the response to this survey was gratifying—again, no doubt, due to the "1988 GENERAL Readers' Survey" being on the reverse side of the sheet.

And in their judgment, it is a solid piece of work, with an "Overall Value" rating (2.22) that places it eighth on the current listing. Indeed, all the ratings for RSN tend to fall in the middle of the spread of the RBG—with one exception: the mapboard.

Surprisingly, the "Game Length" ratings are a bit longer than expected. However, it appears that this is an ideal game for an evening's pleasure. Certainly

it is playable and exciting enough to keep one's attention, even through repeated playings.

Even though the game will be re-evaluated in line with the "new" RBG, I suspect that it will make as fine a showing then as now. The complete ratings for RAID ON ST. NAZAIRE are as follows:

- Overall Value: 2.22
Components: 2.05
Map: 1.53
Counters: 2.48
Player's Aids: 2.83
Complexity: 4.18
Completeness of Rules: 3.32
Playability: 2.32
Excitement Level: 2.28
Play Balance: 2.87
Authenticity: 2.35
Game Length: Shortest: 1 hr., 57 mins. Longest: 3 hrs., 14 mins.
Year: 1987
Sample Base: 92



Our rather long look at *RAID ON ST. NAZAIRE*, with articles running the range from historical to analytical, drew both some kudos and some complaints. When the dust settled, the issue (Vol. 24, No. 4) polled a respectable 2.95 Overall Rating. Surprisingly, the historical piece, Mr. Seaman's "Operation Chariot" grabbed the top spot. The ratings for all the articles of the latest issue, based on a random sampling of 200 reader responses, are as follows:

OPERATION CHARIOT	302
SERIES REPLAY	188
TRAVEL GUIDE TO ST. NAZAIRE	176
VARIATIONS ON A RAID	108
MAN THE BEACHES	98
THE INLAND DEFENSE	78
SQUAD LEADER CLINIC	72
RUNNING THE GAUNTLET	71
ASL ARMOR STUDIES	68
AH PHILOSOPHY	27
STAFF BRIEFING—PESCHEL	12

Congratulations to Don Burdick who finally persevered his way to the *BULGE '81* championship in the AREA tournament after two rounds and four years when Frank Peterson surrendered, leaving Don as the sole survivor of the 25 original postal entrants. Don now holds two AREA championships, having bested Tom Oleson in the latter's first defense of his *ANZIO* crown. AREA members wishing to challenge Don for either of his titles may do so by writing Don Greenwood, who will pass qualifying challengers on to Mr. Burdick.

Seems, if you're looking for a good amateur 'zine devoted to sports boardgames, you have to turn to the British. Mr. Ellis Simpson of Glasgow is editor and publisher of *Sensation!*, a 56-page irregular publication (40p per issue). Sports aren't the only concern—the most recent issue we've seen (#36) had brief reviews on a number of wargames (including *Lee vs. Grant*) and family games. But sports games, and news of the world of sports, certainly dominate the coverage. The activities in a number of boardgame leagues (including one for soccer and one for baseball) are regularly reported upon. If you are a sports boardgame fan who is interested in adding to your library, check out *Sensation!* More information can be obtained from Mr. Simpson (95 Ormonde Crescent, Netherlee, Glasgow G44 3SW, UK).

Infiltrator's Report

Want to display your loyalty to your favorite game company? No better way to do it than to wear its name proudly on your chest—and I'm not talking about a tattoo, but the next best thing . . . a T-shirt. Shown below are our svelte models (from left to right: Craig Taylor, Bill Peschel and Don Greenwood) wearing the latest versions. If you are interested in spreading the gospel of wargaming, you can order any of these direct from The Avalon Hill Game Company (4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214) for \$6.00 each, plus the usual shipping costs of 10%. Simply indicate which shirt you wish, and specify size (sm, med, lg, or X-lg).

Having just featured *BRITANNIA* in these pages, it seems appropriate (since I ran the tournament) to acknowledge the superior competition in that game at ORIGINS '88. A two-round elimination tournament, with 16 players (four boards) in the first round, it proved that any of the four colors can emerge victorious. The four games of the first round saw four excellent players emerge: Ken Gole (playing Blue, with 115 points), Charles Dunn (Green, 139 points), Les Gray (Blue, 128 points) and Tim Proksch (Red, 124 points). In the finals, which was completed in less than four hours, the Purple player emerged with a 120-point win. My congratulations to Charles Dunn; and my thanks to all sixteen players for five of the best played games of this new classic I have ever witnessed.

Don Greenwood has announced a call to arms for playtesters for his new *Stalingrad* game using battalion-level units and a modified *STORM OVER ARNHEM* system. Testers must be willing to critique the rules and game system as well as test for play balance. Detailed written reports will be expected from each group on a monthly basis for three months. Recompense is limited to free copies of the game at the miserly whim of Mr. Greenwood—but he promises that "the play of the thing is its own reward". Both solitaire and two-player game testers are desired. If interested, write Mr. Greenwood at Avalon Hill explaining why he should consider you

for his slave labor gang. Advance apologies to those who are not selected as we will not be able to answer all responses.

Contest 140, devised by the devious Greenwood, proved a tougher challenge than we thought. Due in part to the "1988 GENERAL Reader's Survey" form on the reverse, there were a great many entries. However, only seven came up with the exact solution mapped out in the last issue's "Infiltrator's Report": Don Bryant, Westminster, CA; Scott Cameron, Hicksville, NY; Tom Lavan, Irvine, CA; R.S. Levy, Baton Rouge, LA; Chick Lewis, Van Nuys, CA; James Mitchell, Champlin, MN; and Craig Tenhoff, Long Beach, LA. A number came close, in most cases splitting Haines and Newman, which left them with but one grenade attack in 232.

In Contest 141, looking at the score for this game of *BRITANNIA* it's clear the big problem is to catch Red. With this in mind, a straightforward Angle move presents itself: drop the reinforcement in Lothian, then send two armies into Strathclyde and two into Cheshire. The armies in Strathclyde will fight to mutual annihilation with the Brigantes, denying Red five points. The armies in Cheshire will kill Harold and take the territory, earning five extra points for Blue and denying Purple one point. The other three armies each hold two-point territories. This leaves the Normans. Some examination shows:

1) The Normans can kill Harold, but they'll lose the game if they do. Since Harold can retreat to Cornwall or Avalon, the Normans must send one army into each (the cavalry army in Avalon would also conquer the territory); this leaves only three armies and William and all of them must go to Devon in order to get Harold. This attack gets Blue three points for Harold and one for Avalon, but loses three (for Hwicce, Downlands and Sussex). It does cost Red two for Devon and Avalon—but not enough.

2) William can become King, but will lose the game if he does. The Normans can cover six territories with their six pieces (William can hold a territory by himself and the cavalry army can conquer a Saxon Territory); then the Saxons and Norwegians must be cut down to three territories each however. This means changing the Angle move for if six Angles go two each to Cheshire, Cumbria and Bernicia, William will be King. But the Angles will be giving up four points in Lothian and the Pennines, and letting Red keep five (for Strathclyde), which cancels too much of the gains.

3) There's another possibility. Send the four Norman infantry armies against the four Saxon armies in England. Everyone vanishes in mutual annihilation reactions, which denies Red not only the four points for English territories but all others for Devon or Cornwall (since the Saxons cannot score more than half as many points outside England as inside and half again of zero is zero)! With the Angle move, this knocks Red down to 104 points along with Purple. Green is now the leader with 106. But there's something you can do about that: send the cavalry army to Powys where it and the Welsh army destroy each other—and the Welsh lose two points. Now every other player is at 104 points; Blue has gained five with the Angle move but lost three for the territories the Norman armies were holding and is at 102. William could hold one territory to make 103, but it's not enough.

Therefore, William the Conqueror (?), in despair over not having become King or killed Harold or kept even one man of his army alive, rides over to North Mercia and throws himself on the spear of a friendly Angle. This gives the Angles three more points, and Blue the game by 105 to 104. The final position leaves England empty everywhere south of North Mercia, ready for the next invasion.



Play TAC AIR—the brand new conventional warfare game that examines the capabilities of the U.S. VII Corps in Southern Germany

Sometimes the best way to understand a large event is to focus on a small portion of it. **TAC AIR** highlights the possibilities in a hypothetical conventional war in Europe by examining only the forces and terrain located in the United States VII Corps area in southern Germany. This approach allows for the breakdown of the opposing forces into their component combat battalions, air defense batteries and aircraft flights. This scale also permits the representation of the often neglected "soft" command and logistics "tails" that play an essential yet vulnerable role in modern combat. While other modern era wargames abstract command, logistics, engineers, airpower and combined arms tactics, this unique game system practically revels in these factors, although without overloading the game with details. Securing a victory in **TAC AIR** is much more than a matter of pushing units around to secure "high odds" attacks, just as real modern combat is much more than the advances or retreats of the headline-grabbing armored units. **TAC AIR** examines the elements that underlie the mechanized movements that appear on maps.

With the game's mixture of units of varying combat capabilities, winning requires a thoughtful and proper combination of forces. Employing ground combat organizations successfully calls for the proper allocation of all types of units. Armor and infantry are required for frontline combat, headquarters to command other ground units, supply columns to provide fuel and ammunition, artillery for support, engineers to create and clear obstacles, and mobile air defense batteries to throw a defensive "umbrella" over all. Tactical air units are the "kickers"—their ability or inability to provide essential air cover, support and reconnaissance can prove decisive to the units maneuvering below.

These "combined arms" game mechanics are provided by a deceptively simple and straightforward Turn sequence. This sequence of play provides for much player interaction, with few "dead" periods when only one side or the other is busy. Even while the other side is moving, players are watching for opportunities to engage with air defense units or deciding the best ways to employ artillery in coming maneuver combats.

Hits from combat are marked on ground units in the form of "disruptions", and it takes four of these to eliminate a unit, although lesser numbers can seriously degrade a unit's effectiveness (one disruption prevents attacking and two or more disruptions prevent movement and negate zones of control). At the start of a Turn, players may automatically remove a disruption from headquarters units and from units adjacent to their commanding headquarters units and also roll a die to attempt to remove disruptions from *supplied* units. *Supplied* artillery and air defense units can receive ammunition for the coming Turn. Determining proper chains of command and supply lines for these purposes is simplified by the colored symbol on every ground unit that shows its organization at a glance. Then, aircraft servicing is performed and available air units assigned to air control or a variety of air support missions for the coming Air Phase.

One side (usually the attacking Warsaw Pact) then moves its capable ground and helicopter units that are *in command*. These can fight "maneuver combats" versus enemy ground units after movement. Close attention must be paid to which side of a unit shows; the non-moving side is superior for defense and taking advantage of terrain, but the moving side is necessary for rapid movement and superior for attacking, although frighteningly vulnerable to the unfriendly attentions of roving attack helicopters and fighter-bombers. Engineers destroy and build bridges and create and clear obstacles in support of these moves. Attack helicopter and airmobile units are fast-moving and especially effective, but can be engaged by enemy air defense units as they are moved—nap of the earth flying and clever use of terrain are necessary to maneuver them safely into position.



As maneuver combats are announced, the attacking side can lay artillery barrages on the defenders and the defending side can reply with barrages on the attackers and counter-battery fire on the attacking artillery. This artillery fire is resolved *before* a maneuver combat and its effects can greatly influence that maneuver combat. The other side then follows suit by moving its ground and helicopter units, etc.

The "Air Phase" is next and really puts the tactical airpower into **TAC AIR**. Fast-moving air units are alternately moved during ten "Air Rounds" to perform the missions assigned to them earlier. Enemy air defense units may engage air units as they are moved. "Wild Weasel" units engaging in air defense suppression can turn the tables by attacking air defense units and electronic combat aircraft can degrade enemy air defense and air effectiveness. Air control units attempt to protect and intercept other air units by providing close escort and engaging in air-to-air combats by using radar guided missiles or engaging in classic dogfights. Air units with direct air support orders can use forward air controllers to attack front-line ground units, while those with interdiction orders seek to penetrate into enemy rear areas to attack headquarters, supply and reserve ground units and key bridges. These "iron haulers" may employ conventional bombs or stand-off munitions to accomplish their missions. Units with air reconnaissance missions attempt to fly through enemy airspace to spot targets for the coming Turn's interdiction missions. Paratroopers to be air dropped also enter the mapboard during Air Phases.

Look for further **TAC AIR** information in Vol. 25, No. 2 of *THE GENERAL* magazine, due out in early 1989, which will feature the game.

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Rate each category by placing a number ranging from 1 through 9 in the appropriate space to the right (1 equating "excellent"; 5, "average"; 9, "terrible"). EXCEPTION: Rate items 7a and 7b in terms of minutes necessary to play the game, in ten-minute increments. (Example: If you've found it takes two and a half hours to play the basic scenario of *FRANCE 1940*, enter "15" for category 7a.) For an explanation of the categories, refer to the AH Philosophy of Vol. 19, No. 4. Sub-categories are indicated by italics. Enter ratings only for those categories relevant to the game in question. Note that AH's ratings for **Complexity** and **Year of Publishing** have been provided; do not rate these categories.

- 1. Overall Value _____
- 2. Components _____
- 2a. Mapboard _____
- 2b. Counters _____
- 2c. Player's Aids _____
- 3. Complexity _____ **5**
- 3a. Complexity _____
- 4. Completeness of Rules _____
- 5. Playability _____
- 5a. Excitement Level _____
- 5b. Play Balance _____
- 6. Authenticity _____
- 7. Game Length _____
- 7a. Basic/Shortest _____
- 7b. Advanced/Longest _____
- 8. Year of Publication **1988**

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WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN PLAYING?

Top ten lists are seemingly always in vogue these days. Whether the subject is books on the Best Seller List, television's Nielsen ratings, or even games, the public never seems to tire of seeing how their individual favorites stack up numerically against the competition. Our preoccupation with this national pastime is almost akin to rooting the home team on to victory every Sunday. So to further cater to your whims (and to satisfy our own curiosity) we unveil The *GENERAL's* version of the gamer's TOP TEN.

We won't ask you to objectively rate any game. That sort of thing is already done in these pages and elsewhere. Instead, we ask that you merely list the three (or less) games which you've spent the most time with *since* you received your last issue of The *GENERAL*. With this we can generate a consensus list of what's being bought. The degree of correlation between the Best Selling Lists and the Most Played List should prove interesting.

Feel free to list any game regardless of manufacturer. There will be a built-in bias to the survey because you all play our games to some extent but it should be no more prevalent than similar projects undertaken by other magazines with a special interest-based circulation. The amount to which this bias affects the final outcome will be left to the individual's discretion.

The games I've spent the most time playing during the past two months are:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

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- 4. Please PRINT. If your ad is illegible, it will not be printed.
- 5. So that as many ads as possible can be printed within our limited space, we request that you use official state and game abbreviations. Don't list your entire collection, list only those you are most interested in locating opponents for.

Advanced Square Leader—ASL, Afrika Korps—AK, Air Force—AF, Anzio—AZ, Arab-Israeli Wars—AIW, Banzai—BANZ, Beyond Valor—BV, Bismarck—BS, Blitzkrieg—BL, Britannia—BRIT, Battle Of The Bulge—BB, Bull Run—BR, Caesar Alesia—CAE, Circus Maximus—CM, Civilization—CIV, Dauntless—DL, D-Day—DD, Devil's Den—DEV, Diplomacy—DIP, Empires in Arms—EIA, Firepower—FP, Flat Top—FT, Flight Leader—FL, Fortress Europa—FE, Freedom in the Galaxy—FITG, Gettysburg—GE, Gladiator—GL, Guns Of August—GOA, Gunslinger—GSL, Hitler's War—HW, Kingmaker—KM, Knights of the Air—KOTA, The Longest Day—TLD, Luftwaffe—LW, Magic Realm—MR, Midway—MD, Napoleon—NP, Naval War—NW, PanzerArmee Afrika—PAA, Panzerblitz—PB, PanzerGruppe Guderian—PGG, Panzerkrieg—PK, Panzer Leader—PL, Paratrooper—PARA, Rail Baron—RB, Richthofen's War—RW, The Russian Campaign—TRC, Russian Front—RF, Streets of Fire—SOF, Squad Leader—SL, Stalingrad—STAL, Storm Over Arnhem—SOA, Submarine—SUB, Tactics II—TAC, Third Reich—3R, Titan—TT, Up Front—UF, Victory In The Pacific—VITP, War and Peace—W&P, War At Sea—WAS, Waterloo—WAT, Wooden Ships & Iron Men—WSIM.

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

CONTEST #142

Unit Order Impulse

C/19 NZ Sherman 5•3•8	4	
4 Ind Div X•7•5	5	
BMG6Raj 3•3•5	1	
A/16 Raj 2•3•5	3	
A/19 Gar 2•4•6	4	

[] German Victory [] Draw [] Allied Victory
Chance of Allied Victory

Issue as a whole . . . (Rate from 1 to 10, with 1 equating excellent, 10 equating terrible)
Best 3 Articles

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

THE AVALON HILL CHAMPIONSHIPS

By Don Greenwood

In The *GENERAL READER'S SURVEY* (which appeared in Vol. 24, No. 4), we polled the readership on their willingness to attend an Avalon Hill-only convention in the Baltimore area for the sole purpose of engaging in championship tournaments in our games on an annual basis. The response, despite the obvious travel hardships for many living far away, was an encouraging 38%. Based on this we feel that we could draw between 500 and 1000 Avalon Hill enthusiasts to such a convention, and so we have decided to go ahead with plans for just such an annual event. What follows by way of introduction is an unsolicited letter prompted by that survey and our response:

Dear Avalon Hill;

I was motivated to write as a result of my recent experiences with wargaming in general and my attendance at ATLANTICON 88 in particular.

I'm an attorney who just graduated from law school and finally has the money to spend on any wargame I want to buy. My three closest friends are likewise blessed with new-found purchasing power. All of us attended ORIGINS conventions when we were in high school (and had far less money). Recently, we went to ATLANTICON and, like many recent conventions we've attended lately, were disappointed. This was especially sad for us, because some of our best collective memories were from the two ORIGINS held at Widener College. Yes, a college campus was a less glamorous location for a convention than the Baltimore Convention Center and registration for events and lodging didn't always run smoothly, but we felt more at home there. What follows is a list of the reasons we didn't enjoy the recent convention.

1. **LACK OF A SENSE OF WARGAMING COMMUNITY:** Unlike the early ORIGINS, there were few seminars by game designers on new or upcoming projects, a feature we enjoyed previously. The presence of designers, company-run tournaments, and seminars at conventions really gave one a sense of belonging to a larger community.

2. **LACK OF FOCUS:** Finding the wargaming events among the blizzard of fantasy/role-playing events was difficult. At earlier conventions, the wargaming events seemed fewer and better attended. Your recently surveyed idea of sponsoring competitive tournaments on AH products has merit; however, I think you should expand on it somewhat.

First, sponsor tournaments on only a few games.

Second, have divisions based on experience. One of our nightmares was the thought of entering a tournament like *SQUAD LEADER* or *THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* and meeting someone who had read every *GENERAL* article and played the game dozens of times. Don't misunderstand me. I like both games very much; it's just that I don't have an endless amount of time to play them and I'd rather play a number of titles as opposed to just one. Therefore, I would suggest the following divisions:

- A. Experienced Gamers playing for a \$50 gift certificate.
- B. Average Gamers playing for a \$20 gift certificate.
- C. Novice Gamers playing for a \$10 gift certificate.

Third, one of the tournaments ought to be based on a new game. We frequently entered new game tournaments at ORIGINS because we felt we were on a more equal footing with the other participants. If the game was released only a month before ORIGINS, very few people would have the time to work out perfect strategies. Mind you, I'm not an advocate of playing a game only once, but there are few games I would be willing to play a dozen times.

Fourth, the tournament should be round-robin, not elimination. I know that no round-robin format will be perfect in deciding the best gamer unless everyone plays everybody else, but who wants to enter a tournament and be knocked out the first day? Maybe a format like Olympic hockey would be best with round-robin divisional play and the divisional winners advancing to a medal round.

Fifth, invite other companies to attend. Let them participate to the extent they are willing to sponsor events in their own games.

Sixth, hold it twice a year, preferably around the time you release new products. I think you'll find many people willing to buy what you have to sell.

The key to the success of your tournaments will be the amount of effort your company makes in terms of sponsorship and promotion. To expect gamers to organize major tournaments or conventions is unrealistic. However, with some effort you could make your convention a special gathering, better than recent ORIGINS conventions.

Mark Guttag

Bogota, New Jersey

Mr. Guttag's letter voiced several concerns shared by us; witness our previous proposal for a dedicated Avalon Hill gamers convention. Granted, memories of one's youth tend to paint a brighter picture than deserved, but I too long for the days of the overflow wargame tournaments. How I'd love to see a 128-player *WAR AT SEA* contest again or champion another 64-player *FOOTBALL STRATEGY* field. Call me a dinosaur, but to me the absence of "shop talk" and comradery of gamers well versed in the same game is that certain "something" that our current hobby lacks from the old days. We tried to kindle this kind of excitement with the AREA postal championships, but the reluctance of the participants to hold each other to the official time limits dragged those tournaments out to unreasonable levels. It appears that if a viable "championship" system is ever to be formed, it must be done on an annual FTF basis in live play. But let's reply directly to Mr. Guttag's comments.

Regrettably, you've probably seen the last of the major conventions at a college campus. I too preferred the campus format as a participating gamer. But I've worn both hats and after dealing with five different universities as an active sponsor of many past ORIGINS at both college and hotel sites, I can attest to the vast superiority of the latter from the sponsor's viewpoint. Colleges are just too expensive and unpredictable for sponsors to rely on. There are also less and less of them willing to cater to a gaming show at any price. Our convention will have to be held at a hotel for the simple reason that hosting it on a campus—if we could find one willing to take us—could either bankrupt the company or force us to charge \$30/\$40 for admission like recent ORIGINS do. As for seminars, it's been my observation over the years that designer seminars have steadily declined in popularity/attendance over the years. In fairness, this may be due to the sheer number of competing events these days. I'd prefer not to detract from the championships with another distraction, but we want this convention to be what the gamers want so we're asking you to see what you want collectively.

One of the reasons you are disappointed with the grandeur of recent convention events is simply because there are so many of them. At the first ORIGINS there was approximately a dozen events and each one was filled to the rafters. In recent years, ORIGINS has boasted upwards of 500 events. It's no wonder few of them draw an impressive crowd. The potential playing field is diluted by being drawn in a hundred different directions. Therefore, I think the answer is not to further dilute the player pool by offering various skill level tournaments in the same game because that only adds to the attrition. Moreover, who is to say who is a novice and who is an expert? What's to keep me from entering the Novice Division just to win a prize in expectation of easier opposition? Or how do I know how good I am if I sell myself short before ever playing competitively? True novice players intimidated by the prospect of meeting a more skilled player should stick to the newer games where no one has had a chance to amass great skill, or to multi-player games where "tactical" skill can be overcome by playing against the leader. However, how new is "new"? Even the simplest wargame won't attract many players if it's brand new; it takes too long to learn how to play them. Moreover, I reject wholeheartedly your notion of perfect plans. There is skilled and unskilled play, but I've never seen a "solution" to one of my games that couldn't be beat. I would also hasten to add that the best way to develop skill at a game (or sport for that matter) is to play someone better. No one ever got to be a better fighter by beating up his grandmother. Defeat is a great teacher and more easily accepted if you think of it as a step behind you which better arms you for your next battle.

The format of tournaments at our convention will be decided by a combination of player dictates and the desires of the individual Games Master involved. I favor single elimination tournaments myself as being the most viable. Frankly, if I lose in the first round I figure my chances of winning the whole shooting match are probably pretty low and would rather start something else than continue just for the sake of ruining someone else's chances. However, I recognize there are those who are interested in playing in only one event and don't want to end their weekend prematurely. Consequently, we will turn over the results of our Championships Survey to prospective GMs and ask that they

run their events according to the dictates of the majority wishing to participate in that event. In all likelihood, we will end up with events of both kinds which will allow players to pick and choose what they want to commit to. Moreover, we hope to be able to print not only what games will be available but how they will be run long before you'll need to pre-register. By the way, the GMs will be selected volunteers—not corporate entities out to run an event for a share of the entry fees. This has long been a pet peeve of mine. I have little patience for GMs who sponsor an event only to collect a percentage of the entry fees. I have even less patience for convention sponsors who devise elaborate badge number and generic ticket schemes to ensure skimming their percentage of each ticket sold. The profit motive will be removed from our Championships. Fortunately, we include in our circle of friends a number of gamers who share our enthusiasm for competitive play and are willing to lend a hand to see all this come to pass. So there will be no entry fees to play—only a convention pass to cover the expenses of liability insurance, prizes, hall rental, printing, etc. Our goal is to run this as a break-even proposition. Although that may be hopelessly optimistic, we're willing to shoulder some financial losses to help restore some of the grandeur of the hobby's past.

I'd prefer to limit prizes to plaques as opposed to monetary or merchandise credits. The appeal here should be the pride of achievement—not a rate of remuneration that approaches the minimum wage. I would like to see each winner get a championship plaque and have his name engraved on a master plaque that will be displayed for posterity and updated at future championships.

No other companies will be invited. The whole point of our making this effort is to promote competition in our games—not dilute the process by adding events from other manufacturers. We were instrumental in starting the ORIGINS conventions and openly invited all companies to participate. That's fine. We don't regret it; but now we want our own championships. The ORIGINS tournaments, due to the press of a multitude of competing events, no longer resemble championship events. We want to see if we can restore some of that polish by dedicating an entire weekend to play of our games free from the schedule restrictions and petty regulations of another convention sponsor. It is not our intent to compete with or detract from the ORIGINS shows which we will continue to support. Indeed, we will not even attempt such a show in the same month that an ORIGINS is run.

Twice a year? I'd like to see *THE GENERAL* go monthly too, but we can't afford that either. We'll be lucky to manage this on an annual basis. I really wish we could make it a traveling show to accommodate all our friends on the West Coast who indicated they'd come if it was closer. Who knows, maybe someday we can take it on the road—but for now we must stick close to home. ORIGINS rotates around the country and we hope to see you there if you can't swing the trip to Baltimore. As for releasing new games at such a convention—that's the farthest thing from our minds. For one thing; retailers get upset when manufacturers sell direct to consumers, which is why we limit our convention participation to ORIGINS. Secondly, we aren't doing this to sell products (except in the sense of servicing our line of games). We feel if you enjoy yourself playing our games competitively it will reinforce your loyalty to our brand of games. Speaking as a designer/developer of many of our games, I can attest to the fact that these games were designed with competition in mind. We'd like to see them played that way again. We also want to play them against all comers. We're not just designers—we fancy ourselves gamers too and we don't consider that something to be ashamed of.

1. In what month would you be *most* likely to attend such a convention?

- April August
- May September
- June October
- July November

2. In what month would you be *least* likely to attend such a convention?

- April August
- May September
- June October
- July November

3. Would holding the convention on a holiday weekend (such as July 4th, Labor Day or Memorial Day) make you more or less likely to attend?

- More Less Doesn't Matter

4. Do you prefer a two (Sat-Sun), three (Fri-Sun), or four-day (Thur-Sun) convention?

- 2 day 3 day 4 day

5. Name three AH/VG games you want to play at the Championships and the style of tournament you'd prefer to play in each. (Keep in mind that Round-Robin/Double Elimination events take longer and would preclude you from playing in other events.)

- 1. _____ Single Elim Double Elim Swiss, Round-Robin
- 2. _____ Single Elim Double Elim Swiss, Round-Robin
- 3. _____ Single Elim Double Elim Swiss, Round-Robin

6. Would you be interested in forming a team to compete for the Team Championship?

- Yes No
- Put me on a Pickup Team of other loners if I come.

7. How much would you be willing to pay for admission? (Keep in mind that the higher the fee, the more "free" services we can provide.) The only other expenses to be incurred would be whatever lodging accommodations you make at the hotel or elsewhere.

- \$5.00 \$10.00 \$15.00 \$20.00

8. Would you like us to have a Parts Service booth at the convention to take orders for fulfillment on Sunday?

- Yes No

9. Would you like to attend seminars by AH/VG designers? If so, on what subjects?

- Yes No
- Subject: _____

10. What prize structure do you prefer? (Keep in mind that the more elaborate the prize structure is, the greater the admission charge for the convention will have to be.)

- Medallion Plaque & Merchandise Credit
- Plaque Cash
- Merchandise Credit

11. Would you like to see tournaments broken down into different skill levels of play for the same game?

- Yes No Don't Care

12. Would you like to see all games played at the Championships rated for AREA rating purposes?

- Yes No Don't Care

13. Would you like to get a "free" souvenir t-shirt for attending?

- Yes No Don't Care

14. Name any event (if any) that you would be willing to GameMaster. Keep in mind that doing so would preclude you from playing in that event as other than an "eliminator" (i.e., an alternative to a bye). In other words, you could not win the event you GM.

GAME: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE _____ ZIP: _____

List experience with the game that you feel would make you a good GM for our Championships: _____

ROCKET'S RED GLARE

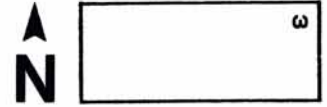


ASL SCENARIO G6



CHENEUX, BELGIUM, 22 December 1944: Colonel Reuben Tucker personally appealed to General Gavin to allow his 504th Regiment to attack Cheneux. Friendly civilians had reported a large column of German vehicles, including tanks, encamped there. Normally an American infantry regiment would request a battalion of armor for support before making such an assault, but Colonel Tucker had an ace up his sleeve. His men had recently captured a whole truckload of panzerfausts, had practiced with them, and now were ready to use them on the enemy. Combined with the early arrival of the latest model of bazooka, Tucker figured his force was strong enough to carry the assault alone.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:



BALANCE:

♣ Add one 6-5-8 to German OB.


☆ Substitute a SdKfz 7/1 for the German Flak Pz IV/20.












VICTORY CONDITIONS: The American player wins immediately when he Controls either building O10 or building Q7.

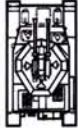
TURN RECORD CHART

♣ GERMAN Sets Up First	☆ 1	2	3	4	5	6	END
☆ AMERICAN Moves First							


Elements of SS Panzergrenadier Regiment 2 [ELR: 5] set up in woods/building hexes numbered ≥ 4 (see SSR 2): {SAN: 3}













 6 ² -5-8	 2-2-8	 9-2	 8-0	 7-18	 5-12	 3-8	 12-4	 13 8 3 75L -/4*/1*	 14 4 3 *20L (20) 3/-/*	 ART M 8 105
7	2	2				3				




Elements of the 504th Parachute Regiment, 1st and 3rd Battalions [ELR: 5] set up in any or all of buildings S1, T1, U1, V1, and X3, and/or enter on Turn 1 (see SSR 2): {SAN: 3}



 7 ² -4-7	 10-2	 9-2	 9-1	 8-0	 4-10	 8-5	 8-4	 PF	 14 2 4 90L 2/-/4
12					4	2	2	4	

(see SSR 3)



SPECIAL RULES:

- EC are Moderate with no wind at start.
- No Vehicle of either side may set up in a building. The American TD, plus all infantry not initially set up, must enter on Turn 1 on road hex(es) I1/Y1.
- The American player has four PF counters (old PF counters or ASL Blaze counters may be used to represent these). Each PF is 1PP and may be used only once; regardless of effect, discard after use. As the American troops had practiced with PF, the TH procedure (C13.31) is identical to German usage and there is no Captured Weapon penalty. No PF Check dr is required of a unit that wishes to use such a counter.

AFTERMATH: The 1st Battalion of the 504th had to make three attacks on the 21st just to gain a toehold in the village. Fire from German 20mm Flak wagons was overpowering. On the next day, Julian Cook's 3rd Battalion marched six hours in order to attack Cheneux from a different direction. Although channeled by wire and terrain, the GIs, now supported by tank destroyers, were able to eliminate the remaining SS troopers in hand-to-hand combat and capture 14 Flak wagons and a battery of 105mm guns. On 23 December 1944, a proud Colonel Tucker reported to Gavin that the 504th Parachute "Armored" Regiment was ready for further action.

You know my face...
you know my name.
Now get my tape
and buy my game!
You'll want the mask...
you'll need the glove.
The poster and book
are what you'll love!
So get all this
for one low price.
Four easy payments...
it sure sounds nice.
Look for the number
you can call...
'cause if you don't,
I'll get you all!



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