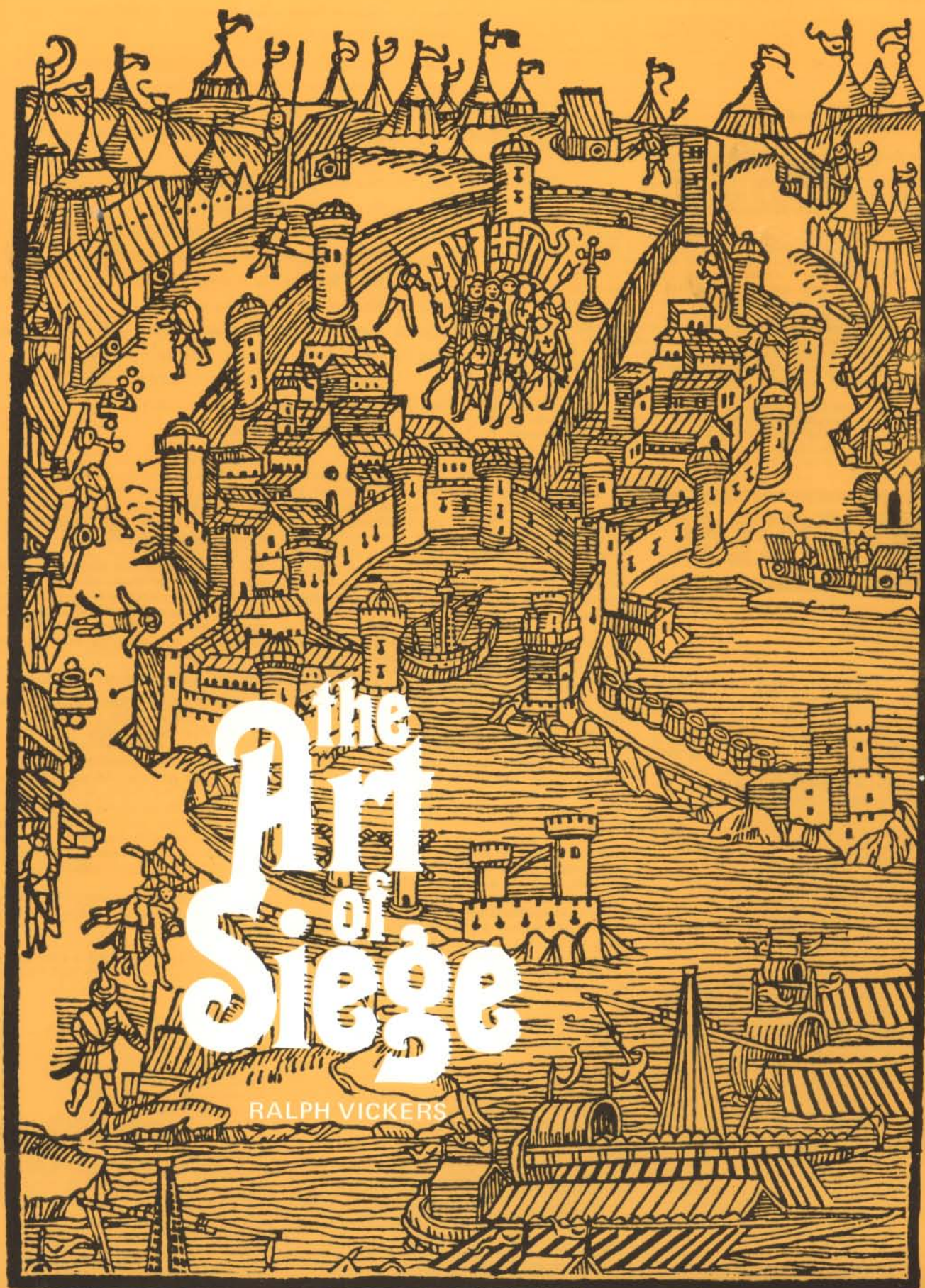


PHOENIX

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The Art of Siege

RALPH VICKERS

PHOENIX

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Phoenix is a bi-monthly magazine aimed at providing UK gamers with a forum in which they may express their opinions of, suggest improvements to and provide new rules/scenarios for board wargames.

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Please return your Phoenix 19 and S&T 73 feedback cards by July 6th 1979 or within 3 weeks of receipt. Estimated despatch of Phoenix 20 subscription copies is August 3rd 1979. Estimated despatch of Phoenix 20 / S&T 74 joint subscription copies is August 3rd 1979. Estimated despatch of Moves 44 is July 16th 1979.

EDITORIAL

JOHN SPENCE

A few readers have written in complaining about the comments made about WWW in issue 17 — see Mailcall. This raises two points for discussion a) our reasons for such comments and b) whether they should be there in the first place. Phoenix is "a forum in which UK gamers may express their opinions of ... board wargames" and, as such, criticism of games is welcome. But what about the companies behind them? Occasionally I believe it is necessary and worthwhile to comment constructively about company policy, future ideas etc. since such factors have a direct bearing upon the games you and I get, the speed with which they arrive (if imported), the completeness of the game and the cost of the product — all of great interest to the normal gamer. This I feel is justification enough for the insertion of such information — Phoenix is not the first to have such a policy and it won't be the last.

So much for the justification — how about some of the suggested underlying reasons for these news items? Whilst Mr. Harries' letter has too many points to correct individually here, it appears based on the supposition that WWW and Phoenix/Simpuls are comparable, that we are jealous of the opposition and that we want to compete for the same 'ground' — this is rubbish! Using some of the available UK based boardgaming magazines to illustrate a point, one has those run on an amateur basis — no business backing — and those that are an adjunct to the games importing/sales business. *Perfidious Albion* and the *Wargamer* are examples of the former (though with the development of WWW and its affiliation with Simulation Games it may soon 'change camps') whilst *White Dwarf* with its interest in fantasy/SF and *Phoenix* are examples of the latter. The financial basis of a magazine's existence must mould how it is run and its aims — economics are a fact of life — and comparison across this line is difficult. *Wargamer's* prime aim is to

act as a focus for WWW and its aspirations to "promote the hobby and to provide a service to players", a very different aim to *Phoenix* where the games themselves are the focal point and, because it is a business, the news and views from Hale. Thus one would expect each magazine to appeal to a different though overlapping group of gamers dependent upon what they want from their reading.

The difference in readership is highlighted by two recent polls that drew upon the same number of gamers for the final outcome of "the most popular game award". Some games that won in one poll were selected as spectacular flops by the other! How can one compete when there is such variability in readership — you pay your money and goes for the sort of magazine that you want. I would hope that *Phoenix* stands or falls by what it is rather than all the things it is not. Similar arguments apply to providing facilities similar to those provided by WWW — two national groups would be divisive and, I believe, are contraindicated.

Another complaint that has come up is "why do we include D&D articles in the pages of *Phoenix*, after all, it is not a boardgame!" Being pedantic D&D is a boardgame — the fact that the 'board' is in the Gamemaster's keeping and not readily available to all players is beside the point! I see no point in trying to hive off certain games because they don't seem to fit the rigid definition of a classical boardwargame — will *NATO Division Commander* be eligible for *Phoenix* I wonder and do I have to hold back any mention of the role playing part of *Swords and Sorcery*? — ridiculous. Let us not get bogged down in trying to delineate the boundaries of our 'hobby' — we are in a developing hobby and it would be idiotic to limit ourselves to the classic game — do I hear computer simulation games in these pages yet?? As I have said before, I try to cater to a readership of catholic taste — do not slate articles just because you don't like its subject — there are many who do!

Cobra Feedback:

There were some interesting results in this survey — I will give you the relevant figures and keep the comments to a minimum.

160 players filled in the questionnaire and had played the game, on average, just over 4 times. However 12% had played the game more than 9

times and 33% had only played it once — 21% of this latter group gave no reason for giving up, 19% because of no errata, 38% because of a newer game and 21% for some other reason.

26% didn't realise that the game needed an errata and only 57% of those who did actually went to the trouble of finding it — I find these results remarkable but they highlight to the producer the importance of getting the rules right first time; gamers are not keen on spending time getting errata for games.

62% still get the game out occasionally.

Preference as to sides was split almost equally between Allies/Axis/no preference/no reply. The Axis were up a couple of % — no more.

Bias results were interesting — 16% gave no opinion but of those who did 25% considered *Cobra* biased in favour of the Germans, 33% in favour of the Allies and 42% found no bias. In the subgroup of those who had not realised an errata was an advantage only 11% considered that there was bias in favour of the Germans, 41% in favour of the Allies and 48% found no bias.

67% of the sample considered *Cobra* to be a good simulation, 12% a poor simulation and the rest gave no opinion.

The present rating of 6.82 is a bit lower than that given by UK gamers in their S&T Feedback when it first came out — it was then 7.3.

Phoenix 17 Feedback:

Issue 17 got a rating of 6.67 — almost static related to issue 16.

Article ratings:

Fulda Gap - 6.68 (First Prize)
Napoleonic Wargames - 6.31
War of the Ring - 5.74
Air War - new aircraft - 5.72 (2nd Prize)
Kesselring Review - 5.65 (3rd Prize)
Sinai Problem - 5.28
Notes from the Underworld - 4.49

Regular Features:

News from SPUK - 6.41
Grapevine - 6.37
Hotline - 6.09
Idea of a Contact Column - 5.96
Mailcall - 5.63
Book Reviews - 5.59

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Are you frustrated....



....looking for new positions to hold and new partners to hold them with? Does group activity appeal to you? Perhaps the lack of similarly inclined people in your locality forces you to play with yourself or maybe the receipt of an anonymous looking buff envelope is the high spot of your week.

If any of these situations applies to you perhaps the time has come for you to indulge in one of our orgies !!! Yes indeed, if you want a change from your same old opponents playing the same old games, if you want to involve yourself in a multi-player game, get away from solo and play-by-mail gaming, immerse yourself in your wargaming hobby for a full weekend then our **SPUKORGY AUTUMN '79** is for you.

Owens Park, part of the Manchester University complex, has been selected as the venue for this, our sixth games orgy. This event will be run from **10.00am Friday, August 31st, to 6.00pm Sunday, September 2nd**. Situated about 3 miles from the centre of Manchester Owens Park is easily accessible by rail, road and air. Manchester's main stations - Piccadilly, Oxford Road and Victoria - are 3, 2½ and 3 miles respectively from the venue. This distance can be readily traversed by taxi (approx £1.00) or by bus using one of the many bus services that goes past the complex (cost about 25p). Those of you coming by car will find the route particularly uncomplicated whether your approach be from the North, South, East or West.

So much for accessibility, what does Owens Park have to offer in the way of facilities? Judge for yourself: ● **Accommodation:** single rooms are the order of the day (these can be turned into twin or double rooms for couples on request). For £7.50 per head you will get a room with a washbasin, bed (obviously) and storage for clothes, games and bottles of whisky. You will also get a fully traditional English breakfast and pantry rations for that early morning/late night brew. Showers and/or baths can be found on every floor in the residential area. The rooms are heated by hot water radiator central heating, individual keys are issued to resident participants. ● **Catering:** self-service meals will be laid on at the following times - Friday: Dinner (choice of menu) 8.00pm - 9.00pm; Saturday: Lunch (3 course or buffet) 1.00pm - 2.00pm, Dinner (choice of menu) 7.30pm - 8.30pm; Sunday: Lunch (3 course or buffet) 1.00pm - 2.00pm. To make use of the catering facilities we must have a minimum of 50 diners to justify bringing in kitchen staff. The cost of meals is very reasonable, £1.00 - £1.50 for the buffet (final price to be set), £2.75 for a 3 course lunch and £3.00 for the dinner. It may be that we will have to settle for a lunch of either the buffet or the 3 course meal rather than a choice (once again bear in mind the fact that staff must be brought specifically to look after us), please take this into account when filling in your booking form. Special diets can be catered for, details should be given on your booking form. ● **Alcohol Intake:** bar facilities close to the playing area will be made available Friday 6.00pm - Midnight; Saturday 11.30am - 2.30pm, 6.00pm - Midnight; Sunday 11.30am - 2.30pm. These bars are amply stocked with wines, spirits, beers and soft drinks. I further more I am assured that we will not be served by a pint sized don't-give-a-damn Spanish bar steward. ● **Games Playing Area:** we will have the use of a hall that will easily accommodate 100 bodies, we also have the option of using the main assembly hall should numbers require such a move. The main hall will hold up to 800 thus there is no longer a need to hold to our previous attendance ceiling of 100. Playing tables (obviously built with us in mind) have a 2'x3' surface and are a perfect height for gaming on. These tables are of regulation dimensions, no more trouble getting a large playing surface for those giant games. 24 hour porter service at

Owens Park means that you can game on a 24-hour basis if you have the stamina, absolutely no restriction on this score. ● **Miscellaneous Items of Interest:** Owens Park has parking facilities for up to 350 cars, there are 8 coin box public telephones on site, a switchboard to accept incoming calls, and 3 cigarette machines. For the war weary there are such joyous diversions as TV rooms, dart boards, table tennis equipment and the indispensable bar soccer tables. We have even been given permission to set up our trade stand on site so you need not loose sleep over the possibility that you will not be allowed to contribute towards the 'Save the SPUK fund'. All things considered I think you will agree that Owens Park looks like a splendid venue for future orgies.

It is standard practice at Owens Park for the promoter to handle all of the monetary arrangements therefore we will be reverting to our previous practice of issuing invoices ahead of the event. Due to the cancellation procedure adopted by the University officials we will be obliged to set a deadline for payment of these invoices after which time, non payment will be considered an automatic termination of your reservation. We must do this to avoid heavy cancellation charges which would otherwise be incurred by us.

To attend our SPUKORGY AUTUMN '79 fill in the booking form which can be found in the centre spread of this issue of Phoenix and send along with a booking fee of £2.50 per attending gamer to:

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A full list of charges applicable for the weekend is given below, these include service charges and VAT.

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Dieppe

"Dieppe is a tense, absorbing game that could be one of the years' best," wrote Roy Schelper in a review for the respected independent magazine 'Fire & Movement'. He was obviously impressed by this game of

the allied 1942 amphibious assault on occupied France. This is understandable for the game, which features five other scenarios apart from the recreation of the actual event, is compelling. Both sides have much to plan and co-ordinate and both have great strengths and weaknesses. Units represented are company, platoon or section sized and have deployment data conveniently printed on the counters. Each turn equals an hour and the hex scale is 500 metres.

Apart from the Canadian Infantry Division and Tank Regiment which participated, there were two British commando contingents, both of which are provided for in the game. **Le Grand Empire**

The period 1795-1815 is a perfect for a board game. There was almost continuous warfare as Napoleon attempted to establish the French Empire as the dominant force in Europe.

This game is a strategic simulation with yearly turns and a hex scale of 175 kms. per hex. The units are equivalent to complete fleets or armies. Two to seven players each

control one or more of the major powers on a mapboard covering an area from England to India and from Russia to the Sahara. Rules cover economics, varying coalitions and superior battlefield leadership.

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A game for up to 6 players reminiscent, in some ways, of Diplomacy and Kingmaker but based on the unique political and economic problems facing contemporary Canada. Players represent different areas of the country and work with or against each other to accumulate funds, achieve popular support and gain power. This is a fast moving game in terms of speed of play and changes of fortune, giving a high level of player interest throughout.

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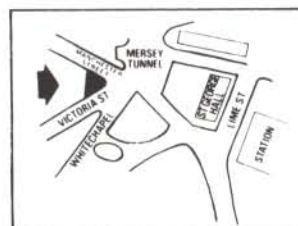
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The Albinea Raid – A New Scenario for SPI's 'Raid!'

ROB GIBSON

Like many other subscribers to S&T, I looked forward to receiving Issue No. 64 and its accompanying game – **Raid!** Having read the rules from cover to cover I was impressed with the coverage – they seem to have made provision for most periods from World War 2 onwards – and *that* seems to be the problem, folks. When we come to the scenarios, we have a four-to-three split in favour of the 1970's. The three other scenarios are early British commando jobs (in 1941, airborne operations were still largely a Commando function). Far from being representative of the twentieth century as a whole, the scenarios are limited to two short periods – indeed the "convoy ambush" scenario is doubtful commando material – any competent infantry unit could and frequently has accomplished this mission.

My dissatisfaction prompted a search in my library and came up with a number of potential scenarios of different vintage. The first is detailed below:

SCENARIO: Albinea, 25th March 1945

General situation:- a mixed force of British S.A.S. regulars and Italian and Russian partisans attack a German Corps Headquarters by night just south of Reggio in Northern Italy. The German garrison are dispersed in huts, unsuspecting.

Alpha Force:-

- Team One – Six Fire Teams (Auto), one LMG, one Bazooka, one Platoon HQ
- Team Two – eight Fire Teams (Auto), one Platoon HQ
- Team Three – two Fire Teams (Bolt), two Fire Teams (Auto), four LMG's, one Platoon HQ
- Force HQ – one 60 mm. Mortar Team

Four demolition charges deployed at Alpha players discretion.

Bravo Force:-

Eight Fire Teams (Bolt), four Fire Teams (Auto), two 81mm. Mortar Teams, four HMG's, two Platoon HQs

Mission:

Alpha Force must enter both Villa Calvi and Villa Rossi, destroy the building and kill the occupants, and withdraw 10 game turns from the start of the attack on the villas. Teams One and Two will attack, Team Three provide covering fire and Force HQ act as support for all three as needed. Alpha Force must then withdraw westwards by Game Turn 15 with not more than one-third casualties. Bravo Force must try to inflict more than one-third casualties or prevent the escape of Alpha Force by Game-Turn 15. Any Alpha Force teams left on the map by Game-Turn 15 are considered 50% casualties (rounded down) and this is added to Bravo Force's score.

Deployment:-

Alpha Force enter map on western edge at Game-Turn 1.

Bravo Force, excepting two Fire Teams (Auto), are deployed in the huts south of the villas, subject to the following restrictions:-

- (a) only one Fire Team (bolt) in each of the two huts nearest the villas.
- (b) HMG teams are deployed in huts, but must reach their gun pits in order to open fire and may not return fire until they do. (Mortar teams may deploy as soon as they are outside their huts).
- (c) one Platoon HQ is located in the hut N.E. of the crossroads, the other in one of the villas at Bravo Players discretion.
- (d) one Fire Team (Auto) to be located in each villa.

Special Rules:-

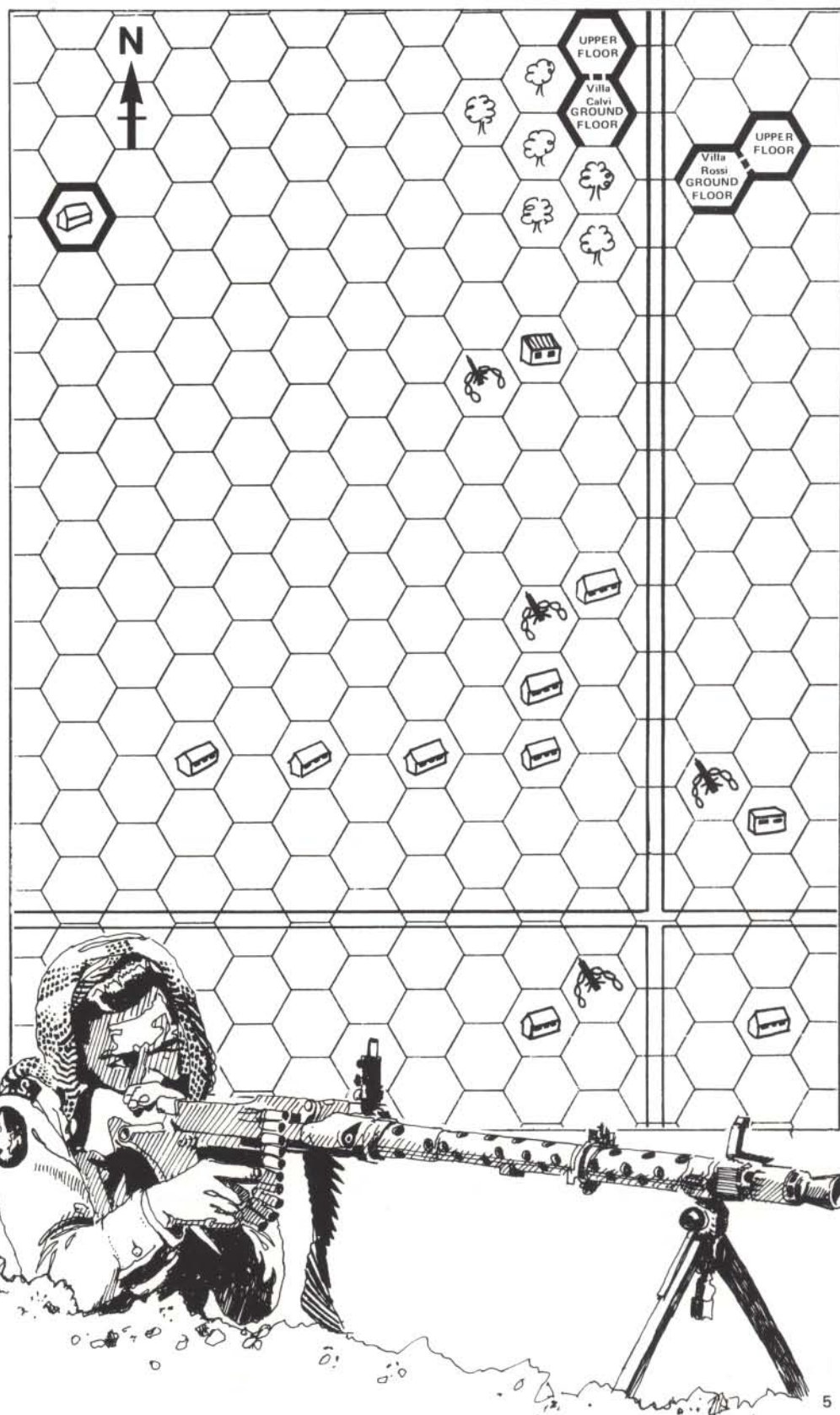
1. Night rules apply (see 15.9 in Rules).
2. Dummies: each side may use up to three dummies to reflect the uncertainty of the real action.
3. Bravo Force are out of Command Control for the first three Game-Turns.

Players Notes and Historical Commentary

The real Albinea raid was described by a senior British Officer as "a piece of brigandage unparalleled in the annals of war". The raid was carried out by a mixed force of Italian partisans, Russian ex-prisoners-of-war and British Special Air Service Regiment troopers under the command of Major Roy Farran. They penetrated the German defences close to the Villa Calvi and raided both villas, killing the occupants including the Chief of Staff to the German Corps Commander, who (the latter) was the main target and withdrew with the loss of nine men – three killed and six captured. The material loss to the Germans was small, but their

morale was badly shaken by a successful raid so far behind the main front line in Italy.

The Alpha player must strike quickly at his objective and withdraw – by Game Turn 15 the Germans are considered to be reinforced by troops not yet in action. At the same time, he must allow for the Bravo player's reaction to the raid and cover his raiding parties both in advance and withdrawal. The Bravo player has to overcome the disadvantages of position and initial disarray and concentrate forward fast, using fire and movement and all available cover. Every Game Turn counts.



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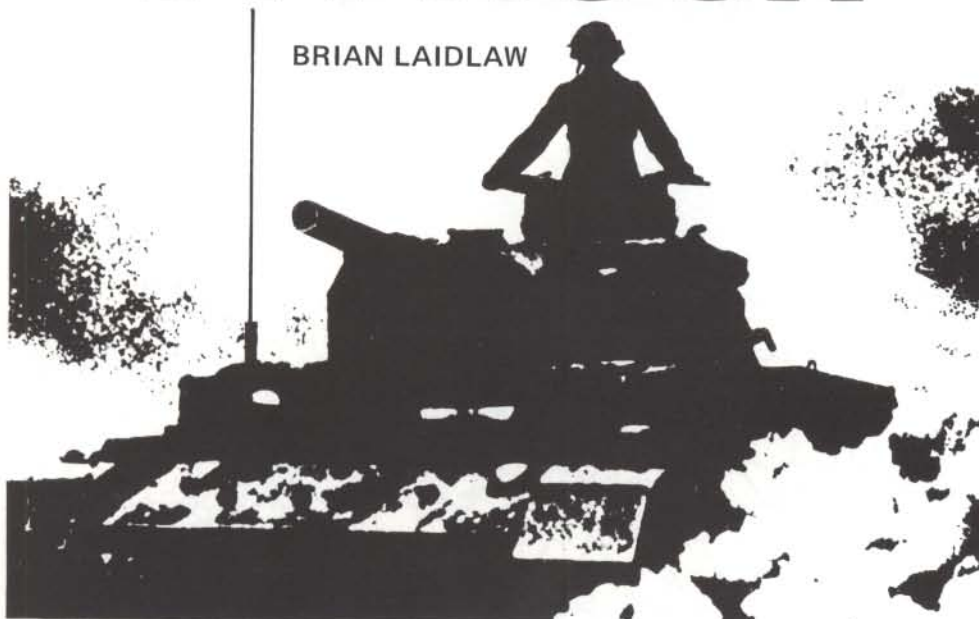
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OPERATION TYPHOON

BRIAN LAIDLAW



On the last day of September 1941 the divisions of Panzergruppe Guderian wheeled north from the Ukraine towards the 'last great battle of the year' which Hitler had said 'would finally destroy the enemy'.

They had three days to reach their jumping off point for the operation which would be launched on the 2nd of October and was aimed directly at the very heart of Russia — Moscow. The code name for this operation was Typhoon.

Guderian's 2nd Panzergruppe would form the right hook in a pincer movement which would surround Yeremenko's 3 armies on the Bryansk front. Hoepner's 4th Panzergruppe would burst through the Soviet line between Bryansk and Vyazma, acting as the anvil for both Guderian to the south and Hoth's 3rd Panzergruppe to the north. Hoth's drive would be north of the Moscow — Smolensk highway turning south towards Bryansk trapping 6 armies of Timoshenko's, West Front. Infantry support would come from the 2nd, 4th and 9th Armies.

It was a victory that staggered even the victors. Seventy to eighty Russian divisions were destroyed in these classic battles of encirclement and well over half a million dun clad Russian prisoners trudged westwards probably to be seen no more. The road to Moscow was open only two weeks after the great battle had begun. What now could stop the Panzers?

On Oct. 19th Stalin proclaimed a state of siege in Moscow and civilian worker units set out to dig a second line of defence outside their capital. Siberian troops had been sent to stiffen Moscow's Mozhaysk defence line and it had rained since Oct. 8th. German mobility was suddenly strangled in the mud and the momentum of the original push, which had slowed while the huge pockets were reduced, could no longer be maintained. Furthermore the stubborn refusal of the Soviet defenders to give an inch surprised the Germans who were convinced that the enemy was a spent force. Supplies were low and a halt was called at the end of October, not only to allow units to be resupplied but also to safeguard the line because large gaps had appeared through breakdown in communications and a lack of reinforcements who trickled up to the front through conditions which rivaled Passchendaele.

The early days of November saw the onset of cold weather and with the frost came increased mobility for the supply columns. Many of the trucks however were still abandoned where they had sunk in

the mud and only limited use could be made of the captured rail network because of problems with the gauge. The men had been fighting almost non stop since June 22nd. In the Panzer divisions their strength was down to 50% while only a third of the original tank force remained. Ammunition was desperately short and the troops, whose clothing was so badly worn that it afforded little protection against the cold, had to rely on local foraging to provide themselves with food.

In the meantime Hoth's 3rd Panzergruppe had now become the 3rd Panzer Army commanded by General Reinhardt while the commands of Guderian and Hoepner had been similarly altered. Field Marshal Fedor von Bock still commanded Army Group Centre.

Stalin had made a further order on Oct. 19th whilst panic spread through the streets of Moscow. The defence of the capital was to be entrusted to the Commander of the Western Front, General G.K. Zhukov.

Typhoon resumed on 15th November — the temperature was -20°C.

It is at this point that SPI's game **Operation Typhoon** takes up the story and its three maps plot the November 15th start line from Klin in the north to Tula in the south. The basic campaign game is 16 turns long with a time scale of one day per turn, but provision is made for extending this by a further 15 turns to December 15th. Despite the extension however there is no scenario which recreates Zhukov's counter-strike launched on December 6th. It is covered only indirectly in the rules by the steady flow of Soviet reinforcements which arrive at about that time.

Typhoon employs a healthy mixture of the proven **Wacht** and **P.G.G.** game systems with a new approach to the question of unknown variable strength units. The map area measures about 5½ft x 3ft and there are 800 counters, less than half of which represent actual combat units. I found that despite their apparent complexity the rules are soon mastered and the pace of the game quite fast considering its size.

ORGANISING THE GAME

As with all games of this scale a little organisation and method before play starts will be well rewarded. At first, for example, there seems to be a bewildering number of conditions which might affect the combat strength or movement allowance of units, but if these are summarised on an 'idiot sheet' it saves referring to the rule book before each combat

or, worse still, realising half way through the game that you've completely ignored an important factor.

You'll need containers for the five 'pools' of strength chits which are drawn for each unit when it first goes into combat and I found paper cups to be ideal for this purpose.

The map is pleasing to look at and of course heavily wooded, the counters are reasonable and my only real complaint here is that the Russian units (white on red) are a little difficult to read under light especially the few company units, which are very hard to distinguish. These units have no ZOC so its worthwhile marking them in some way so that they can be spotted easily during play.

German control counters, with a black cross, are provided to mark captured city hexes but I found it better to use these to mark in advance the towns which featured in the victory conditions, especially in the scenarios. (Incidentally why does nobody copy those little Nazi flag markers found in Narvik).

Since German divisional integrity is a feature of the game it is a good idea to note those divisions which still have regiments to come on later as reinforcements. If these forces can possibly be kept in reserve you'll have fresh divisions to push into the line when their full complement is made up.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Only the German player gains victory points in **Typhoon**. These are awarded for the elimination of Soviet units and the occupation of city hexes. At the end of each turn the German calculates his victory point score as this has a direct bearing on the commitment of the Soviet 20th and 1st Shock armies.

There are three alternative plans for the German to choose from, each with its own set of victory conditions.

1. Historical direct assault on Moscow.
2. Encirclement of Moscow to isolate it from the Russian interior.
3. A general eastward push.

The plan adopted before the game begins is not revealed to the Soviet player until the end and the victory points attained by the German determines the level of victory for either side.

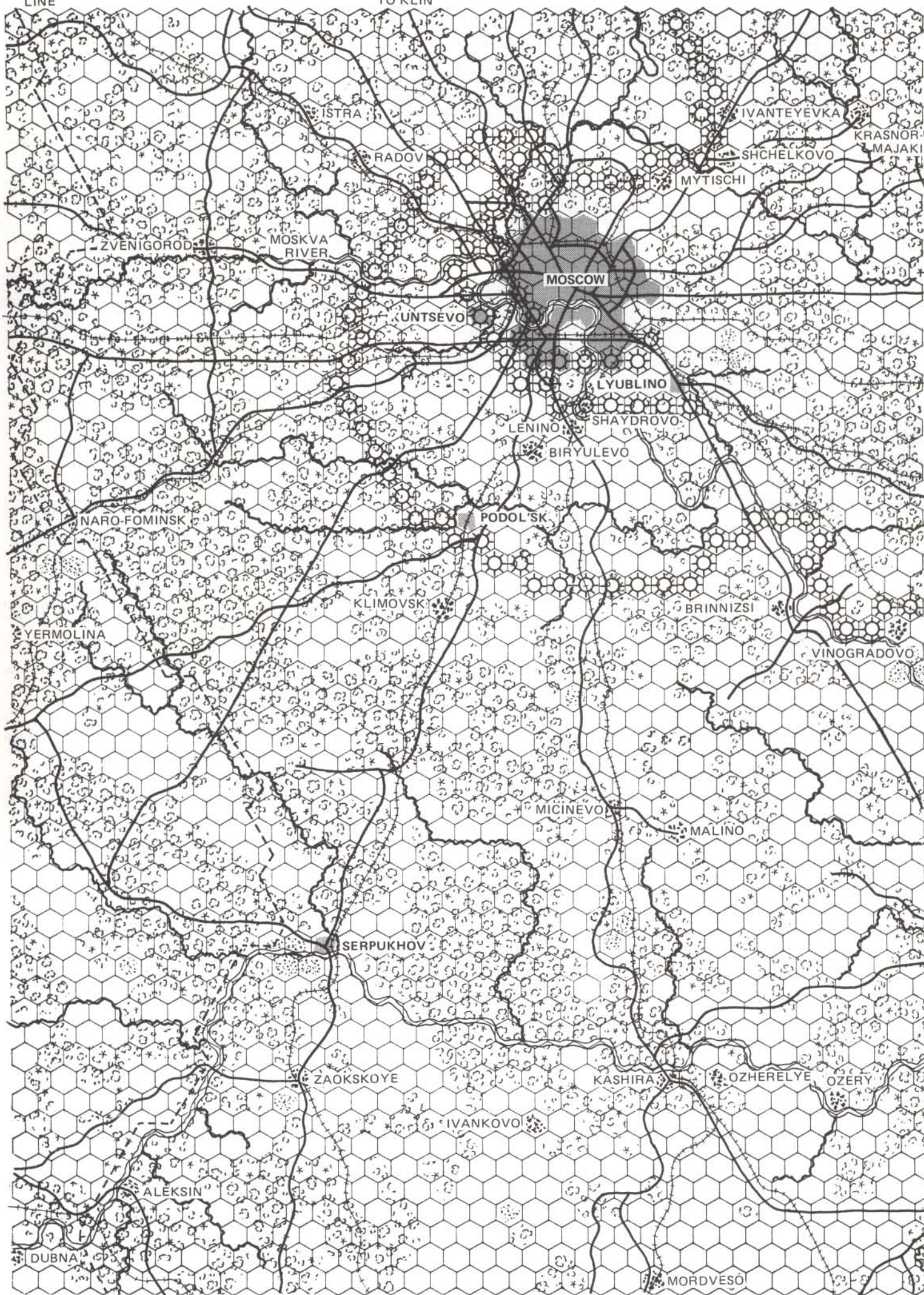
This idea of alternative plans which I first encountered in **Wacht** must be applauded, adding as it does interest and uncertainty to the game. It seems that the one big remaining problem in wargaming is that of perfect intelligence and this sort of idea is at least another step along the way to coming to terms with it.

My own plan was direct assault; option 1. Both the remaining alternatives require breaking the Russian fortified line to the north and south of Moscow as well as attacking the triple line of defence around the western edge of the city itself. The initial set up demonstrates the paucity of the German reserve strength with the line spread as thin as the jam on a workhouse sandwich. There is little room for error and few units ready to exploit a breakthrough in the Soviet line when this occurs. The elasticity in the line demanded by options 2 and 3 appeared a daunting task and anyway I'm a sucker for following the historical path. I hoped that by pushing the 3rd Panzer Army towards the Moscow Volga canal in the north and the 2nd Panzer Army to the Moskva river in the south I would be able to conserve enough of their strength to fight a slow controlled withdrawal when the Russian counter-offensive began. In the meantime 4th Army and 4th Panzer Army would punch a hole in the Moscow shield.

It is not at all clear from the rules, whether the German player loses his V.P.'s for occupied city hexes should they be recaptured by the Soviet player. The wording of the rules is such that they do not even imply an answer one way or the other. I proceeded on the assumption that V.P.'s would be lost on recapture so that only the V.P.'s held by the German on the final turn could be applied to the victory conditions.

START
LINE

TO KLIN



The extended campaign game offers the Soviet player an opportunity of shifting the victory level one step in his own favour by having 12 units west of the Nov.15th start line at the end of the game. If he can exit these units from the western map edge he gets a further shift awarded to him.

With one point for each Soviet unit destroyed and five points for each city hex held I felt that a total of 50 V.P.'s and a marginal German victory would be a reasonable conclusion to my first game.

SCENARIOS AND OPTIONAL RULES

The alternative plans described above apply to the campaign game. Typhoon also has 3 shorter scenarios, one for each of the individual game maps. These simply illustrate the offensive in that particular area and indeed the historical set up from each of the scenarios forms the basis of the campaign game. As learning tools they are excellent but I found that whilst playing them the 'edge of the world' syndrome was more than usually evident. They have evocative titles, Panzergruppe Guderian; Objective Moscow, and - von Kluge on the Nara? If playing space is at a premium this is not a game I would recommend buying for the scenarios alone. They are good but this is a classic case of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts.

Three optional rules may be used either with the scenarios or the campaign game and add a lot of interest to the game without greatly increasing its complexity:-

a) German infantry units may move into a hedgehog defensive formation which entitles them to have the attackers ratio shifted in their favour. However they lose their ZOC.

b) Soviet ski troops. These units are included in the standard order of battle as are paratroops, anti-aircraft units, but this rule gives them a raison d'etre. During snow conditions they are entitled to combat ratio shifts both in attack and defence.

As we shall see later anti-tank units are also given the opportunity to use their functional ability and it seems a pity that the anti-aircraft brigades also could not have been allowed to play out their role; particularly as air points can be used in ground support.

c) The final optional rule offers an alternative German Support total. I'll discuss the Support rules later but basically this option provides for an increase in German logistical support over the historical level for those who want to experiment.



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C 1



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B39

CRITICAL RULES
AN ACHILLES HEEL ?

In my opinion the two most critical rules in any proposed simulation of this battle are Weather and Supply.

It could be argued that Weather is the more important of these since the Germans blamed the ultimate failure of their operation, firstly on the mud which choked the impetus of the original drive and then the intense cold which caused more casualties than enemy action and froze weapons into useless heaps of metal.

To reflect this, all units in the game are classified as having either a good or poor Winterisation level. All German and some Soviet units therefore have their combat strengths and movement allowances halved when there is snow present. There is some compensation for mechanised units however in that their mobility is marginally increased during a freeze.

I've never felt comfortable pushing mech. units across a river regardless of whether there is any bridge in the vicinity. In Typhoon these units may cross rivers only where they are traversed by roads (even in advance after combat) and with satisfying logic this rule is suspended should the rivers freeze. At the same time defenders attacked from across a frozen river lose their terrain advantage.

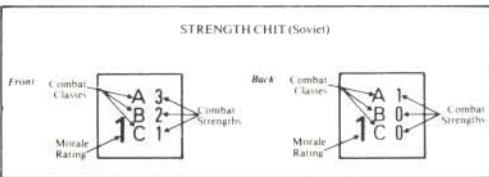
I don't think however that sufficient thought has been given to these rules because even at first glance they begin to lose credibility. For example it is possible in mid November to have days of snow which will disappear overnight and from the beginning of December rivers are liable to freeze and then flow quite freely from day to day. Now I'm no meteorologist but this looks odd to me. We're not talking about your Berkshire Christmas card type winter here but undiluted Arctic conditions which could and did freeze men solid. Once snow sets in the rules should have provided for this either to be left as a permanent condition or at least to stagger a thaw over several days, and if rivers freeze they should remain frozen till the end of the game. It's extremely disconcerting after all to have your units abilities reduced by half and their supply radius shortened by one days light snow which vanishes next morning.

Weather also affects air support in that any precipitation will deprive both players of all air points. I should explain that ruleswise a state of precipitation when combined with a ground freeze condition will result in snow. Logically then precipitation combined with a normal ground condition must result in rain so why on earth should this also ground all aircraft? My solution is to treat rain as being the same as a simple overcast condition and consequently reduce the available air points by half.

I can see that playability (as distinct from simulation) is increased through having as unpredictable weather pattern but I stress that final word pattern, not the random selection of possibilities found on an English Bank Holiday. For me there is no satisfaction in taking advantage of an opponents bad luck when he suddenly finds himself compromised by a rule which had little or no basis in reality. It may be worth tinkering around with these rules and imposing some regularity on the weather condition for yourself; even just to the extent of rejecting silly results when the crop up.

It was an attractive touch when the historical weather was listed as an alternative in the *Wacht* rules on which the game system is loosely based. I'm puzzled as to why similar data could not have been provided for *Typhoon*. I suspect however that almost permanent snow conditions would have weighted the game too heavily in favour of the Russian. The weather rules would appear to be the Achilles Heel in the designers representation to us of the game as a simulation.

The supply rules are a different story as one might expect from S.P.I. since their development has been forged and tempered over a long series of games. They are well integrated into the system, and the only major departure from the norm is that unsupplied units defend at full strength. Isolation however has more serious consequences: attack strengths are reduced to one and defence and movement capabilities are considerably reduced.



TACTICS

One of the fascinations of this game is the approach to untried units and I can see this feature forming the basis of many articles and much comment in the future.

All units in *Typhoon* apart from H.Q.'s and German tank battalions begin the game untried. Instead of the standard attack/defence strengths each unit has a printed Morale Rating (M.R.) and a Combat Class. German units have two possible M.R.'s; 2 or 3 while the Russians have three viz 1, 2 or 3. As a general rule the higher the number the greater the chance of the unit being strong! Within these ratings the units are further subdivided into A B or C Combat Class; though only the Russian has 'C' class units. Combat Class describes in general terms the manpower and weapons capabilities of the unit.

As each unit faces combat for the first time a strength chit is picked randomly from a 'pool' which matches the Morale Rating of the unit in question. There are obviously five such 'pools', two for the German, three for the Russian. Each chit shows a range of combat strengths, one for each of the possible combat classes.

Take for example the 8th regiment 3rd motorised Infantry Division which forms part of the 57th Panzer Corps. It has an M.R. of 3 and its Combat class is A. A good strong unit to throw against the Soviet line? - lets see. Picking a chit from the German '3' pile we come up with a 6. Had this regiment been B Combat Class the same chit shows us that its strength would have been 4.

The strength chits remain with the unit in the style of TSS and are back printed with the reduced strength to be used when the unit suffers a loss. Further step reductions cause the unit to lose its ZOC and take on a cadre status only.

At last then we have system which scotches the plans of the arithmetic 'arolds' who scratch among their forces to factor in precise odds to each combat. It would be foolish though to begin the game with no idea at all of the possible strengths of your own units or the enemy's. But SPI don't even give you the range of possible strengths of units let alone average strengths:- so if you want a job doing - do it yourself. Beats me though why they don't tie up loose ends like this when it takes so little extra effort.

Table 1

German Units				
	Morale Rating 2		Morale Rating 3	
Combat Class	A	B	A	B
Max Strength	8	5	8	5
Min Strength	1	1	4	3
Avg. Strength	4	3	6	4
No. of Units	52	10	51	15
No. of Chits	65		40	

Soviet Units											
	Morale Rating 1			Morale Rating 2			Morale Rating 3				
Combat Class	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C		
Max Strength	10	5	4	16	8	7	20	10	8		
Min Strength	1	1	1	2	1	1	10	5	3		
Avg. Strength	4	2	2	9	5	4	16	8	6		
No. of units	33	34	20	37	8	13	4	13	2		
No. of Chits	95			65			21				

There are none of the now discredited 0-0-8 P.G.G. type units but enough variety to make each playing of the game a whole new adventure. Remember when studying the table that much of the Soviet strength appears on the reinforcement chart and that two whole armies are waiting at Moscow to be committed to the line when triggered by the state of play. Step losses are dramatic even for the strongest units, 50% of their strength is lost with the first step and a second reduction leaves the unit at cadre strength only.

The C.R.T. interrelates with the step reduction system in several ways and those of you who have played *Wacht* or P.G.G. will be familiar with most of the tactical possibilities associated with the system. Almost all results generated on the C.R.T. indicate both mandatory step losses and retreat requirements. You may elect to lose extra steps instead of retreating except when the result is printed in bold type which indicates a breakthrough. Take for example a simple D2 (1). Here the defender must lose at least one step (parenthesised). He then has the option of apportioning the 2 result between retreats and step losses in any way he chooses. Should the defender have insufficient steps to satisfy the mandatory step loss requirement the remaining steps are available to the attacker as extra hexes in his advance after combat. The rules do not state whether following a successful single hex attack against more than one stack of defenders, the defender may take his loss entirely from one stack whilst voluntarily retreating the others.

Enough has been written about these retreat/loss options following the publication of P.G.G. for even the least imaginative player to benefit. One new play came to light however during the playing of **Typhoon**. We'll discuss German Support later, suffice to say for the moment that the effect of being unsupported renders the unit out of supply. Tank and mechanised infantry units have their movement allowances halved whilst unsupplied, and to leave an enemy ZOC a unit must use half its movement allowance plus the terrain cost of the hex moved into. When there is no freeze condition present the cost of moving through wooded country for mechanised units is 5 MP's. All mech units have a basic movement allowance of 14 and for unsupplied units this is halved to 7. In wooded country then, during fine weather, unsupplied mech units are 'locked' into the ZOC of even a weak enemy unit — there is a glut of woods defending Moscow. Tank units are extremely vulnerable since step losses are taken from these units first, and the German tank battalion particularly so, as they have a combat strength of only 1. The Russian player therefore should pounce on this sort of opportunity and by standing firm against the panzers either bring up reinforcement to hammer them hard or oblige them to attack at unfavourable odds.

The power of German tank battalions in this game is reflected not in their combat strength but in their ability to combine with other types of units to gain a Combined Arms Combat Bonus. Russian tank units also qualify for the same bonus and being of brigade size are more able to operate independently of other units. For each tank unit in such an attacking stack the owning player gains one shift in his favour on the C.R.T. A rule like this is an ingenious device for persuading the player to make realistic use of his armoured units and to employ the correct tactics. You will see from Table 1 that on average the basic combat ratio is likely to be only marginally in favour of the attacker if at all. Add to this the other factors such as snow, supply and rivers which might affect combat strengths and it becomes obvious that the German player especially relies heavily on his combat bonuses. It is vital therefore that he thinks carefully before deploying his precious armour. Again, as in **Wacht** the Combat Arms Bonus (CAB) is effective only in attack. In defence its role is limited to negating any C.A.B. used by the attacker. Soviet anti-tank units may be used in such defence when combined with non armoured units.

The tank battalions are ignored when computing German Divisional Integrity (D.I.) leaving them free to join the foot slogging infantry if needed, rather than the motorised regiments they usually accompany. For each participating division fulfilling the D.I. requirements the German may shift the ratio column by one in his favour. There is a maximum of three such shifts allowed for each attack. In attack all regiments of a division need only be adjacent to the defender to gain the bonus. They need not necessarily be stacked in the same hex. This is helpful not only in narrowing the line of retreat for the Russian but since only one regimental or divisional sized unit may attack out of a single hex the German can maximise his attack strength by having all the divisions regiments participate in the attack. Indeed he can use one of those regiments in a diversionary attack on another defender and so long as it is still adjacent to the main defender it still qualifies for the D.I. attack bonus.

For D.I. in the defence it is important to note that the defending regiment need only be adjacent to another regiment of the same division.

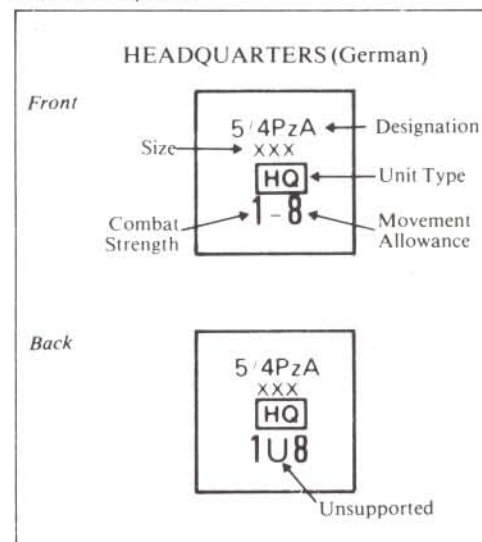
There is no Mechanised Unit Movement Phase in **Typhoon** and I mentioned before the alarming lack of German reserve strength. It's important then to make optimum use of these rules to spread the line as thinly as you dare and to concentrate what offensive power you can at the point where you hope to break the Soviet line. Breakthrough results are printed in bold type on the CRT and indicate that the phasing player may decide on the path of retreat and advance his victorious units and those with which they are stacked, one hex more than the number retreated by the defender; the defender loses his option of taking step losses instead of retreating. Since units advanced after combat will not usually be reinforced during the phasing player's turn he should ensure that the initial advance is made by as strong a force as

possible to guard against counter attack. If necessary the German should move his units into hedgehog formation though of course they immediately lose their ZOC.

The German can take advantage of these rules only if he can keep his army in some semblance of order and this is no easy task. For example the supply radius of his units from their headquarters, normally 6 hexes, is reduced to 4 hexes when snow appears. Unlike P.G.G. the German will be constantly stacking and unstacking his divisions to optimise their use and he is further encouraged to do this by the ruling that adverse results affect all units in a hex irrespective of whether they participated in the combat. Fascinating stuff, and gratifying to see that so much thought has been given to the Operational level simulation since the clumsy D.O.S. albeit that it comes by way of a tactical game system.

I made the mistake during my game of trying to pinch off large portions of the Soviet line rather than settling for smaller pockets. Without a mech movement phase this gives the Russian the chance to escape the trap before it snaps shut. Movement is severely restricted during snow so in my opinion the German plan should be centred on short sharp disabling shock attacks rather than the grand plan. Smaller localised attacks will enable both players to force retreating units to stack with units yet to be attacked. If these latter units suffer an adverse result in that phase the retreated units stacked with them are automatically eliminated. If enough holes can be punched through his first line the Russian will be obliged to surrender large areas of land and retreat. This is the moment for the German to break for the rearward targets.

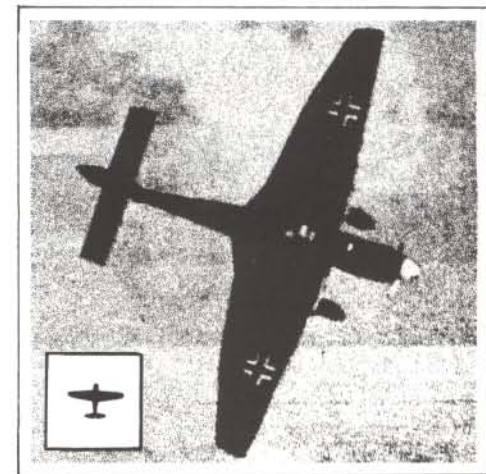
Typhoon uses an integrated CRT and only terrain which directly affects unit's combat strengths are rivers and entrenchment hexes. Two dice are used with the table giving a wide range of possible outcomes. The lowest odds attack which is certain to be in favour of the attacker is 8-1 in clear terrain, 9-1 in woods or town and 10-1 in city or rough hexes. Even on this combat results column there is only a 45% chance of a breakthrough result, while even maximum odds give only a 55% chance. Most of the combat in **Typhoon** uses the row covering woods-town. There is no distinction between light and heavily wooded areas. The terrain types do not follow the contours of the hexes (with the exception of rivers) and you'll have to decide for yourself which terrain type takes precedence. In my opinion its the terrain most favourable to the defender, but the choice is yours.



I found it wise more often than not to stack the German H.Q. units with strong combat units. These HQ's are not as vulnerable as in P.G.G. for example, since they have a retreat before combat option of sorts, but it is imperative for the German player to keep his forces organised and his forward units in supply. Like HQ's, cadre strength units stack for 'free' with combat units as do the Russian battalion and company sized units. It is a good idea to use these as cannon fodder to absorb losses so protecting the more powerful infantry regiments and divisions which, as we have seen, lose their combat capabilities so quickly.

Air power in **Typhoon** is handled in the standard SPI manner, that is to say, Air Points which are available for ground support or German air interdiction. In the early turns especially I committed about all my available air points to ground support. By using his own Air Points the defender may negate some of the attackers advantage but if he employs enough air power the attacker will always get one shift in his favour on the CRT for his critical attack. The Luftwaffe may interdict the Soviet rail system but is apparently not allowed to interdict on roads. This is most odd when one considers that by using strategic movement a Soviet mech unit can move 42 hexes along a road in normal weather.

Finally if he gets that far the German finds a small nuance in the rulings for combat among the entrenchments. Defenders in an entrenchment hex are not obliged to attack adjacent enemy units. I know there is nothing new in the rule itself but it divides nicely, into separate categories, the tactics required for each type of fighting. Its an inspired little rule which at the end of the hard slog gives you a whole new ball game.



GERMAN STRATEGY

Luck plays an important part in this game and this is especially true for the German player since it is his units which are most affected by adverse weather and who rely to some extent on the die roll to enable them to perform at maximum efficiency.

At the beginning of every fourth turn starting on turn one, the German player allocates ten Support Points among his four armies. He then rolls a die for each of those armies and by cross referring the die roll to the Support Points allocated, can see the number of corps HQ units within that army which will be 'in support' for the next four turns. The maximum number of HQ units in any one army which can be 'in support' can never be greater than the original number of Support Points allocated to it. More likely it will be considerably less. The careful player should manage to retain an average of 7 or 8 out of 10. There are 14 corps HQ units on the board at the beginning of the game (47 panzer Corps arrives turn 8) so only about half the German army will be at full fighting strength at any one time. Units whose HQ is unsupported are considered out of supply.

Unless he has a carefully defined strategy then the German will quickly discover that his strength is dwindling away in un-coordinated attacks. On the other hand with so many variable factors I think it is impossible certainly at this stage, to define an optimum strategy for any of the 3 German plans.

The best attacking terrain is in the area of Guderian's 2nd Panzer Army around Tula. However this army is deemed to be unsupplied for the first three days and 47th Panzer Corps does not arrive until turn 8. (Its worth considering these details when allocating Support Points). The prime objective here must be Tula (10 V.P.'s).

All HQ's, Soviet included, may launch one accelerated assault during the game (the Soviets only after turn 16) which doubles the attack factor of each of the attacking units. I used this during the first turn to try to take Tula by surprise. My units

therefore attacked at normal strength ($\frac{1}{2}$ for unsupplied and doubled for accelerated assault) but had to attack across a river and against the entrenchment marker inside Tula as well as using the least favourable line on the CRT. I managed to reduce the defender to cadre strength units. The rules do not say whether a defender in an entrenchment hex attacked across a river has his defence strength doubled tripled or quadrupled. We assumed the worst. As German movement was then ended for that turn Tula was quickly reinforced and I spent several turns trying to breach the river that runs south round Tula then eastwards. It might be better to breach the river first and assault Tula from the north or east. If the battle looks like being prolonged it will be necessary to take Venev to cut the road and rail routes to Tula.

If Tula falls quickly it might be possible to try for a push to the Osetr river but a more realistic objective would be a line running from Tula through Venev to Kashira. The German should keep in mind that his final line should be in good defensive terrain and give himself time to deploy his forces when in position.

The Oka river bisects the map almost at the junction between 2nd Panzer and 4th armies. 4th Army is the most powerful of the German armies but lacks armoured support and faces stiff opposition. Its immediate objective should be the city of Podolsk to hold the bridge over the Oka and the road to Tula.

There are two Soviet armies near Moscow which are committed to the line as individual units when a combination of German VP's and die rolls released them or when German units encroach within 7 hexes. 4th Army, by striking from the south towards Moscow, can use the favourable open terrain and breach the outer ring of fortifications without disturbing the Soviets in the city. They then have a reasonable approach to Moscow from the south or south east.

4th Panzer Army have the northern approach to Moscow and have the bulk of the armour. They face the greatest concentration of entrenchment hexes and the powerful Soviet 1st Shock Army in reserve is in this sector. They may also have the responsibility of taking Klin on their extreme left flank if 3rd Panzer Army is unable to do so. They must also be looking for a finish line; if possible along the Moscow-Volga canal.

The open country on the Lipka river basin leading to Klin and Dimitrov is unfortunately on the extreme flanks of both 3rd and 4th Panzer armies. 3rd Panzer Army is the weakest of the German armies and faces some of the stiffest country though defended by few Russian units. They can pull off surprises but are best used to protect the 4th Panzer flank. My own plan was similar to this but I got only the briefest sniff of Moscow; being forced out of a couple of hexes during the same turn. The game finished on turn 25, with the Germans being pushed out of Klin and Podolsk and unlikely to regain them. I still held Serpukhov and Tula but it seemed pointless to continue as there was no way of calculating my performance within the context of the rules.

Some final ideas for the German to consider.

- i) Use the accelerated assaults in the early turns, the Russian line must be broken in the first half dozen turns.
- ii) Don't be afraid to attack with unsupported or unsupplied units at times. It often pays to do so against weak Soviet units.
- iii) Keep your armies organised. Attacks must be pushed on relentlessly and there is little opportunity to stop and regroup.
- iv) It might pay to transfer some of the tanks from 4th Pz army to 4th Army though of course infantry move more quickly through wooded terrain than armour.
- v) If the extended campaign game is being played (its the only way) consider from the outset where your stop line will be and plan your defence. You can only delay the Russians but you must stop them pushing you back beyond the start line.



SOVIET STRATEGY

The most striking thing about the Russian starting positions is that the entrenchment hexes are completely unoccupied. These stretch the length of the Moscow-Volga canal; around the western edge of the city in a triple layer and then southwards along the Moskva river. Only the Soviet player may use these fortifications and it is never too early in the game to begin to man them. Any units from the weak 20th Army (in reserve in Moscow) which can be released through the commitment rules, should be thrown into these defences so doubling their defence strength.

The 1st Shock Army on the other hand, also in reserve, is for the most part excellent fighting troops and can be deployed anywhere in the line. The ski troops are the most exciting units here and during the game I played were responsible for killing several tank battalions in surprise hit and run attacks.

Obviously the onus is on the German to do most of the attacking in the early stages and the Russian does have a mainly passive role. However this is not to say that he won't be kept busy shifting his forces to cover the areas where the supported German corps are most prevalent. Where possible the armoured brigades should be stacked with infantry units to negate the German Combined Arms attacks and so that similar counter attacks can be made when the opportunity presents itself.

It is extremely important to hold Klin in the north and Tula in the south for as long as possible for not only will this keep the German stretched and starved of reserves but the cities also provide pivot points for Soviet flanks.

Since so much of the Russian activity will depend on the pattern of success or failure of the German it is difficult to give precise indicators to Soviet strategy from a terrain viewpoint. However the final retreat to the entrenchments should be made in good order so that the best use can be made of them.

The speed and success of the German advance will also dictate the commitment of Soviet reinforcements but it is preferable if these can be accumulated and then launched in concentrated blows at the German line when it begins to flag! Remember that the requirement for shifting the victory level in favour of the Russian is for him to end the game with 12 non HQ units west of the Nov 15th start line, and his best chance of achieving this is to use just such a concentrated force in a type of reverse bulge situation.

Time is most definitely on the side of the Russian, not only in his reinforcement strength but also in regard to the weather. His forces are better able to cope and with luck frozen rivers will reduce the German defence options. Even so, the Soviet must be careful not to lose concentration in the early game, some of the German armies are weak and suffering from several disadvantages but are still capable of wielding a decisive blow. Treat this wounded tiger with respect.

SUMMARY

I followed the development of this game with great interest through Moves and S&T, but it seemed to be delayed, revised and amended so often that I had real fears that it would end up as 'another fine mess' in the tradition of D.O.S. It is gratifying to note then that what we end up with is a damn fine wargame. So I am mystified by Joseph Angiolillo's designers notes which read almost in the nature of an apology. He tells us that he felt hamstrung by the feedback question into beginning the game midway through the Operation and assures us that given a free hand he would have covered the whole battle using the P.G.G. system.

In the first place S.P.I. have demonstrated once or twice in the past that they don't always feel themselves hog-tied by feedback answers and secondly his original design was pure Wacht whilst the feedback specified Wacht/P.G.G. Also the two distinct halves of the Operation were so vastly different that in my opinion it would need two sets of rules (like **Atlantic Wall**) to cover the situation adequately. I doubt if mere ad hoc modifications (like weather) to the P.G.G. system would be enough to guarantee a reasonable simulation.

The weather rules, whilst irksome, are not beyond redemption since any adaptation or modification to them would not have any consequent affect on any of the other rules. One hopes that the V.P. calculation rule omission will shortly be rectified by the publication of errata which should also include some minor corrections to the O.O.B. Still it wouldn't be S.P.I. without the occasional glaring mistake would it? Every game a fortune cookie.

An added bonus with **Typhoon** is that it functions very well as a solitaire exercise. Both sides have a distinct offensive and defensive phase during the campaign game and the unknown strength units give an added tension to this type of play.

Undoubtedly the game will sell well containing as it does the wonder ingredient — tanks on the Russian front, but it also deserves recognition in its own right as a 'clean' manageable and often fascinating game with a wealth of strategic alternatives. There are few games one could recommend unreservedly and this certainly isn't one of them but if you enjoy Operational level simulations and the subject appeals to you then I think you'll find **Typhoon** is a very good buy.

TYPHOON POST-PUBLICATION ERRATA

If a unit in an entrenchment hex is also attacked across a river (e.g. Tula) is the defence strength doubled, tripled, or quadrupled?

Doubled

Rivers double defender attacked from across them. Confirm that this rule applies to streams also.

No, it does not.

COUNTERMIX

Ignore Soviet units 3Gd/16, 312/30, and 31/26 (brigade). They are not used in the game.

RULES

[7.14] A cadre unit can count as either a unit of its original size or as a cadre for stacking purposes. Thus, more than one cadre may stack in the same hex if the owning Player so desires (other stacking rules permitting).

[7.15] If Soviet battalion or company-size units are the only units to occupy a given hex, then an unlimited number of these unit-types may occupy this hex.

[15.3] Soviet Reinforcement Schedule

- (a) Ignore reference to 185/30 (Game-Turn 15).
- (b) 31/26 (Game-Turn 16) is a division.

Semblance of worth, not substance



'To the Green Fields Beyond'

ANDREW MCGEE



A review of this game as a whole appeared in the last issue, so suffice it for the moment to say that it is fairly complex and impressively detailed. I want to concentrate, however, on one aspect of the rules, which while sharing this air of well-considered detail, is in my view woefully deficient — the Supply Rules.

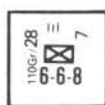
Supply is divided into two kinds, which I shall distinguish as "General Supply" and "Combat Supply". To be in General Supply a unit "Must be able to trace a supply line to a road hex at the edge of the map which was behind Friendly front lines at the start of the game". Being out of General Supply halves a unit's Movement Allowance, prevents it from attacking and, if not speedily remedied renders a unit liable to surrender. It is clear that this kind of Supply represents day-to-day "housekeeping", so it would seem reasonable that it should be traced at the start of each Game-Turn (on the basis that the delivery of such supplies will take place between the end of fighting on one day and the resumption on the next — before anyone accuses me of treating WWI fighting as if it were a Test Match, let me point out that it was the practice for attacks to be launched in the early morning; often fighting would die out by late afternoon with both sides consolidating the positions they held). In the game General Supply is traced at the start of each Movement Phase (of which there are two in each Player-Turn). The point here — and it is one which will recur later — is that a unit's ability to obey an order to move or fight is not dependent directly on whether it at that moment fulfils an arbitrary definition of being "in supply". The unit is netted into the Corps logistical system, and for practical purposes its supply state is determined by what stocks of supplies it has and how recently it has received supplies. It is not immediately relevant to a unit which was resupplied in the morning that by noon it is cut off.

A second criticism of General Supply is that it is traced to the map-edge directly, whereas Combat Supply is traced first to a depot on the map and thence to the map-edge. Even allowing that Combat Supply is more heavily dependent on stockpiles immediately behind the lines, the same basic network must surely be used for both — any other system would be incredibly wasteful, were it indeed practicable. This point too will recur later.

The Rules concerning Combat Supply are possibly more unsatisfactory still. Combat Supply is required in order that an infantry or cavalry unit may attack or an artillery unit fire a barrage. At such times the unit in question must be able to trace a line of supply to one of the depot units placed on the map, and in attacking expends supply from that depot; but there are two complications; the first is that at the moment of the attack the depot unit must be able to trace a supply line of its own to the edge of the map, even if there are supply points stored in the depot (record of this is kept on a separate off-map chart). The second is that the number of supply points expended in the attack varies with the distance at the moment of attack between the attacking unit and the depot.

It is difficult to know quite where to start criticising this quite remarkable rule. Obviously "Combat Supply" represents ammunition expenditure. What then are the realities and difficulties of supplying ammunition to troops in combat?

Firstly, when they "go over the top" the troops will take ammunition with them; this is reflected in the game in the rule exempting British infantry units from the requirements of Combat Supply on Turn One. At some point, however, resupply is going to be necessary — an infantryman can carry only so much ammunition about his person; there many of the criticisms levelled at the General Supply rules are again applicable: — ammunition resupply is accomplished through the ordinary logistical network. In extreme cases a unit may be resupplied virtually in the front line (although this seems to have been more common in WWII) but the process, like that of providing General Supply, will usually take place during intervals in the fighting. Once again it is certain that a unit will not wait to be ordered to attack, then send a request for ammunition back to Corps HQ; the problem of ammunition resupply arises only after the combat. Two conclusions seem to me to follow from this: first, that it is wrong to require the line of Combat Supply to be traced at the instant of combat (Simple example: a unit is resupplied with ammunition early in the morning; later in the day it is cut off from its depot by developments five miles away; under the supply rules in this game it immediately loses its capacity to attack. — Ridiculous). The second conclusion is that the distance between depot and unit at the instant of combat is of no great importance (of course this problem would disappear if supply were traced at some moment more appropriate than the instant of combat).



Secondly there is the process by which the ammunition is delivered to the troops in the front line. In the game each Corps has one or two depots which are deemed to contain all the Supply Points currently available on that part of the front. This may give the impression of a number of "Aladdin's Caves" each packed with vast quantities of military goodies. The reality is different, and the rules do admit this. Behind the front line is a "complex rear-area network of logistic support". This sounds like some enormous spider's web, but the analogy of an oil pipeline might be more appropriate still. At any given time large quantities of supply are in transit between corps and brigade and regiment and battalion and so on down to the individual infantryman, or stored at the HQ of one or other of these intermediate formations. In the First World War the practice was, reasonably enough, to bring up vast quantities of ammunition to stockpiles just behind the front line in readiness for an

offensive; granted this had not been done on such an extensive scale as usual before Cambrai, but the principle is still the same. In the game this is abstracted to the half-dozen depot units. Admittedly the problems on the regimental level were not the concern of the overall commanders, so the abstraction is fair enough, but the fact remains that at the time of resupply the distance from the supply source is relevant, if at all, only in regard to the immediate source, which is not represented in the game. Consequently, at whatever point supply is to be traced, a unit's distance from Corps HQ is of little importance.

It is in any case questionable whether distance as such is relevant at all. It is of course true that enemy activity is more likely to interfere with a supply line, the longer it is, but it is in any case impossible to trace supply through a vacant enemy-controlled hex. The only explanation for this rule is that the "Supply Points" in some way represents the means of transporting supply, but this would seem to be inconsistent with the "pipeline" system already discussed.

Thirdly, and arising from the second point, there is the rule that depots which are themselves unsupplied cannot be used to support attacks. This question too revolves around the pipeline. In the game, units in the front line would be prevented from attacking the moment the depot is cut off. Yet the pipeline and the stockpiles, even if not very large, mean that the supply would not run out for an indeterminate period dependent on the volume of attacks.

Two other points remain to be dealt with on the score of realism. The first is that tank units never expend supply in attacking, which seems very curious. Granted, they are able to carry a large quantity of ammunition than an ordinary infantryman, but resupply will still be necessary. From the playability point of view the problem is perhaps that there would have to be a disproportionate expenditure of supply points by the tanks (which are represented at company level) but it cannot be right to ignore them entirely.

The second problem is the mobility of the depot units, which are able to wander merrily round the battlefield without impairment to their supply function. If all supply points were regarded as actually being stored there, this would be ridiculous. Even when it is realised that their task is at most co-ordination, it would seem that this must undergo some disruption when the depot moves.

The foregoing clearly suggests that the present rules cannot be defended on the score of detailed realism. Do they, then, succeed in presenting the players, through their abstraction, with the same problems as faced their historical counterparts, Byng and Von Bayern?

In the first place, I think that we have to treat the claim to put players in the situation of the historical commanders with some scepticism. The Player must manoeuvre units at the brigade level

and decide just which friendly units shall attack which enemy units, whereas the overall commanders were further removed from the fighting. Similarly, in deciding whether a unit shall attack they can take account of the supply position all along the front, which brigade and divisional commanders could not. It seems that the Players must represent a large number of commanders at once. Nothing about this "perfect knowledge" problem is unique to "Green Fields Beyond", of course, but it does need to be borne in mind.

Allowing for this, what are the problems confronting the Strategic Commanders (or, more likely, their hard-worked staffs) in dealing with supply?

Firstly, they must keep in mind the need to resupply units at regular intervals with both General and Combat Supply. Consequently a battle plan requiring units to operate behind enemy lines or in isolated positions for any length of time will cause problems. Secondly they must ensure that such supplies as are allocated to them by the High Command are optimally distributed among the various Corps of their army. The present rules are neither necessary nor sufficient for this purpose; the distinction between Combat and General Supply is useful only in the sense that it would be unduly bureaucratic to require players to record expenditure of the latter. However, the fact that units are a long way from their depot even cut off at the instant of Combat is not in itself a problem, nor is the temporary isolation of depot units. Similarly the immunity of tanks from resupply requirements and the mobility of depot units are advantages which would doubtless have been most welcome to the commanders, had they existed.

I think this makes clear my objections to the original rules, and, not being one to indulge in purely destructive criticism, I propose to offer a complete alternative set of supply rules. Some sections of the existing rules will be unaffected, and if a case is not mentioned in the following, this means that the existing rule stands.

"FOR POOR EYES ONLY"

RIFLEMAN DODD

SPI have continually assured us that they are devoting a great deal of time and effort to R&D.... Research they *do* seem to be doing. Apart from the battles and the history that they research they also look into such valuable things as 'Killer Penguins' and the like.

On the other hand the 'D' part of things does seem to be falling a little short of target at the moment. Let's leave aside the appalling shambles of the *Highway To The Reich* rules. Let's even leave aside the fact that a new game has arrived in S&T with two full pages of errata *already* printed and inserted in the magazine or the fact that there have been eight foolscap pages of queries and errata submitted to New York on *Atlantic Wall*. Let's leave those aside for nobody else seems to be making a fuss so why should I? What I really do resent is that while all this development is not happening terribly well some of the resources of SPI are being devoted to a piece of trimming for the magazine which, although it may 'Feedback' well enough, has no real or direct relevance to any but a small segment of the people who play war-games. Not only this but the information is such that it can, for the most part, be gleaned by all but the most myopic from the pages of the specialised magazines which deal with those subjects.

I refer to "For Your Eyes Only" which appears to me to be a farrago of clippings, digests from specialist mags and extended tables of information which is out of date even as it's published. To be sure it's only four pages of copy but how much time which ought to be devoted to getting things *right* is being spent on making things *pretty* with this type of idea. Come on, gentlemen, before you start doing the arabesque get the basics right. Now, the left foot goes forward, you transfer your weight from the right to the left and then you bring the right foot forward and put it down in front of the left and you'll go on doing that until you get it right!!



SUBSTITUTE SUPPLY MODULE FOR "TO THE GREEN FIELDS BEYOND"

(11.0) Supply.

General Rule.

Supply is divided into two kinds, General Supply and Combat Supply, and the tracing of each is subject to slightly different rules. General Supply governs a unit's ability to move and fight, Combat Supply relates only to a unit's ability to attack.

Procedure.

All supply is determined at the start of the GAME-TURN (N.B. NOT PLAYER-TURN). So long as a unit is in General Supply at the start of the game-turn it has its maximum movement allowance for the whole game-turn. So long as it is in Combat Supply at the start of the game-turn it may attack in both Combat phases of the coming friendly player-turn, subject to the availability of supply points in the depots.

(11.1) Supply Sources.

There are two kinds of supply source; depot units,

and hexes which formed part of the friendly front line at the start of the game.

(11.11) In order to be in General Supply a unit must at the start of the game-turn be able to trace a line of supply to a friendly depot.

(11.12) In order to be in Combat Supply a unit must at the start of the game-turn be able to trace a line of supply to a friendly depot, or to a hex which formed part of the friendly front line at the start of the game.

(11.2) Tracing a Supply Line.

(11.21) A Supply Line is always traced through a path of contiguous hexes from the unit requiring supply to the supply source.

(11.22) The length of a Supply Line is irrelevant.

(11.23) Delete "Counting it as one Movement Point to cross".

(11.24) A unit may voluntarily lengthen its Supply Line by any amount or may put itself out of supply (of course, if it is not back in supply by the start of the next game-turn, it will pay the penalties).

(11.3) Supply Depots.

(11.33) Delete last sentence; an unsupplied depot may be used to support an attack as long as it contains sufficient Supply Points.

(11.4) Expenditure of Supply Points.

(11.41) Add: Tanks also expend Supply Points in the same way as other units. When supply is traced to a friendly front line hex, the Supply Points expended are deducted from the nearest depot.

(11.42) Delete exception a.

(11.43) Delete. Each attacking unit expends one Supply Point.

(11.6) Effects of being out of General Supply.

(11.62) Delete last sentence. Unsupplied Depots may support attacks provided they contain sufficient Supply Points.

(11.9) Optional Supply Rule Simplification.

Delete whole case.

Starforce - A Solitaire Scenario

JOHN GARRETT

I feel that the major drawback of the Starforce game is that there is only the one solitaire scenario (Rescue Mission 38.0) even though the basic game utilises a simple CRT. Therefore, the following scenario came into being.

(42.0) The colonisation war.

(42.1) Introduction

In 2227, before the advent of the Solar Hemogeny and the L'Chal-dah, Rame starships had explored and colonised many of the surrounding star systems. However, there was a great deal of dissent against the home-orientated government (C.B.R.) and in 2229, incensed by the high level of taxation on mineral exploration, a committee of a new colonial rights council (C.R.C.) was established on HR 7703. Terrified at the unity this group had achieved, the C.B.R. asked for a delegation to be sent to discuss terms. The C.R.C. however unwittingly sent all their major leaders to the conference in a single starship as an act of good faith and the perfidious C.B.R. destroyed the ship and, taking advantage of the C.R.C.'s momentary disunity, attacked at once and in a short campaign ruthlessly subdued the revolt. However, the loss of so many telesthenics was a severe setback to colonisation plans, the government itself being overthrown in the people's war the following year.

(42.2) Orders of battle and deployment:

Star systems and stargates	Starforces	I.D. code
C.B.R. player		
2036/+1 (70 Ophiuchi)	4	(1)
1734/+14 (BD + 45)	2	
1636/-8 (36 Ophiuchi)	2	(4)
1637/-8 (CD - 26)	0	(3)
1938/-7 (CD - 21)	0	(2)

C.R.C. forces

2833/-11 (HR 7703)	5	(B)
2734/+2 (Altair)	3	(C)
2537/+2 (BD + 4)	2	(E)
2433/-14 (Luyten 347-14)	0	(D)
2832/-14 (CD - 45)	0	(A)

(42.3) Special rules

Only the Strategic CRT is used. The C.B.R. player moves all of his units first and then rolls for each C.R.C. starforce individually and moves them all before combat is resolved.

(42.4) Victory conditions

The C.B.R. player must neutralise all the C.R.C. stargates by game-turn 6 or he automatically loses the game. The C.B.R. player also loses if any of his stargates are neutralised.

(42.5) C.R.C. movement table

Start point	Chit drawn									
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
CD-45 (A)	A	B	D	E	C	D	B	C	E	D
HR 7703 (B)	E	2	A	D	B	2	A	D	B	C
Altair (C)	B	E	1	C	A	1	C	E	1	D
Luyten 347 (D)	A	2	D	4	B	E	A	3	C	B
BD + 4 (E)	D	1	A	1	C	E	B	C	E	1

Explanation

For every starforce a chit is drawn individually and is cross referenced on the table with its starting point to find the I.D. code of its new position. The chit is then replaced and another one drawn for the next starforce. If the stargate at the point of destination has been neutralised the starforce stays put.

(42.6) Rationale

This game was devised to be played quickly and simply yet still provide a challenge to a more experienced player. It is also intended to present a position not unlike standard 2-D with a few diversified strategies.

Contact!

Contact entries will appear twice and will then automatically lapse. Please ensure that you contact me in good time if you want to continue or change your entry. An * before an insert signifies the first appearance and as such will automatically appear in issue 21; all others will lapse after this issue.

HIGH WYCOMBE WARGAMERS, 19.00 hrs Wed. British Legion Hall, Tel: **Beaconsfield 4116**.

ULSTER MILITARY MODELLING SOCIETY meets at 2.30 p.m. on every last Saturday in the month at Gregagh Branch Library, Cregagh Road, **Belfast**.

NORTH BIRMINGHAM BOARDGAMES GROUP meets every Wednesday at 7.00 p.m. at the Kingstanding Circle Community Centre, Contact Chris Newey at 21 Calver Grove, Great Barr, **Birmingham B44 9BE**, Tel: 021-360 3478

BLANTYRE BOARDGAMES CLUB, c/o Elizabeth Scott Community Centre, Logan Street, **Blantyre**, (Strathclyde. Every Wed. 7.10pm. Tel: East Kilbride 27030 (G.Munn)

LINCOMBE BARN WARGAMES SOCIETY, Overdale Rd, Downend, **Bristol**. Meets Sunday 2.30pm to 9.30pm. Contact: A.Swanson, 40 Rockland Rd., Downend, **Bristol**, Tel: 565003

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Briad Griffin, 3 Ambleside Avenue, Roath Park, **Cardiff** Tel: 762069.

* **CARTERTON WARGAMERS CLUB** meets at the Focal Centre every Sunday from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. Contact S. Bainbridge, 23, Swinbrook Road, **Carterton**, Oxfordshire OX8 8DU.

A.G.V. Riddell, Thornton, Pennyfford, **Chester**.

O. Bowles, 42 Stuart Road, Highcliffe, **Christchurch**, Dorset. Tel: Highcliffe 3252.

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R. Petty (Vice Chairman, Darlington Military Mod. Soc.) 30 Dundee St. **Darlington**, Co Durham. Tel: Darlington 62184.

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TRINITY WARGAMERS ASSOCIATION. Meets every Sunday in Trinity College. Details available from the Sec. Andrew Finkel, 88 Rathdown Park, Tenenure, **Dublin 6**. Tel: 907605.

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* **CUNNINGHAME BOARDGAMES CLUB** meets each Sunday at 152, High Street, Irvine, 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. — playing fee 25p. or contact Iain R. Dale, 50, Herbertson Courts, **Irvine**, Ayrshire. Tel: 74581.

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Ian Wooler, 16 Harcourt Rd., Dorney Reach, **Maidenhead**, Berks. Tel: M'head 25039.

North Kent gamers — are any of you interested in forming a boardgaming group. Age group 15+. Contact K.W.Barratt, 30, Tradescant Drive, **Meopham**, Kent, DA13 DEE.

J. Garrett, 19 Weaverthorpe, Nunthorpe, **Middlesbrough**, Cleveland.

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Peter Swineburn, 87 Lavernock Rd. **Penarth**. Tel: 707400.

R.B.Walker, (Sec.South Wales Wargames Fed.). 10 Wildbrook Close, Taibach, **Port Talbot**, West Glamorgan. Tel: Port Talbot 87954.

S. Dalby, 89 Stakes Road, **Purbrook**, Hants. Tel: Waterlooville 56467.

Nigel Spike, Univ. of St. Andrews Wargaming Social Students Union, St. Mary's Place, **St.Andrews**, Fife. (meet every Tues., Chaplaincy Centre).

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OVERSEAS

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Maurizio Bragaglia, 00135 **Roma** — Via Campocino, 39 **Italy**. Tel: (06) 338 1304.

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J.E. Digby, 3 Lansdowne Road, **Wolverhampton**, W. Midlands WV1 4AL. — Objective Moscow, Tel. (office) 021-472-1301 ext.2023.

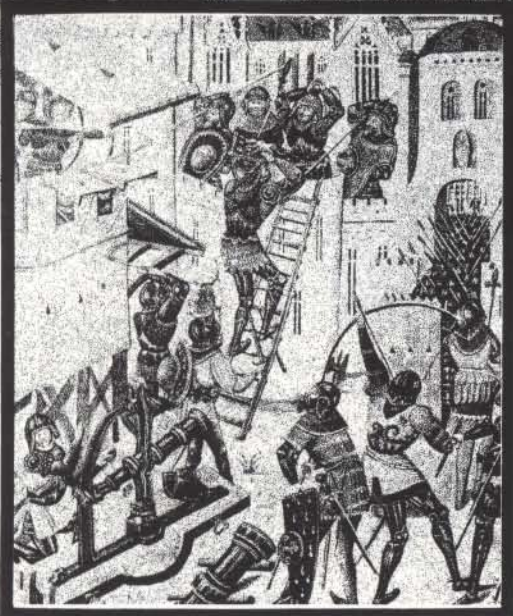
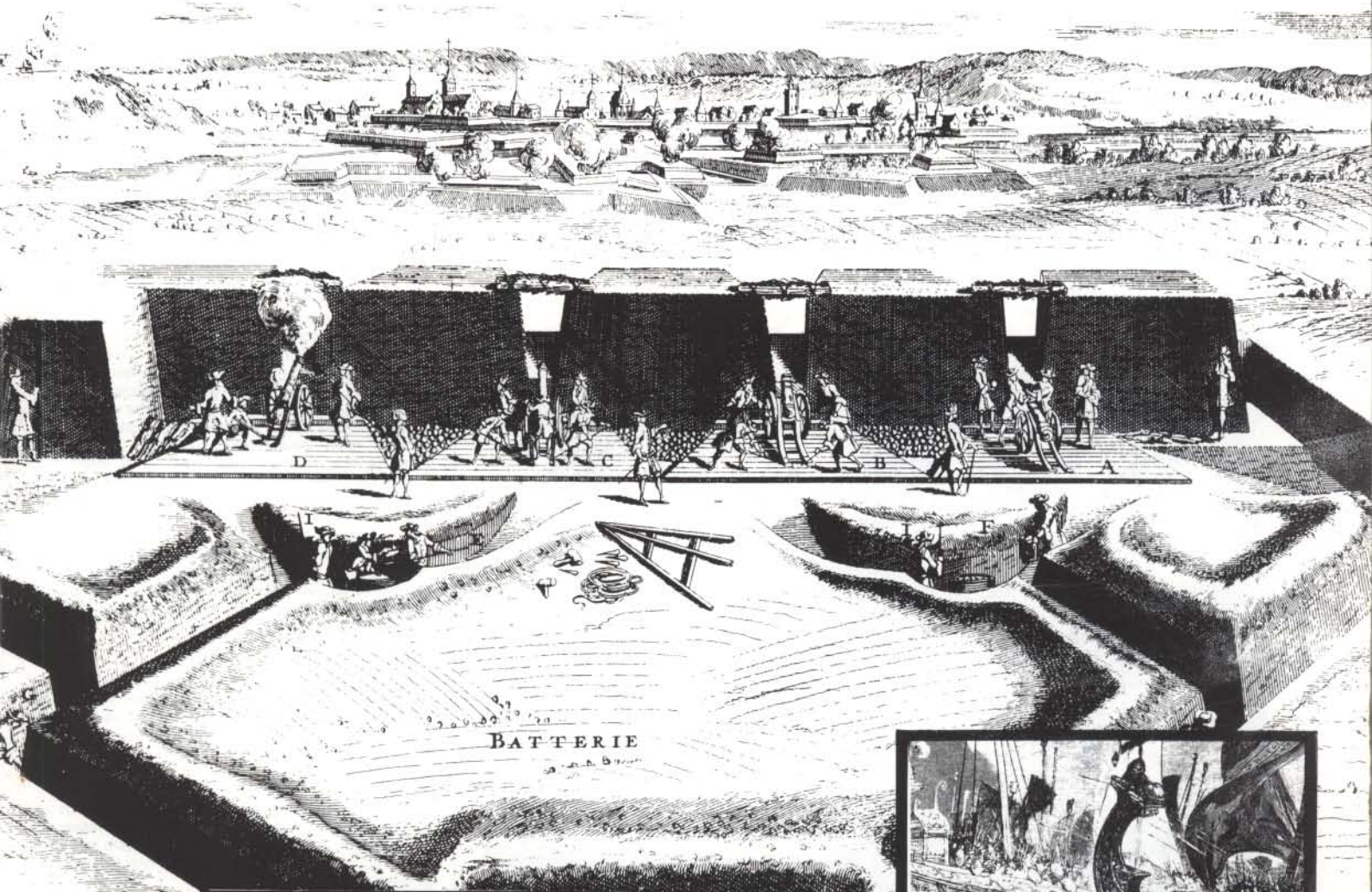
SO YOU WANT TO PLAY PBM HIDDEN MOVEMENT PANZERBLITZ OR SQUAD LEADER ??

Not so very long ago there were two formal Play by Mail Wargame organisations in the UK. AHIKS (see Phoenix 15) concentrated on the more conventional type of PBM games, while the National Games Club concentrated more on exotic variants, particularly Hidden Movement Unpiored games and Multi Player versions. When the NGC, as an organisation, fell apart I was the games organiser, and I continued to organise games as various personal contacts in the hobby approached me. I felt there was a strong need, however, for a regular, specialised, publication for PBM wargamers, to cover Waiting Lists, game starts and results, ideas, news and general PBM information. I had decided I couldn't do a magazine like that myself, and various attempts to start a section in other hobby magazines seem to have failed. Finally, I had further thoughts, and hit upon the idea of WAR DIARY.

WD is not a magazine, it is a news-sheet, and it will never be more than two sides. I propose however to publish fortnightly (and at least monthly). There will be no subscriptions, and no costs. WD will be supplied upon receipt of a SSAE, and as long as I have your SSAE in hand, you'll get the next issue (plus any previous ones you might request). The first issue of WD was published on the 9th April, the second is scheduled for the 23rd April. The first mentions the possibility of Multi-Player Hidden Movement Dreadnought and PBM Squad Leader, while No. 2 will discuss Squad Leader further, along with regular news features.

Available via WD, also for a SSAE, will be supplementary sheets covering PBM instructions, also special rules for Hidden Movement games such as Panzerblitz, Panzer Leader, Sniper, Squad Leader and Mech War 77, or other PBM wargame variants.

So if you want to play PBM wargames, or just keep up to date with what's happening in the PBM side of the hobby, send a SSAE to Geoff Barnard, 39A Mill Street, Guisborough, Cleveland, TS14 6AG.



THE ART OF SIEGE

RALPH VICKERS

It had to happen sooner or later --- a wargame with *no hexes!*

Actually two of the four games contained in SPI's latest quadrigame, **The Art of Siege**, are hexless. These games deal with the more recent sieges of the four covered --- **Lille**, the siege of the French by the Duke of Marlborough in 1708, and **Sevastopol**, the long and bitter French-British vs. Russians struggle during the Crimean War of 1854-55.

The conventionally treated "hex" sieges are Alexander's assault on **Tyre** in 322 BC, and the 1191 siege of **Acre** by Richard the Lionhearted.

Why have two of these games abandoned the traditional hexes? And we don't mean SPI has reverted to squares or some other form of dividing

the game map. These are unadorned hexless, squareless, circleless maps. In fact --- a nice authentic historical touch --- the **Lille** and **Sevastopol** maps are actually enlargements of contemporary maps showing in detail the actual siegeworks, defensive bastions and so on --- everything you could want to know about the constructions during the real campaign.

A hexless wargame is a radical departure from board game conventions. It might or might not (as will be discussed later) be a significant new breakthrough for wargaming. But first, why did SPI take this drastic step?

Rob Mosca in his Designer's notes in the **Sevastopol** rules explains it this way: "... Sevastopol's map contains no hexes. This was done because of the nature of building a trench system and the time/

distance scale between the two sides. Indeed, it (hexes) was found detrimental to the game as it imposed problems dealing with the construction of siegeworks."

Innovation is only justified if it provides a clear improvement. Is it justified here?

In one respect, definitely YES. To set up **Lille** and **Sevastopol** you almost just dump your units on the map, the besieged forces more or less anywhere inside the fortifications and the besiegers outside. There is plenty of time when the game begins to organize your forces more specifically. This is a marvellous convenience for those who chafe impatiently at the usual long and painstaking setting up of games.

Even better (to digress for a moment) the designers have taken advantage of a condition which allowed them to write the rules as rules (ideally) should be written: All you have to do to come to grips with these two games is skim through the rules once to give yourself a general orientation, then start at "square one". The Game Turn Sequence refers you at the end of each brief description of the Game Phases (well, almost always) to the appropriate section in the rules. So you can begin to play either of these games with only a hazy idea of what they are all about and be instructed by the rules step by step as you proceed.

The basic mechanics of play are fairly simple. The besiegers begin by constructing a siegeworks of trenches to approach the enemy's ramparts. These siegeworks consist of two types of rectangular counters (measuring 2 x 1 standard unit counters) — parallels and saps. The parallels represent horizontal trenches and gun emplacements; the saps are zig zag verticals connecting the various lines of horizontals. The object of the besiegers is to extend their siegeworks network conveniently close to the enemy's positions. Thus when they finally go "over the top" the assaulting troops will only have to cross a minimum of open ground to their objectives.

The more trenches the besiegers build the more their tactical options. They can have their troops concentrated in the trenches of one sector and suddenly redeploy them en masse in the trenches of another sector, and immediately after launch a surprise assault.

Meanwhile the besieged are busy repairing and strengthening their defensive bastions. Unit counters of both sides rarely work so hard as they do in these games. They are backprinted, not with the usual reduced combat strengths, but with picks and shovels.

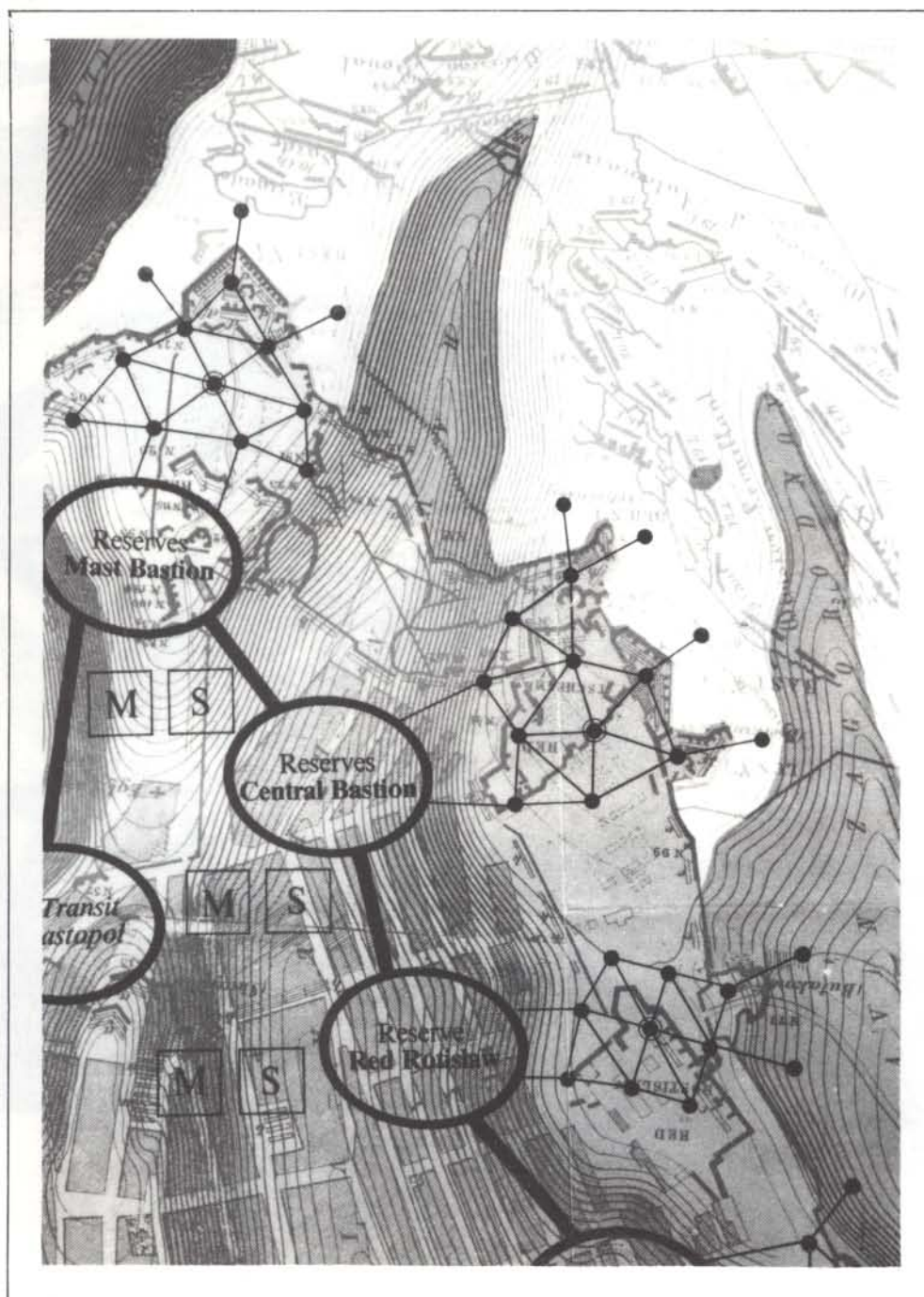
And while all this toil proceeds, both sides are harassing each other with exchanges of mortar and siege gun fire that can reduce to rubble works so laboriously constructed. There is a real flavour here of the sweat and toil of a siege.

But the fear of many wargamers about siege games is that they will be static enterprises with long periods of boredom and inaction. In fact, this is the very atmosphere the designers set out to create. (When you think of it, if they are to realistically simulate a siege, what else can they do?) but hold on — they also wisely kept a sharp eye on game pace and action. They arrived at a satisfactory compromise between realism and play interest. *Lille* and *Sevastopol* not only give us an adequate "feel" of a siege, but are also enough action to keep us determinedly picking and shovelling right to the end.

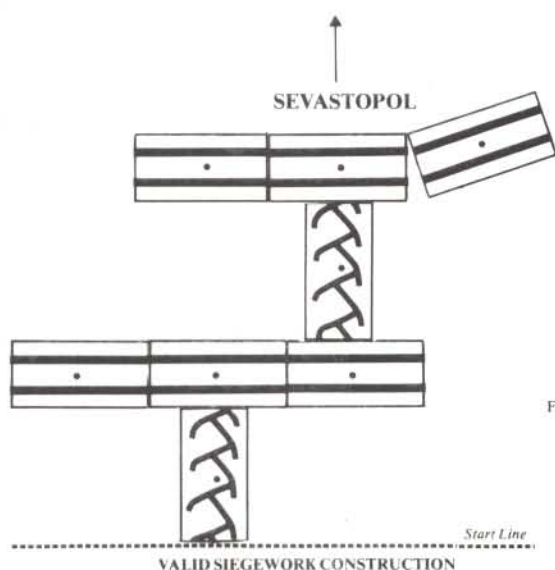
Gun ranges and open terrain movement are governed by measurements made with a "range finder". This is a common practice with miniaturists, so it should not cause board gamers any untoward problems. The rules governing this aspect of play are short and clear.

Once the besiegers unleash an assault, operational phases of the game are halted and the action is confined to a sort of mini-game on a tactical level. The objectives of the besiegers are any of a half dozen or more bastions. If the attackers survive their rush across the open ground in the hail of the defenders' field gun fire, they reach certain assault "points". From here movement and combat are channeled by lines connecting a network of these points through each bastion. The mechanics of melee are much the same as though the action were taking place on hexes, but it works *better*. (more on this in a moment.)

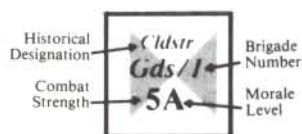
Other features which these games offer are off-map intervention by field armies of the besieged forces, attrition by weather and disease, siege battery ammunition supply, leaders' initiative (a change of your commander-in-chief can have a profound effect on your efficiency), and engineers to supervise construction (but not repairs). There are also some nice, realistic rules covering cases where the defenders can fire down on you if you are trying to dig a trench through a depression or a ravine. And just to make sure you aren't careless in positioning your parallels, there is a devastating rule on enfilade fire.



Playing pieces from SEVASTOPOL



ALLIED UNIT (Front)



ALLIED UNIT (Back)



Field Battery

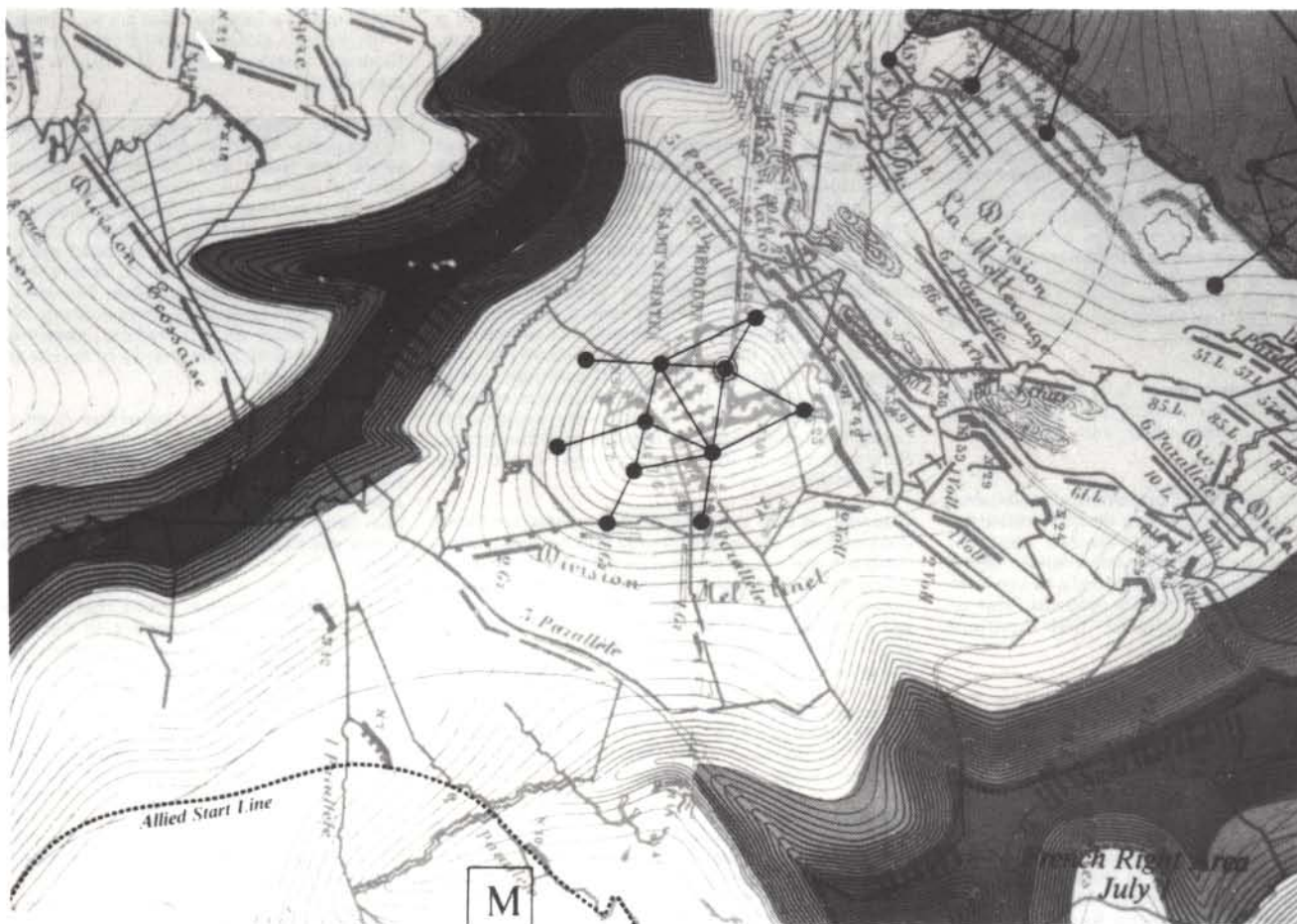


Siege Battery



Mortar 1



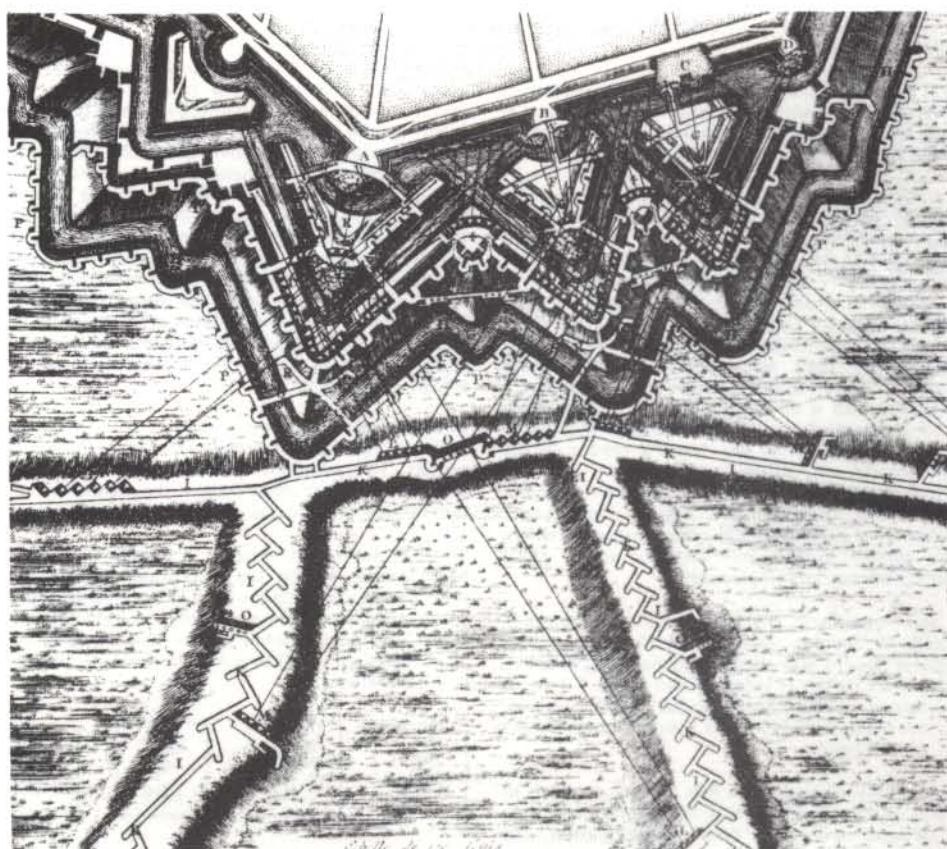


If you are impatient to unleash your assault and don't dig your trenches close enough, you will only do it once. Few troops will survive a long rush across open ground in the hail of defenders' field artillery fire — that's why the besiegers are provided with picks and shovels.

Once you have seen these two games it is obvious why the designers chucked out hexes. Not only were hexes not needed (and one of the rules of good designing of anything is to eliminate everything that isn't needed) but, as Rob Mosca said, they would have been a hindrance. It is far more logical to set up the siegework parallels and saps on a "bare" map than twist and distort them to conform to the rigid confines of hexes. Even the tactical meleeing works better on the point-to-point system than it would have done with hexes. Not every adjacent point is necessarily joined by a line. This makes sense because within a bastion there would be many walls and other configurations that would separate one group of troops from another. Joined points give more opportunities — realistic opportunities — for cutting off and bypassing enemy units than hexes would allow. Thus the mini-games acquire much more interest.

Looking back, the decision to eliminate hexes was obvious and logical, but that decision must have been a traumatic leap. SPI tried this years ago in a long-forgotten game (was it called 1812?) which was a laudable experiment but a disaster. Having been badly burned the first time they tried to do away with hexes, it must have caused some corporate misgivings when another attempt was proposed. Otherwise they would have re-explored this area long ago.

Well, this time it works. But there is still another bouquet to hand out. Usually when a designer trail blazes a new game system he makes a lot of errors and false steps. Usually it is not until the second or third time the system is used that enough bugs are cleaned out to "perfect" it. If SPI has another go at this system no doubt they will improve it, but as it stands it is workable, clean, and sufficiently developed.



The Golden Age of siege warfare was during the wars of Louis XIV when Marshal Vauban conducted 55 successful sieges and built over thirty new fortresses along the French frontier. Vauban wrote many treatises on both the attack and the defence of fortresses. The above is one of the illustrations taken from his works. It details the approach trenches leading to the parallel trench which held the siege batteries and the sappers who dug forward into the fortress ditches.

Let's hope that SPI (and other game publishers) explore further this new frontier. The success of this "hexlessness" raises the question whether some other games wouldn't have been more successful without the restraint of hexes.

Originally hexes were a major technological breakthrough in the hobby. The very earliest games (most of them unpublished) inevitably used squares, or the only slightly better brick pattern rectangles. Everybody could see that hexes were better, but they were just too damn hard to draw — until someone had the bright idea to turn the chart over to a computer. (It was probably Jim Dunnigan.) Hexes have been a fundamental element of the wargaming scene ever since. They are so handy, logical and ubiquitous that it is not surprising that no one has looked at them critically for a long time.

But if you stare at the maps of **Lille** and **Sevastopol** and think about it for awhile, you begin to see that hexes arewell....rigid and arbitrary..... and unrealistic.

Simply because hexes have become the established norm, reality on the wargaming board is distorted — needlessly. Take the most obvious example, those funny rivers we see all over our maps wriggling symmetrically along the hexsides. Merely to conform to hexes these important terrain features must be abstracted, their courses altered, their positions sometimes shifted for miles.

Movement must always be in exact multiples. For instance, usually infantry can move exactly twice as fast across clear terrain as it can through woods. Usually it can march precisely twice as fast along a road as across clear terrain. Does this even approximate reality?

Just to see for yourself, get a pad and pencil and work out this little problem: In the example above we can express the movement ratios as 4:2:1. Movement along roads is exactly four times as fast as movement through woods. Take your favourite game and work out what the real ratios should be. On a typical game these should come out more or less like 4.1:3.4:2.5. Now calculate the time/space distortions imposed on your favourite game by hexes, remembering to multiply the product by the number of game turns.

There is another unrealistic aspect of hexes which is not entirely their fault, but this deficiency is clearly shown by the point-to-point tactical system in **Sevastopol**.

On a typical game board a unit always exerts a Zone of Control on all six contiguous hexes (except perhaps sometimes across those wiggly rivers). But in real life (and in **Sevastopol**) this "ain't necessarily so". It is quite plausible that in the jumble of a defensive bastion opposing units could be "side by side" and yet not exert control over each other. Maybe they are separated by high walls. Maybe they are both in parallel trench systems. Or the situation is even more complicated. Maybe one unit is on relatively open ground while the other is well dug in on a rampart. In this case it is really not realistic to say that the troops on the open ground can exert just as much Zone of Control as their dug-in enemies can exert on them. ZOCs across hexsides are always "reciprocal" whereas in reality there are many instances where ZOCs should extend out but not in — ZOCs should often be "non-reciprocal".

All this unrealistic distortion could be avoided. Instead of bending rivers to conform to hexes, designers should give thought to bending hexes to conform to rivers. If infantry can move 1.3 times faster along a road than it can across clear terrain, why not make the road hex 1.3 times longer than a clear terrain hex?

All we really require of a hex is enough space to place a unit in it. For practical reasons a hex cannot be smaller in area than a unit counter, but there is no reason why, for instance, a road hex cannot be longer. (Even this practical limit could be eliminated if wargame publishers mounted their maps on cork boards and made the unit counters as little plastic flags mounted on pins, but that would raise costs enormously. Perhaps one day in the

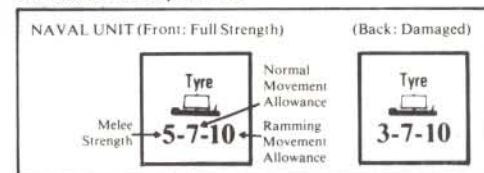
golden future we will all be able to afford such extravagances!)

There are rumours that Somewhere in England a brave designer is working on a game without hexes. Keep at it, whoever you are! Maybe one day you will be the father of a New Age in wargaming — a more realistic age.

But lest we be misunderstood, and at the risk of labouring our point, we should state that we are not advocating that all wargames should be played on "bare" maps requiring all movement to be regulated by a ruler or scale as miniaturists do. There are undoubted advantages to clearly defined areas. In essence we are saying that hexes should conform to terrain, not vice versa. This would mean, of course, that hexes would no longer be hexes — they would be elongated, or expanded, or dented along their rims to conform to the exigencies of terrain. These configurations would often give us more than six contiguous areas to some "hexes" — which would vastly increase the possible permutations of combat and movement. Surely this is an idea worth at least one or two exploratory forays?

Anyway, as it is the **Lille** and **Sevastopol** are likely distinct from any wargame map you have ever seen. They are *real* maps. It was a pity the art department doing the **Sevastopol** map chose to place blue land beside blue water, but aside from that both maps are striking and attractive. The scale of the **Lille** map is better suited to this game system than is **Sevastopol's**. On the **Lille** map you can see your units on their actual bastion positions whereas in **Sevastopol** positioning is more abstract and there is a great deal of "this unit is here but it is actually there" to contend with. But this is not a major difficulty once you get the hang of it.

These are two games which are a very interesting experiment, and are worth the consideration of everyone in the hobby who wants to keep up with the latest developments.



Because the ancient city of Tyre was situated on an island just offshore, **Tyre** is essentially a naval game. Armchair sailors will enjoy the detailed rules covering the battles of Triremes, Quinqueremes and Biremes, the manoeuvring (naval units must be faced correctly), the meleeing, the exhaustion of the galley slaves after a fast ramming run, the efforts of shipwrights to repair damaged vessels for the next battle. The Macedonian fleets must also bombard the city's walls with shipborne catapults to smash them into rubble — and even ram them! (And ramming can only be done from all-sea hexes!) Meanwhile the Tyrians are as busy as ants rebuilding their shattered defenses and strewing their beaches with boulders to discourage enemy ships from landing.

Finally the Macedonian fleets sail from their harbours loaded with troops and there is one grand assault. The attackers now have 16 mini-turns to achieve their two objectives — the Agendrium and the Temple of Hercules — or they lose.

There is quite a bit of detail in this game. At times, some people would say, too much. (has anyone ever polled wargamers to see if they faithfully try to observe every rule in a game? But once you get it all sorted out, patch up a few gaps here and there (e.g. the Mole rules) and memorize it all, the game is quite realistic.



Acre uses essentially the same land system as **Tyre**. For landlubbers it is a more interesting game. It not only features considerable besieging, but each turn there is also an appearance of Saracen relief armies for the Crusaders to contend with. It is an interesting situation competently handled.

The game is played on two levels, strategic and tactical. The strategic level involves general movement and re-deployment and the appearance on the board of a Saracen relief army, or two or three. Then there is either a tactical level involving bombardment and repairs, or assault, repair and regrouping.

Just about everything, except supply, is represented in this game. There are giant catapults such as "The Wrath of God" and "The Evil Neighbour" — fanciful names the Crusaders, not the designers, gave to these machines. There is underground tunneling, tunnel searching and subterranean combat, filling the fosses, repairing damaged walls, counter bombardments, ladder assaults, leaders, and detailed rules for fire and melee combat. The various forces involved include knights, men-at-arms, Archers of the Eyes, horse archers, cavalry, spearmen militia and Naptha Grenadiers. Plenty of colour and something for everybody.

These four games are a departure from the usual SPI quadrigame format. Each game has its own rulebook rather than the usual Standard Rules and Exclusive Rules, and the maps are larger. If you tried **Constantinople** and didn't like it, don't let this deter you from taking a look at these siege games because there have been a lot of improvements.

One interesting feature about these games is that they all give a prominent role to morale. This is an element of combat that many games ignore, but it is highly debatable whether a game can call itself a serious simulation if it does not include this factor.

It's all very well for a game designer to arm Alexander's forces with slings and arrows, but if the troops do not have the will to use those weapons what use are they? Or to put it a little more precisely, to what degree does the morale of Alexander's troops control the effectiveness of those weapons?

In battles, in addition to the ratios of the numbers of troops involved and the relative lethality of the weapons employed, there are human factors which can influence the outcome. These are such qualities as courage, stamina, fear, determination, discipline and so on.

The debatable point is how large a role should morale play in wargame combat simulations?

According to General Eisenhower, "Morale is the greatest single factor in successful wars." (The New York Post, June 23, 1945.) Napoleon said: "In war morale considerations account for three-quarters, the balance of actual forces only for the other quarter." (From a letter, August 27, 1808.) He also said (if memory can be trusted) that in battle the number of disabled men was not nearly as important as the number of men who were frightened. Many other military observers including Clausewitz, Liddel Hart — even Lenin — have made similar comments on the paramount importance of morale. Obviously morale is an important factor to some degree (the exact amount open to debate) so the designers of these games should be given credit for taking the trouble to incorporate it into their combat equations. Let us hope that this is a new trend.

And, let us hope that SPI continues to maintain the generally high standards they have achieved in these **Art of Siege** quads.



D&D

Notes from the Underworld

DON TURNBULL

A regular series about Dungeons and Dragons and other Fantasy/SF role playing games

Reader feedback would be welcome.

Part V Get Thee Gone

This time we will deal with the Cleric and his abilities, so step forward Cleric. Observe, first, that the name is deceptive — this is not the local vicar tempted to go underground in the hopes of raising extra cash for the steeple fund and carrying nothing more lethal than bell, book and candle. He is much more like a member of the religious orders of medieval knighthood. While dedicated to a deity, he is a skilled combatant in melee and can hand out the lumps with the best of 'em. Slightly weaker than the Fighter (he rolls his hits on a D8 rather than a Fighter's D10) and forbidden to use edged and pointed weapons, the Cleric is nevertheless a doughty wielder of the mace or the war-hammer and furthermore he has spell-powers similar to those of the Magic-User. He is a sort of portmanteau character.

A quick glance at the list of clerical spells gives the best indication of the main purpose of this character class. Whereas the Magic-User has access, given the right experience level, to a repertoire of very powerful offensive spells (of which Fireball, Lightning Bolt, Ice Storm, Cloudkill, Bigby's Crushing Hand and Power Word:Kill are a few self-explanatory examples) the clerical menu of spells contains virtually nothing of this nature. Instead his spells serve to fortify (e.g. Chant, which improves all is colleagues' and his own attack, damage and saving rolls), to protect (e.g. Resist Cold, Dispel Evil), to heal (e.g. Cure Wounds spells, of which there are a number of varying degrees of strength) and to vary local conditions to the benefit of his party (e.g. Find Traps, Part Water). Since some spells are reversible at will (e.g. Resurrection can be reversed to Destruction) he has a theoretical limited capacity for offensive spells, though use of such in the normal, rather than the reversed, form is more common (and some DMs rule that good Clerics are not allowed to kill, by spell means or otherwise). So the Cleric is not intended to be either a front-line fighter or a front-line spell-caster — his job is with the support troops further to the rear — though in fact he doesn't do a bad job at either.

To deal with the pugilistic side of the Cleric's nature first, little constraint is placed on him by the rules. He falls behind the Fighter of a comparable experience level so far as hit probability is concerned, he does not gain benefit from exceptional strength as does the Fighter, he has D8 for hits, he is more limited than a Fighter in weapon use and proficiency. But the differences are not all that great.

The restriction on use of edged/pointed weapons is blatantly a game device further to restrict the class. The reason given in the rules — that clerics are forbidden by their deities to shed blood — is clearly specious; a monster whose head is crushed by a hefty clout from a Clerical mace would shed blood just as profusely as one with a dagger in his guts. I don't object to the restriction on the class, but

perhaps a reason could have been advanced which held water better.

Turning to the 'magical side' of the Cleric, once the lower experience levels are passed, he gains access to slightly more spells than the Magic-User, though he has a shorter list of each spell order from which to select and there are only seven orders, as opposed to nine for Magic-User spells. Unlike the Magic-User, who must internalise (a horrid word, borrowed from educational philosophy; I will change it) ...who must learn his spells by poring over a spell-book, the Cleric has his spell repertoire bestowed on him from Above in return for correct 'service' — prayers and exploits — so does not need a spell book at all. Prior to the publication of the PH it was assumed by many that a Cleric did not have to select his spells before setting out for an adventure — he could select an appropriate spell when the circumstances demanded it so long as he had not 'used up his supply potential'. Now it is clear that the Cleric, like the Magic-User, must make his preparations beforehand and that these are in the form of prayers. But this is a much easier task for the Cleric — a first-level Cleric who did not select Cure Light Wounds would have some careful explanations to make to his companions unless they were already well-equipped with Healing Potions, or knew that they were going to a particular area where an alternate choice would be more helpful.

There are two factors militating against the effectiveness of Clerical spells with which the Magic-User need not be concerned. First, unlike Magic-User spells, Clerical spells have a chance of failing, depending on the wisdom of the caster. Though this may seem a drawback, it is not really so; even if the Cleric has a wisdom as low as 12, the chance of a given spell failing is only 5%, and if his wisdom is 13 or over his spells will always work. If a player decides to run as a Cleric a character with merely average wisdom, that's his business; even my doddering Goon-show Cleric Henry Crun, who is mildly surprised to have attained 4th level while still alive, has managed a wisdom of 13, which is his only characteristic greater than 9.

Secondly, pray as he might and perform loyal deeds as he might, whether or not a Cleric is granted a particular spell — or indeed any spell — of 5th order or greater depends on the whim of his deity, who might not for some reason feel well-disposed towards his devoted follower at that particular time. Details of this will become more clear when the DM's Guide is published, so I'm not sure at the moment just how great a disadvantage this could be; in any case, a Cleric must attain the 9th experience level before he has the chance of a 5th order spell, so it won't worry all that many characters unduly.

Clerical spells have one additional virtue as compared with Magic-User spells — while victims of the

latter are in most cases granted 'saving rolls', few clerical spells are subject to them.

Since I didn't talk about the saving roll process last time when talking about the Magic-User, I will do so now even though it is almost entirely inappropriate to the context. The chance to avoid, or partially to negate, the effects of magical attacks (and this applies to other forms of attack too, like Dragon's breath weapons) is determined by the Saving Roll. The original rules contained a Saving Roll matrix, and the DM's Guide will no doubt contain an up-dated version. The character cross-indexes his character class and experience level with the type of attack against which he is trying to save (e.g. Paralysis, Dragon Breath); the result is a number which must be equalled or exceeded with a roll of a D20 if the character is to save against that particular attack.

If the victim fails his saving roll then the magical attack has full effect — the character keels over, goes to sleep, is blinded or whatever. Depending on the nature of the spell, the effect on the victim can vary if he 'makes his save'. Saving rolls are not allowed at all in respect of certain spells, so the victim takes the full effect anyway (Sleep is one such). The effects of other spells (e.g. Charm Person) are completely negated by a successful save, so the spell has failed. In a third category come spells whose effects are reduced if a victim saves; for example the damage meted out by a Fireball is halved.

(Don't worry — each spell in the PH has a note indicating the effect, if any, of a successful save).

Certain characteristic scores and magical devices give saving roll modifiers. A high dexterity will give the character a saving roll bonus against physical spells such as Fireball or Lightning Bolt, while a low dexterity confers a penalty. A high wisdom confers a saving roll bonus against 'mental' spells such as Feeblemind, while a low wisdom carries a penalty. A Ring of Protection will give a saving roll bonus against all forms of magical attack. And so on. The system is, in reality, quite a simple one and speedy in execution.

So to return to the Cleric, when he casts a spell the victim cannot even attempt to save except in a few isolated cases.

This character class starts to emerge as rather an attractive one, don't you think? Though not quite such a potent spell-force as the Magic-User, particularly at the higher experience levels when the Magic-User can call on some really awesome powers, the Cleric is no magical fool, and his curative powers in particular are often of enormous benefit to a party. Though not such a muscle-man as the Fighter, the Cleric can hold his end up in melee pretty well. Not a bad combination, one would think — and I haven't mentioned the Cleric's

most important power yet. But apparently the Cleric is not a popular character class, according to a survey carried out by Lew Pulsipher (see the Letter Column of White Dwarf 11); I am truly surprised at this and look forward with interest to the results of the wider survey being carried out by the White Dwarf publishers.

I mentioned the Cleric's most important power. Some may disagree with this, saying that his fighting ability is more potent, or his spell-use, but I maintain my position. Fighters are there to fight and Magic-Users are there for spell-use; Clerics have the curative, supportive role I have already mentioned, but the power I am talking about is absolutely unique to the Cleric.

So far we have only talked peripherally about Experience Levels (yes — you are still reading the same article) and one day I really must explain them in more detail. For the moment, this must suffice. As a character gains experience in ways which will be revealed, he obtains promotion through a series of 'experience levels'. As he attains each successive level, so his abilities improve — hit probabilities rise, his own hit dice increase in number, his spell potential expands, his weapons proficiency is extended and so forth. Each experience level is successively more difficult to attain than the last and a character has to achieve more and probably take more risks to climb from, say, 6th to 7th level than from 1st to 2nd. (Yes, we have the word 'level' again in another context; I wish it were not so, but the pattern was set many years ago and old habits die hard, at least we have the 'floors' of a dungeon and the 'orders' of spells, if only I can remember to use them).

For the high-level character, then, his most important attribute is his experience level — lose one and it is a hard climb to regain it. He could lose his sword; there are other swords. He could lose his spell-book, there are other spell-books (though admittedly this is nearly as great a tragedy for the Magic-User as losing an experience level). He could even lose his life, and if there happened to be a Cleric around of a high experience level and whose deity was feeling in a good mood, even that life could be restored. But lose an experience level having gained the dizzy heights and it will be a long hard climb to regain it.

The most common way of losing an experience level is to suffer a hit from certain Undead creatures. These are the creatures of legend which exist in the twilight world between life and death. Count Dracula is a well-known example of the Vampire, one of the most powerful of the Undead, but in D&D there are Skeletons, Ghouls, Zombies, Wights, Ghosts, Wraiths, Spectres, Mummies, Ghosts, Shadows and Liches (and non-TSR sources have come up with a whole horde of others). Most of these have the property of draining an experience level if they score a hit on a character — a drain of life-force, so to speak — and the more powerful can drain two levels with a single blow. Add to this the fact that most Undead are immune to normal weapons and you have a class of monster with which no self-respecting adventurer would wish to tangle.

The most important attribute of the Cleric (there, I have got back to the point) is his ability to turn away, dispel or even command into service Undead creatures and the less powerful Demons and Devils. Not all Clerics can get rid of all Undead, of course; a Cleric of the first experience level would not be able to handle more than a mere Skeleton or Zombie, and even then the attempt might fail, while a large horde of twenty or so relatively weak Undead are beyond the power of any Cleric to turn (unless the DM's Guide rules afresh on this). But a powerful Cleric — say of the 10th experience level — is able to get rid of small numbers of most of the Undead monsters without any fear of failure, and stands a good chance of getting rid of the very powerful ones. Many a party has its Cleric to thank for emerging from an adventure at the same experience level as, or higher than, they started following an encounter with nasty-minded Wraiths or Spectres. Without a Cleric present, an encounter with Undead usually means the loss of experience levels — valuable experience levels.

Previously it was not clear how, or in what manner, the Cleric accomplished such a unique feat. Early in my own D&D experience, Alan Youde, famous

for his 'umbo series Dwarves, suggested to our group that the Cleric should stand in the path of the approaching Undead, raise his cross in his hand and shout "Get Thee Gone in the Name of the Lord!", whereupon the Undead would (if the requisite roll were made on the matrix) scuttle away and resolve to lead a new life, or vanish altogether. We adopted this convention, and though the PH does not go into great detail (yet another reason for our desire to see the DM's Guide) it appears Alan was at least partially right — the Cleric must step before the Undead, must speak (the actual words are not given) and must hold forth his Holy Symbol. I guess the form of words, particularly against powerful Undead, may be a mite more convoluted than Alan had it, but it's near enough to go along with for the moment.

The reason why the Cleric has such a power has prompted much debate in the D&D magazines, particularly in America where they really care about these things. Some say it is the power of the Cleric's deity — the Undead cannot face any sort of religious symbol and may even crumble to dust ('dispel', as TSR have it, since they were magically created in the first place) if the religious incantation/aura is powerful enough. One commentator, better known for his vanity than his common sense, stoutly avers that the religions must be compatible, so a Jewish Vampire could only be affected by a Jewish Cleric and would presumably rend a Buddhist Cleric limb from holy limb. Well, I'm all for seeking logical or consistent reasons for the D&D rulings (though I don't worry a great deal if I don't find them, so long as it doesn't detract from the game) but this goes far too far in game terms if nothing else — it's hard enough getting one high level Cleric into your party, let alone having to recruit droves of them, all with different beliefs and deities. In any case, such a motley collection of Clerics would never go down the dungeon in the first place but would stay at the surface fiercely arguing their various points of view.

This contention is not accepted by others (presumably because they could see the 'Jewish Vampire' trap) who say that the cross is a symbol of utter lawfulness (the Cartesian coordinate system) and that this is what the Undead cannot tolerate. An intriguing notion, but unfortunately not all the Undead are of nonlawful alignment, so that thesis is out.

My own view, for what it's worth, is that the whole process represents the ultimate triumph of Good over Evil — the cross has been a symbol of Goodness for much longer than 2,000 years. The fact that all Undead are of evil alignment is consistent with the thesis, but I'm uncomfortably aware that only Clerics of good alignment would be able to turn/dispel Undead if this thesis were true, and I anxiously await the DM's Guide for verification or, more likely, illumination. Evil Clerics would, of course, be able to control Undead and command them into service.

I have just noticed that this is the first time I have mentioned alignments. No wonder D&D novices get confused.

So there we have the Cleric. An important — most would say essential — character class, not so difficult to play as the Magic-User (the limited number and variety of the spells see to that) but not so easy and less convergent to play than the Fighter. And more versatile than either. A far cry from the Scion of the Steeple Fund.

Next time — well, I've already committed myself: it must be a look at experience. What it is, how to gain it, what to do with it and how to hang onto it.

Post Script: Since this article was written, the new combat tables have appeared, in the form of pre-views in issue 22 of The Dragon and issue 13 White Dwarf. These also include new saving roll tables and cleric — versus — Undead tables. The former show little change, though there are now saving rolls for items as well as for characters. The latter have been revised quite considerably, using D20 instead of 2D6 for instance. I am pleased to see that my guess about the mechanism whereby Undead are turned appears to have been correct — good clerics cause Undead to move directly away or to be destroyed; evil clerics can command them into service.

AVALANCHE

THE SALERNO LANDINGS



A Review of the Game Designers Workshop simulation

GDW's offerings have got bigger with time: first, "Battle of Midway" expanded the sea war scene into two maps — then came "Avalanche", again with a two-section map, portraying one of the key amphibious operations of the Second World War. Apart from the impressive maps covering the Salerno bay and plain at 1300 yards per hex, there are 960 counters representing all the units which did or could have taken part in the month-long battle. The units themselves are simulated at company and even platoon level: each unit is also identified properly, so fans of the Scots Greys, Sherwood Foresters, the Ox and Bucks, etc. are well served.

This is a massive game, involving a co-ordinated mass of small unit actions on a constantly moving front. Equally, it is not a beginner's game if played by two "green" players. But it could be a very good "club" game, where experienced players can act the part of Alexander or Kesselring, directing a number of less experienced players in divisional or even regimental command. The greenest beginner could always be found some small unit to command in this game. This parallels with the writer's own beginnings in board wargaming — one night after a club committee meeting, I was enveigled into joint command of the American forces in a session of "Combat Command" (for all you young 'uns, that was the forerunner of "Panzer '44", that was!).

Like "Combat Command" and "Panzer '44", this game also uses tank silhouettes by type to identify armoured units. Unlike the other two games, "Avalanche" has a considerable volume of rules and optional rules to give added realism and — need I say it — add complexity.

The Stacking Rules have come under a certain amount of flak from SPI's top brass. To be fair, the offending rules are not something you can have a quick browse through before launching into a game session: on the other hand, I should hesitate to do the same with some of SPI's magnum opuses (or is it opii). Suffice to say that with a fair knowledge of Army organisation i.e. the make-up of regiments and divisions, the stacking rules are easy to follow.

In addition to the ground forces, there are air support factors (no counters), naval forces represented by unit counters (battleships, cruisers and monitors individually, destroyers as representative counters) and Italian railway artillery (static). The map is contoured and relative height becomes a factor in combat situations.

On the whole, this is an excellent simulation of a very complex and confused battle and well worth learning the rules to play. I would recommend a reading of Hugh Pond's excellent account of the real battle, entitled "Salerno", which has been republished in paper-back format. This gives much of the flavour of the simulation (and vice versa) and a good few ideas on how to, and how not to, conduct a battle of this nature.

This is one of the best simulations of an amphibious operation I have come across so far — well worth buying and very rewarding to play. Highly recommended.



(Note — missiles detonate in the combat phase which is alternate, i.e. one side fires a ship/detonates a missile, then the other, then first again and so on. Initiative is by die roll for first shot).

This scenario further illustrates the principle of simplicity in attack being the greatest ally. I recommend approaching as Martians along the X axis as it is by far the easiest to handle. Then defeat Ares in detail methodically. Keep manoeuvre simple but subtle, not complex and confusing.

I recommend this scenario to any gamer, and strongly.

Scenario Four

An unusual scenario as the defender (the Martian) is greatly tempted to withdraw most of his forces before battle begins! Fighters should be released before any withdrawal to protect the base, which cannot be withdrawn. (The rationale behind the withdrawal should be viewed within the context of the strategic game: preservation of Martian ships, difficult to produce and de-escalation of the fight so any loss can be played down, and a victory hailed as giant-slaying heroism). The Martians *must* destroy at least 1 Ares ship if they effect a withdrawal. Ares must concentrate on the formation firing in this one, I feel.

All in all a finely balanced scenario which is good fun to play; the Martian should consider his withdrawal carefully and the loss in firepower that this would mean. One serious criticism — there are not enough fighter counters. Unused missile counters may be used as fighters, but there really should be more fighters. S.P.I. have confirmed that the limits of the countersheet are *not* limits to the OOB.

Scenario Five

Ares attack a small Martian Garrison at Juno which must fight alone until the arrival of the Relief Force. As in scenarios 1, 2 and 4 the base must be neutralised and *not* destroyed. Ares first decision upon entering the map is what to do about the Martian Garrison. The alternatives include:

- I) clobber the garrison with a combined missile and laser attack.
- II) conserve the missiles for use against the relief force by only using laser fire and formation fire.
- III) a mix of I) and II)

I prefer routine I) above. The scenario is very enjoyable but again hard work. I recommend, to make things easier for each side, that those ships which are to fire in the same formation be stacked in the same cube and to stack no other ships within that cube. This will result in stacks 3 ships high and a clearer and more efficient mind. This is a personal preference. Again, I advise the Ares and Relief Force to advance along the X axis and to fire along it, which will facilitate rangefinding. It should conserve fuel, too. Manoeuvre and initial deployment, especially of the base, are very important, as it will probably delineate where the Martian will make his stand.

By this time - I recommend playing the scenarios in order as a sort of P.I. (programmed instruction) exercise — I was beginning to work out a tactical routine with special emphasis on fire discipline. For example

- a) Preferably fire at ships; fighters do not count for V.P.'s
- b) Try to keep out of the way of missiles or shoot 'em down before they detonate.
- c) Cripple ships (destroy their burn capacity) to end the scenario in your favour and let the recovery table do the rest. This is a viable alternative to formation firing.
- d) Ares should prevent Martians from firing at attenuated ranges of 1-3 on table 10 by manoeuvre and in this scenario in particular.
- e) Martians firing on table 12 at long range place Ares at a disadvantage as missiles are out of range. Fighters lucky enough to get on table 6, even at long range, can scare Ares silly.
- f) Decide which of the CRT's to aim for, and decide which type of damage is your priority to inflict. Deploy your ships accordingly. (Basically in or out of formation; concentrated fire on 1 target or dispersed fire).

BATTLEFLEET MARS

PART 2 THE TACTICAL GAME

JOHN EVANS

The tactical game in **Battlefleet Mars** can be played separately or in conjunction with the strategic game. The map is a pair of squared grids which together combine to simulate combat in 3 dimensions. There are 2 counters for each spaceship (and each base, missile and fighter) with one of these 2 counters being placed on each grid. The grids are labelled X-Y and X-Z, each letter being a dimension (X obviously doubled), hence the grids may be mentally juxtaposed at 90° to give one a 3-D picture of what is going on.

Movement is "strictly Newtonian" — by momentum. This momentum is carried over from turn to turn and is indicated by a velocity marker placed under the counter. Velocity may be increased or decreased, "stopped" and reversed by directional acceleration which expends burn points and consumes fuel. Different ships have different burn and fuel capacities. Ships are catapults, transports and miners. Fighters and missiles may be launched from ships and bases; fighters move in a similar way to ships, missiles move slightly differently. Bases do not move. Ships and bases are deployed on the game map by one of two set routines.

Ships, bases and fighters have combat by laser fire, each type of ship having a different laser strength. Bases are strongest, then catapults, transports miners and fighters in that order. Range is determined by a "true distance table" which gives the range in cubes. Combat resolution is given by a die roll on one of 12 (!) CRT's, decided by adding laser strength of the firing ship(s) to a further but prior die roll. Destruction, damage or no effect will result, depending on the die roll on the relevant CRT, cross-indexed with range. Ships, fighters and bases fire singly unless they fire in formation. Formation will increase the chances of a hit, but ships firing in formation must be close to one another, be 3 in number and moving at the same rate in the same 3-D direction. Sounds complex but isn't. Missiles may be launched and detonate upon striking their target, frequently causing large-scale damage. Damage can be repaired during the game at a set point in the game turn and ships may under certain circumstances be withdrawn from the battle.

6 scenarios are provided, and if the tactical game is played within the strategic game many more will be generated. Scenarios can be easily created and here's how I found the 6 provided in the game:

Scenario One

Counters look good in this "shoot-out" at the O.K. Corral. It is well balanced and good for getting into the run of play. Counters saying "fired" would help, or alternatively a "fired" rosta.

Scenario Two

Introduces players to the use of missiles. As in the first scenario, manoeuvring around the base can be fun.

Scenario Three

This is my favourite scenario. A force of Martian miners and catapults, equipped with fighters for the first time, attack a system of 6 Ares bases and 2 transports. All Ares units are armed with missiles. Manoeuvre is very important as the bases are static: the Martian should attempt to take on the bases one at a time, and destroy the transports — the Ares mobile reserve — as soon as possible. Formation shooting is recommended for the Martian, and at long range, so that the Ares bases' missiles are out of range. The Martian should attempt to ensure that such formation shooting occurs on table 12, not just because it is the most deadly, but also because the statistics will simplify to recognisable parameters and hence a steady plan can be followed and success rate monitored. The 1 in 6 chance of blowing an Ares base into oblivion with 1 volley should not be passed up! But at no time should the Martian task force enter the Ares cross-fire. (Why? Because it's deadly).

Ares should guard the precious transports. Martian fighters in particular may try to hunt them down as the fighters have everything to gain and nothing to lose. Ares should always salvo missiles in multiples of two as a general rule of thumb — at least one out of each pair should then get through.

Players may agree as a sporting gesture to withdraw fighters with their laser capacity destroyed. This will reduce confusion, although it is arguable that this may weaken the Martian position against a careless Ares player.

Gripes concerning this scenario;

- I) Not nearly enough fighter counters and arguably missile counters.
- II) Damage nomenclature slack — as in other scenarios.

Scenario 6

For the enthusiast. Martians withdraw ships in this battle for Mars for a counterstroke, gaining V.P.'s but Martians must hold Mars or lose, whatever the V.P. situation. Quite a tightrope to walk. A big scenario involving hard work, but is likely to be rewarding.

I'd like to make a few further remarks on the tactical game:-

- a) **Formations** — the composition of formations can be interesting to tinker with; clearly 3 catapults is a bad idea as you are bound to get on table 12, hence not utilising your die roll which is normally added to laser strength (laser strength = CRT number). Worth considering before deployment especially.
- b) **Ships** — I really like the counters, especially their names; "Rock Music", "Shazan" for example. Very nice.
- c) **Fighters** — More counters, please, S.P.I.
- d) **Damage** — Clear up of nomenclature desirable.
- e) **Scenario Victory Conditions** — the possession of an asteroid/planet criteria could be clearer. "Seriously damaged" should be explained (sec. d.)
- f) **Neutralising bases** — remember to find 16.43.
- g) **Withdrawal** — consider it. (No offence)
- h) **Stacks** — could be big and difficult to use, but not necessarily so.
- i) **"Fired" counters** — (or similar) may be desirable as it is difficult in a large action to remember which ships have shot, especially when fighters are involved.
- j) **Cargo capacity** — is unclear and I believe that both fighters and missiles can be carried by one ship on the ratio 1 fighter = 2 missiles. Thus, a base or catapult could carry 4 missiles or 2 fighters or 2 missiles and 1 fighter. This will only occur, however, when using the tactical game within the strategic game.
- k) **Questions for S.P.I.:**
 - I) What is the difference between "Salvo" and "Launch" or are they two words for the same thing?
 - II) With reference to Case 27.17 — is a scenario over when one side has un-crippled ships and the other side un-neutralised bases? (Note, I would imagine not).

Having said all this about the Tactical and Strategic games, I feel I must say that I like Battlefleet Mars and recommend it. It is complex at first, but soon play flows easily and effortlessly. It is a subtle mix of economics, politics, space travel and combat and the overall effect is very good indeed. A bit of a gem.



BOOK REVIEW

HAMISH WILSON

Siege warfare was the poor reply to massive fortification which pre-gunpowder tacticians were forced to employ when they found their armies encamped before the massive curtain walls of their opponent. It was, I believe, Napoleon who said, "He who stays within his fortification is defeated" and it would seem that history gives him the right. History as displayed in such splendid works as Steven Runciman's "A History of the Crusades" which has been published by Penguin in their 'Kestrel' imprint. The three volumes of this scholarly and readable work cost £2.95 a piece but the price is small compared with the great value of these extremely well bound paperbacks. (If all paperbacks were this well bound the hard backs would be out of business). A total of sixteen maps, two fold out tables of genealogy and (not counting bibliographies) over twelve hundred pages of text takes the well treated reader through the enthralling story of the Crusades. The trilogy was finally completed twenty five years ago and like all good things is none the worse for it's age.

A mixture of siege and open mobile warfare was to be the pattern for a long time after the Crusades and it was not until the end of The Hundred Years War that the first palls of cannon smoke were to be seen drifting across battlefields. As well as seeing the end of the age of chivalry and the upturning of many of the ways of life in both France and England, The Hundred Years War was to bequeath us astonishing tales of valour and victories won against great odds with troops led by their own Kings. Names like Charles the Wise and The Black Prince and Battle Honours like Crecy, Poitiers and Agincourt echo down the years but for all the dates and politics which fourth form history gives us what was the life like in those days and what was it that moved the leather jerkined soldiers of the day? Some part of the answers to those questions may be found in two books which deal with the period. Alan Lloyd, who will already be known to many from his work on trench warfare, has written a brief but cogent history of the period called "The Hundred Years War" which is published by Hart-Davis, McGibbon at £5.95, as part of their British at War series. Well illustrated in monochrome with pictures of old prints and photographs of ancient tombs and with upwards of half a dozen maps, this book will do very well as an introduction to a very complex and interesting period. For a more detailed, useful and, to my taste, meatier read, then look to "The Hundred Years War" (so what else can you call it?) by Desmond Seward which is published by Constable at £6.95. This is also well illustrated with plates and line drawings to support details of the text — there's a hint here of the SPI 'Modular' approach — and some two or three maps of a general sort, together with what I would prefer to call battle plans of all the significant actions. Where Mr. Lloyd provides the bones of the history, Mr. Seward gives us flesh on the bones and spices the whole with wit, insight and humour. More detailed and more fun is my verdict.

While dealing with this subject let me briefly mention a book which has some relevance and a great deal of interest. It is an account of the archeological expedition to Masada, Herod's great fortress and the site of the last stand of "The Zealots". I have always found something of interest in tales of discovery but this book is doubly interesting in that it tells of the discoveries and also of the siege itself. This richly illustrated Abacus paperback costs £3.95 and is called "Masada" with author Yigael Yadin telling a many layered story of excitement which will stay with the reader long

after the book is finished, and which is a source of valuable information on Roman siege tactics.

From the Middle East to the Far East and from 73 A.D. to 1942 and to the retreat from Burma. That's the start for Brigadier E.D. "Birdie" Smith's book "Battle for Burma" which the indefatigable Messrs Batsford have published at £8.75. This is a most useful book in that it provides a general look at a series of actions and campaigns which have been dealt with in detail in other, earlier works. Brigadier Smith has provided an excellent assessment of the conflicts and congruencies in the upper echelons of the Allied command which includes a very honest portrait of the anglophobic "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell. For all his dislike of the British it is clear from this account that this energetic American Officer was cast in a mould which senior British officers admired, especially his reaction to the defeat and retreat "We got the hell licked out of us. It was humiliating as well. We ought to have found out why it happened and return." and that's what the rest of the book is about. The process of finding out and returning which was to result ultimately in the complete and crushing defeat of the Japanese 28th and 33rd armies. Twenty three photographs and twelve clear maps support the text of a book that confirms the very high standards of the Batsford 'Battle' series of books.

Another paperback now and it's from Penguin again. You may have sat up to watch the astonishing A.J.P. Taylor's television lectures which were known collectively under the title of "The War Lords". I know that I made a noble attempt to follow the lectures but, following a lengthy day's labour, more often found myself lulled to sleep despite the great energy and attack with which Professor Taylor informed his work. You will see that I am glad that the lectures have now been published in book form for, while one may not agree with all that he has to say, there is nothing which he offers us which is not stimulating, original and offering further insights into material with which we may believe ourselves to be already familiar. The six lectures covered the five war leaders, Churchill, Roosevelt, Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin, and the last looks at Japan where, Professor Taylor suggests, there was no overall war lord. As well as the text there are numerous photographs and the whole costs £1.50. A small price for what will be an interesting and valuable book.

Volume Three of "A Dictionary of Battles" by Brigadier Michael Calvert and Brigadier Peter Young has just been published by New English Library and covers the period from 1715-1815. It's an astonishing book which will be of value to any student of military history in that it covers all battles whether naval or land battles and it seeks to cover the entire world. I must confess to being unable to comment about how comprehensive the coverage of, say, China is, since I have never studied the history of that country in that kind of detail, but here we learn about "The White Lotus Rebellion" (1796-1806). Two years later William Bligh, of 'Bounty' fame, was once again involved in mutiny in "The Rum Rebellion" in Sydney, Australia. The list of astonishing and obscure odds and sods with which the book is sprinkled is extensive enough to keep any well informed browser well content with new and suitably esoteric information, and that's apart from the enormous amount of information about battles which are a bit more famous than the Rum Rebellion. The book is divided into eleven sections. The first six are essentially geographical divisions and show what was happening around the world. The next five sections deal with the American Revolution, the French Revolutionary Wars, the Peninsular War, the Napoleonic Wars in Europe and the last section deals with the world wide reverberations caused by the little Corsican gunner. Twenty four maps show the sites of the battles mentioned in the text and the print is large enough to avoid the worst excesses of eye strain usually associated with vast books of this sort. £11.95 will secure a copy of this very valuable, indeed essential, book for any student of the art of warfare or of military history. By the way, Volume Four has already been published and takes us from 1816-1976. The authors are working backwards and I have a great desire to take a look at volume one but that's the past that's in the future.

One of the most prolonged and bloody conflicts of the last few years has been that which involved

America in a military commitment in South East Asia for the best part of twenty years. I'm referring to Vietnam and now that the dust from that war has largely settled we are starting to see the first books on the history of the war appear. Salamander Books have a very fine contribution to make to this part of the bookshelf with a large format book called "The Vietnam War". The book is edited by Ray Bonds and fourteen contributors have been brought together to make up what has to be one of the most impressive books about the general history of Vietnam that is currently available. There are two preliminary essays dealing with the hardware and then with the history of Indo-China up until the start of American involvement. The rest of the 'chapters' deal with aspects of the war from both the military and the political points of view. Perhaps the most poignant contribution is that of the Forward which is written by General William C. Westmorland in which he makes the point, again, that the removal of a nation's will to fight is as sure a guarantee of success as defeating him in the field. He adds, in the final paragraph, "... the essays have been written by a diversity of able historians ... although I cannot agree with all their interpretations ... they are informative and provocative and thus conducive to helping democratic peoples to learn from the trials, errors, failures and successes that occurred in the course of a long, frustrating and tragic war ... in Vietnam." There is little to add to that. "The Vietnam War" is a highly illustrated account of the war which will be of great use as information and history and it is published by Salamander books at £8.95.

Forty years ago this October Lieutenant Prien took his U Boat, U.47, into the British naval base of Scapa Flow and, making something of a mess of his target practice, took three shots with a total of seven torpedoes to sink the 29,000 ton battleship H.M.S. Royal Oak. There have been two books published in paperback about that dreadful Friday the 13th, when they entered the Flow, and about the sinking of the ship at about one o'clock on the Saturday morning or did Prien and U-47 perform that almost impossible feat of seamanship? If you read "The Royal Oak Disaster" by Gerald S. Snyder, an American author who has devoted a good deal of time and effort to researching the various accounts of the time in question then you will have no doubt at all that Prien was responsible and that the mystery, if any, arises from Admiralty embarrassment about impregnable Scapa Flow being penetrated by an enemy submarine. That book is published by Granada in a Mayflower paperback at 95p and with maps and photographs to support the text, makes very good value. The other book was published ten years before Mr. Snyder's and has now been re-issued in a paperback by Hamlyn's. Costing 80p, "Black Saturday" is by Alexander McKee and presents one or two questions which still require answering. McKee is able to show that in almost every respect the story in Prien's Log is inaccurate and by the end of the book one is left wondering why for the author is not concerned to preserve the old canard about sabotage or internal explosion. Indeed he states that the ship was torpedoed. Perhaps the question that arises is, "By Whom?" Whatever the answer, and I'm not in the business of providing one, you'll be fascinated by the arguments which a comparison of these two books will give rise to, and you'll be able to devise an interesting scenario for one of the submarine games because all the tide data is contained somewhere between the two.

I must mention this last volume briefly since it has arrived on the day that I'm writing this column and I haven't yet had time to read it properly but I believe that it will prove to be one of the most important books to come to press this year. It's called, "Operation: World War III" and, where General Sir John Hackett and Brigadier Sheford Bidwell have offered us fictitious scenarios for this event — which I devoutly hope doesn't happen — but this book is the secret American Plan 'Drop-shot', which was their contingency plan for an atomic war against the Soviet Union in 1957. This is not a gag this thing's for real and just thumbing through it makes the hairs on the back of my neck stand up. These are the papers which were being discussed at the hottest point of the Cold War and Arms and Armour Press publish at £5.95. More in depth next time!



Feedback Comments

What is your procedure over publishing of letters in Mailcall? — It seems they are all written by a select group of about 10 — a closed shop situation? (I can only print what I get!! Editor).

I would especially be pleased about articles concerning "solitaire wargaming". (Hopefully another solo article up and coming in the next (?) issue. Editor).

A little lacking in your usual text-breaking-up graphics. Issue 17. (Sorry folks — I submitted too much material, hopefully this will not re-occur. Editor).

The back-stabbing is already starting towards W.W.W. and Keith Poulter. Jealousy I presume! (See Editorial)

Grapevine is, as always, very interesting and informative. Please keep politics out of it, even in jest. (See Editorial).

28. Napoleonic compared. Very perceptive indeed. I certainly learnt a bit about the period from this article.

I'm sure an article on these lines on the WWII East Front would go down well — there are plenty of games at all levels on this subject. (You the reader are the only source of this sort of material! Editor).

14. What's a "Do-it-Yourself" game kit? (Reduced map, paper counters and rules all within the magazine).

Your article series "Books in Review" is very useful from my point of view, you can add an additional page for this article.

For me an article on 'Book Reviews' has no place in a wargaming magazine. My low mark for this article reflects my attitude to the concept more than the content. (I believe that many gamers want to "read round" their subject — this column makes them aware of what is available. Editor).

As self-confessed fanatic of the game, I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate the person responsible for the inclusion of the AIRWAR EXTRAS in Phoenix 17 — I had suggested similar additions to the game, in a letter to SPUK some

time ago — and am hence glad that someone else has been thinking along the same lines.

I would however like to make several corrections/additions to the data given:-

Saab Viggen:-

a) Although the AJ37 version (in service with the RSAF since June 1971) was primarily an attack aircraft — whose air-to-air weaponry was comparatively simple, the JA37 version — introduced in 1978 is an interceptor (with secondary attack capability) and has a sophisticated UAP 1023, X-band pulse doppler radar — integrated with the radar-guided 'Skyflash' missile.

The Skyflash missile is the primary armament of the JA37 — being a medium range missile whose performance — in all aspects — is better than that of current US Sparrows.

Thus the neglect of any 'RH' capability for the JA37 must be considered an error, as must the lack of Lock-on data.

b) While I agree with the use of AIM-9 Sidewinder missiles (usual AA armament = 2 Skyflash + 2 Sidewinders + 30mm cannon) I consider it unlikely the new interceptor will use early models — the improved version being more likely.

c) I suggest your AIRWAR author learns to spell VIGGEN.

Lightning F.6

d) While Lightnings were introduced in West Germany by the RAF in 1964, the West German air force has never used them.

I consider the AIRWAR game system to be extremely playable — despite the aura of complexity which always surrounds it — I play it solitaire, which presents no problem, and find bombing/ground attack scenarios particularly suitable for this — which are infinitely variable due to the wide selection of aircraft and targets available. Additional aircraft serve to further increase the systems versatility and I would welcome a complete extension kit consisting of up to 30 more aircraft — together with counters (a sheet of 100 should be more than sufficient) — additional map sections would also be useful — perhaps with land contours on? Since I have found low level flying (250' — 1000') very absorbing when using varying ground levels (many times I have nearly driven an F-111 into a hillside when approaching a heavily protected target).

Carl Lee

Comments re Phoenix 17.

SINAI GAME PROBLEM: Quite interesting but as I didn't know that rule it was impossible to work out the solution. It's a doubtful rule anyway (9.13 I think — if retreat onto another unit, eliminated if that retreated) when coupled with the doubling in defence rule, given as retreat. Do the Israelis fall back onto a weak battalion-size unit, and then surrender when that's overrun or destroyed? Unlikely. Normally this rule works as there is no defence-doubling rule, but in this case I feel the retreating unit either counts singly in addition to the unit it retreats onto, or even at double strength.

GRAPEVINE: All very well saying when and where one can get games, but doesn't make any critical comment on them. What I want to know is what a game's about, value for money, and how good it is (etc). New games could be reviewed on (say) 1 column basis, and major ones on a page (e.g. Kesseling). In depth analyses are not too much use except for games which are very common, in particular S&T issue games. Overall an interesting and stimulating issue — I hope my comments are of use.

David McKennan.

(Grapevine reports on Games still in the pipeline and is not a review column! Phoenix policy of game review depends totally (or almost) on what you the reader supply — the comment about in depth reviews comes back to the perennial problem of writing about any game — only a small proportion of the readers may have it. I have made it my aim that articles should be interesting to read whether you have the game or not — am I succeeding? Editor).

Continued overleaf

One comment on the Phoenix format: surely it is not necessary to split up articles as much as you do at present (especially cutting off the last 2 paragraphs or so) and then put the bits at opposite ends of the magazine. This makes it rather difficult to read the magazine from beginning to end coherently, and is definitely a point upon which Phoenix falls down in comparison with most other magazines — I realise that competitors are often helped by the availability of advertising material to 'fill' pages, whereas Phoenix has few adverts. I still think that you could improve on this point quite easily, however.

The content of the magazine is definitely improving, but there are still (to my mind) too many analytical, boring articles — often ideas, like that put forward by J.B. Poole in Phoenix 16 (Solo Boardgaming) are drawn out too much, and written in a rather rambling style — same comment goes (dare I say it?) to your editorial in the same magazine issue — thank God you only had about 1/3 of a page to fill!

Thanks anyway — I realise that it is much more difficult to suggest than to implement suggestions, and I think that overall you do a good job. Long live British Boardgaming!

Simon N. Goodwin.

(It would appear that you prefer short articles Simon, but this is not the case with most Phoenix readers, I also believe that most feel that there is adequate meat to most of the articles. It is interesting that the article you selected as an example had a very reasonable rating of 6.36 on feedback. No comment on the Editorial — hopefully that is not a common opinion??! Editor).

May I attempt to complement Jeff Parker's excellent article on Napoleonic wargame design by pointing out that he rather ignores the operational level game where **Napoleon at Bay** (Operational/Tactical Studies Group) has recently marked a massive advance; other games in this category (besides the **Leipzig** mentioned) include **1812**, **La Grande Armée** (both SPI), **Le Grand Empire** (Simulations Canada), **Napoleon** (Gamma 2 & AH) and **Napoleon's Last Campaign** (Rand) (Rand's

Wellington in the Peninsula I believe never reached this country). In case readers are using Parker's piece as a guide to the battle games available may I add: **La Bataille de Preussisch-Eylau** (Martial Enterprises), **Eylau** (Wargamer 2), **Friedland 1807** (Imperial Games) and **Albuera/Vittoria** (Wargamer 8).

Peter Hutton

Jeff did not ignore any particular game, rather he selected certain games to make his point. However the above list will help gamers appreciate the wide spread of Napoleonic games. Editor).

I am disturbed by Doug Davies' attempt to cast doubts over the distribution of 3W's Silver Hexagon awards, in Grapevine, Phoenix 17.

The first vote was taken through The Wargamer's Feedback sheet, and was therefore dependent on the percentage of readership replying, as is the case with any award. The second vote was taken by ballot and was publicly counted at Battlefield One, where 100 gamers qualified the earlier decision.

3W's have made it repeatedly clear that the awards mean little at this time, but that as 3W gathers strength (i.e. members) and thence representation they hope to build up some real prestige for them. Had Doug Davies felt so strongly about these "hobby-wide awards" (his sarcasm) he could have voted too. The winning of four of the awards by the home team seems strange 'til it's realised the impact 3W has had on the boardgaming scene in Britain.

Apropos of this impact, it is not surprising (to 3W members anyway) that Keith Poulter pulled more votes for the gaming personality award than Jim Dunnigan or Charles Vasey. In the last two years, who else has:

a) Established a new magazine which has doubled in size and grown increasingly intelligent and interesting, as well as publishing a new game each issue?

b) Established a new games company utilising and encouraging British talent for British boardgames,

and which sells all games by other publishers (except SPI) at lower prices than does SPUK?

c) Established a "club" (or more properly ORGANISATION) which has in the last year held more venues for wargamers to meet and to play than SPUK have done?

Unlike Doug Davies I see nothing sinister in Simulation Games 'taking over' The Wargamer's stock of games. Subscribers to the magazine receive their free games and these are later published separately by SG to make a legitimate profit. The method has precedent: "Kharkov" which I received "free" with my S&T subscription would cost me £6.85p from SPUK now! Need I add that "Kesselring" (a far more original game despite its teething troubles) from The Wargamer would now cost me £5.64p from SG?

I note too, without rancour or axe to grind, that The Wargamer is currently a far better magazine than The Phoenix which is only now taking its first unsteady steps towards independence (and therefore improvement!) *(Cannot see the relationship. Editor).* It is grievous, seeing the smaller magazine devote space to carping against a rival that has completely outdistanced it to become Britain's premier independent.

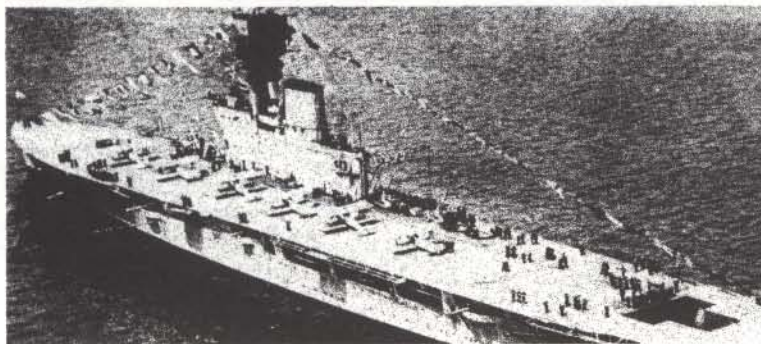
But I come neither to praise (wholly) nor to bury The Wargamer. We could use more of the constructive criticism mentioned incidentally by Mike Costello in the same issue as Doug Davies' dark hints.

Better still, could we not all adopt the attitude of Donald Mack, who seems to thrive on contributing to both magazines and doesn't seem to see any conflict therein? How could there be? More diversity means more choice, — what is good for The Phoenix and The Wargamer is good for all of us — make Peace not War!

Meic Harries

(It would seem that Meic is a man of strong opinions! See editorial. Editor).

Mike Colleran **A First Impression** **INDIAN OCEAN ADVENTURE**



(Printed with kind permission of F & M and the author)

"He was determined at all costs," Capt. Roskill wrote of Adm. Somerville, the CinC of the Eastern Fleet in 1942, "to avoid being attacked by the enemy's carrier aircraft and, because of his inferior strength, to decline fleet action. He knew that whatever the weakness of his present fleet, it was the last that Britain could send into the Indian Ocean. The country simply could not afford that it should be hazarded."

Outnumbered almost 2:1 in aircraft, and facing an opponent — Adm. Nagumo — whose qualitative advantage in crews and machines was equally substantial, Somerville's appreciation of the strategic situation is difficult to fault, even with the advantage of 36 years of hindsight. With only 24 more aircraft on his three carriers than were carried by the YORKTOWN alone at the battle of the Coral Sea, where the Americans faced two

Japanese fleet carriers while he faced five, the odds of him winning anything near as much as he could expect to lose were long indeed. The bet was bad and he wisely declined.

Indian Ocean Adventure, GDW's simulation of the Japanese carrier raid of 1942, offers its British player an even worse bet. The ILLUSTRIOUS Class RN fleet carriers had 3" of armour plate for a flight deck. Consequently, they could sustain considerably more hits from dive bomber attack than the IJN fleet carriers, with their unarmoured flight decks, and be expected to survive. At Midway, for example, a single 1,000 lb. bomb struck near the AKAGI's centre elevator, penetrated the deck planking, exploded in the hanger deck, and triggered low order detonations of stored torpedo warheads that eventually reached the AvGas system, dooming the ship. By comparison, the INDOMITABLE and FORMIDABLE's sister ship the ILLUSTRIOUS took six direct hits with 500 kg. bombs in Jan. 1941, staggered to Malta where she took two more, and then sailed to Norfolk

Navy Yard for repairs. While it's my personal opinion the armoured flight deck didn't justify the large sacrifice in aircraft capacity it entailed, I find it hard to believe it didn't offer some protection against vertical attack. Yet in **Indian Ocean Adventure**, the INDOMITABLE and FORMIDABLE have no such advantage over the Japanese carriers.

While armour is a purely defensive measure, the game effectively deprives the British player of his sole offensive advantage as well. Even as early as 1942, the Royal Navy had developed a capability for conducting night operations from carriers that was far in advance of anything being done in the US or Japanese navies. Radar had been fitted to a number of his **Albacore** torpedo planes, and Somerville intended to close the IJN strike force by night, launch radar searches for it, and strike using moonlight or flares for target illumination. The game does permit British (only) aircraft to fly at night, but effectively eliminates the tactic by restricting them to half range. With only one turn out of four judged as night and with the range of British strike planes reduced to two hexes, morning is sure to find the British carriers within five hexes of the Japanese fleet, which just happens to be **Kate** range. Adm. Somerville never got a chance to try the tactic, so its potential remains speculative, but under the **Indian Ocean Adventure** rules it has little to recommend it.

Since no victory points are given for bombing Colombo or Trincomalee, the British player can't even hope to hit the Japanese carriers while they're doing that. He can do little more than stay well out of the way while hoping to catch isolated scouting forces, should the Japanese player be foolish enough to dispatch them. The game system itself was developed years ago for **Coral Sea**. It's a playable representation of carrier combat that **Flattop!** has improved on at some sacrifice in playability. But unless you have a friend who enjoys stalking wounded tigers in the bush at night, you'll probably have difficulty finding a British player for **Indian Ocean Adventure**.



GRAPEVINE

A REVIEW OF NEWS, GOSSIP
AND RUMOUR
COMPILED BY DOUG DAVIES

10 MAY 1979

The Grapevine is a year old with this issue and I must thank you all for the support you've given it in the feedback, why its even scored more than the Fonz, so just keep them 9's rolling up!

I will commence this time with news that Avalon Hill are going to trundle out a revamped and rejuvenated version of that old favourite **Battle of the Bulge** to compete against the current crop of new titles on the campaign. I suppose this is rather like sending an upgunned Valentine to do battle with a Panther, but I know it will be of real interest to those gamers who specialise in the old time classics. The next game using the Squad Leader system, entitled **Crescendo of Doom**, is well on the way through its playtesting period, and is projected for release in June. It will feature the early campaigns of the second war with British, French, and Polish units in addition to the Germans. Avalon Hill are advertising new boards available for SL enthusiasts, these being the ones designed for future games in the series and therefore containing terrain for which there are at present no official rules. The new fantasy game I briefly mentioned last time will be called **Treasures of Marnon** and is apparently a mixture of conventional boardgame and a fantasy background, featuring dragons, orcs and the rest of the obligatory cast of characters which populate these things.

At SPI the main gaming concern of the moment appears to have been settling the future S&T games, for nothing new has entered the production schedule other than projected issue games. As it stands at the moment there are to be two Napoleonic folio sized games in issue 75, **Dresden** and **Eylau**, (no doubt slightly re-titled so don't panic Keith!). The great Russia v China game, still untitled, but not I suspect **The East is Dead** as some wag at SPI has labelled it, will appear in issue 76, with apologies to Mr Harris. Following this, yes in 77 would you believe, will come two of the following three titles, **Arnhem Bridge**, **Little Round Top**, or **Eben-Emael**, all capsule sized games, designed I guess to introduce the great majority to the joys of the microgame. Then finally 78 will contain the 'fifth' part of a quad being designed using the Wacht Am Rhein system which will cover the campaign from the Normandy beach-heads to the Rhine crossings, although exactly which of these it will be has not yet been decided. The latest projected release date for **Campaign for North Africa** and **Freedom in the Galaxy** is Origins, with **Bloody April** probably in August (you should of course add a couple of months before these become available in Britain).

Unfortunately the intended SPUK-Heritage tie up previously announced will not now be taking place. From the boardgaming point of view the main advantage in the deal would have been obtaining the excellent design work of Steve Peek and Craig Taylor, but as both of these have departed, (not exactly on amicable terms we suspect) the loss of the agency should not unduly worry British gamers.

At GDW the Traveller industry gathers pace with plans to produce some suitable miniature figures

and the Judges Guild having been appointed to design various play aids for weary participants. A further addition to the series will be **Highguard** an adventure, and this will be followed by a supplement on naval operations. The science fiction addicts among the boardgaming fraternity are going to be well looked after by GDW who have several SF games in development at the moment. These are **Outpost** a game featuring lunar surface combat, **Bloodtree Rebellion** about guerilla warfare on a strange planet called Sombra, and **Belter**, (no thats its name, not a recommendation!) involving asteroid mining in the 21st century. It would appear that GDW have solved the problems of finding new material to simulate by simply transferring campaigns to the stars. In addition to the above **Triplanetary** is to be enlarged and revived. The System 7 miniatures system continues to grow with a further three sets of counters becoming available which makes twelve sets in all so far. The system uses the Fire and Steel rules published sometime ago but instead of using actual figures, which can of course be expensive, sets of counters are employed.

Following recent trends those up and coming lads from OSG are going to produce a couple of microgames. The first will be an introductory game to their ambitious series on the campaigns of Napoleon, entitled **The Hundred Days** which will be their entry into the Waterloo stakes. The other, **Star Quest** is a science fiction game which as the name suggests involves searching for wealth and victory in the outreaches of the galaxy. The latest hit on Broadway is not a musical, no its Bonaparte in Italy the game I mentioned last time which is a three map simulation with 800 counters and due for release shortly. OSG also have a fantasy game in the works (tell me who hasn't!) whose name I can't reveal at the moment due to copyright difficulties for a couple of books have similar titles — intriguing isn't it?

Do you know which well known hobby personality was amazed to find himself listed as a playtester for one game he'd never played and for another he'd never even seen? Could this be the start of a new trend to put Britain on the wargaming map? Was Jim Dunnigan behind Operation Condor, was Randy Reed to blame for Africa, and Blenheim, the thinking man's snakes and ladders, was it really a Charles Vasey design? Answers to all these questions can be obtained for the usual exorbitant fee from the friendliest outfit in boardgaming (and that isn't SPUK!).

Meanwhile fresh from the tragi-comedy in the Teutoburger Wald, amid cries of war, haw, haw, comes news of new games to be published by WWW. These include **Peninsular War** designed by Keith Poulter, a subject strangely neglected by our American friends who apparently think if it ain't got Bony it ain't no good. Then there will be **Galley**, and seeing both Heritage and Avalon Hill plan games on the same subject it could be advisable watching next years boat race to get a feel for the subject! Next yet another attempt to show why Hitler got lost in the Ardennes called **Ourthe River**. Lessons on how to play Caesars Legions are also believed to be on offer from WWW.

A new free service to the British boardgaming scene has been introduced by Robin Hood and Peter Calcraft in the form of a newsletter called **25 Years On**. This is designed to give information on the flourishing 'zine scene' devoted to multi-player PBM games such as Kingmaker, Diplomacy, En Garde, and After The Holocaust. If you are interested in getting involved in such a venture this will tell you where the openings are available and who to contact. The newsletter can be obtained by sending a stamp addressed 9"x 4" envelope to the address below.

A final thought regarding the Feedback, all those putting 8 or 9 for Grapevine or alternatively 1 or 2 for Hotline might qualify for a prize, if John can add them up correctly this time! (*Attempts to subvert the Democratic process will not sway my impartial analysis of Feedback results! Editor*)

25 Years On:- Robin Hood, 103 Oxford Gardens, London, W10, 6NF

HOTLINE...

- Question: Why not run a play by mail game through the Phoenix? I understand that you've probably been through this but would still like to know.
- M.W.: SPUK staff certainly could not handle this due to work load however, if there are sufficient enthusiastic gamers and if the editor agrees then why not indeed. How about it John?
- Comment: Another thing that annoys me is that the 'loyalty rate' for subs to S&T is only 30p cheaper than the normal rate and that new subscribers are getting folio games instead of Strikeforce I. What about us old timers eh?
- M.W.: What can I say? We cost out a sub, we arrive at a price and we charge that price. If you resubscribe for a year you save 90p not 30p. As for giving out folio games instead of 'Strike force I', the original free game was 'Napoleon at Waterloo' which was effectively a folio game. This title was dropped in favour of Strikeforce I which I personally have never regarded as a particularly good game to promote S&T subs. Since we have now produced a quantity of folio type games in the U.K. we are in a position to offer these as introductory games, something that we could not have done, prior to U.K. production. Put it down to progress and look on the bright side, you have been enjoying all sorts of special offers through your S&T sub that new subscribers have missed out on.
- Comment: Let's have a N.E. Convention. Leeds-Main rail links, M1, A1 and M62, nowhere is better!!!
- M.W.: Maybe so, however as I have said on several past occasions we could not take it upon ourselves to hold a meeting outside our own area. It is difficult enough to organise a smooth running meeting locally as anyone who has been involved in such an undertaking will tell you. Even with local contacts things can go sadly awry as you will be aware if you have read Phoenix 18 'News from SPUK'. If anyone wants to hold a convention we will be happy to give them publicity in Phoenix at no cost, just send the details to John Spence.
- Comment: Surely it is now illegal to not offer a refund (as distinct from credit note) when goods ordered are out of stock.
- M.W.: The wording on our out of stock notes has not been changed since we first brought them into use and it is true that we do not include the offer of a refund on these. Quite frankly this possibility was not taken into account at the time that the artwork was initially prepared and no one has complained to date therefore we had no reason to reword it when reprinting. Steps will be taken to rectify this on our next print run, in the meantime you can be assured that we will honour a claim for refund in the event that we cannot come up with the goods. All you have to do is notify us of your wishes and we will comply.
- Question: Are large games boxed in one box with one counter tray in the new boxed format and can the counter trays be bought separate.
- M.W.: Large games come in one double size box (4" deep instead of 2") with three plastic trays. Plastic trays are available separately at 25p each plus 20p post and packing on one tray and a further 10p post and packing per extra tray.
- Question: Will the errata sheets advertised in S&T be available in this country.
- Question: Would it not be possible to reprint S.P.I. errata in Phoenix or at least list those available through SPUK.

Continued overleaf

Question: Are errata sheets available from S.P.I. (U.K.) or does one have to send to S.P.I. New York as in S&T 70.

Question: Is it possible to obtain errata from you?
M.W.:

What makes me think that S.P.I. mentioned errata recently!! As it happens we are hoping to build up a complete errata file and put this into our micro computer (see news from SPUK). If and when this is put into operation we will be in a position to keep our file up to date and offer print outs of these on request, more on this at a later date. In the meantime we have the following errata available in limited quantities.

Objective Moscow
Battles for the Ardennes Quad
Borodino
Soldiers
Musket & Pike
After the Holocaust
Blue & Gray Quad
Napoleon at War Quad
Westwall Quad
World War III
Firefight
Red Star/White Star
Descent on Crete
Strategy One
Art of Siege Quad
Great War in the East Quad
Winter War
Normandy
USN
Red Sun Rising
Modern Battles Quad
Blue & Gray II Quad
Spitfire
War in the West
Ardennes Offensive
Crimean War Quad
Air War
Nato

If you require any of these please write to 'customer service' giving details of your requirements and please be sure to enclose a stamped self addressed envelope.

Question: Could you possibly give, through 'Hotline' the minimum period of notification required for a change of address with regard to S&T subscriptions.

M.W. We can take address changes up to the day prior to the packing of the subscription copies.

Question: Why do I have to pay for S.P.I. Consumer Research, i.e. stamp on envelope. Cost trivial but it still seems wrong.

M.W.: Put like that I agree it does sound wrong. As you say the cost is trivial for an individual who wants to make his views known however that 7p is a sufficient inconvenience to discourage those individuals who might be tempted to fill in a post free card with frivolous and misleading answers. If a customer is prepared to pay the postage we feel it is safe to assume he/she is genuine.

Questions: I took out a trial subscription to S&T for 3 issues and, after the second issue I am asked for a renewal subscription within about 3 weeks, before I have had a chance to play the game. This does not give me much chance to decide whether to continue. The first 'renewal' issue that I am being invited to pay for will not arrive until about 3 months after I have paid for it. Why the rush?

M.W.: As you will appreciate, we must place an order for S&T 6-8 weeks prior to posting out subs. In order to ensure that we buy in sufficient stock we must estimate demand as accurately as possible therefore we must get firm information on the subscription renewal response. The renewal date coincides with the date set for preparing the S&T order thus we make sure that those of you who wish to continue your subscriptions are catered for.

NEWS FROM SPUK

MALCOLM WATSON

WRITTEN 18.5.79

Probably the most exciting project on the go around here at present is our move to purchase a micro-computer. For the Doug Davies's of the wargames world let me quickly say that this will not de-humanise our operation, you will still be able to phone up and get answers to your many questions just as you do now. In particular I promise to physically assault the first member of staff who blames any errors on the machine.

The question of whether or not we should introduce such a machine to our company has been under discussion for several months and we have come to the conclusion that it is a move that should be made at the earliest possible moment. We believe that we will become more efficient in our office work, leave less room for packing errors, keep more accurate stock levels etc. We will be in a position to analyse not only our own Phoenix feedback response cards but also the UK S&T subscribers cards. The S&T analysis will be sent to S.P.I. for inclusion in their marketing plans and we will also have the benefit of studying these details. Another benefit we hope to pass on to you will be the ability to build up a computerised errata file which can easily be kept up to date. With such a file we would be in a position to print out current errata on the full range at your request.

With the advent of this machine we will be obliged to change some of our procedures. These changes will serve to make us more efficient and should eliminate the many grey areas in our operation that lead to errors. The first change that you will notice will be an alteration to your account code, we intend to shorten these and make them more manageable. At present we know that your code will be given on every despatch note created for individual mailings. In all probability this also will be given on the print out labels used to address subscription magazines thus your code will be brought to your attention at least once every two months.

One particular area of our operation that has been under examination for some time now has been our discount structure. When originally conceived this was intended to reward those patrons who supported us, the more you spent the higher a discount you would enjoy. The method of applying the discount was simple, the more games you bought the more you must be spending, and this was indeed the case back in the good old days. Not so now however. Because the gap between the least expensive and the most expensive games has widened dramatically over the past few years it is quite possible for a subscriber buying folios to spend less money and get a higher discount than a subscriber who buys a single large game. Example, customer number one buys 3 folios @ £2.75 each, total expenditure before discount - £8.25, discount applicable - 15%. Customer number two buys War In Europe @ £26.00, discount applicable - 10%. Customer number two might well ask what happened to fair play, especially when he consults the discount details and sees that if customer number one splashes out and buys 6 folios, cost before discount £16.50, that fortunate devil will get a 20% discount, twice that enjoyed by the War In Europe man. Customer number two now highly irate rushes off with his monster game and sets it up with but one thought in mind, the invasion of Hale to deal with the culprit who allowed such a dreadful state of affairs to come about.

Despite the fact that he knows he will get some flak, that same culprit has decided to tackle the problem head on and do right by the big spenders. With immediate effect we are revamping our discount scheme to take into account the monetary value of your order, that pure and simple. The higher the value of your order, the higher your discount will be thus we have turned the full circle and got back to the position we were at some 5-6 years ago. When arriving at our new structure we took into account the inadvisability of offering discounts on small orders, we believe that our discounts should start at orders of £10.00 and above, however we did not want to see the single game purchaser losing out so we put in a low value discount band. For the big buyers (clubs etc. who usually bunch to-

gether to get the maximum discount), we have brought in a ceiling discount band of 30%. Low profit items such as game boxes etc have been dropped from the scheme because they no longer have a large enough margin to allow discount. On the credit side for those of you who have joint Phoenix/S&T Subs we have brought the O.S.G. games within the discount structure. The new scheme quite frankly is one big swings and roundabouts package for subscribers and SPUK alike but the main thing is that those of you who want to spend money on your hobby will feel the benefit. Full details are given on the back of this issues order form.

One more change made with this issue affects only those of you ordering from abroad. The new discount structure has allowed us to work out a new deal on postal charges. In the past we have had a sliding scale of charges but with the revised discount structure we have been able to calculate the amount of internal UK tax and postage that can be used towards meeting the cost of your orders. The results will be very much to your liking I am sure. Once you start ordering three or more games the savings in postage become very evident, see the back of the order form in this issue for details.

Response to our Phoenix devolution has been extremely good to date and we are being kept very busy making the appropriate alterations to our records. We started out acknowledging these but due to the amount of work in hand we have now dropped that procedure. If you have taken out an extension and do not receive Phoenix 20 with S&T 74 please contact us immediately so that we can put the matter right.

Our first shipment from Operational Studies Group is now en route and will be with us by the time you get this issue. Games in the shipment are: Napoleon at Bay (The Campaign in France 1814) at £10.50, Napoleon at Leipzig at £11.00, Rommel and Tunisia (Last chance for glory 1943) at £11.00, Panzerkrieg (Von Manstein and Heeres Gruppe Sud, August 1941 - March 1944) at £8.75. The last three games are boxed, all prices include P&P.

In issue 18 I mentioned that we were to take on the agency for Heritage Models INC of Dallas. Since that statement was made I have been given reason to reconsider taking on such a commitment and have decided not to pursue the matter. It is my opinion that we could not enter into the expansion programme required to handle the job properly with any degree of confidence in that supplier.

Retraction time now, in the last Phoenix I said that Brent Nosworthy had up and left SPI with a partially designed game in Armada. Whilst talking with J.F.D. this week I had it pointed out to me that this was not correct and that Brent had finished the game before leaving SPI. My apologies to Brent and anyone else who may have been caused any embarrassment by this error.

The good news from Jim is that SPI are getting over their designer problems and are keeping up with their new schedule. Exactly what this schedule is I am not too sure but details should reach me in a week or so, not in time for this issue unfortunately. New SPI games now in stock are 'War in the Ice', 'Creature.....Sheboygan', 'Stargate', 'Titan Strike', 'Vector 3', 'Mech War 2', 'Red Star-White Star', 'Suez to Golan' are expected in the S&T 74 shipment.

As you will no doubt have noticed S&T 72 was rather late in getting to you. This was not caused by SPI's move but rather by the inability of our printer to get the Phoenix to us on schedule due to election work. The printers largest client just happens to be heavily involved in the local Conservative club, he wandered in with a load of work for the election campaign and applied sufficient arm up the back pressure to put us in lumber. The printer cannot be faulted, he was looking after his best customer and was guilty only of trying to keep his clients happy, it is just unfortunate that the politics of this country had to interfere with us wargamers. S&T 73 will be late in going out and you can put that down to the SPI move.

Finally GDW have at last got some supplies into Britain, all of their games listed on our order form (except 'Their Finest Hour' which I believe is being revised) are once more available. In addition we now have the following in stock: 'Operation

Continued on page 27

FEEDBACK

How to use the Feedback Response Card: After you've finished reading this issue of Phoenix, please read the Feedback questions below and give us your answer/numbers on the card in the response boxes which correspond to each number. See centre spread for reply card. Please be sure to answer all the questions (but not write anything in the box for question-numbers labelled "no question"). Incompletely filled out cards cannot be processed. **What the numbers mean:** When answering questions "0" always means NO OPINION or NO QUESTION, "1" means YES and "2" means NO. When the question is a rating question, "1" is the WORST rating, "9" is the BEST rating; "5" is an average rating and all numbers in-between express various shades of approval or disapproval. Please do not use decimals or halves. **The deadline for the return of this card is 6th July, 1979 or 3 weeks from the receipt of this issue.**

- (1) How long have you been playing board war-games? 0 = less than 1 year, 1 = 1 year, 2 = 2 years, ... 9 = 9 or more years.
- (2) How many boardgames do you have? (Quad games count as 4 games). 1 = 1-10, 2 = 11-20, ... 9 = 81 or more.
- (3) Do you read any other conflict simulations publications other than S&T and Phoenix? This includes magazines covering SF/F/role playing games and magazines not totally devoted to conflict simulations. 0 = none, 1 = 1 other, ... 9 = 9 or more other magazines.
- (4) Did you send in the feedback card from issue 18?

Rate the following aspects of boardgaming on a 0-9 scale with 0 = no interest through to 9 = fanatical.

- (5) Fantasy boardgames.
- (6) Science fiction boardgames.
- (7) Role playing games such as Traveller and D&D.
- (8) Present and near future games.
- (9) Do you prefer tactical (1), operational (2), strategic (3) or grand strategic (4) present and near future games.
- (10) WWII to Korean War games.
- (11) Do you prefer tactical (1), operational (2), strategic (3) or grand strategic (4) WWII to Korean War games.
- (12) Early 20th. Century games.
- (13) Do you prefer tactical (1), operational (2), strategic (3) or grand strategic (4) early 20th. Century games.
- (14) Napoleonic games.
- (15) Do you prefer tactical (1), operational (2), strategic (3) or grand strategic (4) Napoleonic games.
- (16) Other 19th. Century games.
- (17) Do you prefer tactical (1), operational (2), strategic (3) or grand strategic (4) other 19th. Century games.
- (18) 16th. to 18th. Century games.
- (19) Games covering eras prior to the 16th. Century.
- (20) Rate this issue of Phoenix on a scale of 1-9, 9 being excellent and 1 being poor. I would appreciate a few constructive comments and reasons below if you rate it 4 or less.

Rate the following articles/reports in this issue on a scale of 1-9, 9 being excellent and 1 being poor.

- (21) Siege Quads Review.
- (22) Operation Typhoon Review.
- (23) Semblance of Worth.
- (24) Tactical Battle Fleet Mars.
- (25) Notes from the Underworld.
- (26) Play by Mail.
- (27) Indian Ocean Adventure.
- (28) 'Raid' Scenario.
- (29) Avalanche Review.
- (30) StarForce Solitaire Scenario.
- (31) For Poor Eyes Only.
- (32) News From SPUK.
- (33) Hotline.

- (34) Grapevine.
- (35) Mailcall.
- (36) Book Review Column.

It will be June when you read this with Origins '79 and the associated Charles Roberts Awards almost upon us. I feel that this would be an opportune time to canvas you, the readership, to find what are the most popular games played by the Phoenix reader and whether you are representative of the hobby as a whole (as measured by other polls!). Lets have a large Feedback this time to make it as representative as possible of the readership!

- (37) What is your favourite game, limiting yourself to board and role-playing games. It need not have been produced in the last year.
- (38) What game is the best simulation of the battle/campaign it portrays (In your opinion).
- (39) In your experience what is the most playable game you have met.
- (40) What is the best Ancient Game you have played.
- (41) What is the best 11th - 18th Century Game you have played.
- (42) What is the best Napoleonic game you have played.
- (43) What is the best 1815-1939 game you have played.
- (44) What is the best 2nd. World War game you have played.
- (45) What is the best modern game you have played.
- (46) What is the best SF/F game you have played.

NEWS FROM SPUK CONTINUED

Crusader' £23.55, 'Yalu' £10.00, 'Bar-Lev' £8.65, 'Case White' (Yes honestly) £8.65, plus from GDW's 120 series 'Mayday', 'The Battle of Alma', 'The Battle of Agincourt', 'The Battle of Libositz', 'Guildford Courthouse', '1942' and 'The Battle of Raphia', all selling at £4.25 each. These prices include UK P&P costs. Buy now while stocks last, it may be another six months before they get more goodies over here.

LOW COST MAIL-ORDER SPECIALISTS—

● BOARD WARGAMES, SIMULATIONS

● Role-playing Rules

● Miniatures Rules

● Ral Partha Miniatures

Science Fiction

- * Strike Team Alpha (LZ) £4.15
- * Black Hole, Ice War (MGC) B £1.95
- * Star Fighter (GTG) £8.60
- * Strange New Worlds S,B £8.60
- * Direct Conflict in D6, B £7.60
- * Gamma World £7.00
- * Encounter £1.10
- * GEV (MGC) £1.05
- * Olympica (MGC) £1.05
- * Battlefleet Wars (SPI) £8.45
- * Chitin, Rivers (MGC) B £1.95
- * Galactic War (TT) Rules £1.20
- * Cosmic Encounter B £7.00
- * C.E. Expansion Kits, I,II,III £3.00 each
- * Ogre (MGC) S,B £1.95
- * Outreach (SPI) S,B £5.25
- * Imperium (C&I) B £6.00
- * Mayday B £4.00
- * Star Force Alpha Centauri (SPI) B,S £5.00
- * Star Soldier (SPI) B £5.25
- * Traveller (GDW) S,R. £5.95
- * Supplements: Memory (Bk IV) £2.95
- * 1001 Characters £1.95
- * Traveller Ships (LZ) £1.95
- * Warpwar (MGC) S,B £1.95

Fantasy Dungeons and Dragons (TSR) R

- * New Boxed Edition £7.60, Revised Book £2.95
- * Players Handbook £7.00, Softcover £4.50
- * Monsters Manual £7.00, Softcover £4.50
- * Introductory Dungeon Module B1 £2.70
- * Dungeon Modules G1, G2, £2.00 each; G3,D1,D2, £2.30 each; D3 £3.00
- * M & T Assortment I,II,III, £1.50 each
- * Dungeon Geomorphs ea. £1.50
- * Thieves of Badabaskor, Citadel of Fire £2.00 ea.
- * Frontier Forts of Kelnore £2.00
- * Arduin, Grimores, Skull Tower (Ch) £6.50 ea.
- * Book III Runes of Doom £6.50
- * Instant Bad Guys £2.30

Fantasy — Role Playing

- Tunnels & Trolls R £1.75
- Solo T&T Dungeons:
- Buffalo Castle (FB) S £1.25
- Labyrinth (FB) £1.95
- Deathtrap Equalizer Dungeon (FB) S £1.95
- City of Terrors £3.70
- Wierd World, Dargon's Dungeon, Naked Doom,
- * Sorcerer Solitaire, Overkill, Beyond the Silvered Pane all at £2.00

- Runequest £4.95
- Militia & Mercenaries £1.60
- Balastors Barracks £2.00
- Chivalry and Sorcery (FGU) R,S. £6.50
- Source Book, Swords & Sorcerors £4.95 ea.

Fantasy Games

- Middle Earth (SPI) £12.00
- War of the Ring (SPI) £8.50
- Sauron, Gondor £5.00 ea.
- Sword & Sorcery B £9.25
- * Sticks & Stones (MGC) £1.95
- * Stomp (Ch) £1.95
- * Source of the Nile S,B,R. £8.50
- * Elementary Watson B,R. £7.40
- * Spellmaker, Quest (GTG) B £8.60 each
- Melee, Death Test S,R £1.95
- Wizard (MGC) R £2.70
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