

# ***FIRE & MOVEMENT***

*The Forum of Conflict Simulation*

September/October 1991

Number 75

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CAN \$6.75



## **HORNET LEADER**

**STRIKE FIGHTER OPERATIONS**

**Also in this issue:**

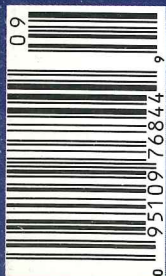
**Balkan Front**

**Carrier War**

**ORIGINS Report**

**Players' Notes**

**and much, much more!**





# La Bataille de les Quatre Bras



Avesnes, June 14, 1815

To the army --

Soldiers, today is the anniversary of Marengo and Friedland, which on two occasions decided the fate of Europe. Then, as after Austerlitz and Wagram, we were too generous. We believed the promises and protestations of these princes and allowed them to remain on their thrones! Today, however, they have united against us and are viciously threatening the independence and sacred rights of France. They have begun a most unjust aggression. Therefore we march to meet them: and are we, after all, of their calibre? Soldiers, at Jena you were one against three of these same Prussians who are today so arrogant; at Montmirail you were one against six....

The Madmen! A moment of prosperity blinds them. But it is beyond their power to oppress and humiliate the French people. If they set foot on France, they will find their tomb! Let those among you who were prisoners of the English tell you of their experi-

ences on English ships and of their horrible suffering!

Soldiers, we shall have to make forced marches, fight battles, and face many perils; but, with perseverance, victory will be ours; and we shall reconquer the rights, honor, and happiness of the Fatherland.

For all Frenchmen of courage, the moment has come to conquer or die!

-- Napoleon

La Bataille de les Quatre Bras is the second of three boxed sets detailing the climactic moments of Napoleon's last 100 days as Emperor of the French.

Marshal Ney, entrusted with the left wing of L'Armee, sweeps across the Belgian frontier. As Napoleon probes an indeterminate force of Prussians massing on the banks of the Ligny Creek, he orders Ney to continue the drive up the Brussels road and seize the important crossroads at Quatre-Bras. They know full

well that possibly, somewhere among the tall corn and light woods ahead, awaits the Duke of Wellington at the head of nearly 100 thousand English and Allied troops.

La Bataille de les Quatre Bras reproduces this fateful encounter on one 34x22" period map and nearly 600 unit counters (including every Anglo/Allied unit found at Waterloo two days later). Also included are the new 3rd edition standard rules, charts, tables, organization displays, and historical commentary. La Bataille de les Quatre Bras is fully compatible with La Bataille de Ligny, and when played together they form the grandest simulation ever presented for the 19th Century enthusiast.

As tradition demands, La Bataille de les Quatre Bras will provide you with all the colour, excitement and authenticity your glory demands of the Napoleonic battlefield. Your baton awaits you on this field of honour...

Vive L'Empereur!

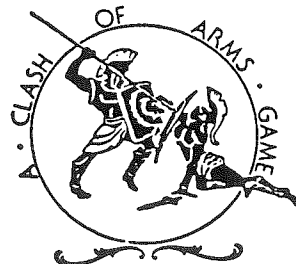


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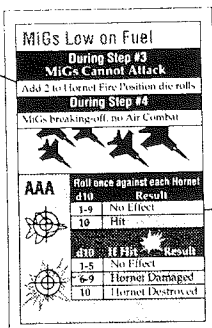
# FIRE & MOVEMENT

The Forum of Conflict Simulation

Number #75  
SEPTEMBER—OCTOBER 1991

Mission Event Card (See 2.35)

Target-Bound Mission Event

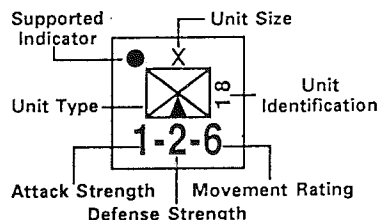
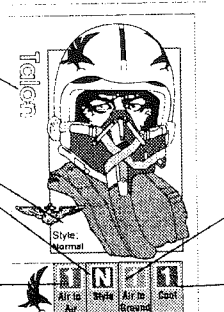


Aviator Card (See 2.37)

Pilot's Call Sign

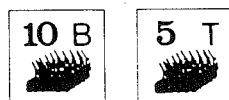
Pilot's Air-to-Air Style Rating

Pilot's Air-to-Air combat modifier



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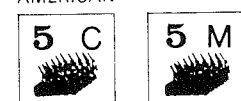
### BRITISH



British Regular

Tory

### AMERICAN



Continental

Militia

### FRENCH



Regulars

Seasonal

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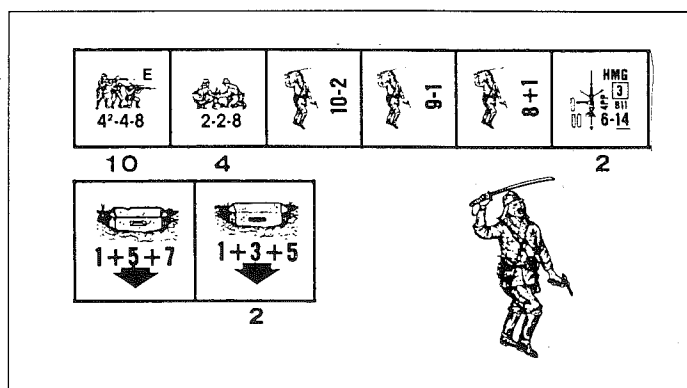
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# FIRING LINE

The wargaming event of 1991 has to be the ORIGINS show. Though I wasn't able to attend this year, all the reports of the show indicate it was a vast improvement over last year's show. Much of the credit must be chalked up to the GEMCO organization headed up by Wes Coates and Howard Barasch. Good show to all the ORIGINS '91 staff!

Here at *Fire & Movement*, we're working to implement some minor changes as suggested by the feedback response and our ORIGINS seminar. We're working to improve the proofreading by purchasing an improved spelling and grammar checker and hiring an on-site proofreader to triple-check our articles. We're also working to provide captions for pictures and illustrations and insuring we get all the hard data for a summary box for each review. Finally, we've centralized the article assignments with Christopher to better coordinate the assignments between the magazines.

This issue we have GMT's *Hornet Leader* as our feature review by Rick Swan. Other wargames profiled in this issue are GR/D's *Balkan Front*, AH's *Code of Bushido*, Omega's *Carrier War*, and a Classic Review of SPI's *American Revolution*. A report on ORIGINS '91 and the return of The Gauntlet round out this issue.

*Fire & Movement* #76 will feature GDW's *Tet Offensive* along with profiles of *Republic of Rome* and *Campaigns of Marlborough*. Also featured is the last installment of the WW2 Anthology along with a preview of the games to be covered in the American Civil War Anthology.

## From the Oopps Department

The front cover of *Fire & Movement* #74 and the game components illustrated within the lead article on *Air Bridge to Victory* are Copyright © RBM Graphics+Design Studio. Our apologies to Mr. MacGowan for not including the copyright with the artwork.

TABLE 1

#72 Article	Rating
Firing Line (Editorial)	6.05
Battlefield: Europe (Close-Up)	6.79
Battlefield: Europe (Designer's Notes)	6.26
Modern Naval Battles 3 (Profile)	6.28
MNB 3 (Designer's Notes: Emrich)	6.39
MNB 3 (Designer's Notes: Verssen)	6.35
1990: Year in Review	7.95
King of Kings (Profile)	6.63
WW2 Anthology	7.20
Patton vs. Rommel (Computer)	6.00
Gauntlet (Opinion)	6.67
Media Notes	6.71
Player's Notes	7.05
Hobby News Bullentin Board	7.83
Crossfire (Letters to the Editor)	7.36
Issue Overall	6.91

Also, there was a slight error in the Napoleon's Battles review in *F&M* #74. The designer of record for *Sword and the Flame* is Larry Brom. Craig Taylor is listed as the rules editor. Our apologies to both gentlemen.

## Feedback Results

*Fire & Movement* #72 feedback closed out poorly with 23 responses, but #73 has 59 responses at this point, so the response rate is really looking up. We made the cut, so the feedback page lives on! Let's see if we can make 60 responses for #74. We really, really (really, really!) encourage readers to send their feedback in when they are renewing. This would give at least one feedback per year and would give us a representative sample over a year's time of all subscribers.

The special double issue WW2 Anthology continues to be a source of mystery. On the one hand respondents are giving it very high ratings (7.7 in #72 and 6.5 in #73) in terms of interest in seeing it, but on the other hand a little under half of respondents are saying they they want the option to not receive it. This appears to be rather contradictory. Further analysis of situation suggests those in favor of the issue are highly so, while those who would want an option are more neutral (there are even two respondents who rated the idea a "0" but did not want the option to forgo the special issue!). In the interest of clarification, we are bringing the Special Issue WW2 Anthology question to a yes or no vote in this issue and the next. My impression from feedback comments is that more people want the special WW2 Anthology issue and like the serial and later special issue method best. Looking at the votes for the various presentation methods for the Civil War Anthology seems to confirm this where the votes were: 31% Serial Only, 18% Special Issue Only, and 51% Both Serial and Special Issue.

If you're interested and have access to a great many of the Civil War period wargames, please write and let us know. We are in the process of generating a complete list of Civil War games to be published in #76 for reader review. More writers would be helpful especially with the relatively obscure titles.

TABLE 2

#73 Article	Rating
Firing Line (Editorial)	5.34
Carrier (Close-Up)	7.23
Carrier (Example of Play)	6.45
Operation Shoestring (Profile)	6.55
New World (Profile)	6.38
Desert Steel (Expanding Front)	5.74
Search & Destroy (Classic)	6.71
Yet Another Patrol (LIC)	5.96
WW2 Anthology	6.88
Their Finest Hour (Computer)	5.51
Player's Notes	7.18
Hobby News Bullentin Board	7.54
Crossfire (Letters to the Editor)	6.66
Issue Overall	6.77

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**Writing for Fire & Movement:** Please request the latest *F&M* Writer's Guidelines sheet from Callie Cummins at **Decision Games**, P.O. Box 4049, Lancaster CA, 93539-4049. New writers must contact the Editor for a writing assignment! The current payment schedule is \$25 per page. Contributors to the *Players' Notes* and computer columns receive a review copy as their compensation.



by Rick Swan

## CLOSE-UP

Here's a great idea—how about a company that publishes nothing but solitaire games? It makes good business sense. Solitaire games are enthusiastically received by the gaming community, they're played constantly and often, they sell well (as far as I know), and most multi-player games are played solo anyway. There's got to be a sizeable audience ripe and ready for a steady supply of solo games, like maybe a *Strategy & Tactics* subscription service exclusively devoted to solitaire aficionados, which includes every wargamer I know and, I suspect, most *Fire & Movement* readers.

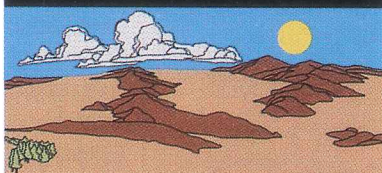
Of course, there's a flaw in this otherwise terrific idea, and I suspect it's a fatal one. As fun as they are to play, good solitaire games are a designer's nightmare, often more difficult to design than multi-player games of comparable complexity. Not only does the solitaire designer face the same problems of balance, accuracy, and playability as the multi-player designer, he must also contend with the creation of a Simulated Opponent, an "artificial intelligence" of sorts formidable enough to challenge a skilled human player and versatile enough to hold up under repeated playings. This, needless to say, is not easy. Designing a merely okay solitaire game is as hard as designing an excellent multi-player game; designing an excellent solo game is as tough as a multi-player masterpiece. (Solitaire games are the second most difficult type of product to design, the first being introductory multi-player games that can be enjoyed by both novices and veterans. The easiest design assignments are monster games of enormous complexity—all you have to do is keep typing until you've got a rule for every contingency.)

This is all the more reason to sit up and take notice when a solitaire designer comes up with an ace, such as Dan Verssen's classy *Hornet Leader*. It's published by the feisty GMT Games, who got off to an excellent start with last year's *Silver Bayonet* and is quickly becoming the company-of-choice for the hardcore wargamer who lacks the patience

# HORNET LEADER



## Mountain Approach

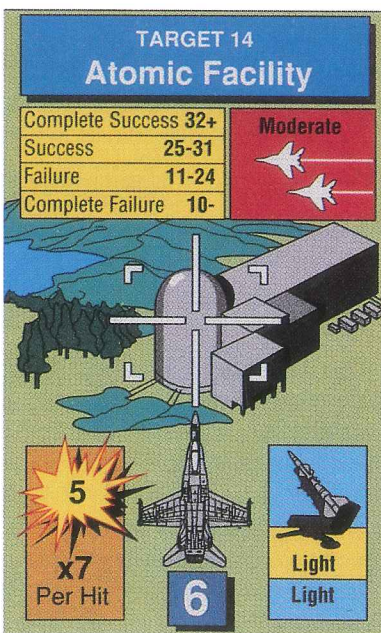


If the Mission is a Fighter Sweep, Fleet Air Defense or a Naval Strike, draw the next card.

### Hornets may not enter...

d10 Approach(es) Affected

1-2	North
3-4	West
5-6	South
7-8	East
9-10	Roll two Approaches, re-roll 9s, 10s, and duplicates



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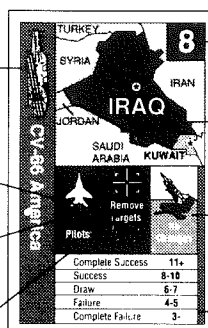
### Campaign Card (See 2.31)

Parent aircraft carrier (no effect on play)

Targets to be removed from Target deck

Modification to enemy MiG defenses

Enemy pilot quality



Number of missions in this campaign

Enemy nation or area of operations

Modification to enemy SAM defenses for this campaign

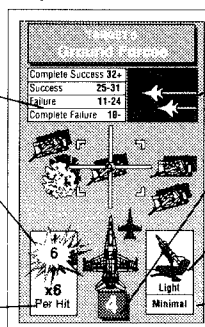
Campaign Victory Point Levels

### Target Card (See 2.32)

Mission Victory Point Levels

Number of hits required to destroy target and fulfill mission objectives

Number of Mission Victory Points per hit



MiG activity

Recommended # of Hornets to fly mission

SAM defenses in Target Area

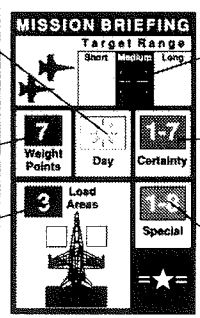
SAM defenses in Approach Areas

### Mission Briefing Card (See 2.33)

Time of day indicator

The number of Weight Points that each Hornet can carry on this mission

The number of Load Areas that each Hornet may use on this mission



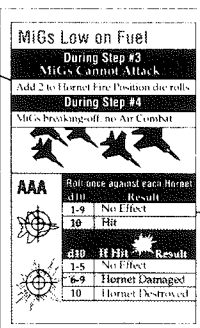
Mission Range

Certainty of your intelligence on SAMs and MiGs

The chance that Special Events and Mission Events will occur

### Mission Event Card (See 2.35)

Target-Bound Mission Event



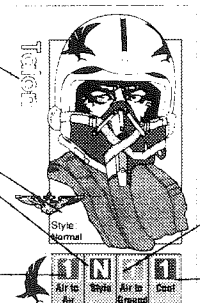
Carrier-Bound Mission Event

### Aviator Card (See 2.37)

Pilot's Call Sign

Pilot's Air-to-Air Style Rating

Pilot's Air-to-Air combat modifier



Pilot's Air-to-Ground combat modifier

Pilot's Cool rating

to hack through the novel length rules from publishers whose products tend to suffer from a bad case of the bloats (not to mention any names, but let's say that making it all the way through certain rule books constitutes a "victory" in itself). While **Hornet Leader** doesn't scale the heights of **RAF** (West End Games, 1986), it's the most playable and just plain fun solitary game of the last several years.

**Hornet Leader's** obvious antecedent is **B-17, Queen of the Skies** (The Avalon Hill Game Company, 1983). In both games, the player controls a plane (or for **Hornet Leader**, a bunch of planes), is assigned a mission in hostile territory, makes decisions regarding crew and equipment allocations, then attempts to complete the mission while dealing with enemy aircraft and other assorted complications. Though the settings are different—**B-17** takes place in World War II, while **Hornet Leader** is strictly contemporary, with missions in Central America and the Middle East, including a Desert Storm scenario for good measure—the targets and missions in both games are quite abstract, not much more than statistics and illustrations, the board game equivalent of ducks in a shooting gallery. Both are historical simulations in the most general sense.

In all other aspects, **Hornet Leader** leaves **B-17** in the dust. Its modern weapons are much more fun to work with, its game systems are decidedly more satisfying, and its graphics are to **B-17's** as **Cinemascope** is to **Super-8**. Because of a clever integration of cards, charts, and counters, **Hornet Leader** avoids the inevitable tedium of **B-17**, shifting the focus from endless die rolling and chart checking to strategic decision-making.

All solitary games must have a randomizing system to generate the Simulated Opponent's "strategy." **B-17** uses charts and tables, **Ambush** (Victory Games, 1983) uses paragraphs, and **Hornet Leader** uses a card-driven system similar to that of **RAF**; random draws from various decks of cards determine target details, defensive information, enemy forces, and so on. Here, however, **Hornet Leader** suffers in comparison, as it lacks the sophistication of **RAF**, particularly the almost supernatural strategy generated by **RAF's** Simulated Opponent. **Hornet Leader's** Simulated Opponent is essentially a series of randomly generated obstacles.

Logical, challenging, and elegant though it may be, **Hornet Leader's** Simulated Opponent feels like a series of puzzles, rather than an active enemy capable of responding to a human player's actions. Granted, that's an awful lot to ask of a solitary game, but **RAF** pulled it off (and to a lesser extent, so did **Ambush**), and unfortunately for solitary designers, the standard has been set.

This doesn't take a thing away from **Hornet Leader**—it's still impressively conceived and thoroughly entertaining—but I suspect that players expecting another **RAF** will be disappointed, dismissing **Hornet Leader** as interesting but trivial. They risk missing out on a terrific product. It's no crime that **Hornet Leader's** ambitions are more modest than **RAF's**; the execution of those ambitions is outstanding, and that is what counts.



## The Empty Helmet

**Hornet Leader's** components are flat-out gorgeous, but you'd never know it from the dismal box. Ordinarily, this wouldn't bother me—besides retailers, who cares, really, about the cover art?—but I'd think twice about buying a copy if all I had to go on was the cover, and it'd be a shame if it scared away potential customers. So don't be put off by the cover, though the layout is static and dull, and the photo of the **Hornet** pilot is so dark that the helmet might as well be empty. If the box limits the game's sales, the GMT boys have no one but themselves to blame, because they had a striking cover right in front of them, namely, the Desert Storm Mission Display sheet included in the box (full color, compelling graphics, neat design). And if they felt the Desert Storm sheet might have been misleading (the game doesn't exactly focus on Desert Storm, though it's probably the scenario that'll get the most play), they could've used a reduction of the main display sheet, a sampling of the playing cards, a picture of the designer, anything but that crummy photo of the empty headed pilot.

Once past the cover and inside the box, you'll discover a truly beautiful set of components; I can't think of a game with better color and layout than **Hornet Leader**. Rodger MacGowan has exceeded his high standards; this is art by any definition. The Mission Displays (which pass for maps in **Hornet Leader**; they include various tables and charts with tactical displays) are stunningly rendered, packing an enormous amount of information in a small space, uncluttered and exquisitely colored. The counters feature detailed sketches of the weapons they represent (such as Sidwinders, Mk 82s, and HARMs), which are attractive and easy to read.

Best of all are the playing cards. They're breathtaking, suitable for framing, almost too good to use. For starters, the colors are brilliant—rich hues of green, blue, yellow, oranges, and red, chosen with an artist's eye, complement each other to perfection. And what detail! The Target cards, to pick a random example, feature full color aerial views of mission targets sketched in three dimensions. On the Convoy Target card, you see two gray trailer trucks and a pair of tanks traveling on a brown dirt road that winds through a field of green; the Capital Strike card features a miniature city. Beneath the bright blue title of each Target card are four boxes containing statistical information; the MiG Activity box, for instance, shows outlines of enemy planes against a bright red sky. The Mediterranean World War III card (from the Campaign Card deck), includes a mini-map of the Mediterranean, with key countries clearly labeled, the Priority Mission card (from the Special Conditions deck) features a clock-face (complete with sweeping second hand) and some official looking documents, and the Quick Hop card (from the Mission Events deck) shows a cup of coffee. None of these touches, which abound in the cards, are necessary for play, but they add enormously to the aesthetic experience. As fine as the cards were in **Modern Naval Battles** (3W, Inc., 1989), **Hornet Leader** puts them to shame. If there's any justice in this industry, MacGowan ought walk away with every graphics award on the planet next time around.

One quibble with the components, minor but nonetheless annoying. Two log sheets are included (a Pilot Experience log

and Mission log) to help you keep track of your success, but they've got to be photocopied. Photocopying is a pain in the neck—not everybody has easy access to a machine, you know—and technically, this requirement means the game is incomplete. I wish GMT had kicked the price up a few bucks and put a pad of sheets in the box. After all, Avalon Hill found room in the budget to add a pad to **B-17**.

GMT continues to work on the quality of their rulebooks, and the effort shows. This one is tightly written with plenty of examples, the right amount of detail, and some appreciated extras, such as a detailed list of cards and a chatty section of Designer's Notes. There are still a few editorial problems, among them stilted phrasing ("The objective is to go out and destroy enemy ground targets"), awkward organization (some concepts, such as "area," aren't clearly defined, and explanation of pilot statistics should've been included up front) and layout glitches (only some of the counter definitions are accompanied by illustrations, and the line "Continued on Back Cover" shows up in the middle of a paragraph), but these types of problems should become less frequent as GMT becomes more experienced.

Though the rulebook is 20 pages long, only about 16 of them are devoted to rules, which is okay. What's not okay is leaving two of them empty (actually, they're filled with pictures of the pilot cards, which amounts to the same thing). Why not use the space for variants, a glossary, or more Designer's Notes?

## The Cards

Cracking **Hornet Leader** requires a thorough understanding of how the cards work, since almost every aspect of the game is regulated by one or more of the seven decks. Let's look at them.

**Campaign Cards.** There are nine of these, which designate the part of the world in which your missions will take place. The choices range from the obvious (Central America and Iran) to the exotic (the Atlantic Ocean in World War III). The card tells the number of missions to be flown, ranging from three to 15; generally speaking, the fewer the missions, the easier the campaign. The card also gives modifications to the enemy's SAM defenses and pilot ratings (Iran, Libya, and Central America have the worst enemy defenses, the World War III scenarios have the best), tells which Target Cards to remove from the target deck (eliminating the possibility, for example, of a major naval strike in Iran), and lists the victory point awards. A particular campaign can be selected from the deck, or a campaign can be drawn at random. I strongly suggest the selection of specific campaigns, since the easy ones (Central

## Sequence of Play Outline

Mission Briefing

Pre-Flight

In-Flight

Attack Resolution

- Hornet Movement
- Air Combat
- HARM Attacks
- SAM Attacks
- AAA Attacks
- Air-to-Ground Attacks

Post Target/Mission Results




d10	Result
9-	Failed to Lock-On
10+	<b>Locked-On</b>
+2	SAM's Value vs. High Visibility Hornet
+4	Hornet didn't move
-1	Night Mission
-5	Per E-Pod

**Long Range  
SAM Lock-On  
Priority**

Hornets in the Target Area  
Hornets in the SAM's Area  
Hornets in Approach Area  
Hornets in Pre-Approach Area

AAA Result	Result
2-	Missed
3-5	Near Miss, Attacks at -2
6-8	Near Miss, No Attacks
9-10	Damaged, Jetition, Abort
11+	Destroyed
+	AAA's Value
+2	vs. High Visibility Hornet
-3	Hornet is Evasive



























































SAM		d10	Result
	1-6	Missed	
	7-6	Near Miss, Attacks at -2	
	7-9	Near Miss, No Attacks	
	10-11	Damaged, Jetison, Abort	
	12+*	Destroyed	
	+	SAM's Value vs. High Visibility Hornet	
	+2	Hornet is Evasive	
	-2	Per E-Pod	
	-3		











**MiG Engagement  
Priority** 










Damaged Hornets  
Defensive Hornets  
Normal Hornets  
Aggressive Hornets

vs. Non-Air Combat

Air-to-Ground Attacks		
Condition	Modifier	
Pilot Skill	Air-to-Ground Skill	
High Visibility	+1	
Night Mission without N-Pod	-2	
vs. AAA	on counter	




3	Central America	Honduras Guatemala	Nicaragua	Panama	Costa Rica	El Salvador	Mexico
							
							
							
							
							
							
							
							


MISSION BRIEFING	Target Range		1-9	Certainty	1-5	Special	★
	Short	Medium	Long				==
					Day		
			5	Weight Points	Load Areas		
			3				

Munition Shortage		Number of Counters Available
WEAPON		20
Stewwonders		10
Sparks		12
Mk. 82's		10
Mk. 83's		6
Mavericks		5
Harpoons		1
E-Pods		4
N-Pods		3
Harms		7



**WEST APPROACH**

<b>TARGET #2</b>	<b>Bridge</b>	Light Success 14-17 Failure 6-13 Complete Failure 5-	Normal 	Long 
			Moderate 	





**EAST  
APPROACH**

# NORTH PRE-APPROACH



America, Libya, Iran) are pretty easy and the difficult ones (Atlantic and Mediterranean World War III, North Korea) are borderline impossible. Start with Central America and work your way up.

**Target Cards.** These cards designate specific targets within the area shown on a Campaign card. Typical targets include command posts, communications centers, airfields, and atomic facilities; there are 26 in all. The cards tell how many hits are required to destroy the target (five for a communications center, 10 for a large airfield), what type of MiG activity and SAM defense can be expected, and the recommended number of Hornets needed to fly this mission. Target cards are drawn randomly.

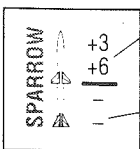
**Mission Briefing Cards.** One of the 15 Mission Briefing cards is randomly drawn with each Target card. The Mission Briefing card contains a number of variables that modify the conditions of the mission described in the Target card. Modifiers include the range of the target, weaponry limits for the Hornets (expressed as Weight Points and Load Areas), and whether the mission will be flown at night or during the day. The card also gives the odds that your intelligence on enemy SAMs and MiGs is accurate, and the odds that Special Events and Mission Events will occur.

**Special Conditions Cards.** Before play begins, the player rolls a 10-sided die and checks the result against the Special Condition odds on his Mission Briefing card. If it falls within the indicated range, one of the 15 Special Condition cards is randomly drawn. The condition on the card will be in effect for the duration of the mission. Typical conditions include munition shortages (you may not be able to use the weapons you want), F-117 Stealth Fighter support (penalizing enemy attack rolls), and a thunderstorm over the target area (making long distance air-to-ground attacks especially difficult). Chances are good that a Special Condition will occur; odds are roughly 2 out of 3. The number of favorable and unfavorable conditions are about the same, though it's rare that a condition has a profound effect on the success of a mission one way or the other.

**Mission Events Cards.** There are 18 of these, and like the Special Condition cards, they function as yet another set of random events. One event may occur while your planes are on their way to the target, and a different event may occur while the planes are returning home. The occurrence of Mission Events is determined in the same way as Special Conditions. In general, the Mission Events are more colorful and dramatic than the Special Conditions; among them are intelligence foul-ups (which significantly changes the enemy fighter strength), engine failure (a random Hornet must abort the mission), and news coverage (CNN covers your mission, resulting in extra victory points).

**Aviator Cards.** These 15 cards represent the player's pilots. Each has a name (Blackhawk, Mustang, Wedge), a personal style (Aggressive, Normal, Defensive), and numerical ratings for Air-to-Air combat, Air-to-Ground combat, and Cool. The back of each card shows the aviator in a Shaken state, reflecting the aftershocks of a previous mission, with correspondingly lower ratings.

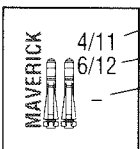
**Air-to-Air Missile:**



Long Range Fire Position Modifiers  
Top # = if 1 missile is fired  
Bottom # = if 2 missiles are fired


Dogfight Fire Position Modifiers  
Top # = if 1 missile is fired  
Bottom # = if 2 missiles are fired

**Air-to-Ground Weapon:**




If fired at target in same Area as firing Hornet  
If fired at target 1 Area away from firing Hornet  
If fired at target 2 Areas away (Harpoons only)  
#s represent die roll necessary to score:  
1 hit/2hits/3hits

**Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM)**



SAM Size: A rating of the SAM Site's size.  
SAM Size Indicator: a graphic indicator of the SAM Site's size.  
SAM Value: A numeric indication of the SAM Site's strength.

**Anti-Aircraft Artillery (AAA)**




AAA Attack Value

AAA Size

Attack Penalty vs. AAA: Apply this penalty to Hornet attacks aimed at AAA.

**Enemy MiG:**



MiG Type: The type of aircraft.  
MiG Defense Value: A modifier applied to Hornet attacks against the MiG.  
MiG Style Indicator: Indicates the Air Combat Style of the MiG. (A, N, D- not shown)  
MiG Air Combat Values: Rating of the MiG's Air Combat capabilities.

Note: This is a pre-production MiG counter. The final counter will be arranged a bit differently and Style Indicators will be added.

**Hornet Cards.** These 12 cards represent the planes. They're the least flashy of all the cards, featuring little else besides five boxes (called Load Areas) for the allocation of the plane's weapons. The back of each card shows the plane in a Damaged state.

## The Systems

Once the cards are sorted and the decks shuffled, it's time for the Hornets to fly. The game follows a rigid turn sequence, divided into five distinct phases: the Mission Briefing (basically, the set-up), Pre-Flight (selecting pilots, planes, and weapons), In-Flight (random event check, and placement of enemy MiGs), Attack Resolution (in two parts: Air Combat and Air-To-Ground Combat), and Post-Flight (another random event check, repair damaged planes, log the results, tally the victory points). Phase by phase, it goes like this:





## SAM Density

d10	Minimal	Light	Moderate	Heavy
1	-	-	Small*	Medium*
2	-	Small	Small*	Medium*
3	-	Small	Medium	Medium**
4	-	Small	Medium	Large
5	-	Small*	Medium*	Large
6	-	Small*	Medium**	Large*
7	Small	Medium	Large	Large**
8	Small	Medium	Large	V. Large
9	Small	Medium*	Large*	V. Large*
10	Small*	Large	V. Large	V. Large**

\* Plus One Long Range SAM

\*\* Plus One Large Long Range SAM

**Mission Briefing.** After the target area and special conditions are selected (by drawing from the appropriate decks), the player deploys enemy Surface-to-Air missiles and Anti-Aircraft Artillery on the Tactical Overview, which is essentially an abstract map of the target. The Tactical Overview is divided into five areas: the target itself; four adjacent "Approaches" designated north, south, east, and west; and four "Pre-Approaches" that border the Approaches and are also designated north, south, east, and west. The target area contains both AAA and SAM sites, the Approach areas contain only SAMs, and the Pre-Approaches have neither. The SAM Defense box on the Target Card shows the SAM density in the relevant areas, which may be Heavy, Moderate, Light, Minimal, or None. A modifier from the Campaign card may adjust the SAM density; for instance, the Libya Campaign card changes all Heavy densities to Moderate. Generally, the Campaign card modifiers favor the player.

To deploy the defenses, the player rolls a die for each area, checking the result on the SAM Density table. For instance, a roll of 7 on the Medium column of the table results in the placement of a Large SAM in the area being checked. Certain results on the table increase the normal defenses; a roll of 9 on the Medium column would've added a Long Range SAM to the Large SAM. Though there is a chance that an area will remain defenseless (leaving a gaping hole for the Hornets), it's a slim one; there's a 100% chance that an area will have at least one Small SAM if the SAM density is Moderate or Heavy (which it is more often than not) and a 90% chance if the density is Light. There's a 40% chance of SAMs if the density is Minimal, but this rarely occurs, and it never occurs in the target area itself.

**Pre-Flight.** The player's most crucial decisions take place before play actually begins. In the Pre-Flight phase, he chooses the number of planes to undertake the mission, the aviators to pilot them, and the weapons they'll be taking. A suggested number of planes for the current mission is given on the Target card. The player has the option of taking two fewer or two more than the suggested number; if he takes fewer, the mission

is significantly riskier, but if he takes more, he automatically suffers a victory point penalty. Novice players are advised to take the suggested number; cautious players might add a couple more, but unless the target's defensive forces are exceptionally weak, it's rarely a good idea to take fewer.

To assign aviators, the player must study their ratings to size up their strengths and weaknesses, using his best judgement to anticipate the likely enemy opposition (which is difficult in the beginning but gets easier as you get a few missions under your belt). In general, if heavy MiG resistance is expected, pilots with high Air-to-Air ratings are the best choices. If the ground defenses are especially dense, pilots with high Air-to-Ground ratings are the ones to take. A good mix will usually do the trick.

There are three categories of weapons to choose from: Air-to-Air missiles (Sparrows and Sidewinders), Air-to-Ground weapons (Mk. 82s, Mk. 83s., Mavericks, Harpoons, and Homing Anti-Radiation Missiles), and Pods (E-Pods, which defend against SAM and Long Range Air attacks, and N-Pods, which aid targeting during night missions). Additionally, each Hornet comes equipped with a 20mm cannon, useful in both air-to-ground and air-to-air combat. Each weapon (except the cannon) has a certain number of Weight Points; a Maverick, for instance, has one point, a Harpoon has two, and Sidewinders and Sparrows have none. The player can equip his planes with any combination of munitions he likes, while he stays within the range of points given on his Mission Briefing card; 10 points is the maximum, but it's possible to have as few as two. He's also limited by the number of load areas indicated on the Mission Briefing card. There are five possible load areas in each plane, but the Mission Briefing card might prevent the use of them all. Each area can carry only a certain number of munitions; the Wing Load areas, for instance, can carry only one Harpoon or two of any other type, while the Wingtip areas can carry only a single Sidewinder each. Equipping the planes is a challenge—there never seems to be quite enough Weight Points—and it's inevitable that you'll screw this up the first few missions. (If in doubt, consider going for an extra Sparrow or HARM.)

When the planes are ready to go, the final step of this phase involves their placement on the tactical maps (the Tactical Overview and the Air Combat Area). Planes are deployed in pairs (sections) on any of the four Pre-Approach areas on the Tactical Overview, any of the four Approach areas, or on the Air Combat Area to provide air cover. How many planes should be assigned to air cover? Again, experience is the best teacher, but you can get a general idea of what to expect by checking the MiG Activity box on the Target card. If the activity is Light, one section of Hornets should be enough. If it's Heavy, send all you can spare.

**In-Flight.** This is basically a housekeeping phase. The player checks for a target-bound random event (by rolling within the indicated range on the Mission Briefing card), then rolls for faulty intelligence (also given on the Mission Briefing card) for each area. If faulty intelligence is indicated, he rolls again on the SAM Density table and changes the defenses in the area being checked; a Medium SAM might abruptly become a

Large SAM with an extra Long Range SAM. Finally, the player determines the number and type of enemy MiGs by checking the MiG Activity box on the Target card, rolling a die on the appropriate column on the Enemy Fighter Presence table, then deploying the indicated MiGs in the Air Combat Area. Since the Hornets and MiGs haven't yet engaged, the exact placement of the MiGs in the Air Combat Area isn't important.

**Attack Resolution.** Attacks are resolved in a series of four almost identical steps, each representing about 30 seconds of actual time. All steps but the first begin with movement. Planes can stay put or move into any adjacent area; planes in the Air Combat Area can move to any area. If any Hornets are likely to engage in air-to-air combat during this step, they may jettison any of their air-to-ground munitions to avoid a combat penalty (they suffer a -1 penalty per AGW point carried in Dogfights).

The first part of this phase is Air Combat, which occurs between Hornets and MiGs in the Air Combat Area. A die is rolled and the Initial Air Combat Positioning table is consulted to determine which side (if either) has a combat advantage. A Hornet must be engaged before it can attack; this is determined by Initial Air Combat Positioning, the fighting style of the aviator, and the MiG Target Priority Table; basically, friendly Aggressive aviators have first pick of enemies to engage, while MiGs will engage Defensive-style and Normal-style Hornets before they'll engage Aggressive Hornets.


Aggressive planes attack first, followed by Normal planes, then Defensive. Regardless of whether a plane is attempting a Long Range attack or a Dogfight, he must first achieve a Fire Position. The Hornets and the MiGs each have their own Fire Position tables; a roll on the table, modified by a variable or two (such as the type of MiG involved), determines success. If the roll fails, so does the attack. If the roll succeeds, the player checks the Air Combat Results table. The results—which may be modified by the type of missile used, whether it's day or night, and excessive AGW Weight Points carried—include Missed (nothing happens), Near Miss (the target can't attack during its next opportunity), Damaged-Jettison-Abort (a Damaged plane must jettison all munitions and is unable to conduct attacks for the rest of the mission), and Destroyed (goodbye, plane). There are a few other considerations, such as the evasive action option to reduce the likelihood of being hit, but that's basically it. Because of all of the chart-checking and modifiers to consider, air combat is not especially smooth, but it's intense and satisfying.

Air-to-ground combat, which occurs only in the Tactical Overview, involves the Hornets' attempts to bomb the target site while avoiding fire from the AAA and SAMs. During a step, each Hornet may attempt to drop bombs, fire its missiles, or conduct a strafing attack. The various munitions have different ranges. For instance, Mk. 82s and Mk. 83s must be dropped in the same area as the Hornet, while HARM attacks can be made in the same or adjacent areas. Defensive weapons are likewise limited; AAA and normal SAM attacks are made against Hornets in the same area, Long Range SAMs attack Hornets in the same and adjacent areas.

To check for a successful attack, the player rolls a die and compares the results to the numbers on the counter representing the weapon; generally, the higher the roll, the more likely the weapon hits. For instance, the Mk. 82 counter is designated 4/10; if the die roll is greater than or equal to 4, but less than 10, a single hit is scored. If the roll is greater than or equal to 10, a pair of hits or scored. Targeted SAMs and AAA units suffer step losses; a Large SAM is reduced to Medium, Medium is reduced to Small, and so on.

Enemy SAMs respond by attempting a "lock-on," requiring a die roll on the SAM Lock-On table; modifiers include the SAM's value and whether the targeted Hornet is taking evasive action. A SAM can lock-on to a number of Hornets equal to the SAM's value, assuming the Hornets are all within range. Rolls are then made on the SAM Lock-On Results table, whose results are similar to those of the Fire Position Results table. AAA attacks are conducted along the same lines, requiring rolls on the AAA Attack table followed by checks on the AAA Result table. Like air combat, air-to-ground attacks are fun and exciting, but they're a little sluggish to execute because of the number of modifiers and die rolls.

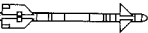


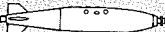
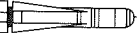



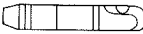
**Post-Flight.** More housekeeping, this time taking place during the trip home and the subsequent arrival. A die roll indicates if a Mission Event occurs, and another series of rolls determines if Damaged Hornets are, in fact, Heavily Damaged (there's a good chance that they are); Heavily Damaged Hornets will be grounded for longer periods of time than those that are merely Damaged. A roll is also made for each pilot to see how he's weathered the mission. After factoring in modifiers for the aviator's Cool rating and plane damage, a die roll determines if the pilot is okay, Shaken (his card is flipped and his ratings reduced), or Not Ready (the aviator can't participate in the next mission). Damaged planes are also forbidden from taking part in the next mission. Additionally, a variable number of non-Damaged planes will also be restricted from participating next time due to maintenance problems, as determined by a roll on the Hornet Check table.

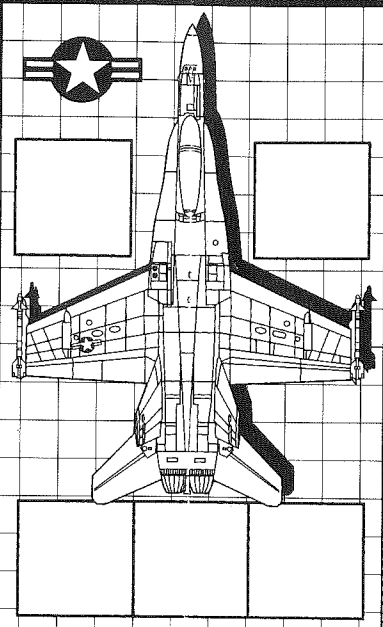
 <b>Enemy Fighter Presence</b>				
d10	Minimal	Light	Moderate	Heavy
1	-	-	21,21	23,23
2	-	21	21,21	21,21,21
3	-	21	21,23	21,21,23
4	-	21	21,21,21	23,29
5	-	23	23,23	23,23,23
6	-	23	21,25	25,29
7	-	25	21,29	21,23,29
8	21	21,21	23,25	21,25,29
9	21	23,23	21,23,23	23,25,29
10	23	29	23, 29	23,29,29
Note: Each is a flight of two fighters				



# Hornet Load Area Restrictions

## Munition Weights

	Munitions	Weight Points
AAMS	Sidewinders 	0
	Sparrows 	0
	Mk. 82's 	1
AGWS	Mk. 83's 	2
	Mavericks 	1
	Harpoons 	2
	HARM 	1
Pods	E-Pods 	1
	N-Pods 	1



To find out how you did, tally the victory points gained and lost from the number of hits made on the target, enemy planes and Hornets destroyed, and random events. Compare the total to the Mission Victory Point Levels box on the Target card, which will give a result of Complete Success, Success, Failure, or Complete Failure. When you've completed all the missions of a campaign, add the total points to determine an overall level of success. It's not terribly difficult to achieve Success in the easier campaigns, Central America in particular. In all campaigns, Complete Success is a real challenge, requiring gutsy play and more than a few lucky dice rolls. All in all, **Hornet Leader** is well-balanced; the odds of victory are better than even for experienced players, but they're significantly stacked against novice and careless players.

## Extras

There are only a handful of optional rules, and since none of them are particularly difficult, even first time players might want to consider them. For players unhappy with the printed aviator statistics, rules are provided for generating new ones from scratch. The system is really nothing more than a series of die rolls, meaning that the new statistics might be unrealistically advantageous or discouragingly weak. Rather than generating random numbers, players might want to use a system of their own, such as a point allocation system similar to the ones used in role playing games. In its simplest form, the player receives a fixed number of points per aviator (say, three points) which he uses to modify the aviator's four characteristics any way he chooses, starting with a base of zero for each. (For the styles, which don't have numerical ratings, consider the Defensive style to be zero, Normal to be one, and Aggressive to be two). The player then distributes the points as he likes, gaining a bonus point if he'll accept a negative rating for one or more characteristics. A typical aviator's characteristics might end up like this: Air-to-Air = -1, Style = Defensive (0),

Air-to-Ground = 2, Cool = 2. Tinkerers are encouraged to play around with this; you might, for instance, consider giving the Leader Aviator six points instead of three, or you might roll a 6-sided die to determine the beginning number of points for each aviator, effectively combining the random number system and the point allocation system. Consult *Ambush* or the *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons Player's Handbook* (TSR, 1989) for additional ideas; **Hornet Leader** is ready made for role playing.

There are good optional rules for pilot experience (another idea right out of *AD&D*), which increases an aviator's skills in proportion to his campaign success. Rules for fatigue and recovery are also nice, which prevent Shaken pilots from automatically improving. Finally, there's the "No One Else To Shoot At" optional rule, which says that when a SAM has fewer Hornets in range than the SAM's value, the SAM adds a bonus to its Lock-On Results die rolls. Why this is an option instead of a standard rule is a mystery—it makes more sense than the standard rule, it's not hard to remember

(it's only one sentence long), and what's another modifier added to the dozens already in the standard game?

The best extra is the Desert Storm material. This isn't just another scenario, but rather an entirely separate game module with its own mapsheet (full color, complete with charts and tables) and set of rules. Though an Iraq Campaign card is included in the standard game, the Desert Storm module focuses on conditions specific to that essentially one-sided conflict (which isn't quite so one-sided in the game, in the interests of playability). Modifications to the standard game include:

- Substituting a Target Location table for the Mission Briefing cards, which generates a specific city in Iraq as the destination for your Hornets.
- Using an Arming table to determine the number of Weight Points and Load Areas for the Hornets. The Range Band number of the target city indicates which column of the Arming table will be used; for instance, Al Jahrah is in Range Band 1 (Short Range), Baghdad is in Range Band 4 (Long Range).
- Choosing a Mission Profile for the aircraft, a rule exclusive to the Desert Storm module. A High Profile means more weapons for the Hornets but an increased chance of enemy contact, while Low Profile means just the opposite. A Normal Profile keeps everything the same.
- Checking for enemy forces on the Contact table while flying to the target city and also when returning home.
- Checking for the presence of Saddam Hussein (or Mr. Hussein, as he's called here). If the target city is marked with an asterisk, a roll of 1 or 2 means that Mr. H is present. If the mission is a Complete Success, a roll of 1 or 2 means that Mr. H has bitten the dust. To quote: "This results in an immediate cessation of hostilities, and dancing in the streets of Iraq and

around the world. Iraq surrenders and your pilots become national heroes." Is that all? No lunch with George Bush?

Though the Desert Storm module looks like an afterthought, it's one of the game's best features. In fact, it plays more smoothly than the standard game (not as many cards to deal with) and the subject is certainly irresistible. It nicely simulates the fish-in-a-barrel aspects of the actual conflict as well as the challenges our guys might have faced if Iraq had been a little more on the ball. Very nice.

## Tips

The **Hornet Leader** rules are fairly easy to learn, but beginners will have to go through a lot of trial and error to nail down winning strategies. Here are a few tips to make those early missions a little less frustrating.

1. Take the aviator ratings seriously. A one point bonus on an Air-to-Air rating makes quite a difference when facing MiGs; a two-point bonus can often spell victory even when the Hornets are significantly outnumbered. Since an Aggressive pilot can blast a Normal pilot out of the sky before the Normal pilot gets off his first shot, style ratings should also be considered carefully. As a rule, using Shaken pilots is suicidal.

2. Don't tie up a lot of your planes in air support; that is, don't overreact to the MiG activity and deploy an excessive number of Hornets in the Air Combat Area. In general, no more than half of your planes should be deployed in the Air Combat Area; one section is sufficient for Light MiG activity, and two sections are enough for Moderate activity. Use three sections for Heavy MiG activity only if you've got plenty for the Tactical Overview areas. As your skill increases, you may find that you can get along with even fewer sections for air support.

3. Keep your planes moving. The Anti-Aircraft Artillery and the SAMs get a hefty attack bonus against planes that remain in the same area for two or more consecutive steps. Don't let them have it. (One exception—unless you're in really bad shape, take the time you need to unload your bombs in the Target area; if that means staying put, so be it.)

4. Attack hard and fast. Move to the Target area as quickly as possible, dump your bombs, then get out. The longer you linger, the better your chance of being blown to bits. Air-to-air combat is a lot of fun, but it's often unproductive—don't lose sight of the mission.

5. The developers disagree on how aggressive a player should be. Gene Billingsley advises caution, suggesting that players load up on as many E-Pods as possible to maximize safety. Dan Verssen dismisses Gene as a wimp; leave the E-Pods at home, he says, and stock up on HARMs. Though it's probably a good idea to err on the side of caution until you get a feel for the game, for experienced players I'd suggest taking Verssen's advice and load up on the heavy stuff. Not all of your bombs and missiles will hit their targets, and when you're out, that's it (don't count on your 20mm cannon). Besides, aggressive tactics are much more fun—if you're going to go down, you might as well go down in a blaze of glory.

## So What?

**Hornet Leader** is not without its problems, though most are minor. Foremost among them is the number of modifiers you need to manipulate, which borders on the unwieldy. There are modifiers on the cards, on the counters, on the Mission Display, on the log sheets—like flies at a stockyard, they're everywhere, and keeping track of them is a real headache. It's almost inevitable that advantageous modifiers are missed along the way, and I suppose that's a valid penalty for not paying attention, but I'm not convinced that each and every one is necessary in the first place. The modifiers for pilot experience, for instance, include air kills, ground kills, target defense levels, leader presence, night missions, damaged and destroyed aircraft, Cool ratings, missions skipped—enough already.

The box claims 15-25 minutes play time for a single mission, and while that's more or less true, it doesn't take into account the preparation time necessary to get your planes off the ground. Calculating and deploying enemy defenses, selecting and arming the planes, and completing all the necessary bookkeeping and chart checking took me a good half-hour the first few missions. Even when I got used to the routine, it still took a lot of time. While it's true that all of the preparation pays off in exciting and interesting missions, I'd have settled for a little less excitement in exchange for a little more streamlining.

Though the game stresses playability over historicity (which is just fine with me) the liberties taken with reality may annoy sticklers for accuracy. Planes move one area, period, and fly automatically; there are no engine problems per se and there's no significant danger of running out of fuel. Unlike the Hornets, the MiGs don't seem to have any meaningful weapon

## Hornet Leader Clarifications

**Mission Log:** The modifier for "Returned Damaged" on a Pilot Check die roll should be "+2," NOT "11+." This is stated correctly in rules section 14.51.

**Counters:** There are two sets of Hornet counters. One set (HV on back side) is placed directly on the Tactical Overview or Detailed Air Combat Area, and represents your Hornets in flight. The other set (#s on one side, Hornet silhouette on the other side) are your random selection chits. Place the ones with numbers corresponding to the eligible Hornets (the ones which you are randomly selecting) and draw the chits to determine the "Random Hornet(s)." **Section 14.4:** This section should be titled "Make Carrier Sheet Adjustments."

**Section 7.4 and 7.5:** When placing Hornet sections, you place the appropriate COUNTERS (the ones with the #s on the front corresponding to the appropriate Hornet Cards, and "HV" on the reverse side) on the Tactical Overview or the Detailed Air Combat Area. **Pilot Experience (18.1):** Don't let the part about "diagonal slashes" and "Xs" confuse you. This is only designed to let you know how many hits a pilot scored on a mission. One slash equals one hit. Thus "//-" shows two hits and "XX/" shows five hits.

**Fatigue (18.2):** When using the Fatigue rules, you Do Not make Pilot Checks. Roll a Fatigue Check for each Pilot instead.



## FACT BOX

**Publisher:** GMT Games, 310 West Lacey Blvd., Hanford, CA 93230; published 1991

**Designer:** Dan Verssen

**Developers:** Gene Billingsley, Dan Verssen

**Art Director:** Rodger B. MacGowan

**Components:** One 22 x 17 combat display, one 8 x 10 mapsheet, 110 playing cards, 200 die-cut counters, one 20-page rule book, one 10-sided die, various play-aids

**Complexity:** Low/Medium

**Topic:** Solitaire simulation of contemporary F/A-18 Hornet combat missions

restrictions. And as the developers themselves point out, bombs and missiles perform equally well against all types of targets, which is not exactly true.

But given **Hornet Leader's** focus, the liberties taken with reality are trivial. And despite my grumbling, I was surprised at how quickly I got used to juggling modifiers. As for the long prep time, well, that's a key part of the game; if you can't learn to enjoy it (I'm trying, honest), you can certainly appreciate its purpose (I do).

**Hornet Leader's** virtues far outweigh its flaws. The variety of cards ensures a new and engaging situation for every mission. Replay value is high, making the game an exceptionally good value. Though its historical perspective is a bit superficial, it successfully conveys a feel for what strike-fighters are up against. **Hornet Leader** is an excellent game, with clever systems, stunning graphics, and an elegant overview of Operation Desert Storm tossed in as a bonus. It's too good to miss. ○



## Hornet Leader: Example of Play

Here's a run down of the opening rounds of a typical **Hornet Leader** scenario, from the initial set up through the first steps of the attack resolution. Generally speaking, the choices described in this example were made to illustrate the rules and don't necessarily reflect the optimum strategy. [Ed. Note: Page 8 contains a summary of the example of play.]

### Mission Briefing

With the cards shuffled, the Mission Display spread out, and the counters punched, I'm ready to go. I begin by selecting a campaign. The rules give me the option of picking a particular campaign or choosing one at random, so I'll split the difference and choose randomly from the three introductory campaigns. I pick Central America; it's a good choice for beginners, since the entire campaign comprises only three missions (as compared to, say, the North Korea campaign, which requires 11). Also encouraging are the early intelligence reports shown on the card. The Central America pilots have a Bad quality rating, and their Moderate SAMs will be modified to Light.

Next, I draw a random card from the Target deck. Luck's with me again—I've drawn the Bridge, a fairly easy target. The card's intelligence report indicates only Light MiG activity. Additionally, the SAM defenses are Moderate in the target area and Light in the Approach areas, which is not bad at all. The card recommends that I use four Hornets, a relatively low number, confirming my suspicions that this mission shouldn't be particularly difficult.

The Mission Briefing card, another random draw, is a mixed bag. I'm only allowed 5 Weight Points (some cards allow as many as 10) but three load areas are available (many cards have only two). It's a daylight mission—that's both good and bad, since the enemy SAMs will be less likely to hit my Hornets, but there'll also be a negative modifier to my bombing attempts—and it looks like a 90% certainty that my intelligence information will turn out to be correct.

I draw a Special Condition card to check for a random event. According to the card, I'll be experiencing a munition Shortage; the number of counters available for each weapon type has been restricted (20 Sidewinders, 10 Sparrows, a dozen Mk. 82s, and so on), but since I don't have many Hornets to arm, this shouldn't be much of a problem.

It's time to turn to the Tactical Overview of the Mission Display and deploy the enemy AAA and SAMs in the target area and the four Approach areas. The Target card says that there's Moderate SAM density in the target area and Light density elsewhere, but the Campaign card instructs me to change all Moderate results to Light, so the density won't be as bad as it could be.

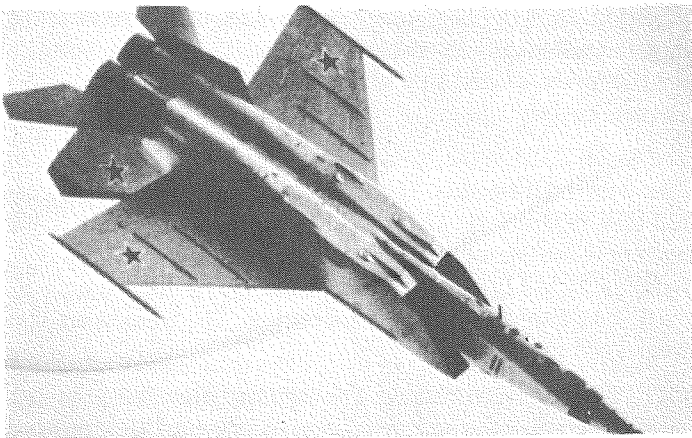
I'll consider the areas one at a time, beginning with the North Approach. I roll a 10-sided die and check on the appropriate column of the SAM Density table. The result is a Light SAM, so I place the corresponding counter in the North Approach box. Defenses are deployed in the other areas following the same procedure. When all is said and done, I've got Medium SAMs in

the East and South Approaches, Small SAMs in the North Approach and target area, and a Large SAM in the West Approach. Additionally, there's Light AAA in the target area and an extra Long Range SAM in the South Approach. It looks like a solid defense. This may be harder than I thought.

## In Flight

Deciding the number of planes, the aviators, and munition allocation comes next, arguably the most difficult decision of the game, compounded in this instance by the restrictions imposed by the reduced weight point allowance and the munition shortage Special Condition. Choosing the number of planes won't give me any headaches; I'll use the suggested number of four, since using fewer would be too risky and more would result in the loss of victory points. All planes are identical; I'll use planes 300-303.

The choice of aviators is trickier, as it requires a lot of educated guessing. There's no way to be sure if I'll be encountering enemy MiGs—I won't know until the Hornets are in the air—but because there's been MiG activity reported, I'll play it safe and assume the worst. Gambling on the absence of MiGs could have devastating consequences; if I encounter MiGs and have no friendly air support, there's an excellent chance that I'll lose one or more Hornets, which is murder on the campaign, even if the mission is completed successfully.



I decide to assign one section (two planes) to air combat. To fly them, I'll need a pair of aviators with strong styles and formidable Air-to-Air statistics. My choices: Wedge (Aggressive style, Air-to-Air rating of 2), and Leader (Aggressive style, Air-to-Air rating of 1; a rating of 1 may not sound like much, but 2 is the maximum for any rating). Wedge is in Hornet 300, Leader in 301.

For the target area aviators, I'm looking for high Air-to-Ground statistics. I pick Banzai (Air-to-Ground rating of 2) for Hornet 302, and Cowboy (Air-to-Ground rating of 1) for Hornet 303.

As for the munitions, I'll start by allocating a Sidewinder to the Left and Right Wingtip Load Areas in all four planes. Why? Because the Sidewinders have zero Weight Points, and the Left and Right Wingtips can be armed with a single Sidewinder each and nothing else; in effect, the Sidewinders are free. (Note that in this particular mission, I'm restricted by the munitions shortage. But even with the shortage, I'm allowed 20 Sidewinders, so I should have plenty).

To finish arming the air combat Hornets, I'll load them up with Sparrows (for Long Range attacks) and more Sidewinders (for Dogfights). Though both types of missiles have zero Weight Points, I'm limited here by the capacity of the Load Areas. The Left and Right Wing Load Areas can have only one Harpoon or two of any other weapon type; the Center Line Load Area can have one Pod, Mk. 82, Mk. 83, or Maverick. I'll take an aggressive approach with 300, allocating two Sparrows in both the Left and Right Wing areas, and a Maverick in the Center Line area. I'll take a more conservative approach with the 301: two Sidewinders in the Left Wing, two Sparrows in the Right, and an E-Pod in the Center Line. Purposely, I've favored air-to-air weapons over air-to-ground weapons; as a gun-shy novice, I'm afraid of encountering an excessive number of MiGs, so I've taken more air-to-air weapons than I'm likely to need. (Over the long haul, this isn't the best strategy—if possible, it's a good idea for every plane to have air-to-ground weapons on board—but it's better to go heavy on air-to-air weapons in early missions until you get the hang of air combat).

For the target area Hornets, I want plenty of air-to-ground weapons, HARMs in particular to knock out SAM sites. For the 302, I'll allocate two HARMs in the Left Wing Load Area, a Maverick in the Center, and a pair of Mk. 82s in the Right Wing. I'll allocate identical weapons in the 303, substituting an E-Pod for the Maverick in the Center for extra protection. In future missions where the SAM defense is more intense, I might increase the number of E-Pods, but in this mission it's a moot point because the munition shortage limits me to a total of four E-Pods. Why didn't I take any Mk. 83's? They're more powerful AGWs, to be sure, but at two Weight Points each, they're also quite heavy. My weight limit restrictions make them a luxury I can't afford.

With the planes armed and ready to go, I now must decide their initial placement. One section, of course, will go to the Air Combat Area. I'll send the remaining section to the North Approach area; with only a Small SAM site there, it looks like a good bet.

## In Flight

We're in the air! On the way to the target, I roll a die to check for a random event. The roll is 3, within the 1-5 range on the Mission Briefing card, so I draw a Mission Briefing card. I get a Target of Opportunity; for every Mk. 82, Mk. 83, Maverick, HARM, or Harpoon I expend at this time, I score an automatic two Mission Points. That's not a lot of points, but they're free.

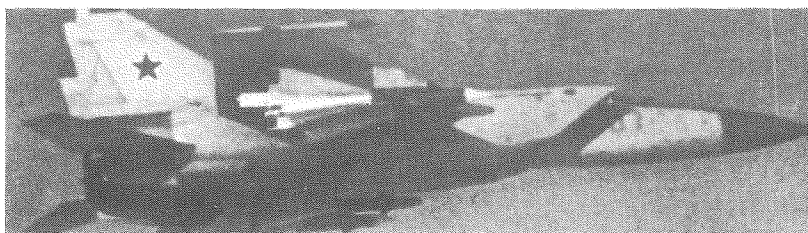
Hmmmm... what the hell. I ditch the Maverick from the 300 and pick up two points.

I now roll for certainty; that is, I roll a 10-sider and compare the result to the Certainty rating on the Mission Briefing card. It's a 7, within the 1-9 range, meaning that the SAMs remain as they are. If I'd have rolled a 10, I would've had to re-roll on the SAM Density table for the Target area and all of the Approach areas. This could've really messed me up if, for instance, a Large SAM replaced the Small SAM that I thought was in the North Approach area.

Before combat begins, I've got to determine the number and type of enemy MiGs. The Target card lists Light MiGs. I roll on the appropriate column of the Enemy Fighter Presence table and



come up with a pair of MiG 23s; I place two MiG 23 counters, randomly chosen, in the appropriate boxes in the Air Combat Approach. The counter for one of the MiGs shows an Aggressive style and a +1 Defense Value, the other has a Normal style and no Defense Value. Considering the alternatives—according to the table, I might have faced twice as many MiG 23s—not bad. My hopes are high.



## Attack Resolution

At last, we're ready for action (elapsed playing time so far: about half an hour). Air Combat and Air-to-Ground combat takes place over four identical steps; identical, that is, except that Hornets can't move in step one, as they've already been committed in the Pre-Flight phase.

The first step of Air Combat finds the air support Hornets (300 and 301) flying toward the two MiG 20s. To determine initial positioning—which indicates which side resolves Long Range combat first—I roll a die and consult the Initial Air Combat Positioning table, adding a +2 modifier because of the Bad MiG pilot rating on the Campaign card. The total is 8, giving the Hornets an Advantage. The Hornets resolve all of their Long Range attacks before the MiGs conduct any of theirs; obviously, this is a big plus, since I might get lucky and blow a MiG out of the sky before it gets off a single shot.

Before the shooting begins, I've got to figure out which planes will be attacking each other. In this case, engagement is straightforward since only two planes per side are involved; Wedge, my best Air-to-Air aviator, engages the Aggressive MiG, while Leader engages the Normal one.

I'll resolve Wedge's Long Range attack first. He fires one Sparrow (he could've fired two, but I'm holding one in reserve). I check to see if he's achieved a Fire Position, calculated by rolling a die (the roll is 7), adding +3 for the Sparrow, +2 for his Air-to-Air rating, and +1 for the MiG's Defense Value, totalling 13. This exceeds the required modified roll of 11, meaning that Fire Position has been achieved. Now I go to the Fire Position table and roll again; it's a 7. **Damaged!** The MiG must jettison all munitions and won't be able to conduct any attacks for the duration of the mission. Though the MiG is still intact, it'll be a sitting duck for the next step of combat.

Leader's attack is resolved the same way. He'll also fire a single Sparrow, and the Fire Position is calculated as before. This time, a roll of 3 is modified by a +3 for the Sparrow and +1 for his Air-to-Air rating; the roll falls short. The Sparrow is expended and the frustrated Hornet readies for the next combat step.

The undamaged MiG now gets to make a Long Range attack against Leader. To a die roll of 9, he adds his +2 combat rating (printed on his counter), a +1 bonus for attacking an Aggressive Hornet, and a -1 penalty for the Hornet's E-Pod. The total is 11, good enough for a successful Fire Position. A roll on the Fire Position table gives a result of Near Miss; there's no damage to Hornet 301, but it won't be able to make an attack during its next opportunity.

Despite the Near Miss by the MiG, I'm still in good shape. I'll move in for Dogfight combat during the subsequent steps and with

any luck at all, Wedge ought to be able to take out the Damaged MiG with a double Sidewinder.

Let's move to the target section of Hornets, still waiting in the North Approach. I'll commit my weapons as follows: one HARM from Banzai will be directed at the Small SAM in the target area (HARMs can be used against targets in the same or adjacent areas), a second HARM will go to the anti-aircraft artillery in the target area, and a Maverick will be sent to the target itself (the bridge; like HARMs, Mavericks can be sent to adjacent areas); Cowboy will send a single HARM to the Small SAM in the North Approach.

All HARM attacks are resolved before any SAM lock-on is attempted. Rolling for Cowboy's HARM, I get a disappointing 1, modified by Cowboy's Air-to-Ground rating of 1; the North Approach SAM is unharmed. But my luck is better with Banzai. Against the AAA, I roll of 10; with the applicable modifiers, the HARM has destroyed the AAA. Another Banzai roll of 10, modified similarly, completely destroys the Small SAM in the target area. Banzai's superb performance will significantly reduce the risk in the second step of combat when I plan to move the Hornets directly into the target area to unload their Mk. 82s.

The Small SAM in the North Approach now gets the chance to lock-on to both Hornets. The lock-on attempt on Banzai is a die roll of 6, modified by +2 (the SAM's value) for a total of 8; the attempt fails. The lock-on attempt on Cowboy is a die roll of 3, modified by +2 (the SAM's value) and -3 (for the Hornet's E-Pod), for a total of 2, which is not enough. The Hornets are safe from SAM fire this step.

I resolve the Maverick attack. The modified die roll is 8. I check the hit numbers on the weapon counter and see that I've scored one hit against the bridge. It'll take three more hits to bring the bridge down.

## The Shape I'm In

At the end of the first of four combat steps, I'm in pretty fair shape. With one MiG out of action, air combat is definitely going my way, and while the ground attacks could've gone better—I wish I'd have been more successful with the Small SAM in the North Approach—my planes are intact and I've still got plenty of bombs. In the next step, I'll move both Banzai and Cowboy into the target area and release all their Mk. 82s, which should knock out the bridge. Then I'll get them out as fast as I can. Since I've effectively neutralized the defenses in the combat area, odds are good that I'll escape without a scratch. This campaign is off to a good start. ●

by Mark Pitcavage

## PROFILE

# Balkan Front

Writing this review of **Balkan Front**, Game Research Design's (GRD) newest release, was a difficult task because I really had to write three reviews in one. **Balkan Front** is at the same time a new game, a new **Europa** game, and a remake of an older game by Game Designer's Workshop (GDW), **Marita-Merkur**. Any analysis of **Balkan Front** must take all these factors into account, plus the fact that **Balkan Front** is the first game published by GRD (their previous release, **The Urals**, was not an actual game but rather a module to add to **Fire in the East** and **Scorched Earth**). This review must therefore balance all of these different elements.

Since **Balkan Front** is the latest **Europa** game, and the first in some time to be released, I would like to briefly discuss what the series. **Europa** is a series of games and modules that simulate World War II on a divisional-regimental-battalion level. The games use a common rules system and interlocking maps. Many of the games are themselves linkable to other games in the series, and the ultimate goal is to create the mother of all monster games, **Grand Europa**, a comprehensive operational simulation of the entire War. The system itself has been around for quite awhile, mostly in the hands of Game Designer's Workshop. The first **Europa** games (**Drang Nach Osten** and **Unentschieden**, published in 1973) were GDW's first games. They were the first monster games as well! The series continued with games on virtually every World War II campaign from Norway to Egypt to the Caucasus, and not excluding the Balkans. Because of its scope, and the fact that the individual games were generally well designed, **Europa** spawned a couple of magazines, several newsletters, numerous clubs, a quasi-**Europa** game in *Strategy & Tactics* (#128), and a company dedicated to producing play aids for the series, GRD. GRD took over the **Europa** series in the late 1980's with the blessing of GDW. **Balkan Front** is the first complete game that the company has produced, although at least four others are in various stages of development or production.

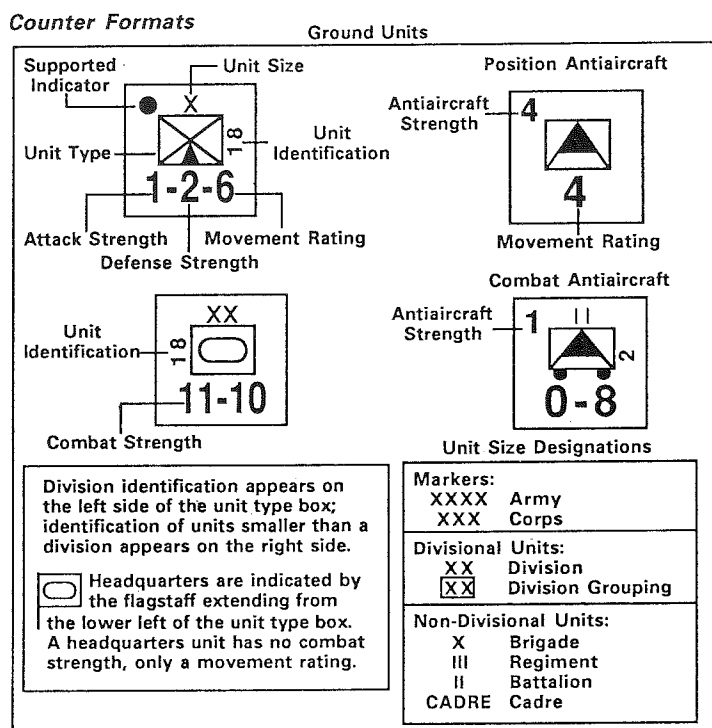
**Balkan Front**, as the title implies, is the **Europa** game which covers the campaigns in the Balkans in 1940-41. This includes the Italo-Greek War, the German invasion of Yugoslavia and Greece, and the parachute assault on Crete. The game covers the same ground that its predecessor, **Marita-Merkur**, did. This naturally leads to the question, "Why redo a perfectly good game when there were other projects, including the long awaited **Second Front**, still to be completed? However, **Balkan Front** convinced me of its validity. It is an altogether

different game from **Marita-Merkur**, and happily, a superior one. A look at the components can help demonstrate why.

### Components

The most obvious difference between the old game and the new one lies in the game maps. While both games include one and a half size maps covering the same area, GRD completely redrew the maps for **Balkan Front**. The "new style" maps, as they are called, now include many more features, including a new category of towns, four categories of ports, a new type of railroad, narrow straits crossings, places of historical interest and

numerous other features. An especially pleasing discovery for anybody who has played an older **Europa** game is that geographical features are now named. Rivers, provinces, mountains and islands are no longer anonymous terrain features. In addition, every hex from the original maps has been rescrutinized for historical accuracy and playability. As a result, not only are the maps significantly more accurate, but they have no game map anomalies such as hexagons containing very small sections of land. Moreover, GRD seems to have made an actual effort to make the game map easy to use: fortified hexsides and port symbols are now printed directly on the map, and weather lines now extend over water. Adding a bit of historical flavor is the fact that many cities and towns now have several names listed. These additional names show places in the language of their inhabitants (if this differed from the language of the rulers), and new names given to areas conquered and annexed by other states.





Even though extensively revised, the maps are not without problems. Weather lines are still labeled by letters placed directly within them, instead of to one side, so that it is difficult to remember which side of a line labeled "C" actually is weather zone C. One very important geographical area, Bosnia-Herzegovina, is delineated only in the rules, not on the maps. This is rather inconvenient. Finally, a printer's error resulted in several high mountain hexes being printed in a different color. Ironically, these hexes are actually more pleasing than normal high mountain hexes, which are hard to see. Unfortunately the error only happened to some hexes not all of them, so there is one terrain type represented in two different ways. These problems with the maps are really only quibbles. All elements taken together, the maps are really a work of wargaming art. As a combination of function and artwork, they are certainly among the best in the hobby. A.E. Goodwin (for his research) and Barbie Pratt (for the graphics) deserve to be commended.

The game also comes with almost 1,000 counters (as opposed to 600 in *Marita-Merkur*). The *Balkan Front* counter mix contains the complete order of battle for Yugoslavia and Greece, including units intended for *Grand Europa*, and the relevant forces from Germany, Italy, Hungary, Britain and the Commonwealth, and Bulgaria (whose forces were not included in *Marita-Merkur*). The orders of battle for all the participants were exhaustively re-researched by a team of people. This resulted in a number of changes, the most drastic of which is in the Yugoslav order of battle, which has been extensively revised, resulting in a much more accurate picture of Yugoslav mobilization. Among the changes, each province in the country now has its own mobilization schedule, depending upon its feelings towards the Axis and/or Allies.

There are other changes in the counter mix as well, including cosmetic changes. Commonwealth countries are now all represented as variations of a common theme, so that Australia, for instance, now has its own color combination—identifiably Commonwealth, yet distinct. Air units now have back side printing which indicates the inoperative condition and identifies the aircraft type. Previous *Europa* counter mixes identified the reduced side of every land unit as "cadres," except for the Germans, which had the privilege of being called "divisiongruppen." *Balkan Front* has finally dropped that, using "cadre" to refer to every reduced unit. As with the maps, GRD seems to have paid special attention to playability when designing its counter mix. Corps counters, which can be used to replace large stacks of units are included; these are a welcome addition to any *Europa* game. More importantly, for the first time in the history of *Europa* an adequate number of game markers (air fields, forts, bridge destroyed markers, etc.) has been included with the game. *Balkan Front* contains a plethora of such counters. This includes a number solely designed to ease play, such as markers to help players remember odds and combat modification. I found this very helpful and wish other game companies would consider imitating GRD in this area.

However, there are also a few problems with the counters. Several of them were printed with the wrong information, which is just plain sloppy. In addition, there was another

Air Units

Air Attack		Type	Air Defense		Air Unit Types	
Strength	4	B	4	Strength	Fighters:	F Fighter
Model	Do 17Z		Movement Rating		Bombers:	B Bomber
Tactical Bombing Strength	3-4	13			D Dive Bomber	
		Strategic Bombing Strength			Transports:	T Transport
					GT Glider Transport	
					Prefixes:	N Night

If only one bombing strength is present, it is the tactical bombing strength; the air unit has no strategic bombing strength.

5	F	5
1	Hurri 1	8

printer's error which changed the color of German and Italian units slightly from the standard in previous *Europa* games. I didn't find this to be a problem, although I know some people have complained.

Rounding out the components are the charts and rules. The charts are all servicable, though not as attractive as those in the previous *Europa* game, *Scorched Earth*. It is the rules which truly distinguishes *Marita-Merkur* from *Balkan Front*. While both games use the *Europa* system, that system underwent 11 years of evolution after *Marita-Merkur*.

The *Balkan Front* rules are clearly superior in at least three respects. First, the standard rules have been brought up state of the art *Europa*. Based on *Scorched Earth*, the *Balkan Front* rules include significant changes to air units and supply, and other modifications to the rules for armor effect, railroads, terrain, special units, and weather wise, *Balkan Front* is both more playable and more realistic than its predecessor. The second area of change regards the political rules. The situation in the Balkans in 1940-41 was confused, to say the least. The rules in *Marita-Merkur* which tried to simulate this situation were adequate but clunky and needlessly convoluted. *Balkan Front* handles the political aspect of the campaign in a much simpler way, which greatly improves ease of play. Lastly, *Marita-Merkur* had but two scenarios, the new version has eight, ranging from a one turn scenario of the invasion of Crete to the massive campaign game. Among the scenarios are several alternative history ones, including a very exciting hypothetical Italian invasion of Yugoslavia (see my article in *The Europa Magazine* #18). *Europa* games have tended to have few scenarios; I am glad to see *Balkan Front* break this tradition.

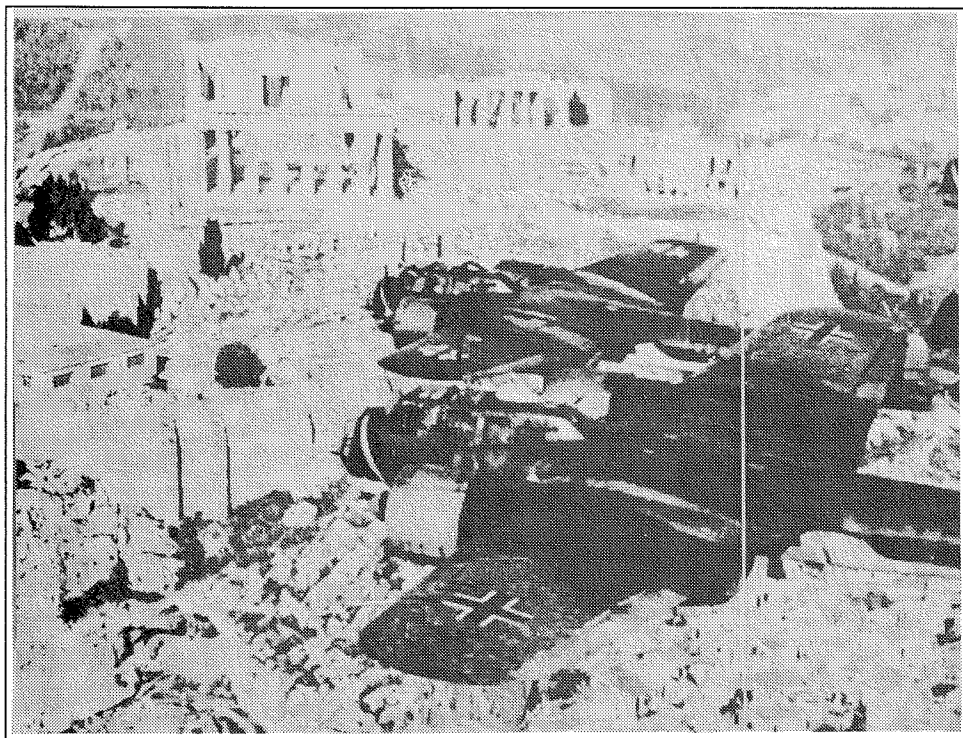
In general, the new rules are a great improvement. However, *Balkan Front* still contains some rules which are not thoroughly developed or are obsolete (I will discuss some in more detail below). A perennial *Europa* problem, not fixed in this game, is the lack of examples of play in general and of illustrations in particular. *Europa* games, though adhering to many wargame conventions, are nevertheless quite complex, and would profit by an approach more conducive to learning. An additional absence is the lack of any designer's note or players' notes. *Europa* games have traditionally eschewed providing hints for players but have always included extensive designer's notes. *Balkan Front* however, does not. Instead, designers notes were included in *The Europa Magazine* #16 (a lot of them—12 pages of notes plus the latest errata). This delayed appearance of design notes, when combined with several easily caught errors in the rules (and one in the charts), suggests that

the game might have been somewhat rushed in development and production.

While I'm on the subject of components, I should mention one additional component that has no effect on play but is nonetheless important. The box art for **Balkan Front** is very visually striking. GRD has decided to use World War II propaganda posters to decorate its **Europa** box covers. The cover for **Balkan Front** is an Italian poster depicting a crouching Italian soldier armed with a Roman short sword — an interesting attempt to try to bring out past martial values. It wouldn't surprise me if **Balkan Front** sold some copies based on the box cover itself. The bottom of the box, however, is rather drab, especially when compared to its predecessor **Scorched Earth**, which had one of the more exciting box bottoms I've seen.

## Rules

The rules for **Balkan Front** are relatively streamlined and generally well written. This is not surprising; if there's one thing that **Europa** players have been doing for the past two decades it has been quibbling over rules. The fundamental rules for **Balkan Front** are standard wargame. The sequence of play



is surprisingly short for a modern wargame, consisting of only five phases: an initial phase, a movement phase, an air phase, a combat phase, and an exploitation phase. Of course, a lot goes on in these phases.

In the initial phase, the phasing player receives reinforcements and replacements, attempts to repair inoperative air units, and possibly resolves various political events. Both players determine the supply state of their units. Units trace supply through combination of overland, road and railroad hexes to various supply sources. The supply rules are deceptively simple, and players must pay attention to exactly how their units are being supplied. This, of course, is as it should be in a wargame. There are also a number of special conditions and

options such as supply by air and sea.

There are similarly many movement options. Movement in **Balkan Front** is fairly cut and dried at the basic level, but it does require a little practice to be able to move your units the way you want to. It costs movement points to leave zones of control and more to move through them. Mountain, ski, cavalry, artillery, light infantry, and combat/motorized units all have various movement penalties or advantages. Behind the lines, they can use administrative movement to help get them where they are going. Roads and two grades of railroads can also help speed movement. Rail movement is a little confusing at first; a unit can move so many hexes by rail per movement point depending on its movement allowance. For instance, a unit with eight movement points can move six rail hexes per movement point, for a total of 48 hexes. Each unit moved by rail subtracts from that country's rail capacity. This is where one of the problems with **Balkan Front's** new rules lies. A unit moving on a low volume railroad costs twice as much as the same unit moving through a high volume railroad. This doesn't seem to make much sense. A low volume railroad should limit the number of units that can travel on it, not use up total rail

capacity. Units can eschew rail movement in favor of air or sea transport. Only units without heavy equipment can travel by air.

Events other than movement also take place in the movement phase. One of the things that adds realism to **Europa** games is unit specialization. Engineer units in particular have a lot to do. Engineers can build forts and permanent or temporary airfields, and can repair airfields, ports and rail lines. With sufficient movement points and odds of at least 10:1, any unit or stack can attempt to overrun a foe, causing automatic elimination. This is an important key to a successful blitzkrieg.

Following the movement phase comes the air phase, which is quite involved. Some have said that the air phase is really a separate game, and it arguably is **Their Finest Hour**, an earlier **Europa** game that mostly covers the Battle of Britain. Air units represent

groups of around 50 air craft, specified by model. They are differentiated by type, range, attack and defense strengths, and tactical and strategic bombing capability. Naturally they have a variety of possible missions. Depending on their type and capability, they can intercept other air units, scramble or transfer to different bases, transport or air drop units or terror bomb cities. They can bomb a variety of other targets, also, including ports, air bases, rail lines and naval transport. They can also interdict hexes (called harassment bombing) and lend offensive or defensive ground support.

The air phase is somewhat involved. A player moves his air units to their various targets. Along the way his air units can undergo "patrol attacks" by enemy air craft, which can possibly



Ground Combat Results Table

Die Roll	Odds Ratio													Die Roll
	1:4	1:3	1:2	1:1	1.5:1	2:1	3:1	4:1	5:1	6:1	7:1	8:1	9:1	
-1	AE	AE	AE	AE	AE	AE	AH	AR	AS	AS	HX	DR	DR	-1
0	AE	AE	AE	AE	AH	AH	AR	AS	EX	HX	DR	DR	DH	0
1	AE	AE	AE	AH	AR	AR	AS	EX	HX	DR	DR	DH	DH	1
2	AE	AE	AH	AR	AR	AS	EX	HX	DR	DR	DH	DH	DE	2
3	AE	AH	AR	AR	AS	AS	HX	DR	DR	DH	DE	DE	DE	3
4	AE	AR	AR	AS	AS	EX	DR	DR	DH	DE	DE	DE	DE	4
5	AH	AR	AS	AS	EX	HX	DR	DH	DE	DE	DE	DE	DE	5
6	AH	AS	HX	DR	DR	DH	DE	DE	DE	DE	DE	DE	DE	6
7	AR	AS	HX	HX	HX	DH	DE	DE	DE	DE	DE	DE	DE	7
8	AR	HX	DR	DH	DE	DE	DE	DE	DE	DE	DE	DE	DE	8

result in his forced return. After a player has moved his air units, his opponent can attempt to intercept them. Air to air combat will then ensue. Interceptors will attempt to get past their opponents fighter screen to attack his bombers. In air-to-aircombat, units can be returned to base, rendered inoperative, or destroyed. If a player's units survive enemy attempts at interception, they then must under go anti-aircraft fire from units in the hex. As was historically the case, anti-aircraft fire is less dangerous than air-to-air combat. Provided a player still has surviving units, he may then attempt to bomb the target. Of course, the attack still may not be successful. To complicate matters further, the game also allows night operations, with special rules.

The air rules sound complicated, and they might take some getting used to, but they are actually intuitive and built on common sense. The one glaring exception to this is the patrol rule. The reason for this rule is obvious; since interception occurs after movement, it would otherwise be possible for air units to fly safely over thousands of fighters to get to their targets. The patrol rule was designed to eliminate this problem. However, patrol attacks allow for no casualties. The patroller simply rolls a die. A roll of six will turn back the enemy if the fighters' strength is equal to or less than the enemy air units' strength; a five or six if greater than the enemy's strength, a four, five or six if twice as great. This means that the weakest group of obsolescent biplanes can possibly turn back the most advanced jet fighters with no loss to themselves. This whole problem could be resolved if the rules simply mandated interception attacks (with the subsequent air-to-aircombat) instead of patrol attacks. With the exception of the patrol attack, I think the air rules are quite well written, and though I generally prefer air power to be abstracted in operational games, I find that the complete air system in *Europa* games greatly adds to its flavor and realism.

Ground combat can also take a little getting used to. The reason for this is, again, the wealth of unit specialization in *Balkan Front* and *Europa* games in general. Most of the complexity comes from the armor effect rules. *Europa* games provide the most detailed operational analysis of unit specialization on combat that I have come across. Each unit is rated for its armor effects capability (AEC) and its anti-tank effects capability (ATEC). A unit can have full, half, or no AEC, or it can be AEC neutral. *Balkan Front* simplifies the earlier system, which

divided AEC into armor effects on the attack and armor effects on the defense. At perhaps a slight cost in realism, this greatly eases play.

How do these effects work? The combat die roll is modified according to the proportion of AEC possessed by the attacker, and modified again by the proportion of AEC (or ATEC if the attackers AEC is 50% or more). Sound confusing? Well it is, at least at first. I can attest from personal experience that after a while determining AEC and ATEC proportions becomes second nature. An example can show how it works. Let's say that two armored divisions, a motorized infantry division, three infantry regiments and an artillery regiment are attacking two armored brigades and an infantry division. The attacking forces has 13 regimental equivalents or REs (REs are standard measurements of size used in *Europa* games; as general rule divisions count as three REs each and regiments and brigades as one RE each). The defending force has a force of five REs. Let's look at the attacker's proportions first. The motorized infantry division and the artillery unit are AEC neutral, so they don't count in the proportion. We are really dealing with nine REs, then, six of which have full AEC (the others have no AEC). This means that one half or more the forces has AEC, which gives a +2 modifier to the die roll. Only two of the defender's five REs have AEC, which is enough to provide the defender with a -1 modifier, for a net combat modifier of +1. Of course, you also have to figure out the combat odds, the terrain effects, the effect of air support and/or air assault engineers, and other applicable effects.

This procedure takes a little getting used to; by the time you figure out the AEC you might have forgotten the original combat odds. The first time I played a *Europa* game I found it a little difficult to get used to, but the second time was much easier. And I appreciated the extra realism. The one problem with the armor effects system is that it doesn't really represent armor effects accurately. Modifiers shouldn't be based on the proportion of one side's armor to that of the other side (or the proportion of one side's anti-tank capability), they should be based on the amount and quality. Situations can arise in *Europa* games where a player will leave unit out of an attack in order to maximize his die roll modification. It is hard to see how contributing an extra unit to an attack could actually hurt the attack. Former *Europa* designer Frank Chadwick has argued that this is possible since the inclusion of an infantry

unit in an armor attack would detract from the ability of the mobile formations to conduct a mobile battle. Frankly, I think there's something fishy in his argument. Despite this possible flaw in the armor modification system, I must say that I still like the system in **Balkan Front** and other **Europa** games better than any other I've tried. In general it works and I'd be hard pressed to come up with a better alternative.

Once you get through figuring all the modifications prior to combat, combat itself seems very simple. You roll the die, you check the modifiers and you get your combat results, which are relatively standard: Defender eliminated, exchange, defender retreat, etc. Division sized units of sufficient strength and quality form cadres instead of being completely eliminated. Units forced to retreat into an enemy zone of control are eliminated or reduced to cadre strength. Retreats and advances are one hex only.

#### Armor/Antitank Effects Summary

	AECA	AECD	ATEC
Less than 1/7	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
1/7 up to 1/2	+1 (0)	-1 (0)	-1 (-1)
1/2 up to full	+2 (+1)	-2 (-1)	-2 (-2)
Full	+3 (+1)	-2 (-1)	-4 (-4)

#: Combat die roll modifier during clear weather

(#): Combat die roll modifier during poor weather

AECA: AEC in the attack; AECD: AEC in the defense

Following the combat phase is the exploitation phase, in which combat/motorized units can move again. They can also conduct overruns once more. Non-motorized units have no movement at all—not even administrative movement. There is little remarkable about this phase.

### So What Does it All Mean?

**Balkan Front** has some problems. Some are problems of the **Europa** system, while others are peculiarly the game's own. The **Europa** problems are mostly due to rules that have outlived their usefulness, if indeed they ever possessed any. The patrol rule is perhaps my pet peeve. I rarely ever change or ignore rules when I play wargames, but I must admit that I can't stomach the patrol rules. If low volume rails are going to stay in **Europa**, then they need to be scrutinized too. And while people are scrutinizing, they ought to see if they can streamline the rail movement rule. Imagine trying to move a large stack of units (and believe me, in **Europa** games they get large) by rail: "Okay, the first unit has a movement of eight, so I can move six hexes per movement point—let's see, that's one, two, three, four, five, six, one, one, two, three, four, five, six, two, etc." (Now multiply this process by four for the remaining movement points, and by seven for the other units in the hex, and you see what a pain it can be. Of course, the other units will all have differing movement values, meaning you have to trace each one separately).

**Balkan Front** is also not without its own particular problems. I have already mentioned the various glitches in the map, counters, charts and rules. One thing I have learned in my years

as a wargamer is that unfortunately no wargame is perfect. However, these glitches appear more irritating because most of them haven't appeared in past **Europa** games. I think that **Balkan Front** could have benefited from a little more tender loving care.

One last possible weakness that must be discussed is the subject matter of the game. You have to wonder why the only games on this subject ever published have been **Marita-Merkur** and **Balkan Front**. One reason is that it is hard to make this interesting campaign into a good game. The invasion of Yugoslavia and Greece might have been more balanced than the invasion of Poland, but I wouldn't bet my money on it. How many people want to go through the trouble of setting up the Yugoslavs just to see them destroyed in a turn or two? However, this leads me to the game's strengths. The people who worked on this game, designers John Astell in particular, have gone to great lengths to overcome that obstacle. Astell has managed to make a good game here. He has done this by a number of means. The first was by including the Italo-Greek war, not just as a scenario but as an integral part of the campaign game. The fact that the Axis player must perform well with the Italians to have a good chance of winning goes far to address any imbalances. **Marita-Merkur** tried to do this as well, but more clumsily. Secondly, Astell has included a number of scenarios and rules, both historical and hypothetical, to help balance the game. These range from the Italian invasion of Yugoslavia mentioned above, to Rommel not launching an offensive with the Afrika Korps, to Greek appeasement.

The game has other strengths as well. The **Europa** rules, which form the heart of **Balkan Front**: they simulate operational combat in the Second World War better than any other rules systems I've ever seen, and have noticeably improved with each revision. I think the rules in **Balkan Front** are very close to their final form which says quite a bit. The last point to be made about **Balkan Front** is to underline its incredible historicity. This is after all what wargaming is all about. The wealth of detail in the maps, the orders of battle, and the rules is overwhelming. Rules cover Albanian revolt, German intervention, limited amphibious invasions, coastal shipping, commandos, and countless other areas. When playing the Greeks, you really do get the feel of mobilizing your entire country to repel the invader, you really do feel the threat of possible German intervention. **Balkan Front** succeeds extremely well in doing what most of the recent **Europa** games have been able to do, in creating a palpable atmosphere based on historicity and realism rather than chrome.

I doubt that most players after playing the game could imagine any other company ever doing a game on the subject. **Marita-Merkur** was an admirable first step, but with **Balkan Front** I think that GRD has published the final word. **Balkan Front** is one of the better games I have bought in recent years. I don't think it is too much to assert that every World War II gamer needs to own a copy. The high quality of **Balkan Front** is all the more remarkable when one considers that to produce this game, GRD had to match exactly the high production quality of another company's wargames without any surviving art. I am pleased to say that GRD's first game is a winner. ●



by Terry Rooker

## PROFILE

**Carrier War** is Omega Games' latest offering. It covers the Pacific Theater of World War II from December 1941 to April 1944. The game is basically strategic level with the players representing America and Japan. In multi-player versions, the players represent different command factions on each side. This gives the MacArthur player the chance to fight the U.S. Navy as well as the Japanese.

The time period covered seems a little unusual (ending in April 1944). Most accounts of the Pacific Theater indicate how the war was basically over by 1944. All that was left was continued American pressure until the Japanese finally collapsed. The justification for ending the game here was economic; there were a lot of ships produced in the last year of the war, and to include all the counters would drive the price up. There is a planned expansion kit to cover the last year of the war. To compensate for the lack of late war balance, the expansion will include some early allied mobilization scenarios.

### Game System

The game mechanics are fairly conventional. If you have played any other wargame, then there will be little to surprise you in **Carrier War**. In addition, as in other Omega games, there are three levels of play. Level I is the basic game, and levels II and III add various levels of complexity. Unlike other Omega games with this feature, the bulk of the game is in Level I. Levels II and III add some chrome, but about 95% of the game is in Level I.

Each turn represents a month of activity. To provide some player interaction, each turn has three operations rounds with the players alternating missions within a round. This system allows the players the opportunity to perform some action between each action of their opponents. It also prevents the artificiality of one player running amok for a month before the other can respond.

Of course there are ancillary actions that occur only once a month. There is a supply phase when supply is determined, not only for units, but for bases as well. An unsupplied base cannot operate units, which can severely restrict operations. There is a standard reinforcements phase. Each monthly turn has a single land phase when land operations are abstracted. The strategic events phase is when the random events are introduced. The strategic events include the various occurrences of the war that would be beyond player control. For example they include aircraft improvements and shipboard anti-aircraft upgrades. The squabble between MacArthur and the U.S. Navy is also abstracted. Finally there is an administrative phase for miscellaneous clean up operations. To handle

# Carrier War

the mopping up of Japanese resistance, **Carrier War** uses an interesting Japanese Resistance Table (figure 1). The size of the Japanese unit eliminated is cross-indexed with a die roll to determine how many game turns a U.S. division equivalent must remain the hex to clean up the Japanese resistance. This table nicely handles what could otherwise be a tedious burden on the players. Salvage and repair of naval units is also performed during this phase.

Determine the number of turns a US division equivalent must mop up Japanese resistance in each hex in which the last Japanese land units were eliminated in land combat during the turn.

JAPANESE RESISTANCE TABLE					
Die	Japanese Unit Eliminated				Die
Roll	II	III	X	XX+	Roll
1	0	0	0	1	1
2	0	0	1	2	2
3	0	0	1	2	3
4	0	1	2	2	4
5	0	1	2	2	5
6	1	2	2	3	6

Figure 1

The heart of the game is the naval/air phase. It consists of three naval/air rounds (NARs). Each NAR is identical. First there is the air movement step. In this step each player can transfer air units between bases. The transferring air units can initiate no combat actions. Other air units can attempt to intercept the transfer missions. If the intercept is successful, then air combat can occur. The players alternate transfer missions, until neither player has any left to perform.

The bulk of the action occurs in the naval/air operations step. During this step players can initiate combat actions. Again the players alternate missions, until neither has any to perform. Normally, units are moved hex by hex to their destination, perform their mission, and then possibly return to base. Naval units can be moved to a "station," in which case they remain in that hex until moved later, or returned to base at the end of the step. A strategic event, which represents the USN's ability to refuel at sea, will allow the USN vessels to remain on station between NARs.

Each force is assigned a mission that limits the actions available to the unit(s) in that force. There are separate missions available for air and naval units (figure 2). For example, a naval force that wants to conduct an amphibious invasion must be assigned mission F Amphibious Operation. This mission can only be assigned in port (representing the combat loading necessary for a successful landing). Also notice that only certain missions can be assigned to on-station units.

During a unit's movement, the opposing player can attempt to intercept either air or naval missions. For naval units the force must be spotted first. The search attempt is influenced by the number of airbases/carriers aiding in the search. If a force is successfully spotted, then missions can be launched to attack it. When a force is intercepted, combat is not always simple. Most combat will be air strike combat, so I will focus on that type of combat. There is also naval combat (between ships), and land combat (between ground units). If both players announce air strikes, then the sequence of attacks must be resolved. If the strikes are simultaneous, then all attacks are resolved, and the results applied at the same time. If they are not simultaneous, then an Air strike Sequence Table is used to determine the order. This maybe important as a base could be damaged before it can launch a strike. There is another table to determine if one side is surprised, and yet another table to determine if the air strike actually locates the target. Then the Combat Air Patrol (CAP) may intercept the attackers. The target(s) get to fire anti-aircraft fire. Targeted aircraft carriers must determine their vulnerability. This reflects the fact that carriers in different stages of operating aircraft have different vulnerabilities.

Look at the debacle that the Japanese fleet suffered at Midway. Finally, the air strike is resolved. The Air strike Combat Results Table (CRT) gives a number that is then cross-indexed in the Air Strike Damage Table to give the actual damage inflicted.

This sounds rather complicated, but in practice it flows smoothly. There is an Air strike Combat summary card with all of the resolution outlined on a single page, and the outline includes the necessary tables. When attacking land targets a similar procedure is used, but there is no contact role. This procedure is outlined on the back of the naval unit air strike summary. Finally, there is a simplified procedure for resolving strategic air attacks. The result is simply the number of Japanese surrender points inflicted.

Air units can also suffer damage from attrition. This attrition nicely abstracts the wear and tear of combat operations over a month. If a base is in an opposing air unit's zone of control (ZOC), then it can suffer losses, depending upon the number opposing units exerting the ZOC. This reflects the losses caused by routine patrolling. The same procedure is also used to calculate bomber losses from the strategic bombing campaign.

Submarine attacks also use an abstract system. Each player receives a number of submarine points each turn. He can use a point to make one submarine attack. The procedure for an attack is simple. A moving naval force is temporarily halted, and the submarine makes an attack. Unspotted forces can be attacked, but a contact roll is first required. Since the Japanese player is restricted to attacks on capital ships (carriers and battleships), a Japanese sub attack against an unspotted force, may result in the expenditure of a submarine attack point, with no attack.

When the attack is made, a die is rolled and indexed against the submarine attack table. The result is the damage applied to the target ship. While this procedure seems to greatly limit the

effectiveness of submarine operations, it nicely captures the actual effect of such operations during the war. Japanese submarines were largely restricted to fleet support operations (i.e. scouting, and attacking naval targets). They were also limited by fewer boats. The USN operated large numbers of boats, later in the war, but the American submarine doctrine emphasized anti-merchant operations (which is why the USN player can attack transport missions as well as naval units). This aspect is captured by limiting the number of American submarine attack points, and gradually reducing the amount of Japanese naval transport as the game progresses. Even though this system is simple, it captures the occasional catastrophic loss caused by submarine operations. It does so without needless complications.

Naval transport is obviously important in a Pacific theater game. Again the choice was a simple abstract procedure. Each player receives a number of naval transport points each turn. Each unit transported costs a certain number of points. When a player has expended his allotment, then no more units can be transported. The transported units are simply marked with an At Sea marker and placed with the transporting force. These units can be attacked (by American submarines, or other naval/air units). Obviously, units at sea when the transports are destroyed are lost and unavailable for operations.

A related activity is amphibious landings. In this case the naval transport goes from a friendly port to a hostile location. The transported units may fight their way ashore. This operation can be complicated by the presence of fortifications. Naval bombardment and air strikes are available to reduce the enemy positions ashore. The USN player must expend an additional naval transport point for each unit moved ashore. When the landing is declared the defender must declare the type of defense (except for atolls, the only choice is defend the beaches). He can defend the beaches, or inland. If he has more than one unit he can defend in-depth, which is a combination of the other two. If he defends the beaches, then the landing forces must immediately assault those units. This is basically a normal land combat, except that if the attacker does not clear the defenders from the hex, then the landing is repulsed. If the defense is inland, then combat does not occur until the following land phase. Note that for a defense in-depth combat occurs both times.

Airborne operations use a similar procedure. Obviously they are a type of air mission rather than naval transport. The mission can occur within four hexes of the launching air base. Enemy air zones of control can interfere with the mission, but friendly units can be used to contest the control. There are two types of airborne mission. An air assault is a direct attack on an enemy position. An air drop is a landing in the enemy rear, followed by normal combat operations. In *Carrier War*, the distinction is made by when the defenders are attacked. In an assault they are attacked immediately upon the landing. In a drop, they are attacked in the following land phase. Assaults are made against fortifications, and atolls. All other operations are air drops. One advantage of air assaults against fortifications is that they ignore the fortification's defense multiplier. Such operations are less supported so there is a trade off. They do provide an advantage against a fortification.



## Naval Missions Summaries

### A. Carrier Task Force Seeking Naval/Air Engagement

The task force must contain at least one undamaged aircraft carrier with air points embarked to be assigned this missions. May launch air points on Bombing an Airbase, Bombing a Port, Bombing a Fortification, Close Air Support, Air Superiority, Escort, Interception of Enemy Air Mission and Combat Air Patrol missions only. May not initiate naval combat.

Cost in Naval Operations Points:  
4 points per CV, BB, CVL  
2 points per other naval unit

### B. Carrier Task Force Attacking Land Targets

The task force must contain at least one undamaged aircraft carrier with air points embarked to be assigned this missions. May launch air points on Bombing an Airbase, Bombing a Port, Bombing a Fortification, Close Air Support, Air Superiority, Escort, Interception of Enemy Air Mission and Combat Air Patrol missions only. May not initiate naval combat.

Cost in Naval Operations Points:  
3 points per CV, BB, CVL  
2 points per other naval unit

### F. Amphibious Operation

Assigned to ground units being transported by sea to invade an enemy held land hex. Must be assigned in port. U.S. land units must comply with the U.S. Amphibious Staging Areas rule.

Cost in Naval Operations Points:  
2 points per land unit

## Air Mission Summaries

### A. Air Superiority

NAPs/LAPs only

Air units move to a target hex containing an enemy air base and conduct air combat with an enemy combat air patrol. The surviving units may then attack any enemy units at the air base in the hex.

### B. Interception of Enemy Air Mission

NAPs/LAPs only

Air units defend their base or task force against incoming enemy air missions through interception. Air units may intercept enemy air missions entering their zone of control (any hex within their combat range) unless the air mission has gained surprise. The intercepting air points are moved to the target hex and contact is determined. If contact occurs, air combat is resolved immediately.

### I. Strategic Bombing

BAPs only

U.S. bomber units move to a target hex in Japan. Air combat is resolved with any enemy air units that intercept or provide combat air patrol in the target hex. Flak attacks for any bases and the Japanese hex itself are resolved using the Flak Table. Losses are extracted. Surviving air units then attack strategic targets in the hex abstractly using the Strategic Bombing Table. The attack may increase the number of Japanese Surrender points and Victory points amassed by the Allied player.

## Figure 2

The important features of the campaign are present. The sequence of play captures the ebb and flow of the war. Even though turns are a month long, there is sufficient opportunity for each player to interfere with his opponent's operations. The important point is that it all works. None of the special operations feels like an "add-on" that is not integrated into the design. For example, amphibious assaults are a simple extension of the naval transport mechanism. This system provides a nice framework for the war to develop. There were several unique features of the war, and they are captured in several special rules that modify the basic system.

## Special features

Special features are some rules that change the basic sequence as described. For example, the upgraded capability of many units is reflected by using another combat chart. In other cases there maybe a simple modification to the sequence.

During the war there were equipment upgrades that had a noticeable effect on the performance of one side, usually the U.S. Navy. Some of the most noticeable were the replacing the F4-F Wildcat with the F6-F Hellcat, and the replacing the TBD Devastator carrier attack planes with the TBM Avenger. Other upgrades include the increasing number of ship borne anti-aircraft weapons of both sides. These upgrades are reflected by using a different combat results table. Specifically these upgrades are: U.S. Naval and Land Air Points (2 upgrades), Allied Naval and Land Air Points, U.S. Bomber Air Points, Shipboard Flak (anti-aircraft weapons), Naval combat modifi-

ers (reflecting loss of Japanese proficiency relative to the USN, U.S. radar offsetting Japanese night combat doctrine, and better U.S. torpedoes).

During the war the U.S. developed the ability to replenish ships at sea. This eliminated the requirement for each vessel to put into port every week or so to refuel, and load new supplies. In the game this ability allows the USN to leave ships on station between NARs. Those vessels still must return to port at the end of the turn (every three NARS). No matter how efficient the replenishment at sea, there are still some things that must be done in port. There is a disadvantage to this ability. When a combat situation does develop and there are more than one U.S. naval force on station, there is a possibility the one task force may be away replenishing.

Since vessels conducting underway replenishment are very vulnerable, these operations usually took place well away from potential trouble spots. Where possible, another force was kept between the replenishment group and possible enemy forces. The bottom line is that part of the American force may not be available when an attack is launched. A situation that occurred historically on several occasions.

Events on mainland Asia are also abstracted. In reality their main effect was to divert Japanese resources. Granted many people died, and there was much suffering, but in the long term these operations did little but divert Japanese resources. The forces committed to the Asian campaign are simply not available in Carrier War. The divisions assigned to the

Burma Campaign can become available through the fall of Burma. Other than that, the Japanese player cannot take advantage of any mainland units. The American bombers in China are represented by simply providing an airbase in China. Likewise the Soviet declaration of war is a variable strategic event. In actuality, it was made too late to provide any assistance to the Allies, but it could have occurred sooner. If the Soviets do declare war, the Japanese player loses all further land reinforcements, and cannot use bases in Korea and Manchuria.

Another key element of the war was the difference in air crew training. The Japanese started the war with well-trained and combat experienced pilots. The U.S. had well-trained pilots, but with little experience. A critical difference was the emphasis each side placed on training replacements. The American system emphasized using combat veterans to train the new pilots and help them survive long enough to get their own experience. The Japanese almost de-emphasized training. Early in the war there was little noticeable effect, but later on, the relative quality was different. In some accounts, one of the key American accomplishments of the first year was the attrition of the high-quality, experienced Japanese aircrews.

In the game, Naval Air Points (NAPs) must be trained. There are three levels of quality; New, Trained, and Veteran. Replacement points are received as New. Basically they can operate a plane with little chance of killing themselves. These NAPs can be increased to the Trained level. They must remain in home waters for a turn and receive training. They can either be specifically embarked aboard a carrier, in which case only the number of NAPs that does not exceed the carrier's capacity can be trained, or a carrier can be permanently assigned to training duty. In this case the number of NAPs that can be trained is the capacity of the airbase (usually class III) at the port. This method is obviously superior, and is still the U.S. Navy method used to train aircrews. The NAP must survive combat to become veterans. Players can combine NAPs to consolidate losses, but the quality of combination is the lower of the NAPs combined. For example, if 18 Veteran NAPs are combined with 1 New NAP, the result is 19 New NAPs.

One of the more important aspects of the Pacific War was intelligence. Specifically the American code breaking activities that enable the Allies to read a large part of the high-level Japanese traffic. This aspect of the game is important so I discuss it separately in the next section.

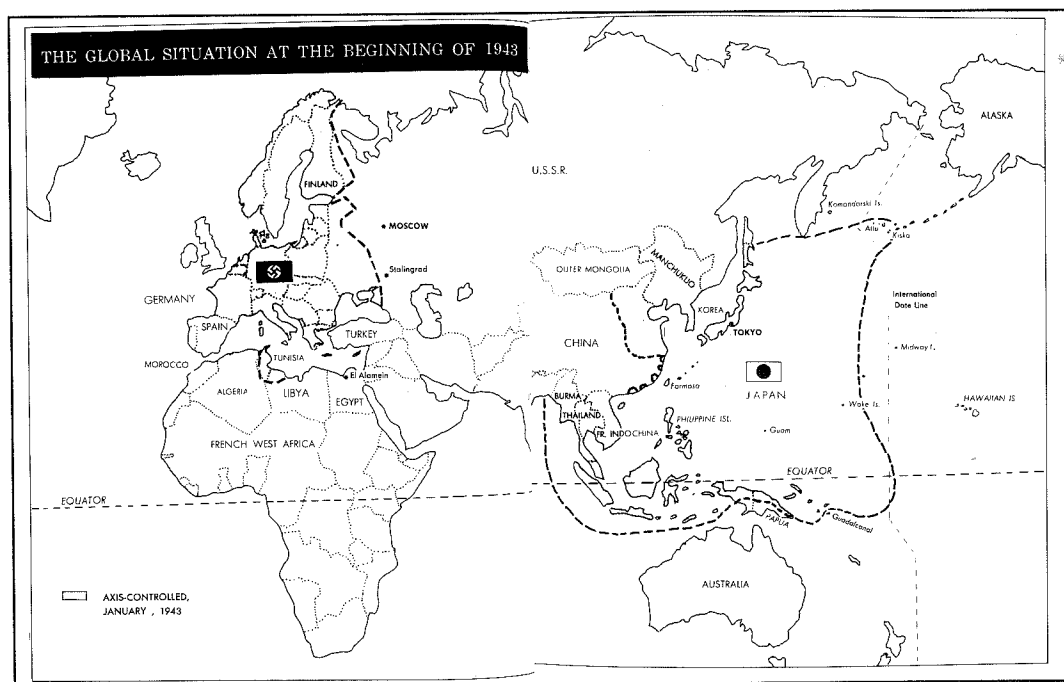
## Intelligence

Depending upon your perspective, Allied code breaking may have won the war. I say

Allied, since the Ultra intercepts from Germany were as important as the Purple intercepts from Japan. What advantage did this code breaking provide? For the Battle of Midway it allowed the USN to carefully husband and concentrate its limited carrier force against the principle Japanese force. Without information provided by intercepts, the American units may have been dispersed to cover more possibilities, concentrated against the diversion force, or possibly defaulted the battle if indecision had kept the carriers from going anywhere.

Since this is now common knowledge, any WWII Pacific Theater game must be judged on how well this situation is handled. *Carrier War* does a creditable job, but it is somewhat "kludgy". The Japanese player must write down his planned operations for the coming turn. Note that since interceptions are not planned, they are not written down. He then secretly rolls a die to determine the accuracy of U.S. information for the turn. The result may force him to disclose everything, or it may allow him to lie through his teeth. The secret roll prevents the U.S. player from knowing the veracity of the report.

This system works, but it does involve plotting the turn's activity. It also provides opportunities for "rules lawyers" if the Japanese player makes a typo, and the 10 cruiser force becomes a 1 cruiser force. The main problem with this system is that it prevents the Japanese player from reacting to American moves during the turn. Consider that there are three NARs during the turn, the American could start some operation on the first NAR, and the Japanese player cannot react until the following game turn. This sacrifices too much flexibility. For example, the Japanese may commit to a major operation such as the historic battle of Midway. The intelligence result is lukewarm, so the American knows something is up, but not what it is. Taking advantage of the situation, he concentrates his carriers to attack some important Japanese position, knowing the Japanese player is committed until the following turn, preventing a reaction. Yes, the knowledge that something





big is underway is important, but on the other hand the Japanese player cannot cancel his operation to intercept the American carriers, which if you remember was the primary goal of the Midway operation in the first place.

I point out his problem because there is at least one better solution in Pacific War. The intelligence result simply reduces the amount of time the American has to react to Japanese operations. For example, in the case of Midway, complete U.S. surprise allows the U.S. player to wait until the Japanese are fully deployed, and then he can interrupt their operation with an interception. On the other hand, complete Japanese surprise might force the U.S. player to move before the Japanese. This system captures the important elements without bogging down in plotting, or restricting either player's flexibility. Since the *Carrier War* design channels the play along historical lines (more on that later), this restricted flexibility is not as bad as it first seems. Most events develop as they did historically, so the sensible alternatives at any point are usually apparent to both players.

### *Historical Accuracy*

With any historical simulation it is essential to judge how well the situation has been captured. There is a problem with this assessment. There is a, by now, classic dichotomy in game design; the playability versus simulation debate. Regarding accuracy there is a similar dichotomy; accuracy of results versus accuracy of opportunity. This has also been discussed as the "feel" versus results debate. Basically the issue is whether a game reliably produces results similar to the historical outcome. Obviously there must be some room for improvement over the historical situation, or nobody would play the losing side. At the other end is the attitude that the players should have the forces and situation present at the beginning of the battle, but should then have complete freedom to do as they chose, within the limitations present for that commander.

The designer of *Carrier War* admits he opted for the playability side of the one debate. He describes how he used many simplifying elements in the design. Having seen an earlier version of the game, I agree that many of the changes have simplified play. For this game the issue concerns the other debate. The focus of the game is somewhat below a true strategic level. In other words, the players cannot control which types of vessels will receive construction priority. They have limited say over the direction of the war, for example the Allied concentration on the European war is built into the reinforcement tables. Already the players are locked into the historical sequence. Many of these decisions forced the Pacific campaign to follow a certain path. The design (and playtesting) appear to have focused only on the actual course of events. In the next section I will describe an anomaly that results in a very boring game for the American player.

There is a quicker example of how the actual result is built into the game. One of the critical factors of the attack on Pearl Harbor was the presence (or lack of presence) of the USN carriers.

The American player rolls a die to determine if any carriers are in port for the Japanese attack. There is only an 11% chance

### *Construction/Repair of Bases*

The cost of Engineer points to repair/construct bases is as follows:

Repair Class I airbase	1
Construct Class I airbase	3
Repair Class II airbase	3
Improve Class I airbase to Class II	4
Repair Class III airbase	4
Repair Port	4
Improve Class II airbase to Class III airbase	5
Construct Port	6

*Figure 3*

that any carrier would be in port, and less than a 3% chance that both carriers would be in port. Considering the turns are months, and the *Enterprise* arrived in port shortly after the attack, it should be very possible that a Japanese force that stays to attack Pearl Harbor for the full game turn (a month) should catch the *Enterprise* in port.

Basically, the USN carriers were not caught in port, and that is the result the game provides. It would seem there is little incentive for the Japanese player to attack Pearl Harbor. This is the case throughout the game. The actual historical result is most likely, and there is little opportunity for either player to change the result. Consequently, *Carrier War* definitely falls into the accuracy of result "camp."

### *Pearl Harbor*

A favorite tactic in Pacific Theater games is to attack Pearl Harbor, and destroy the base. Many historians have commented on the Japanese failure to significantly damage the base at Pearl Harbor. It is postulated that destroying the fuel farms alone would have set the American effort back by six months. Instead the Japanese focused on a very Mahanian (he was kind of a Clausewitz of naval warfare) doctrine of bringing battle to the main enemy force. As the war demonstrated, this doctrine failed them miserably.

What does an all-out Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor accomplish? In *Carrier War* quite a lot. First some background. In the game each player receives engineer points to repair damaged facilities, and build new facilities (figure 3). A certain number of points are required for each type of action, and points cannot be accumulated between turns. If the required number of points are not available in a turn, the action cannot be performed.

Until January 1943, the USN player simply lacks the engineer points to do much. If the Japanese attack succeeds in damaging the naval base on Oahu, then it cannot be repaired until January 43. During that time any units in port cannot leave. This leaves the only USN repair base on the West Coast of the USA! This base is 12 hexes from the next closest base in the South Pacific, with the next bases 16, 17, and 18 hexes away. In the North Pacific, Dutch Harbor is only 8 hexes away, but there is no other base around. If the Hawaii base is damaged, the Central Pacific is forfeited to the Japanese until January 43!

Things are not much better for the airbase. The airbase repair rules do not specify if a doubly damaged class 3 base is repaired as a class 3 or a class 1 base (it functions as a damaged class 1 base). Under a liberal reading (i.e. it is repaired as a class 1 base), the airbase could be returned to a damaged class 3 level in January or February 42. Under a strict reading of the rules, it cannot be repaired until January 43. Also, in this case there are insufficient points to repair both the airbase and naval base, so the USN player must decide between them. The result is that a completely repaired and functional Pearl Harbor may not happen until June 43!

If you are like me, and go for the knock out blow in the initial attack, then **Carrier War** may be the game for you. Of course hanging around long enough to inflict this amount of damage is risky, but may be worth the risk. Another aspect that reduces the risk is that the Japanese player knows the two forward deployed USN carriers do not appear until January 42 (i.e. turn 2), unless they start the game in Pearl Harbor. In actuality, the Enterprise did try to go after the Japanese carriers shortly after the attack. In the game, the Japanese does not have to worry about that.

## Conclusion

Does the hobby need another WWII Pacific Theater game? A lot depends upon what the game has to offer. **Carrier War** fills a nice niche. Pacific War by Victory Games was in some ways the definitive simulation of the Pacific Theater. As with many Victory "strategic games" it was actually an operational game that was played at a strategic level. That gave the players great operational control, but it also made for very large, complex games.

If that is the case, then why is it definitive? As wartime records have become available, it is clear that the main factor in the Pacific Theater was the American ability to read much of the principal Japanese message traffic. Pacific War used an ingenious system to reflect this fleeting and unpredictable advantage. It is also easier to use than **Carrier War**'s use of explicit Japanese op orders.

As we have seen, **Carrier War** is probably not definitive. It has the advantage of being much more playable. As I worked with the game the more it struck me as **Victory in the Pacific** with hexes. It is not nearly as simple as **Victory in the Pacific**, but it is almost as easy to play. It provides much more depth in available tactics, and options. There are some problems with the design, but nothing fatal. As we have seen, it produces historical results. For "what if" fans, it may produce results that are TOO historic in that it is not always possible to deviate much from the actual course of the war.

If you are looking for a playable game on the WWII Pacific Theater, then **Carrier War** may be the game for you. It will be especially pleasing for history buffs who want to understand why the war developed as it did. For "what if" analysis, the design may be too rigid to allow much tinkering. I guess that is the price for a simpler game system. If you are interested in the period, you will probably want to try the game. ●

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by Gilbert Collins

## PROFILE

# Three Games on the American Revolution

There have been at least three wargames published on the American Revolution. Each design has tackled the conflict in a different manner, but there are some common threads. But there are also some radically different philosophies as to the nature of the conflict. It is the purpose of this article to compare these three designs.

In 1972 SPI released *American Revolution*, one of the first wargames based on the entire war. It was a novel design in many respects, introducing new game features. The foremost of these was the map. Designed along the "watershed basins" of America, it utilized an area movement system abandoning the familiar hexagonal or square grid.

The area movement was simple but functional with terrain either rough or clear. American units could move through rough terrain at lower cost and thus could avoid British units. In an abstract manner it showed how the Continental Army could avoid battle if necessary. One radical departure from most war games was the absence of any combat odds lower than 1:1. This was no major obstacle to play, but for the want of one combat factor the American player often could not attack.

The British had a one third chance of not being able to move a particular force, since the units themselves were anonymous strength points and usually concentrated. This meant that you could not perfectly coordinate strategic forces onto a particular point. The rule illustrated perfectly the problem of coordinated offensives in North America at the time.

The quality of the Continental Army is constant throughout the game, a situation not borne out by history. The Continental Army was evolving during the Revolution. After 1778 it was not the disorganized force that it had been in 1775. Washington had turned it into a highly disciplined tool. A rule covering this aspect would have been more historically correct.

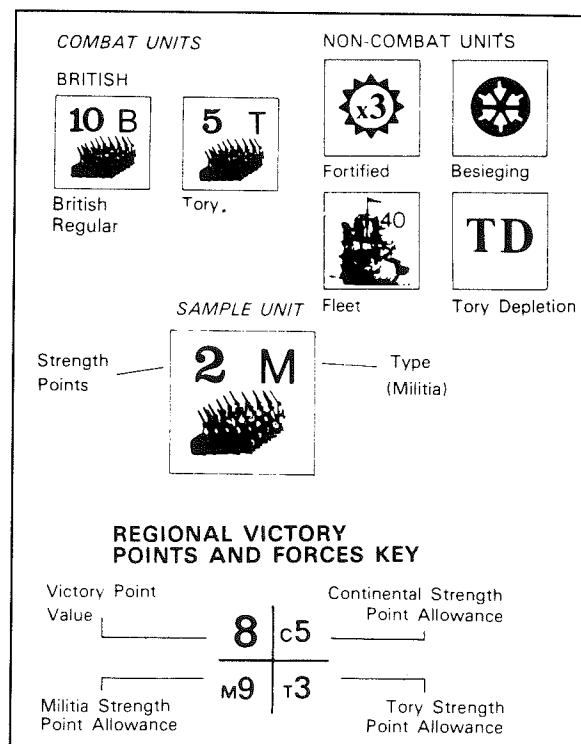
The handling of tories and militia is one of the most interesting aspects of comparison in all three versions. The roll of the militia in the Revolution is deeply ingrained in American myth, much as the roll of the Canadian militia is in the War of 1812. The trouble here is that it is hard to represent what tories and militia really contributed to the war, in contrast to what our perceptions of their roles were.

*American Revolution* had an excellent system for utilizing militia and tory units. The units were not placed on the board until triggered by British movement into an area. Once triggered they were placed and could move and fight normally within their area. If the British left, the militia were removed. Tories were handled in a similar fashion except that once

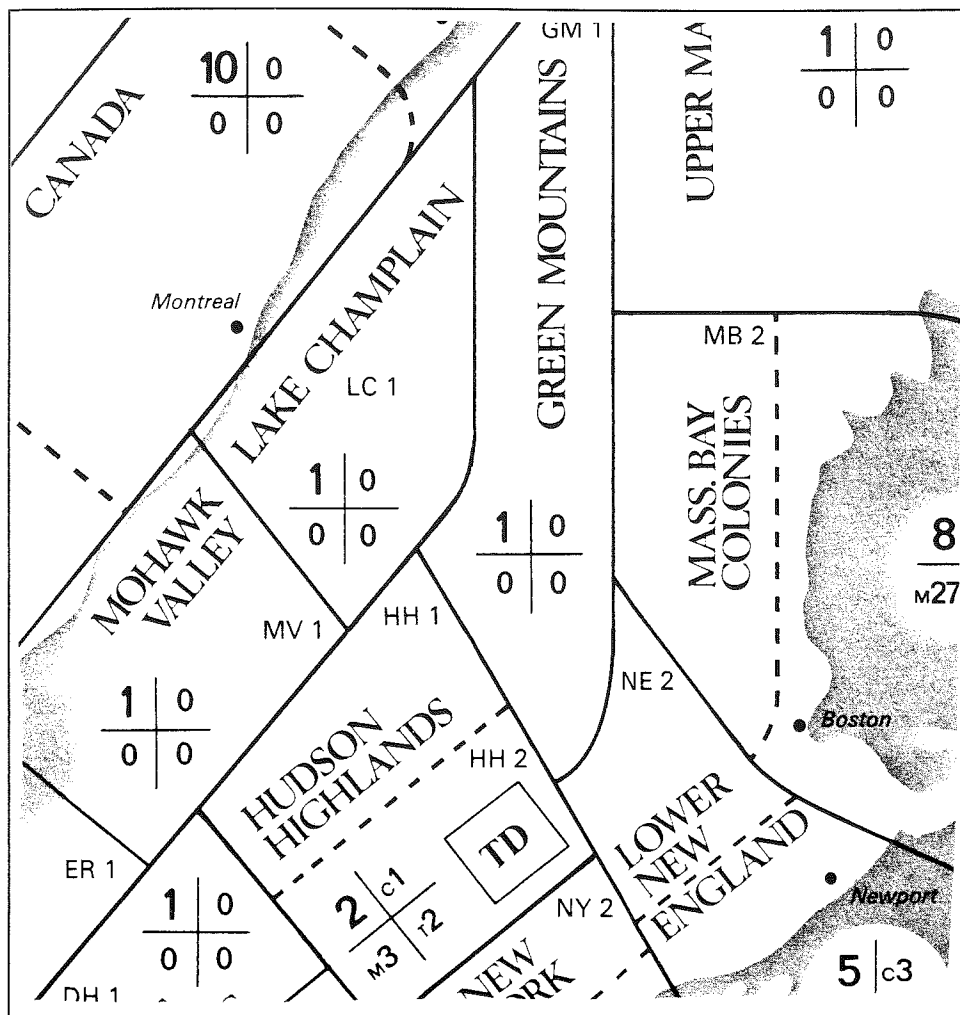
activated, they remained on the board. Tories could leave an area only after being converted to British strength points.

The number of militia and tory units available for each area varied greatly. Generally speaking, most Tory support centered in New York and New Jersey. Each were allowed to raise five Tory units. This was still only equal to the militia for those states. As a whole, not one area on the board had the capability of raising more tories than militia. In the southern states militia units outnumbered tories by three to one. In the north the ratio was four to one. The ratios are significant because Avalon Hill's *1776* takes an entirely different viewpoint.

Sea power, often overlooked in studies of the American Revolution, was actually instrumental in the British defeat. In SPI's treatment there are only two "fleet" counters; one French and one British. Until the French arrival the British player has freedom of the seas. The naval rules are simple but there is a respect for naval capability that is enough to decide the game one way or the other should a player ignore them. In effect, the fleets merely move forces and blockade. There is no naval combat. The key here is blockade, for with the interaction of the supply rules it is possible to trap an army like Cornwallis' at Yorktown and destroy it.



Counters from *American Revolution*



### A section of the map from American Revolution

One of the hardest things to work into a game on the American Revolution is foreign intervention. France recognized the fledgling United States after the American victory at Saratoga in 1777. By the end of the war Great Britain was fighting France, Spain, and the Netherlands. The difficulty arises as to "when" these foreign powers should be triggered. It was not in the best interests of France to intervene unless they could be sure of American success. Thus French intervention was a real "unknown."

SPI simulates this by having a "Major Success" which consists of the destruction of five British strength points without loss to the American. After the first Major Success, French arrival is triggered with French troops arriving two turns later. (Each turn is a season.) Should a second Major success occur, the British must have accrued a certain level of victory points or forfeit the game. From this point on American recruitment of Continental units is doubled. A third Major success ends the game immediately in favor of the Americans.

Once French arrival is triggered, the Americans can usually win their independence. But it is by no means assured, as the British can still make it a rough fight. In SPI's philosophy, to win the Revolution would have meant bringing back the King's authority throughout the land. Victory conditions are rough.

The militia in each area must be totally subdued and the area garrisoned by British regulars. Each area has different garrison requirements. It takes more troops to hold New York than the Roanoke Valley. Since the size of the British army is finite, casualties must be kept low. If not, the player can find himself in the embarrassing position of not having enough garrison troops.

The **American Revolution** was a fine simulation for its time. It handled a difficult assignment with good play value and a respect for history. Even eighteen years later it stands up very well. In Avalon Hill's **1776** we have a much more conventional wargame with standard hexagonal grid, combat tables and a very complete manual. The rules cover supply, automatic elimination, Indians, bateau movement, winter restrictions, dragoons, fleet movement and more.

The board is aesthetically pleasing and detailed. Movement is standard, with rough terrain and rivers costing more to enter. Combined with the fine nuances of the map, one is able to recreate some fine historical detail. Thus the importance of a fort on a "class two" river, the St. Lawrence for example, is in

stark contrast to a fort built on the shores of Lake Champlain. The river fort dominates the river and halts bateau movement past it while the lake fort has no influence on lake movement.

The use of river movement is extensive and it is possible to move an army hundreds of miles into the interior of the country. Burgoyne's move from Quebec to the foot of Lake George is easily simulated here. In short, the terrain in **1776**, along with the detailed rules, allowed a host of possibilities.

One of the most exciting aspects of **1776** was the utilization of the tactical combat cards. Some would call it "just luck," but the use of the cards was an exercise in out thinking your opponent. You evaluated the tactical situation and tried to figure out what one's opponent would do. Use of the cards amounted to picking a battle maneuver that would yield some favorable modifier on the die roll. This was further modified depending upon your opponent's choice. The results could be decisive, catastrophic or nothing. It perfectly illustrated the period where battles could range from a "Saratoga" result to inconclusive engagements such as "Germantown."

Foreign intervention was handled in an entirely different way than in SPI's version. In **1776** the American player does not have to gain a large victory to get recognition. He just has to stave off defeat. Thus, Avalon Hill takes the view that French intervention was just a question of time. (The French are coming!) However it is not absolutely certain as to when. Their arrival is modified by the degree of British success. If the

British are winning they will arrive later. The earliest the French may arrive is April of 1778. Theoretically it is possible to prevent the French from arriving at all, but at that point the British are on the threshold of victory anyway. 1778 is a nailbiter year for the British as they feverishly wonder as to when the French will arrive and where.

The French army is not so dangerous to the British as are the French fleets which are enacted with accuracy here. With these the American player has freedom of movement from Quebec to Florida. Fleet combat can also be decisive and the loss of a fleet to the British could mean loss of the war.

Tory and Militia depiction was excellent. Unlike SPI, these units were always available in an area regardless of British presence. There numbers however varied considerably depending on the situation. Here Avalon Hill took an entirely different stand as to the politics that influenced these special units. In 1776 area has the most number of tories when the British regulars are not present, while militia are at the minimum. Designer notes explain that Tory units tended to be more active on their own than while in the presence of British regulars.

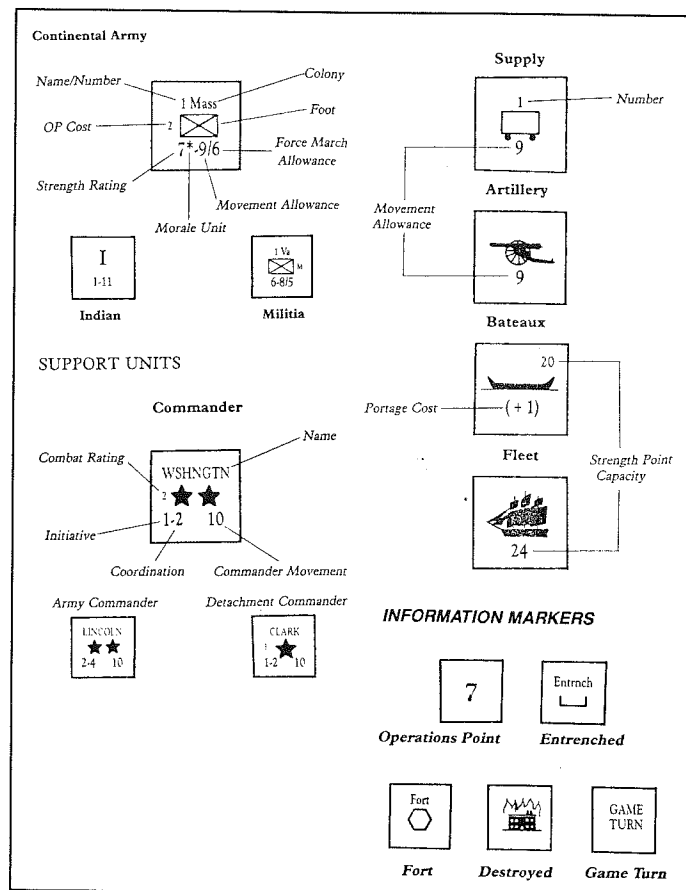
Many factors influence the number of militia and tories in an area. Usually this amounts to what side has the greater control. Continental regulars are more easily recruited when the area is free of British influence. Rebel militia appear in large numbers when an area is threatened. Should an area be totally controlled no Continental units may be raised and militia falls to the minimum. In short, 1776 has a finer scale when it comes to the utilization of auxiliary units and the combinations of such lead to an exciting game.

Victory conditions in 1776 are similar to **American Revolution** which amount to holding territory. Twenty towns must be garrisoned by the British, virtually all of the thirteen colonies. Destroying American forces is not enough, this is only a means to an end. Like the SPI philosophy, winning the Revolution would have meant suppressing the whole country.

1776 is one of a kind. It is now considered an "old title" but never achieved classic status. When first released it was not all that popular, since the Revolution never was a popular game subject. The game also generated a lot of articles in the game press at first. These were criticisms of the game as being too imbalanced against the Americans. Avalon Hill maintained that 1776 was a new breed of game. It was not possible to unlock all of its secrets in one or two playings. They were right. For a year later, articles began appearing about the game's imbalance against the British! 1776 had come around full circle. It still has my vote as the best game on the American Revolution.

**13: The Colonies in Revolt** was published in *Strategy & Tactics* magazine in November of 1985 (issue #104). In this lay many of the seeds that prevented the game from being a great success. It would have been far better to release it as a boxed purchase. Still, with this disadvantage, the author Richard Berg produced a title with some great features marred only by the limitations of the magazine format.

The map covers approximately the same area as 1776, stretching from Quebec in the North to Georgia in the South. The interior goes a little farther covering the Ohio and Illinois



## Counters from 13: The Colonies in Revolt

territory. The grid is standard hexagons. Terrain features are mountains, hills, rivers, cities and clear. Unfortunately the map is too dark and spoils what would have been an adequate design. One is tempted to leave it in the sun to bleach it lighter.

Where the map fails the counter mix restores. The regimental and brigade level units are beautiful. These add a great deal of life to the simulation. Neither **American Revolution** nor 1776 had utilized historical units, and their use in this version is one of the game's best features.

The color choices are wise, pleasing to look at, and functional. British regulars are bright red, Tories light tan, Continentals dark blue, Militia light blue, Germans green, and French purple. Bateau units, fleets, and supply are stark white but contrast nicely with the line units when stacked.

The negative side of the counter mix was that there were not enough of them. I combined two games together and still did not have enough supply counters and forts to play the game. These are easily made, but to have a fine game marred on this point is a shame.

The units were activated by an operations point system. Points were drawn randomly from a counter mix and the player was free to allocate them as he saw fit. As units performed actions these points were deducted from his total. Since initial point allocation was random, both American and British could temporarily have the initiative. This was unlike both **American Revolution** and 1776, where the American player largely is on the defensive.



Water movement is also extremely important. There is a full section of rules describing bateau movement. With bateaus one can travel five times as fast down river, compared to marching. One feature I liked is the ability of land units to "carry" their bateaus. In 1776 one could not accurately portray Burgoyne's move from Lake George to the Hudson. This was because bateaus could not be carried overland, a surprising oversight. In *Colonies in Revolt* bateaus may portage.

The combat system was new. Odds were used only as a modifier to the final combat table which was differential. There were further modifiers such as weather, artillery, supply, entrenchments, leader ability and so on. The table itself utilized two dice and had thirty-six different results. These results varied widely from loss of strength points to the complete surrender of an army. With swings of fortune such as these one had to carefully weigh the decision to do battle. In one of my practice games I had Lord Howe's army land at New York to attack Washington's. A modified die roll of "11" saw the surrender of Lord Howe's army and that was in 1776!

This brings us to one of the best features of the game, the inclusion of leaders. Washington, Lee, Gates, Arnold, Howe, Burgoyne, Carleton, and others are all included. These restore a lot of flavor which had been missing in the other two versions. After all, the results of the American Revolution are steeped in the personalities of the leaders.

For game purposes they allow more efficient movement of forces, interception of enemy moves, modifiers to combat, and in the case of Arnold the possibility of treason. The "Swamp Fox," Francis Marion, is included and has special abilities to ambush and remain concealed.

One of the surprising omissions is the use of Sea power. Both SPI and Avalon Hill realized that it could not be left out. In this version Sea movement is allowed only for the British. The designer notes state that the French Fleet has been abstracted into the Caribbean, but I think the absence of the French Fleet is fatal to any true simulation of the Revolution.

The militia and Tories were handled in a new

way. Tories were raised by the expenditure of operational points. In this manner you could decide for yourself whether or not the units were needed. Militia were not tied to any "triggered" move by the British and could be raised for free. There were modifiers, of course, similar to that used in 1776. If the militia were outside their home colony, or the British had left the territory, there was a greater chance they would disband.

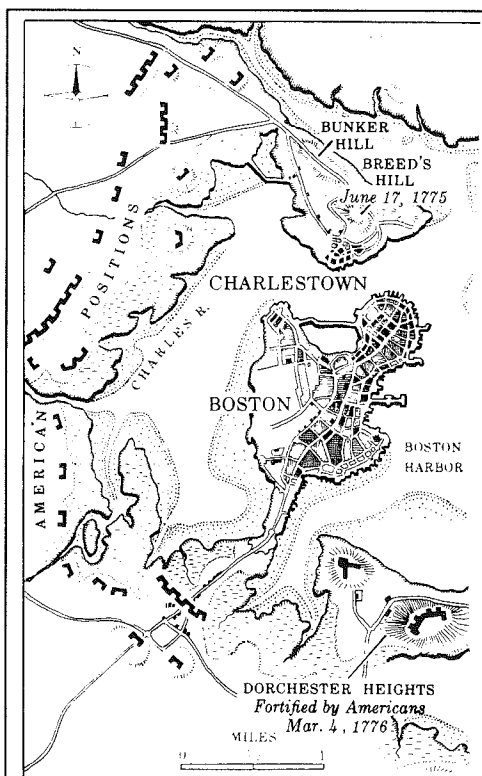
French intervention was handled similarly to 1776. A major victory had to be won by the Americans. This meant defeating twenty five combat factors in battle. Three turns later the French could arrive by the roll of a die. Further die roll modifications each turn assured that French arrival was inevitable.

The victory conditions in this game are interesting since they allow for the fact that the Revolution itself evolved and changed after the Declaration of Independence.

The British player wins if he controls Canada, one area, and the following cities: Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston. But he wins under these conditions only in 1775 or 1776. A long war favors the American. If the British are to crush the Revolution, it is best if they do it quickly. Should early victory elude the British, winning then becomes virtually the reconquering of America.

The *Colonies in Revolt* had some good concepts and a superb order of battle compared to its predecessors. Its major faults lie in the fact that it was too large a subject for the magazine format. It still gives good play value and history nonetheless.

Games on the American Revolution have never been as popular as say, the American Civil War. With these three versions we received good play value and decent history. If the subject is done again I would like to see the best features of each version incorporated into the new. This would mean the elegant simplicity of *American Revolution*, the accurate map from 1776, and the fine counters from *Colonies in Revolt*. A marriage of these three features would give us one of the best simulations on the American Revolution.



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# EXPANDING FRONT

## Code of Bushido

by David Harrison

The image of Japanese infantry in WWII conjures up images of fierce close-in jungle fighting, massive banzai charges, and Hara-kiri. **Code of Bushido**, TAHG's last ASL module, underscores the opinion of many that the Japanese infantry is the best in history. It succeeds in doing this with an ingenious array of subtle (and not so subtle) rules. What results is an exciting and authentic feeling for what it must have been like to fight the Japanese in the Pacific.

The components of the ASL system have always been top notch and **Code of Bushido** is no exception. Included in the \$40 package are boards 34-37, a pad of 36 overlays, the first half of Chapter G (the rest of the rules will be included in the Chinese expansion, **Gung Ho**), the entire Japanese OB, and eight scenarios. The boards are some of the nicest looking to date with terrain that looks no different from that depicted on the other boards. Woods become jungle, brush is bamboo, orchards are palm trees, and grain is kunai grass; however, overlays must be used to depict rice paddies. As a result, Pacific terrain is substituted only functionally and not aesthetically for the European terrain. I feel this was a good choice as it allows all boards to be used in either theater. I have no complaints with the quality of the components.

Let's take a look at the Japanese OB. The Japanese support weapons are a mixed blessing: although they are as light as the German weapons and have a longer range than the American versions, they all have lower breakdown numbers. Additionally, their MMG and HMG require crew to be used effectively, just like guns.

As to be expected, Japanese vehicles are a pathetic lot. The highest armor factor available is six and their best AP ammo rates only 75. On the positive side, they tend to be very mobile. Even the Italian vehicles are more exciting.

If their vehicles are junk, then their ordnance is anything but. They have an impressive group of mortars and artillery guns—one of the latter rates a full traverse 140L. On the negative side, they lack good AT guns.

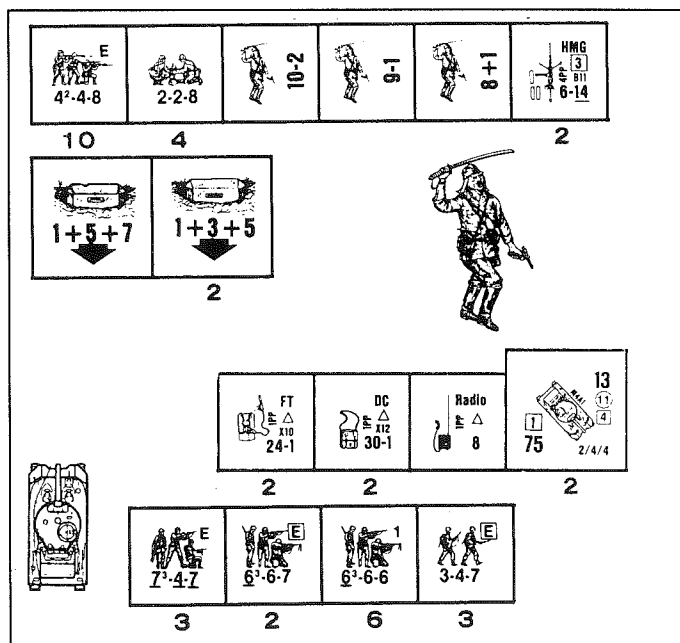
The chief advantage the Japanese have over other nationalities is the fact that their squads don't break. Japanese squads have no broken side; instead they have a step reduced side with a slightly lower strength, which is denoted by a red band—very appealing. If they fail morale, they are step reduced. Step reduced squads which fail morale go to half squads. Half squads break normally. The system works very well in representing the fearless nature of Japanese troops and requires very different tactics to overcome. Just what tactics are required other than simply blasting away at

them turn after turn with as much fire power as possible, I have yet to figure out. If you think a possible solution is moving in quickly for close combat, you are merely playing into another one of their strengths.

Japanese infantry automatically use hand to hand combat and receive an extra -1 modifier to represent their special training. In addition, the Japanese are great ambushers since their elite and first line units are considered stealthy. As such, close combat involving them tends to be casualty intensive and they seem to usually win. Also included is a Hara-kiri rule which allows Japanese infantry an attempt to eliminate themselves before being captured.

The Japanese banzai capability is not as effective as I expected. It is a less restrictive form of a human wave assault, not requiring multiple hexes to set up but still requiring a leader to participate. I disagree with the leader requirement since I feel banzai charges should be easier to establish than they are, but maybe it's a good thing for the sake of play balance given all their other advantages.

A unique infantry counter makes its debut in **Code of Bushido**—the tank hunter hero. These units must banzai charge and they either detonate a demo charge in the enemy hex or engage in close combat with an enemy vehicle, and both types of attacks occur in the same movement phase. They are not very effective against vehicles, especially if the opponent is smart enough to leave infantry in the same hex with them. However, their threat does hamper Allied play and requires precautions to meet.



The Japanese possess a host of other advantages: all leaders are treated like Commissars, they gain concealment easier than other nationalities, they are harder to search for, and a fraction of their force may always set up hidden—just to name a few. These add up to what is probably the most potent infantry to date. If the Japanese have so many advantages, what are their weaknesses? Well, thankfully there are...a few.

The most obvious shortcoming of the Japanese is their weak strength factors—fire power and range values never exceed four. Elite troops are only 4-4-8's. Another disadvantage is that Japanese leaders tend to be short lived since they must make a wound check if they fail morale. Finally, the Japanese tend to lack good leadership since their best leader is a rare "-2" with all others ranging from "-1" to "+1."

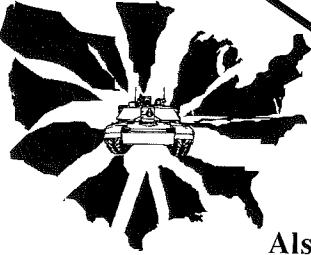
Chapter G is very well written. I had few questions other than on some rare cases that may come up—but this is to be expected in a game this detailed. The terrain rules are effective in portraying the denseness and low visibility of the jungle. Both sides will find it slow going with close fighting the norm. It is obvious much thought went into each rule, and the old maxim "the whole is greater than the sum of the parts" applies here: the rules work well together to give a remarkable feel for what they are trying to simulate.

The only complaint I have with the module concerns the scenarios. I don't understand why Avalon Hill is bent on providing only eight scenarios on a new theater—at least ten are warranted. The scenarios are varied and interesting enough, but more sce-



narios like the last, *The Bushmasters* (now among my all time favorites), which is a gem featuring a large and mixed American elite force versus a well defended Japanese infantry position complete with a surprise banzai charge, should have been included. I don't know if I'm alone on this, but it is this kind of situation which I find the most appealing and associate most with the Pacific theater of land operations.

It should be obvious by now that I like *Code of Bushido*. Playing the Japanese is so unlike any other nationality that breathes new life into ASL. One is simply forced to come up with fresh tactics to defeat the Japanese. Your game will never be the same again. ●



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# COMPUTER GAMES

## CONFLICT: EUROPE

by Art Kritzer

The composure of Europe is rapidly changing. The opening of the Berlin Wall signals a new era for all. Who could have predicted the rapid succession of events in Eastern Europe in 1989? Certainly very few. Also caught off guard was the wargaming field. As a consequence, few of the NATO/Warsaw Pact games now on the market offer scenarios that reflect the current situation.

Surprisingly, a group of European designers put out a wargame in 1989 that accounted for some of these changes. Perhaps they had a Genie bottle. In any case, the game in question is **Conflict: Europe**. This computer simulation includes five scenarios that range anywhere from an outright east/west confrontation to a situation whereby the U.S. has pulled its forces out of Europe entirely. The game accounts for chemical warfare, cruise missiles, Starwars, and tactical nuclear exchanges, to name a few. It is without doubt one of the most challenging, and therefore, one of the most enjoyable wargames that I possess. The graphics are first class, the sound effects passable, and the preliminary screens, outstanding. In short, the game has class.

I will attempt to review **Conflict: Europe** as a simulation of the scenarios it portrays. It must be stated that I am no expert in modern tactical/operational conventional and/or nuclear exchanges in Europe in the present day or some time in the future. (Are any of us?) I will, however, attempt to show whether the game is reasonable in its design and therefore, its actual play.

When **Conflict: Europe** is first booted the usual credits are there. There is a twist though. To help you pass the crucial seconds of idleness, a military style marching beat can be heard. Almost immediately, the beat gets progressively louder. And just when you're tempted to turn down the volume, a picture appears, the sound changes, and a newsreel unfolds on the right hand side of the screen. It bears a

headline. The news is bad. World War Three has erupted. As a player, you must decide the fate of Europe. Fortunately, you have options.

### The Scenarios

*Opening Gambit:* This scenario assumes that both NATO and the Warsaw Pact have had two weeks to prepare prior to the actual invasion by the Pact (circa early 1989, before the vast changes in the Eastern block).

*Out of Step:* An unexpected diplomatic crisis has triggered an outbreak of hostilities. As a result both sides have units unprepared and out of position, (again, early 1989).

*After the INF:* Same scenario as in *Opening Gambit* except that all non-strategic nuclear weapons have been removed from play. Apparently, West German peace parties have had their way.

*The Star Wars Option:* Same as *Out of Step*. However, only short range battlefield nuclear weapons are available. The premise being that both sides have developed effective antimissile systems.

*What If?:* Perhaps the most challenging scenario for the west. The U.S. is assumed to have pulled out entirely from Europe. As a result a new NATO is formed with stronger E.E.C. commitment. As an equalizer, Warsaw Pact cannot rely on Rumanian and/or Polish assistance. Both are now neutral but do allow the Soviet player access through their territories.

In all scenarios a player can choose the role of NATO or the Warsaw Pact. Your opponent is always the computer. Unfortunately, if you like multi-player games you will be disappointed. The good news here is that the computer plays quite well. The computer is not easy to predict nor easy to defeat. Once a scenario is chosen the screen will show the war room.

### The War Room

The war room is the heart and soul of the game. All game activities center on its display in some way or another. The top two thirds of the screen is the actual play area. It displays Europe from England to the Soviet Union. It includes northern Italy and southern Scandinavia. A down fall here is that the screen does not scroll; the net result is a compressed screen. Below the play area is a narrow information strip. It displays a read out of the current game turn, its phase, and as well the strength of any one unit highlighted by the game cursor. Finally, at the bottom of the screen is the ever present Command Area. The Command Area can be accessed any time a player is in a movement phase. It reveals all kinds of useful and/or irrelevant information depending on the whims of any particular player or situation. About the only problem I have with the above set up is that the actual play area is too small. For the life of me, I can not understand why the Command Area and the Information strip could not have been accessible by a cursor box or an escape key. It seems an awful waste of limited space, especially for a computer screen.

### The Three Game Phases

Every turn is composed of a movement, assault, and rebuild phase. Movement is via a mouse or joystick depending on the computer played on. There are no hexes or square grids on the screens. Stacking is not allowed nor passage through other units, friendly or not. Mountain areas reduce movement rates by half. Generally, any given unit can move one space away from its present position. There are two exceptions. Only the Soviet player has the capability of dropping his airborne army beyond the one space range. Although weak, it can dropped at just about any spot on the game screen on any given turn. In addition, only the Soviet player is allotted an amphibious army. It has the capability of threatening Denmark with invasion. Since

the game is strategic, it appears that the game designers decided to deny the NATO player the same capabilities at this particular scale. Whether you agree with this point or not is not really important. The reason? The airborne army will rarely determine a game winner. It is more useful as a threat than when actually employed.

After movement a player must decide if any of his units will partake in combat duties. More than one unit can combine their attacks on any one enemy unit. However, any given unit is only allowed to attack one enemy unit. After combat duties are assigned, the computer carries out the results and determines the retreat routes for any unit(s) affected. Generally units are retreated towards friendly lines.

The last phase is the build phase. During this phase a player will be informed of the turn's reinforcements. A player will have to decide which units will receive armor, air and support reinforcements. In very broad terms: armor reinforcements represent the combat capabilities of any given

unit; air support represents (you guessed it) logistical supplies. Units can receive these reinforcements regardless of their position on the board. Personally this is one point that I have trouble with. In recent games, completely isolated NATO and/or Warsaw Pact units have been able to receive reinforcements, turn after turn. In the over all execution of the game this point is quite trivial. However, it is pretty annoying to have the computer build up a one armor/one air unit to a seven armor/three air unit two or three turns after being cut off. Most peculiar.

### Air Missions and Special Assignments

Well enough of the preliminaries, let's get down to the chrome. **Conflict: Europe** offers a lot, read a lot of chrome. During any movement phase a player can choose from nine different air missions for his units. Air superiority, interdiction, and air defence are pretty straightforward. They do as their terms imply. Assault breakers, deep strikes, "iron strikes," strategic bomb-

ing, counter air and air reconnaissance need further explanations. Assault breakers give support to ground units when attacked or attacking enemy ground units. They can wreak havoc to any well planned attacks. Deep strikes will have long term effects on enemy communication centers. If successful, they can prevent enemy units from moving or attacking at all. "Iron strikes" have long term effects on supply lines. Apparently, it will reduce the rate of reinforcements and/or supplies. I have yet to find it particularly useful in any of my recent games. Too often the game will be decided before the consequences of "iron strike" take effect. Strategic bombing is strictly for the morbid crowd. It is directly aimed at civilian casualties. I guess the theory is, the more dead your opponent suffers, the better off you will be. Counter air is aimed at enemy airfields. If successful it will lower the number of air missions assigned against any of your units. Finally, there is reconnaissance. Allotting enough air points to it will enable you to keep tab of enemy units, their assign-

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DON'T HAVE THEM?**

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THEY FORGOT ABOUT  
RESEARCH, TESTING, & DESIGN.**

**WE DIDN'T.**

## SIMULATIONS CANADA... FOR SERIOUS WARGAMING

### NAVAL COMBAT:

\*\*\*New\*\*\***PACIFIC STORM: THE MIDWAY CAMPAIGN**, Operations In The Central Pacific, 1942. In this second PACIFIC STORM study, we turn to Admiral Yamamoto's grand plan to defeat the American Navy after the partial success of the Pearl Harbor attack and the humiliation of the Doolittle raid. Spanning the open reaches of the Pacific from the Home Islands to Hawaiian chain, with Dutch Harbor and Truk as theatre limits, and in the center, Midway Island, the game concentrates on plan formulation and execution via command and control to hold the pivotal position between the American Navy and Japan during an 18 week campaign. Amiga, Atari ST, & IBMPC.

\*\*\*New\*\*\***PACIFIC STORM: THE SOLOMONS CAMPAIGN**, Operations In The South Pacific, 1942-1943. The US advance back into the Pacific went north to Midway and south to a previously obscure island called Guadalcanal. Midway was a fast victory. The fight for the Solomons was the hardest of the war. This operational naval, air, and land simulation concentrates on the command and control of an entire theatre of war, covering the campaign in 2 week turns. Amiga, Atari ST, & IBMPC.

**FLEET MED**, Tactical Naval Combat In The Med, 1939-1943.

**MALTA STORM**, The Battle For The Mediterranean, 1941-1942.

**KRIEGSMARINE**, Tactical Naval Combat In The Atlantic, 1939-1944.

**NORTHERN FLEET**, Modern Naval Operations In The Atlantic Ocean.

**GRAND FLEET**, Tactical Naval Combat In The North Sea, 1906-1920.

**IN HARM'S WAY**, Tactical Naval Combat In The Pacific, 1943-1944.

**LONG LANCE**, Tactical Naval Combat In The Pacific, 1942.

**SEVENTH FLEET**, Modern Naval Operations In The Pacific Ocean.

**FIFTH ESKADRA**, Modern Naval Operations In The Mediterranean Sea.

**GREY SEAS, GREY SKIES**, Tactical Modern Naval Combat.

### LAND COMBAT:

\*\*\*New\*\*\***MAIN BATTLE TANK: MIDDLE EAST**, Modern Tactical Armoured Combat. The Middle East seems to forever be in turmoil. And if recent history is any indicator, this situation will not be changing in the near future. **MBT:ME**, our third MBT game (in design for two years and delayed to incorporate data from the recent Gulf conflict) provides the terrain of the Middle East deserts and the forces of the local powers, as well as intervention countries, in a command oriented simulation that allows for past, current, and future combat situations. Prebuilt scenarios and a "build your own" system are provided. Amiga, Atari ST, & IBMPC.

\*\*\*New\*\*\***BATTLE TANK: KURSK TO BERLIN**, Tactical Armoured Combat In The East, June 1943 - May 1945. Though the war in the East was not going well for Germany, the General Staff still thought it might be won with the new tanks and weapons just starting to stream in from the factories. That hope died at Kursk, but left 2 more years of brutal combat. This second game in our grand tactical BT series completes our coverage of the East front. Prebuilt scenarios and a "build your own" system are provided in this detailed command style study. Amiga, Atari ST, & IBMPC.

**MBT: NORTH GERMANY**, Modern Tactical Armoured Combat

**BT: BARBAROSSA TO STALINGRAD**, Tactical Armoured Combat In The East, June 1941 - May 1943.

**MBT: CENTRAL GERMANY**, Modern Tactical Armoured Combat.

**ROMMEL AT EL ALAMEIN**, Battles For Egypt, 1 July to 6 November, 1942.

**MOSCOW CAMPAIGN**, Typhoon & White Storm, Aug 1941 to Feb 1942.

**TO THE RHINE**, The Allied Advance In The West, 29 Aug to 11 Dec, 1944.

**ROMMEL AT GAZALA**, Battles For Tobruk, 26 May to 27 June 1942.

**STALINGRAD CAMPAIGN**, The Turning Point In Russia, Jun 1942 - Feb 1943.

**KURSK CAMPAIGN**, Operation Zitadelle, Summer 1943.

**OPERATION OVERLORD**, The Invasion Of Europe, 6 June - 28 August, 1942.

**GOLAN FRONT**, The 1973 Arab/Israeli War In The North.

**FALL GELB**, The Fall Of France, Spring 1940.

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\*\*\*New\*\*\***FLEET MED**, Tactical Naval Combat In The Med, 1939-1943. The Italian Fleet was battle ready and eager for a fight, as was the navy of England, the long term ruler of the Med. But only one fleet would survive the coming conflict. This is the fourth and final game in our WWII tactical naval series. The full available fleets of England and Italy are provided, as well as those of the United States and France. 9 scenarios & a "build your own" system are included. Amiga, Atari ST, & IBMPC.

**MALTA STORM**, The Battle For The Mediterranean, December 1941 - August 1942.

**KRIEGSMARINE**, Tactical Naval Combat In The Atlantic, 1939-1944.

**NORTHERN FLEET**, Modern Naval Operations In The Atlantic Ocean.

**GRAND FLEET**, Tactical Naval Combat In The North Sea, 1906-1920.

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\*\*\*New\*\*\***MAIN BATTLE TANK: NORTH GERMANY**, Modern Tactical Armoured Combat. The breakdown of the Warsaw Pact had given hope that Europe might continue its long period of peace. But Germany inevitably slipped into the power vacuum created by the Russian pullback. Our second MBT game provides the terrain of the North German Plain and the forces of England, Russia, & Germany in a command oriented simulation that allows for NATO or aggressive German situations. Prebuilt scenarios and a "build your own" system are provided. Amiga, Atari ST, & IBMPC.

**BATTLE TANK: BARBAROSSA TO STALINGRAD**, Tactical Armoured Combat In The East, June 1941 - May 1943.

**MAIN BATTLE TANK: CENTRAL GERMANY**, Modern Tactical Armoured Combat.

**ROMMEL AT EL ALAMEIN**, Battles For Egypt, 1 July to 6 November, 1942.

**MOSCOW CAMPAIGN**, Operations Typhoon & White Storm, 30 Aug 1941 to 13 Feb 1942.

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ments, and their expected date of arrival. With only forty air points at any given time, a player is forced to think long and hard before assigning missions. You see, the clincher here is that once a point is assigned to a mission it cannot immediately switch to another. It must first forfeit a turn in air reserve. Although annoying, this restriction is quite realistic.

Once during a game players will have a chance to access the special missions terminal. Once there, a player will have the choice of one of the following missions: 1) Chemical/biological warfare: Catastrophic civilian casualties will result. Militarily, short term combat effectiveness will be the gain. Game wise, this is only advisable in dire situations. 2) Asat: this mission will lower the effectiveness of the enemy's reconnaissance. 3) Counter air: special forces will raid enemy airfields. 4) Supply dump destruction: as it implies. 5) Counter cruise: Enemy cruise sites will be raided.

### Nuclear Power

What sets this game apart from most contemporary war games is that it actually

accounts for nuclear exchanges. As gruesome as it sounds, it actually gives players a chance to sweat out their options. As a last resort to a conventional defeat, game commanders will be tempted to order tactical and/or strategic nuclear strikes. Doing so will, however, bring the wrath of your computer opponent. Any nuclear strike that a player makes will result in an equally severe strike by the computer. To clarify, if you order a tactical nuclear strike on an enemy unit, the computer will usually respond by striking one of your armies in like manner.

Nuclear requests can range from one effected unit to one effecting eight enemy units. In addition, you can also request that supply centers, cities, HQ's, airfields, and/or cruise sites be the object of your attacks. But wait, these are only 'two bit' options. If you really feel ghoulish why fool around? You can order in strategic strikes. The ultimate request is 'Fumble Winter', the code name for Armageddon. If this command is ever entered, an all out nuclear war will result. To remind you of your

madness, the computer will flash a message on the screen. "Congratulations, you have destroyed the world." There, ... how's that for a game action that reflects reality.

There's more. In addition to nuclear requests, a player can call for chemical and/or conventional high explosive cruise missiles on selected targets. Doing so will prevent nuclear responses but will undoubtedly lead to corresponding computer strikes. No free rides. As a last note here, a player has the option to preset missile strikes, conventional or not, by ordering 'Alter Reflex Strikes.' This means that if the computer ever resorts to a missile strike, your forces will be automatically programmed to strike back as commanded. Frankly, I'm not sure what to make of this option. Often times, a player will find himself too busy with the myriad of options available and completely forget about this option. Why bother? The computer will always give you the opportunity to strike back. A design problem? Maybe, ... or perhaps after twenty-five odd games I have still not figured out the subtleties of



this option. In any case, it is not critical to the overall play of the game. Forget about it.

## Odds and Ends

During any movement phase a player can access the logistics terminal. Doing so will allow a player to keep track of his reinforcements. In addition, if a player allots enough air points to reconnaissance they will be able to keep track of their opponent's reinforcement rate. When and if a player decides to keep track of other enemy actions he can do so with the warcom terminal. When first encountered it can look quite impressive. What you see is a printer on a screen that displays messages from other theaters in the war. News of Baltic sea battles and Norway's demise will be read. However, the initial impression will not last. It can take quite a while for all the messages to appear, and really, they have no effect on the actual outcome of the game. Finally, if you really desire, you can get your own hard copy of the print outs. My only comment here is, "What for?" Let's go on to something more relevant.

To simulate the role of diplomacy, **Conflict: Europe** offers a Diplomatic terminal. A player can access this any time he feels an urge to communicate with his adversary. Ceasefires, surrenders and nuclear use can be negotiated. Paradoxically (and realistically), these agreements need not be adhered to. You are never bound to keep your word. I don't doubt that the computer has the capability to break its word but I have yet to see it happen. Why? Well, ...it must be understood that in the context of the game diplomacy is surprisingly unimportant. You see once the game has begun, and it is *only* a game, you will probably play to win. With that in mind, very few of us will consider a negotiated settlement—especially with a computer when there is even a faint hope of winning militarily. Inevitably, if faced with certain conventional defeat, I usually get some revenge by starting an all-out nuclear war. The logic here? At least both sides will experience the bitterness of defeat. Sounds pretty callous doesn't it? Hey, it's just a game. What's sad is that in reality both NATO and the Warsaw Pact have the option to respond in the same manner. Ponder that.

## Victory Conditions

For any side to win they must do so within thirty days of combat. In game terms that translates to fifteen turns. To win, Warsaw Pact must have significant forces across the French-German border or destroy all the NATO ground units. NATO must prevent the Warsaw Pact conditions or destroy their ground units to declare themselves winners. It is definitely easier to win as the Warsaw Pact in any scenario. They have more ground units and get the critical first shot in. Being a sucker for punishment, I usually play NATO. Regardless of who you play, you may find yourself thinking that you lost. You see, the computer rates your level of victory (competency) after each game. The more casualties you take, military or civilian, the less your rating. Brilliant! Found a way to win consistently? Big deal, now you have to contend with the computer's assessment of your leadership qualities. This will keep you going back for more game action. As well, this is a unique way of forcing gamers to think and play responsibly.

## The Bottom Line

**Conflict: Europe** is more strategic than operational in its design. Units represent NATO corps or Warsaw Pact armies. As a game commander you will be forced to make decisions as a field commander. You will not be able to direct any particular battle. In essence, you will not be able to play the almighty god and direct all aspects of war. You will experience frustration, helplessness, and anticipation on every game turn. In short, you will get to think like an actual leader, not just a military commander. In this context, **Conflict: Europe** succeeds admirably. Militarily, the game makes compromises. It assumes that NATO will be able to reinforce their Reforger sites and gain control of the Atlantic. It allows the Warsaw Pact an airborne army that can drop successfully where planned. The game even assumes that neither side will begin the conflict with nuclear and/or biological weapons. Lastly it assumes that France and the other NATO countries will enter the war once begun. Unrealistic? Maybe. But in any game that depicts a hypothetical, and in recent months, an unlikely event there must be assumptions. And really, can we really assume that NATO, with its high

tech advantage, will be able to win air superiority over the more numerous Warsaw Pact airforce? Who knows? At least **Conflict: Europe** confronts this question without resorting to the usual assumed Western line of thought. It is very tough to win air superiority in this game. Unlike other games, NATO may not win the air war. This point, more so than any other, makes me respect the game designers. They at least have had the courage and foresight to put out a game that is different than the rest.

The bottom line? I heartily recommend the game to anyone interested in computer games. It is well thought out and includes many more options than this brief review can cover. It will not allow players to determine their victories in well defined black or white manners. It will challenge you and capture your attention, game after game. Bravo!

*Contact the publisher directly at:*  
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London SE1 0SW United Kingdom  
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## FACT SHEET

**TITLE:** Conflict: Europe  
**PUBLISHER:** Mirrorsoft, Ltd.  
**AVAILABLE FOR:** IBMPC, Amiga and Atari ST  
**REVIEWED ON:** Atari St  
**PRICE:** \$40-50 US  
**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:** One  
**SCENARIOS:** Five  
**SAVE SYSTEM:** During any movement phase  
**GRAPHICS:** Excellent  
**COMPLEXITY:** Mid-range  
**DOCUMENTATION:** Excellent  
**OVERALL QUALITY:** Excellent  
**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** A An excellent strategy (political/military) simulation of a future conflict in Europe. Various options explore the possibilities of a changing Europe.

## Paper Wars: Contemporary Military Wargaming

by David Gruenbaum

*"Friction is the only conception which in a general way corresponds to that which distinguishes real War from War on paper."*

von Clausewitz, *On War*

### Cardboard Combat

Although only war on paper, wargames facilitate exploring plans or concepts, verifying staff routines and standard operating procedures (SOPs), and training personnel. A small slice of the total (one 1989 Army count totalled 279+<sup>1</sup>), it doesn't cover classified or strategic gaming (consult Allen's *Wargames* and Prados' *Pentagon Games*).

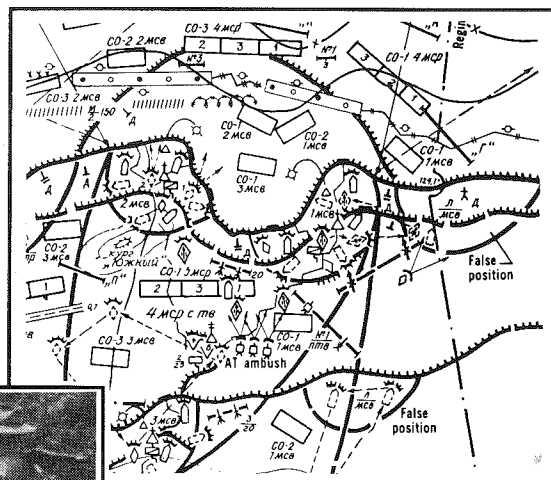
Armies have used simulations, from von Reisswitz's maneuver game, to Livermore's **The American Wargame**, through countless command and staff exercises, generally for senior staff, not operational/tactical commanders. While wise tactical commanders wargamed in sand, on cave walls (Ferrill's *The Origins of War* shows the earliest depiction of a flank attack), tent canvas or vehicle side, these techniques cannot accurately depict combat between specified units consistently. I know of no tactical simulation prior to 1970. FM 105-5 **Maneuver Control** manual (now out of print) contained instructions, combat power tables, firepower scores, and losses from weapons types per hour, but lacked simplified combat results tables.

In the 1970s Army Combat Intelligence Staff Courses used two map games. In one, teams playing corps G2 sections scored points by disseminating intelligence (through controllers) leading to enemy forces destroyed and friendly lives saved. In the other, teams playing 28th Division G2 staffs developed intelligence assessing German deployment and actions using messages and reports from 1 to 15 December 1944. Even knowing the Ardennes Counter-Offensive followed, the most pessimistic assessment was a three division attack, testimony of German stealth: seven divisions were in the sector. About that time the Army produced two other games, Dunn-Kempf and the Computer-Assisted Map Maneuver System (CAMMS).

Army officers Dunn and Kempf designed a company/platoon level game using 1/285 scale

vehicles, only the playing surface differing from hobby versions. Twelve plastic panels form a terrain relief map of part of the Fulda Gap (between Wolf and Grossentaft, also on Omega's **Main Battle Area** map). In CAMMS, players maneuvered counters on plastic 1:12,500 maps, directed by battalion commanders over field phones or radios. Commanders and staffs, restricted from viewing battleboards, relied on board players' situation reports (sitreps) for plotting locations, developing plans and fighting battles. Staffs had to track losses and supply, and plan accordingly. The computer would cripple units not resupplied or with losses not filled through command succession or reorganization. Confusion and communications created chaos well: players screamed into phones while trying to move units, threat echelons advanced, battalion commanders demanded more information while issuing orders obsolete for circumstances. But battles were preposterous. Players conducting direct fire filled out sheets listing firing/target units and respective unit postures (moving or halted, in the open, hasty or prepared defensive positions). Given to a controller, processed by terminal

gram assumed continued Soviet movement, right over defenders.) Once battalion and brigade were notified of this travesty, Control admitted the results didn't seem right, but the computer couldn't possibly err, therefore terminal operators entered data incorrectly (although the engagement printout indicated otherwise). Control resurrected B Company, 2000m back. Threat battalions cracked the U.S. Main Line of Resistance. Later T62s and BMPs rolled into the open. Six tanks lay in wait on a lightly wooded knoll, behind a hasty minefield, a 105mm battery in direct support. Tank cannon, artillery fire and mines had no effect. Control finally ordered the Threat back, cancelling the



operators, Ft. Leavenworth's Combined Arms Center computers digested them and spat out strange results some twenty minutes later. Examples follow:

Two T-62 battalions crossed a stream, one leading, the other echelon right. Fourteen M60A3 tanks of B/3-185 Armor, just within woods ahead, fired at 1500 meters. One C Company platoon, on a wooded knoll slightly to the front and right, volleyed at 800m range into their left flank. The result of devastating interlocked fires: one Soviet NCO captured, his AK-47 destroyed! U.S. players demanded an explanation. Then Control proclaimed B Company overrun with no Soviet losses! (The pro-

attack, unable to explain the lack of results. Elsewhere, one SU-7 in one pass destroyed a company in prepared positions in a woods, at dusk. Dawn's finale: a tank battalion and MRC attack. B/3-185 awaited, in a treeline on a low ridge, behind a road cut and minefield. Ten Threat tanks plowed into the minefield, A and B companies' Kill Zone. The first U.S. volley killed five tanks, a second killed 11 (inexplicably since only five targets remained and six tanks fired). The Soviet player didn't remove the unit. (You think only hobbyists cheat?) The attack crossed minefield and roadcut, ignoring volleys into their right flank from 750m range. They suffered NO casualties. The computer decreed the U.S. battalion overrun and captured.

CAC abandoned CAMMS in 1987. One replacement, Pegasus, with 1:25,000 maps and 20mm hexes, seemed inspired by commercial

games. Twelve large panels constituted a massive game for a lot of people. Turns were real-time 30 minute periods, a frantic pace for players. Combat resolution was clumsy: straight attrition, every 5 minutes of combat, modified by target posture, visibility and suppression.

Another was **Fulda Gap (FG)**, played on a 24 X 36 inch map. Not SPI's 1977 game of that name with brigade/regiment counters, CAC's FG was similar to **Air Armor**, 1500m per hex, 90 minutes per turn. The company/battalion counters were L-shaped metal pieces stamped with the unit type, ID, strengths and range. Sequence: First (Soviet) Player Turn (U.S. turn identical).

- Airstrike Allocation.
- Movement Phase: phasing player only.
- Combat Phase.
  1. Attack declaration.
  2. Attacking artillery, airstrikes and heloes target designation.
  3. Defender reveals units and
  4. Missions (Delay or Defend). For each unit attacked from one hex ranges the Defender chose the Mobile or Assault CRT. All other combat used the Mobile CRT.
  5. Defender allocates defensive fires/FPF.
  6. Defender consults CRT and rolls die for each firing defending unit. Attacking units take step losses.
  7. Attacking units conduct fire attacks (at newly-reduced strength) and apply results.
  8. Delay Mission defenders retreat 1 hex. Attackers may advance into vacated hexes unless facing a blocked hexside.
- Intelligence Phase: Phasing player selects one face-down enemy unit to be turned face-up. Any Dummy revealed is removed. Units had six hex Primary zones of control plus 12 hex Secondary ZOCs. Entering/leaving Primary ZOCs cost one additional movement point. Combat was mandatory in Primary ZOCs, optional in Secondaries.

FG resembled commercial wargames but had differences, Defender first fire with Attacker losses applied before return fire most significant.

About 1975 CAC devised another game which would have two versions. **First Battle (FB)** was a Low Resolution Battle Simulation (LORBS) game to exercise division command groups in the decision-making process. FB had three modes: Open—basic rules for commanders and operations staff play of battle planning and operations; Closed—other staff play, tactical messages, and battleboard access restrictions; Command Post Exercise (CPX)—all staff. All had the same objectives and basic system. The primary objective was staff teamwork (NOT

## Low's Gaming Spectrum and Game Characteristics Trends<sup>2</sup>

NTC & Military JRTC	Manual Exercise	Commercial Wargame	Computer Wargame	Inter- Assist. Wargame	Computer active Simulation Comp.	Math Analys.
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High <—	Human Decisions & Operational Realism	<— Low
Low >—	Degree of Abstraction	>— High
Low >—	Outcome Reproducibility	>— High
Low >—	Convenience/Flexibility	>— High

Figure 1

winning in game terms) emphasizing:

Doctrinal execution; Terrain usage; Fire support integration; Obstacle employment; Maneuver time/distance factors. Timely intelligence use. Rules governed, not personal experiences, otherwise play deviated from stimulating decision-making processes, stated one paragraph.

Units could write their own plans, execute different missions and test SOPs using 1:25,000 maps and paper counters on metal clips. Turns were 30 minutes, real time.

Sequence: First (Threat) Player Turn (U.S. turn identical).

• Indirect/Supporting Fires.

• Movement, Direct Fire and Close Assaults, in any order. Direct Fire Strengths reflected fire capabilities, 2000 to 3000m ranges. Two M60 tanks equaled three T62s, two TOWs equaled three Sagger. Close Assault Strengths expressed capabilities within 1000m, one M60 tank equaling one T62, or one mech/motor rifle squad (assuming mortars and other support included). Artillery factors were based on the M109 155mm SP howitzer.

Despite Indirect Fire/Support Phase separation from Maneuver, there was interactivity. When opposing units moved within 2000-3000m of units with line of sight, these nonmoving units could conduct direct fire. The targeted units' player stated whether they continued moving or halted to fire (ending their movement), determining which DF CRT was used. Since each unit could move once or fire twice, or move half its allowance and fire once, or fire once and move half, combat became more spasmodic than in most wargames. TacAir and heloes could be employed whenever available.

When units came within 1000m the non-phasing player declared whether close combat was accepted. If not, the Defender withdrew 2000m minimum and was immobile next turn. If accepted, all attacking units entering the square engaged all defenders therein. Both sides could use artillery (doubled in effectiveness).

Defending unit strengths were doubled (infantry strengths tripled) in positional defenses, forests and built-up areas. Tank-heavy forces could not assault through steep (30% gradient) wooded slopes. Movement had more detail than commercial games. Heloes could move into position and then loiter on station. Heloes conducting direct fire while loitering (not having moved there that turn) attacked at doubled strength. FB could be set anywhere on 1:25,000 maps. A drawback was deducting unit losses on sheets, then recalculating strengths.

About 1982 CAC fielded **First Battle: Battalion through Corps**, with additional detail for any military map up to 1:100,000. Instead of dice, it has random number tables for CRTs of 00-10, 11-20...91-99 segmentation. FB: B-C's greatest advance: ... no requirement for a distinct THREAT Phase or U.S. Phase during the 30 minute turn. Completely interactive, players have great freedom within unit capabilities' to move, or shoot, or both (as in B), close assault, support by fire. Mutual simultaneous operations provide great interactivity and chaos to players, more authenticity to off-board staffers.

While resembling FB, FB: B-C has unique features. Units in concealed defensive positions can ambush, their losses halved (1/3 if in prepared positions), the target's doubled. Prepared positions, forests, rough terrain and built-up areas halve target unit direct fire losses, 2/3ds reduction for light infantry if in position and unengaged for 12 hours. Unit facing is critical. Firing into unit flanks doubles losses inflicted and halves return fire strengths. Firing into the rear triples target losses and cuts return fire strengths to 1/3. Since attackers choose when and where to commit forces, their strengths are automatically doubled in close combat.

FB spotting generally depended upon units 2000m or closer to an enemy performing some action. FB: B-C spotting is more complex, depending upon posture, activity (moving, firing or stationary, in defensive positions or not), terrain (open or woods, rough or built-up/urban), day or night (if night, what type of sights?),



weather. Fog and smoke block all weapons' sights except Thermal, good to 1500m. Personnel spotting is 3000m in the open if moving or firing during daylight, 1000-2000m otherwise, the night range 500m (without Thermals) if stationary. Vehicle spotting is 5000m in the open when moving/firing during daylight, otherwise possibly 3000m, but generally 1000-2000m. Night range spotting (without Thermals) of stationary non-firing vehicles is 500m. The pieces resolve spotting and intelligence through shape: heavy card stock blue or pink paper, folded into an L, flipped to reveal the unit type upon being acquired.

Artillery capabilities depend upon actions taken and Percent of Mission used. (E.g., each turn an SP battery has a 7 capability, towed and missile only 5. Displacing a 155 unit takes 40% of 7 (3), emplacing takes 25% (2).) An adjust fire/1st volley mission costs 25%, each subsequent volley 5%, each Fire for Effect 10%, each dedicated battery's FFE only 5%). **FB: B-C** is detailed, playable and accurate. But as an introduction to wargaming it's a turn-off. It's training, not fun. Staff actions, while vital, are drudgery: personnel accounting (key weapons crewmen and leader casualties are not replaced erodes combat power rapidly), intelligence, radio net control, operations and logistics. It's hard work. Battle players are drained by running the board all day. OPFOR players enjoy themselves for awhile as barrages pulverize covering forces, but then regiments hit resistance, get attrited, and it's less fun.

But **FB: B-C** is relatively simple compared to CAC's new **Battle Command Training Program (BCTP)** for divisional command groups down to battalions, including the National Guard's. In 1989 Pennsylvania's 28th Infantry Division and Indiana's 38th each fought five day wars via several vans crammed with computers. Donna Miles reported in *Soldiers*, December, 1989, that 3000 soldiers in the 28th's **WARFIGHTER** exercise proved able to perform actions necessary to enable commanders to see the battle, base decisions on the best intelligence possible, translate decisions into plans and execute them. LTC (Ret.) Thomas Morgan described in *Army History*, Fall 1989, **WARFIGHTER**'s historical analyses basis.

How valid is such gaming? Quite valid, according to the schematic in figure 1. Low's Spectrum doesn't include National or Joint Training Centers operations or commercial wargames. Relative positions are important. Wargames rank relatively low in all categories except Human Decisions and Operational Realism, the one most valid. War is a human activity, support systems and armaments only tools, not the essence. No matter how mechanized or what size the forces, people make the decisions. That's what's paramount in simulating warfare. We get significant training if commanders and staffs act within accurate constraints and mod-

erate realism. Human interaction is critical. Decisionmaking, staff action, teamwork and after-action reviews teach the lessons. No bloodless program or mathematical formulae however sophisticated can fully model human folly and brilliance. Neither can deterministic games (or rigid sequence of first Player move, combat, exploitation, with identical second Player turns) fully replicate real war's spasmodic dynamisms, uncertainties and chance.

Daniel Bolger's account of a battalion NTC rotation, *Dragons at War*, captures war's essence. Warrior narratives from Xenophon's *Anabasis* to Glover Johns' *The Clay Pigeons of St. Lo*, are similar. Analyses of Vietnam show combat not so dissimilar from the Revolutionary War's Southern Campaign, Philippine Insurrection or Pacific Theater after all. Panama will show the same. War's ageless story is chaos, confusion, uncertainty, luck. One manages resources, but commanders must lead soldiers.

However, in Proceedings of the Georgia Institute of Technology's Course on Modeling, Simulation and Gaming of Warfare, quantification rather than historical behavior predominates. Formulations of sequential games, proving-grounds lethality, Lanchester analyses, target acquisition and engagement decision factors may be true, but also irrelevant. General Donn Starry challenged in 1984: "For more than forty years the operations research community has expended untold treasure and the best efforts of many, many very bright people tinkering with small unit exchange ratios and the calculus associated therewith, ignoring the larger lessons of the history of battle, and reluctant to raise its field of view to a horizon where the calculus may not be so precise but the return of investment in terms of weapons systems decisions, tactics, training and organization is far beyond anything we might realize in the region where the calculus is more precise but the product far less useful." Hobby gaming's error is often the other extreme, but the core of his challenge remains essentially unmet by either.

## A Renaissance of Wargaming (Again)

James Struve quoted General Bliss' 1903 proposal for "the working out of a great war game" as a critical component of the newly-established Army War College.<sup>4</sup> Wargaming was abandoned in 1970. Excessive detail apparently made the games unplayable. Colonel Raymond Macedoni reinstituted gaming in 1976. A practical application complementing lectures a 1978 game was "drawn from a commercial wargame."<sup>5</sup> In 1981 AWC reestablished the Department of War Gaming, later the Center for Land Warfare. Struve noted that AWC still gamed, but personnel changes and reorganizations prevented wargaming from recapturing its 1950-69 analysis and evaluation role.

Somewhat parallel, the hobby grew in the 1960s, became sophisticated and diverse, reached apogee in 1980, then plunged to near-extinction with SPI's collapse and TSR's usurpation. While maps and components became more colorful and attractive, there were many failures. The hobby drifted. These weren't the only reasons, for career, family, and economic factors may have been greater. However, any product must meet expectations to flourish. Unusual topics (seemingly other than Civil War or WWII) may not be doomed to failure, but poor quality guarantees it. Moreover, for military gamers tedious rules and convoluted, rigid systems had decreasing realism, playing one turn more arduous than producing Operations Orders. Such games led a friend, a Vietnam veteran officer, to exasperation: These games don't work! They bore little semblance to Clausewitz's writings: "Everything in war is simple, but even the simple things are difficult." By 1981 I'd gone from avid gamer to detached observer. I still bought games for maps or OB information. None were playable or realistic, however. Until **Panzer Command**.

Eric Lee Smith's system had simple acts (shoot or move) in chaos created by unpredictability of which formation would next be activated by whom. The game simulated formations, training levels and command limitations without complex rules. West End and Victory published other games with potential for better simulating combat. **Air & Armor (A&A)** has a beautiful map and color-coded formations (although activation is too predictable and the combat system cumbersome). **Omaha Beachhead** is excellent. I taught my son, who was 11 at the time, **Lee vs Grant**; as Grant he won. **St. Lo** superbly presents a corps down to companies, designer Joe Balkoski even integrating logistics, interdiction and artillery missions into play. Such techniques could make intriguing but flawed **Gazala**, **Kirovograd**, and **Aachen** playable.

A new commercial wargaming era is possible.

## Shooting an Azimuth: What Path?

Civilian and military games grew out of cross-fertilization. A commercial wargame sparked AWC's wargaming revival. Two 1983 U.S. Army Command & General Staff College wargaming booklets had slightly different Opposed Rates of Movement. One cited a "CAC Jiffy War Game" as its source, the other cited *Strategy & Tactics* (#46, Sept/Oct 1974) as its source (and *S&T* author Stephen B. Patrick cited *FM 105-5 Manual* as his).

Civilian wargames can be as effective as the military's, sometimes more so because of less detail but broader scope, which can be played to a decision. (Not **Bloody 110**. At 20 minutes/turn, 135m/hex, squads and individual vehicles, it requires detailed planning inappropriate for the level where commands are fragmentary

orders (FRAGOs or Fragorders): "Move there, do this.") Civilians often design games on topics which the military may have only in classified form or not at all. They can be an independent measure of military games.

The military has wargaming, which should create a potential market. Does it?

Military gamers, like hobbyists, must be won over. Although the CPX implications of many games deters, I find interest among soldiers nonetheless. But there is skepticism founded on professional judgment and experience of what's reasonable and realistic. If the person knows some games, which mostly are poor, he may lack interest. Publishers must produce attractive games on interesting subjects, likewise for hobby gamers. But military gamers are a tougher audience, requiring more realistic games, not more complex.

In *Strategy & Tactics*, # 131 Nov/Dec 1989, Jim Dunnigan declared "the Golden Age of wargaming has come and gone and won't be back." He noted "...how little wargames have changed between 1980 and 1989 than, say, 1971 and 1980." The game? **Donau Front**, a 1980 game derivation, without **Drive on Frankfurt's** interactivity and formations concepts. Issue #132's game **Iron Cross**, man-to-man Eastern Front tactics. Good components, but retread **Squad Leader**, not interactively based on squad/platoon formations. The Golden Age won't return if intellectual cupboards are bare and designers purvey old wine in new skins.

By contrast, Ty Bomba in the premier issue of *Command*, Nov-Dec 1989, said "During the past decade, we've all been conditioned by the myth (that's right—the myth) that board wargaming is a dying hobby...." *Command's* game: **Blitzkrieg '41**, another unimaginative Soviet, German alternating sequence. But Mr. Bomba promises unusual games of what if like: the Roman Empire survived into the 20th Century, the Germans and Japanese conquered the world in the 1940s only to fight over the Mississippi... No, thanks; my time's too valuable to waste on these. If these are 1990's offerings then Mr. Dunnigan is right.

I believe neither is. Wargaming may not enter another Golden Age, but can achieve a comeback. Most military gamers participate to analyze historical battles and potential contemporary conflict. I suspect most hobbyists do also, "alternative worlds" fans already into D&D or sci-fi. But more history exists than the Civil War, Eastern Front or the Bulge (although these deserve better treatments than they've usually had). Where are Balkoski-system games for the Southern Campaign of the American Revolution, the Philippines Insurrection, Belleau Wood, Argonne-Meuse, New Guinea, Chorwon Valley, Imjin River, Parrot's Beak, Leatherneck Square? If players demand Civil War games,

apply Lee vs Grant's system to the Peninsula and Atlanta campaigns. Wargaming has a future only if designers discard old systems and find new subjects or revise poorly-treated games. Don't attempt to recreate every movement of every unit. Detailed rules cannot recreate the event but do create unplayability. Allow interactivity to create the complexity through chaos.

Chaos Theory holds that small unpredictabilities in simple systems shape great phenomenon, complexity and turbulence, the Butterfly Effect more true of War than anything else ("For the want of a nail..."). Every battle and operation struggles between organizational inertia, random occurrence and unit disintegration.

Heavy and light forces have a few but well-known capabilities: attack (undeployed, hasty, deliberate or coordinated), defend (hasty, deliberate, in open or close terrain), delay, move. U.S. artillery has some variants: direct support, reinforcing, general support or general support-reinforcing missions, simulated in military games and partly in **St. Lô**. They can in other games. A few simple actions in interactive, unpredictable sequences create some semblance to war's chaos. In war one rarely has any idea what is going on except close within one's own command. Coordinating units at any level except within one's own command is very difficult. **Light Division's** command point costs, particularly unit versus task force activation, captures this. But designers devote inordinate attention to Orders of Battle as if exact numbers are knowable and paramount. They're not. Anyone who's tried to get a platoon or company headcount knows how squishy numbers are. Only magnitudes of McClellan keeping a corps inactive at Antietam are so vital, whether Lee had 70,000 or 7,000 at Gettysburg is not. Terrain deserves such attention. Defensibility and trafficability should be stressed: compare VG's NATO map to page 33, Armed Forces Journal International, May 1984. Coast and Geodetic Survey or topographical maps are essential. **Bloody 110's** map is the best. By contrast, **Hitler's Last Gamble** fails to show the deep Ardennes watershed's valleys and misplaces towns: Kommerschied is on the wrong side of the Kall.

The games of the 1990s should incorporate commands and color-coded formations (**Panzer Command**, **Air Armor**), coordinated attack planning and seizing initiative (**Aachen**, **St. Lô**), "chaotic interactive systems, attack and defense postures, attritional CRTs with mutual Engagement Initiator/Target losses, Demoralization and Disorganization markers. Vietnam was the first TV war, Panama not the last. Designers should simulate ramifications of news coverage of collateral damage" as noncombatants are killed through inadvertence.

Specifically, 1990s games should have:

- Attritional CRTs. Operations since the Civil War have been Strategic/Operational Offense, Tactical Defense: seize the initiative to maneuver into positions forcing enemy attacks into your killing zones. Tactical engagement initiators normally have advantages which only diminish if assaulting units achieve close combat. If direct fire combat is inappropriate (above tactical levels), CRTs should incorporate mutual step losses to both attacker and defender (e.g. **1914**, Eric Goldber's **Kursk**, **Duel for Kharkov**, or **Omaha Beachhead**). Usually one side decides to retreat, it's not automatic from combat losses. But Suppression (Light or Heavy) often is an automatic consequence of tactical fires, especially from artillery.
- Commanders' control of operations and intensity. Cards indicating Hold, Defend or Delay versus Feint, Fix or Close for Assault could be chosen before combat, for CRT adjustments.
- Unit postures and facing. Platoons or divisions, units orient on likely enemy avenues of approach, unless in 360 perimeters. Attack the flank and combat power is two to three times greater, attack the rear, it is four to five times greater.
- Unit ZOCs and areas which appropriately represent capabilities and size in different terrain. Regiments in **Drive on Stalingrad** have active ZOCs over some 60 sq mi, tank battalions in **Central America** across vast forest and mountain expanses. They misrepresent what 500 to 3000 men, 30 to 60 tanks can do. ZOCs should depict direct fire weapons coverage or capability to fix an enemy in position, probably only in tactical/operational games. Hexes should represent average areas units actually occupy.
- Accurate, standardized maps: 1:1,000,000 and 1:500,000 for strategic level, 1:250,000 for operational, and 1:12,500 to 1:100,000 for tactical to operational games. 16 or 20mm hexgrids should be standard. The former facilitates conversion between miles and kilometers, the latter for metric scale.
- Rivers as terrain, not hexsides. Most wargames depict rivers only as impediments to movement. But rivers are also covered, concealed avenues of approach, particularly for light infantry and guerrillas. Units must occupy and patrol both banks right down to, sometimes under, the water to block them.
- Close terrain combat different from that in open and mixed terrain. Open terrain is flat or slightly rolling, little or no vegetation, with 0-100m per km elevation variation. Mixed is rolling, lightly vegetated, and has gentle slopes of 100-200m elevation variation per km. Close terrain is rough, heavily

vegetated, or with elevation variations of 200-400m per km, or vegetated slopes greater than 30%, or built-up terrain. Open and mixed ground is the arena of armor and mechanized forces in maneuver, shock action and tank duels out to 3000m. In close terrain, where artillery, armor and air support are restricted, dismounted infantry is Queen of Battle. Battles are over scant meters of ground, chaotic and savage skirmishes by platoons and squads in ambush and stalking warfare, often at grenade-throw range. Artillery is difficult to place on target, tanks blundering and vulnerable.

- Logistics as armies' lifeblood. Without supply, wargames fail to simulate what's often commanders' greatest restraint. Powerful tanks, artillery and aircraft devour ammo and fuel in vast quantities, teeth and claws supported by huge tails at a ratio of about 1:10 combat/combat support:service support. *St. Lô* creates limitations on initiative and artillery because of supply and interdiction. Few games show capabilities and logistics interrelationships as does *Duel for Kharkov*. (Despite mind-numbing detail, CNA missed logistics' essence.) A synthesis of concepts must be developed showing logistical commands shuttling packages forward for operational consumption.
- Command as the nervous system, formations the limbs of an army. *Panzer Command*, *Omaha Beachhead* and *A&A* superbly link the two. Commands put formations (not individuals or all units) into operations.
- Doctrine. Critical but difficult to game, it involves not unit or weapons capabilities (although they shape it), but training shaping perceptions of "school solutions." German Infiltration (U.S.) "Expanding Torrent" doctrine sprang from conceptual, not material roots. U.S. artillery superiority is based on plotting boards and time-on-target techniques, not massed guns or secret warheads.
- Historical research transformed into playable games. *The Longest Day* shows astounding research but, lacking interactivity or unpredictability, is plodding and dull.

Games in January, 1990, are almost as distant from Vietnam as *Tactics II* from ? . Most are nearly as unrealistic and outmoded. Few touch upon the most likely types of future wars. In 1965 *Battle of the Bugle* was enjoyable, but *Guadalcanal* better anticipated Vietnam. U.S. troops are in Panama, DEA agents in Peru's Huallaga Valley confront Sendero Luminoso guerrillas, Khmer Rouge equivalents. Future wars will feature terrorism, low intensity, jungle and mountain warfare—and television. If Gorbachev upends 75 years of history it won't mean the Millennium. Wars will continue. Far from unique and irrelevant, Vietnam, Afghani-

stan, Panama and suitcase bombs hold deep future implications.

Ultimately, *Iron Cross* and *Squad Leader* cannot capture fire team, squad and platoon tactical realities no matter how playable. If you really want to know what it's like, enlist in the National Guard or other service. Enroll in ROTC instead of just playing around. Command a tank, fire team or artillery crew for real. There's nothing like it.

Above the tactical level games can help in the study of war. It is as serious and fascinating as the study of AIDS or cancer, deserving the same respect, not the trivialization of many games. That may be the deepest demarcation between hobbyist and soldier attitudes: game for the former, call to duty for the latter. ●

### Endnotes

1. Michael Bowman, Deputy, TRADOC Analysis Command, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, presentation; (Georgian Institute of Technology; Atlanta, 1988) Proceedings of Ninth Annual Course on Modeling, Simulation and Gaming of Warfare, August 23-226, 1988.
2. Roy K. Frick, Science Applications International Corporation, presentation; (Georgian Institute of Technology; Atlanta, 1986) Proceedings of the 1984 Workshop On: Modeling, Simulation and Gaming of Warfare, December 2-5, 1984, pg. 209.
3. General Don Starry, U.S. Army (Ret.) presentation, Proceedings of the 1984 Workshop On: Modeling, Simulation and Gaming of Warfare, pg. 15.
4. James Struve, *ibid.*, pp. 253-260.
5. Based on a presentation by designer James F. Dunnigan to the 1988 Workshop, my guess is that the game in question was Simulations Publications Inc.'s *NATO*, circa 1972.

*The Author thanks the personnel of the 2070th USAR School, Ft. Belvoir, VA, particularly LTCs Dana Sweet and George Brown, for giving him the opportunity to participate in training at their Battle Simulation Center, from 1986 to present.*

### About the Author

David Gruenbaum, has been a hobbyist since 1962, and a participant in military simulations from platoon through division/corps staff training.

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# PLAYERS' NOTES

## The Legend Begins: The Afrika Korps—1941

by Terry Lee Coleman

p: Rhino Game Company  
d: Mark Simonitch

It really is hard to believe that Avalon Hill published *Afrika Korps* over two decades ago. To satiate the thousands of would-be Rommels, dozens of games have been published on the WWII North African Theater. Despite the occasional gem, such as *Rommel in the Desert*, these games have not captured the hearts of wargamers—witness the large number of *Afrika Korps* games still hotly contested at conventions.

The publishing of *The Legend Begins (Legend)* shows both a defiance of the odds, as well as a great love for the subject matter. Attempted by an established game company, a new North African WWII simulation would be a calculated risk. Rhino Games has *Legend* as its first release, which on the surface seems a near impossible venture.

Mark Simonitch, the designer of *Legend*, is another of those "one man game companies" which have given the wargaming hobby such fine games as Bill Banks' *Ancients and Rise and Fall* by EMS. Simonitch has a built in advantage over his fellows, however. A marvelous mapmaker, Simonitch has had work gracing many professional wargames, including several issues of *Strategy & Tactics* and *Command* magazines. The maps of *Legend* do not disappoint, with Simonitch's crisp uncluttered style well suited to the North African terrain. Rather than get into the usual quibbles over accuracy, suffice to say that the important points of interest are included, and that even the hardcore North African campaigner will be

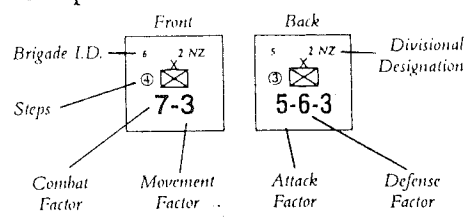
pleasantly surprised by the maps' function and aesthetics.

After finishing with the maps, the gamer will certainly notice the 23 page rule booklet. Not to worry, as the majority of charts, rules examples, "schematic diagrams" and the like are found in the rules rather than on the maps. Notwithstanding, the actual rules run some 16 pages, making the complexity too high for the beginner. Still, one has to give Simonitch credit for knowing the audience. *Legend* has more than enough design tidbits to attract the serious gamer. These include:

- Each armor unit has a special "Armor Effect Rating" for armor superiority in combat;
- Headquarters units provide artillery shift in combat, hardly the norm in an operational level game;
- Malta's interdiction capability varies with each turn, and the German player has the X Fleiger Corps available for use against Malta, a simple but effective way of simulating the island's importance to the North African conflict;
- The British form "Tank Divisions" where the component brigades are generic, as the British historically "mixed and matched" units as needed;
- The combat table results vary according to the size of the forces involved; and
- Players draw blindly for "Primary" (full) movement or "Secondary/Tertiary" (half) movement, where one player may get two impulses in a row.

*Legend* also has limited and active zones of control, which affect movement, supply, and losses when retreating, in a fluid manner necessary for North African armored conflict. There is a wide range of combat options, including selective attacks, disruptions, reconnaissance screens, and of course, overruns.

### Sample Combat Unit

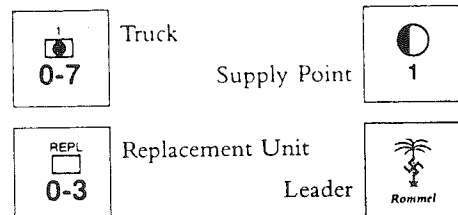


There are three types of field works: Minefields, Improved Positions, and Fortifications. Bardia, Mersa Matruh and the Tobruk perimeter are permanent fortifications and it is at these key cities, especially Tobruk, where the action centers. I have yet to see an operational level game fully recreate the siege of Tobruk, but *Legend* is as good as any I have seen. In nearly every game, bitter fighting will ensue near Tobruk, as the German player must eliminate the threat to his flank. The British player has the advantage of rail movement, and will eventually receive better tanks. Both sides have to worry about supply and keeping ports functioning. All in all a tense and reasonably balanced game.

The designer's notes are plentiful, explaining why each design choice was made in this undeniably exciting game. Still, the choice to include virtually everything in the standard game is a bit much. Did we really need cadres, tank repair, off map boxes, anti-shipping rules, port repair, three different types of field works, etc. in the basic game, especially since there are more optional rules as well? One thing Simonitch should have learned from *Command*, is to include "beginner rules." That having been said, *Legend* is well worth the money for the veteran gamer (two of the three scenarios are playable in two to three hours, a real bargain). Mark Simonitch is obviously a designer who loves to play games—I know no greater compliment. ●

## Sequence of Play Schematic Diagram

### Operations Phase



1st Segment	2nd Segment	3rd Segment	4th Segment	5th Segment	Mid-Week Supply Roll	1st Segment	2nd Segment	3rd Segment	4th Segment	5th Segment	End of Turn
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# Tet Offensive

by John Kisner

p: Game Designer's Workshop, 1991  
d: Frank Chadwick

GDW is dead! Long live GDW!

**Tet Offensive** from GDW is easy to ridicule. It comes in an over-sized box filled mostly with air, and Bob Larkin's cover art crowds every hackneyed image from the Vietnam War imaginable into a single frame. GDW, the company that years ago brought us obscure but dignified classics like *Torgau*, has discovered "marketing." Like it or not, it looks like the company is going to follow Milton Bradley's and TSR's holy leads, and seek the elusive mass market grail.

Surprisingly enough, upon reflection I see this as a positive step. Over the last ten years, GDW has done more sequels than Sylvester Stallone. At the same time, they have seemed to drift away from traditional wargaming. My guess is that declining sales made this their only sensible course—since in wargaming, as in the movies, very few sequels sell as well as the original. It took the success of a game like *Axis & Allies* to make GDW realize that their shrinking market was neither inevitable nor irreversible, but possibly just the consequence of a poor publishing strategy. If nothing else, **Tet Offensive** signals a return to the days when master designers like Frank Chadwick and Rich Banner crafted the games one at a time in the Workshop.

**Tet Offensive** comes in a big box and retails for a big \$40, but by no stretch of the imagina-

tion is it a big game. The mounted mapsheet is 19 x 28 inches, and fewer than 230 combat units are provided for play. A complete game lasts just five turns, and takes somewhat less than five hours to set up and play. What the game lacks in quantity it attempts to make up for in quality.

Size and color are used to indicate special information about the game pieces. Counters come in four different sizes, and those of you who wear glasses will appreciate the fact that all the combat units are 5/8 and 1 inch counters. All of the 1 inch counters are used to depict special Allied units, the most important of which are those able to move in the Allied Aero-Mech Movement Phase. Color codes are used to show the "Corps Area" of South Vietnam to which each Allied unit is restricted. Similarly, the unrestricted theater level units are given a bright yellow unit symbol box. This thoughtful use of visual clues makes it very easy to spot units able to rush north along Highway One for the relief of Hue. Thus, aesthetics have been used effectively to facilitate play of the game.

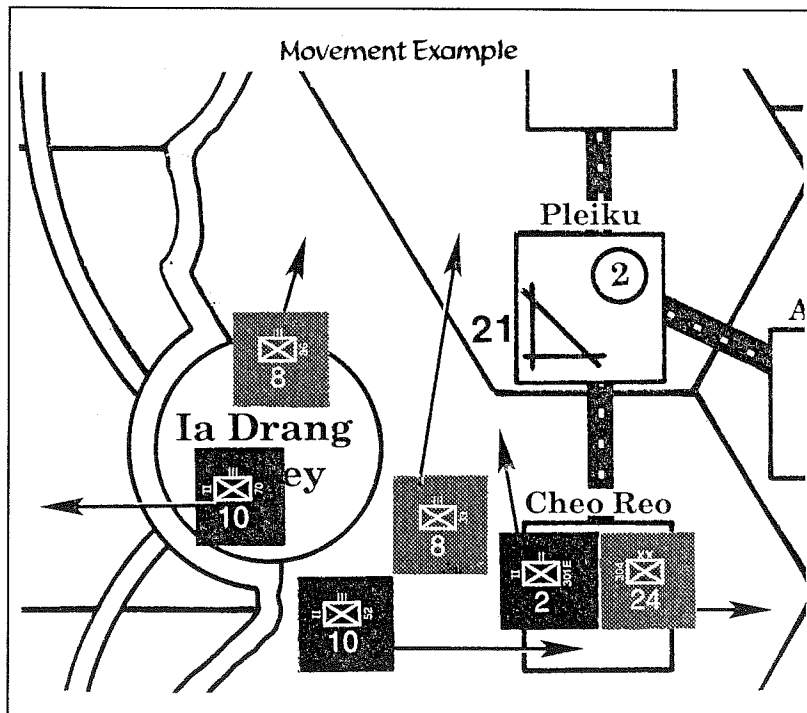
The map is a brightly colored rendition of South Vietnam, including relevant portions of surrounding countries. Designer Chadwick uses an area mapping system that is a distant cousin of his widely praised *A House Divided* game. South Vietnam is broken down into 23 provinces, and within these provinces are scattered 41 cities and ten Viet Cong Sanctuaries. Movement of ground units in the game is generally quite simple: either from one province to an adjacent one, or between the province and one of its cities. In addition, U.S. and ARVN units are able to travel by road and helicopter, greatly increasing their mobility.

**Tet Offensive** deals only with the crucial early months of 1968, during which the Vietnam War turned briefly conventional. The general flow of the game is very simple: the Communist forces capture a few cities early on, and the more mobile Allies then struggle mightily the rest of the game to drive them out. Generally, the success or failure of this first turn will determine the game's eventual outcome. Since the Viet Cong (VC) units only get to move one area per turn, and it takes another turn to move to and from cities, the game's five turn length makes much maneuvering for these forces after the set up impossible. Therefore, careful planning of the initial deployment is crucial.

Setting up the game is a simple task, as for the most part units have their start locations printed on the counters. The Allied units must be deployed historically, this in stark contrast to the freedom afforded the VC. While this allows the Communist Player to fiddle with various "perfect" first turn set ups and moves, the certainty to which he may plan is hindered by the fact that each city in South Vietnam (except Saigon) is defended by a randomly deployed group of immobile regional forces. These vary in strength from zero to eight combat factors, with anything above a strength of "2" being quite exceptional. (Note that rules for the deployment and use of these "Ruff-Puffs" are missing from the initial error sheet. For those of you who have been wondering, zero strength Ruff-Puffs are removed from play when their city is first attacked.)

Governing this struggle is a very elegant sequence of play that captures the "feel" of the Vietnam War. First, the VC Player moves and attacks with his units. Nothing unusual about this—the subtlety comes later, in the Allied half of the turn. Here Chadwick flip-flops the traditional order of events, and allows only the "aero-mech" units of the Allies to move prior to their Combat Phase, after which comes the general Allied Movement Phase. This sequence usually allows the VC the option to avoid a battle by moving away—except when attacked by units which are mechanized and those which are flown into battle by helicopter. While there will still be an occasional battle in the bush, in general the only fighting of significance occurs in the cities—which are vital to the determination of victory and defeat, and which the VC cannot afford to give up without a fight.

Only "revealed" VC units participate in combat, and these are turned face up in several ways. They are automatically revealed if in a city, and can always be voluntarily considered so at the VC option. In addition, Allied units can search for enemy units which are in the same province or Sanctuary, hoping to locate them prior to the Combat Phase that follows. In the Combat Phase, engaged units are pulled off



the map and spread out in a "Battle Box." The only combat effects of terrain are those that allow VC units "first fire" in Sanctuaries, and Allied units the same advantage when *defending* in cities. Combat is simple: players attack an enemy unit with one or more friendly ones and roll a die that is referenced with the odds on the CRT. As a result, defending units can be eliminated, forced to retreat, or left unharmed.

The retreat rule is as elegant as it is brilliant. Unless units have a safe haven to retreat into, they are eliminated. For the VC, this is a Sanctuary adjacent to the province in which the battle takes place. For the Allied player, it is a friendly city in the same province as the one in which the battle takes place. Also, if the Allied units are retreating from a city, they may retreat along a road to a friendly city that is connected by that road. Much of the game's strategy hinges on the understanding the tactical implications of these retreat rules. Eighteen of the 41 cities of South Vietnam are in provinces that are not adjacent to Sanctuaries, and these cities are therefore relatively safe from capture since the VC would suffer horrendous losses trying to hold them. Furthermore, the bold capture of a Sanctuary by the Allies can be used to cut off the retreat route of nearby enemy units, resulting in their wholesale slaughter at the hands of other forces.

The game's inelegant victory conditions are all that mar an otherwise marvelous design. "Demoralization Levels" of the United States, South Vietnam, North Vietnam, and Viet Cong are kept track of on the game map, and these can range from negative numbers to well over one hundred. The process is as cumbersome as it is artificial. Basically, both sides become demoralized as their units are eliminated. In addition, the Allies gain demoralization points each turn equal to the political point value of cities controlled by the communists. If both armies of one side are past their demoralization limits, then that side loses. If neither side loses by the end of turn five—or both do on the same turn—then the Allied Player wins. (A final note: in my limited experience with the game (four completed games with opponents), the Allied Player has lost every time, so play balance may be a problem.)

These minor caveats aside, *Tet Offensive* is a minor masterpiece—one which should definitely *not* be judged by its cover. The only major question left is how many gamers will be willing to pay \$40 for a "standard sized" game—a question that, as a reviewer, I am grateful not to have had to answer. ●

the Middle East, one to six (although at least four are recommended) players place their army chits and other markers to indicate strength, alliances and control. With introductory to low complexity rules, the game can be taught to anyone in five minutes, and the clarity of the graphics and sequence of play promote easy mastery of the game.

The object of the game is money (or "oil chips" in this case). When the game ends, every oil chip is another victory point. Unfortunately, these same oil chips must be spent to raise and use armed forces. The "rub" is that war can be quite practical and regional instability is an effective key to success. The downside to simply overrunning neighbors, however, is that surviving players won't like you, and between them and their votes in the U.N., well....

Each turn players can opt to play two of three phases. During an Economic phase, players collect oil chips for all their controlled territories (each is worth from 0-7, as indicated on the map). During a Military phase, forces can be moved and battles fought. During a Diplomatic phase, an "Arms Auction" can be hosted (with the highest bidder allowed to expand his military might), U.N. proposals can be made (such as economic embargoes, moving U.N. peace-keeping forces, ending the game or changing the rules) and players may opt to change their Superpower Alliance Status.

Akin to *Diplomacy*, *Mid-East Peace* uses a luckless combat system which is almost too simple to believe. During a Military phase forces can be demobilized (removed from the map—this seldom happens as they are difficult to replace, unless, of course, peace is imminent). Following this, each "Force Counter" may move one space to an adjacent land or sea space. After movement, forces may attack across the borders. To resolve a battle, each player checks their force strength then reaches for their oil chits. Both players then secretly

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**WARNING:** The Sergeant-General warns that *EastFront* may elevate your blood-pressure and could cause gamers' elbow.

## Mid-East Peace: Relaxing Over World Tensions

by Alan Emrich

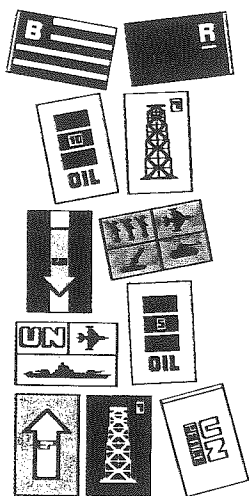
p: Columbia Games, 1991  
d: David Kowan and Tom Dalglish

Sometimes, there can be nothing so enjoyable as a game that doesn't take itself too seriously. This is one of those times...

*Mid-East Peace* from Columbia Games, Inc. (\$19.95) is one of those rare, multi-player games from our hobby that attracts more players who observe it than it repels. When this reviewer set it up recently at a local gaming convention, the crowds around it were thick and the observers were just as amused at the players and laughing along with them at every turn of the screw.

The game itself is simple enough. On a topographical 11x17 inch map of





Force Counters, Oil Counters/  
Markers, Superpower Counters,  
UN Peacekeeping Counters

commit a number of oil chips from zero up to their a maximum of their force strength available. The highest oil chip total wins. Sabre rattling, therefore, becomes a primary noise heard 'round the game table, especially since there is no penalty for losing as the attacker!

It is the Diplomatic portion of **Mid-East Peace** which adds the best elements to the game. Hosting an arms auction is a dicey proposition, because one's neighbor might outbid you and build up his own might (and thus present a greater threat). Still, it's the only way to increase one's own military strength, so you "bids your oil and takes your chances" like everyone else at the table.

U.N. motions are vital to a winning strategy. Each country controlled on the board is another vote in the U.N. (as is belonging to a Superpower Alliance). A simple majority will pass any proposal except for ending the game in peace, which requires 12 votes. Thus, the bigger powers who've managed to overrun more of their neighbors will have more votes, but if everyone is against them, just watch the embargoes go in place! A U.N. Peacekeeping unit can be moved (it begins the game in Cypress) to a country, preventing anyone from attacking into or out of it.

Finally, players may opt to join either the "red" or "blue" Superpower alliance. Doing so adds one vote for the player in the U.N., prevents attacking or being attacked by fellow alliance members and allows for the calling in of Superpower forces into one's home territory for its defense (in exchange for 1/2 of that area's oil production!).

The game ends in "war" when the supply of oil chips in the bank is exhausted (after about one to two hours). The game ends in "peace" if one player is left, the U.N. passes the "peace" resolution or, more likely, every player in the game has joined a Superpower Alliance (sort of like "red" and "white" victories in **Russian Civil War**). While oil chips are victory points at the end of the game whether it ends in war or peace, military force strength points ADD their value to a game ending in war, and SUBTRACT their value in a game ending in peace! There, friends, is the game. Maneuvering deftly at its end to guide the ultimate outcome to either war or peace.

**Mid-East Peace** is a rattling good game. Although the cartoon cover of the box might put players off, the information on the back of the box (while slightly silly) should win an award for "truth in advertising." A lot is said on it, and all of it is patently true. One might question if a game that seems to only weigh about an ounce could possibly be worth twenty bucks. The answer, quite simply, is yes. ●

## High Ground

by Ted Bleck

p: Crown Tactics, Inc., 1991  
d: Walt Drury and Ed Rex

Crown Tactics has taken to the high ground with the release of its first game. **High Ground** made its debut at several game conventions this past year. The primary marketing technique to date has been a hands-on introduction in head to head play. It has been universally well received.

Some readers will already be familiar with the game having visited Crown Tactics' convention booth. There one can play one on one with the game's developer, Walt Drury. Those attending many of the larger conventions this summer and fall will want to be on the lookout for Walt's distinctive booth. It sports a French Tricolor, British Union Jack and a framed print of Felix Philippeaux's "The Battle of Waterloo." Walt will be more than willing to introduce one and all to the intricacies of his pride and joy. He claims anyone can be playing **High Ground** with less than ten minutes of instruction.

**High Ground** is targeted at the entry level gamer. The simplicity of rules, ease of play and rapid pace make it ideal for the novice player. It is a wonderful introduction to the hobby for someone who has never played a wargame before. There is no ponderous historicity to face nor is there a complex set of rules to first read and then commit to

memory. A player new to **High Ground** will be playing soon after opening the box and will quickly encounter many of the concepts of strategy and tactics found in more complicated games.

The game can be described as more than a parlor game and yet less than a simulation. It plays with the speed of checkers and parcheesi while requiring at times the skill of chess. It has the simplicity of **Stratego** though it avoids being a simple hunt and search game.

In many respects **High Ground** is a throwback to the Golden Age of wargaming. The 19.5 x 19.5 inch mapboard is divided into a grid of 19 x 19 squares giving the game a chess like feel. The squares regulate movement and feign terrain. The first edition mapboards are printed in subdued earth tones with stylized representations of terrain features. Second edition mapboards, available in late 1991, will feature a more realistic "bird's eye view" of the field and livelier colors. Owners of a first edition game will not miss out on anything. The excitement is not be found in the map, but in the play across the playing surface.

One noteworthy innovation is the design of the playing pieces. Brightly colored squares, rectangles and triangles represent infantry, cavalry, and artillery units respectively. Each piece hold a set of pegs including one bearing a flag. These pegs represent a piece's relative strength, staying power, command and control, etc. As a piece absorbs casualties in combat the pegs are removed. When a piece can no longer absorb casualties its flag is removed and surrendered to the opponent.

## Attack

Players roll the dice to attack.  
3 rolls are allowed each turn.  
First HIT ends the attack.

Dice Roll	Infantry attack	Artillery attack	Cavalry attack
2 Miss	Miss	Miss	Miss
3 Miss	lose 1 peg	lose 1 peg	lose 1 peg
4 HIT	OVER-RUN	1	2
5 HIT	1	2	3
6 HIT	2	3	4
7 HIT	3	4	OVER-RUN
8 HIT	2	3	4
9 HIT	1	2	3
10 HIT	OVER-RUN	1	2
11 Miss	lose 1 peg	lose 1 peg	lose 1 peg
12 Miss	Miss	Miss	Miss



Two words of caution: first, the pegs retain some of the mold lubricant which should be removed before the flag is affixed; second, the pegs are small and should be kept out of the hands of younger children (their bright colors make them attractive and their size makes them easy to swallow). Crown Tactics has included extra pegs in each game should any get lost in the family room shag carpet.

The game is played until one side captures the opponent's Crown square or one player concedes. Victory is determined by points awarded for the capture of enemy flags and control of the opponent's Crown. It is conceivable that one can capture the other's Crown only to lose. A particularly long, bloody assault could leave



**Artillery** 3 pegs and 1 flag;  
are placed on the squares with a cannon.

the enemy in possession of more flags than the value of the captured Crown.

The mechanics of play are exquisitely simple, yet provide for plenty of variation and chance. Movement is regulated by type of unit and terrain entered. A player is allowed to move one unit type each turn. Movement points may be used by one piece or divided among several pieces of that type. In no case may more movement points be used nor may more than one type of piece be moved.

The sequence of play alternates between players. What a player decides to do and in what order may vary greatly from turn to turn. A player may move, attack, or switch during the course of a turn. These actions may occur in any order. A typical turn might include the launching of an artillery attack, moving one infantry piece three squares and then perform a switch (exchanging locations with an adjacent unit), and finally having a second infantry piece move a single square to complete the turn.

Attacks occur during the turn when the player indicates which of his units will attack what enemy unit. Terrain types for both units are checked to see if the attack results will be modified in any way. The Combat table is then checked by cross referencing the type of unit attacking with a roll of two six sided dice. The attacker has three tries to score a Hit against the defending piece. Once a Hit has been secured the attack ends, even if modified by terrain so that no damage occurs.

To balance play between opponents of unequal skill and experience eight Attack cards are

included. An Attack card allows the holder to make one additional attack in a turn. Once played it is discarded. Normally each player would receive four cards. A player of lesser skill might be given five or more of the cards at the start of the game. Employed at an opportune moment, the initiative can be regained and held for a turn or two.

Two subtle lessons that are quickly learned and mastered are to assess the relative strength and weakness of the units and to employ each in an appropriate tasks. The infantry piece, with its ability to absorb hits, moves through all types of terrain and overruns other units, is truly the Queen of the battle field. Its weakness is its slow movement and low hit results. It is useful in advancing through difficult terrain and holding a key position.

Artillery is vulnerable to loss due to its inability to absorb much damage. Its speed and range of fire however, make it a potent offensive weapon. The long arm of the battlefield can reach out and make itself felt. Artillery is best used in a support role and should be protected by a careful selection of position or terrain.

Cavalry is quick and durable with excellent mobility. When attacking cavalry has great shock value even when discounting its ability to overrun. Its most significant weakness is the limited types of terrain it can enter. Cavalry is most useful for its shock value, exploitation of breakthrough, and making sweeping flank attacks.

Logistic concerns of supply and reinforcement are simulated by a Supply piece which is moved along the base row of squares from depot to depot. The piece must follow a specific path. If the path is occupied by the enemy or the Supply piece is eliminated, replacements may not enter the game.

As the game progresses a player must decide if the force at his disposal is sufficient for the task at hand or whether to try to enter replacements. These require the expenditure of three turns of movement often surrendering the initiative to the opponent. This can be a most frustrating decision bringing an advance to a halt, something not uncommon in the annals of history. Players soon discover ways to husband their pieces and to make the best of their opportunities.

Is **High Ground** fun? I had the opportunity to watch a group of 7th and 8th grade students as they were introduced to the game. Although a bit awed by a tournament setting, they were up and playing with just 5 minutes instruction. In a half hour they were all playing like veterans. They were still game for another round three hours later. ●

## Shattered States: The Game To Reunite The United States

by Mel Friedman

p: Engelmann Military Simulations

d: Karsten Engelmann and David Spencer

Sometime in the near future, economic and political upheavals in the United States lead to the collapse of the federal government. America splinters into twenty-eight political regions. Civil war breaks out as small coalitions arm themselves, determined to reunite the shattered nation—and to control its destiny. This is the premise for Engelmann Military Simulation's latest strategy game—**Shattered States**.

The game box is graced with a cover that can at best be described as functional. A seemingly depressed Uncle Sam points his finger in the familiar "I want you" pose. Surrounding him are drawings of missiles, a tank, a jet, a computer and an inexplicable pair of soldiers with uniforms and weapons that look circa 1918 to my eye. Like their under appreciated game **Rise and Fall**, nothing about the EMS packaging would have caught my eye—or interest. But as the man says, you can't judge a book by its cover.



### MERCENARIES (M,A,D)

The good guys from the North are willing to fight for you. Receive ONE unit in any friendly controlled area adjacent to CANADA

COST: 2

Inside the box, one finds an unmounted 22 x 34 inch mapsheet, 400 die-cut counters that represent army units and civilian rioters, a set of Area Cards for the various regions, decks of National and Foreign Cards, "money" in the form of Gold Points, four Player Aid Cards, four six-sided dice and a rulebook. Again, everything is functional. Maybe barely functional. The map tore partially along the center seam the second time it was set up for play. A piece of tape repaired the rip.

The retail price of this game is \$35. Yet the map is unmounted and flimsy. The quality of the counters are adequate but the color selection for the six sets of army units was not well thought out—the purple and black, and the red and orange are especially hard to discern from across a large table. The Area Cards and the

National and Foreign Cards are made from heavy paper. I didn't expect the laminated cards from Avalon Hill's *Up Front* but I did expect the cards would be of uniform size. After carefully separating them from their sheets I discovered they weren't. In fact I recommend storing the cards in plastic storage bags because the four rubber bands EMS included would probably cut into the unevenly-sized cards and shorten their lifespan.

Why am I harping on the quality of the components? Because this is a great game. If value were based only on the physical quality of this product, I'd warn the prospective buyer—beware—don't buy. Instead, I'd like to warn the prospective buyer—don't miss this one.

Designed for two to six players, the object of this *RISK*-like game is to make the once-great republic whole again before it disintegrates into permanent disunion. Using military units, and cards which grant the players special skills and additional firepower, players attempt to conquer neutral areas and areas controlled by their opponents. The first player to control ten areas, three of which must be "starred" territories, wins. (This is the victory requirement for the six-player version. The area requirement is adjusted upward depending on the number of players.)

The game begins with the players taking turns selecting their start areas (two in the five and six-player game, more when there are fewer players). Initial area selection is crucial for far more than just geographical location or terrain features.

Each area on the board has a value for grain and gold. Grain Values range from one to five, Gold Values from three to fifteen. Grain Value determines how many units can be recruited each turn. The Gold Value determines how much money the player receives. In addition, each area possesses a Special Ability.

California, for example, gives the controlling player an advantageous die modifier during combat. This modifier can be used in battles that the player fights anywhere on the board, not just in California—and can be used every turn that the player maintains control of that region. Controlling the Lone Star State gives a player naval assaults. The Deep South provides airborne skills. The Big Sky area delivers a nuclear capability to the owner while the Rocky Mountain region has anti-nuke interceptors. Other areas provide for assassination attempts, armor, artillery, even the ability to provoke riots in enemy areas.

When an area is conquered by another player, the new owner acquires the region's Special Ability. Most of these Abilities are duplicated in the National and Foreign Card decks—but purchasing the cards can be expensive and the cards are "used up" once they are utilized.



## NUCLEAR BOMB (S)

Roll one die against each unit in one area. For each 1 or 2 rolled, eliminate one unit. Two riot markers are placed in the area

COST: 7

Regional Special Abilities just might haunt an opponent forever.

Once the players have their areas, units are recruited, money is divvied out and National Cards are distributed. Players are allowed to purchase additional National Cards or up to three cards from each of the Foreign decks: Europe, Canada, Japan, Mexico or the Caribbean. A player must hold territory on the proper border in order to purchase the respective Foreign cards. These cards, along with the regional Special Abilities, provide the flavor that makes *Shattered States* the game that it is.

To give a sense of the variety of random events, advantages, weapons, skills, etc. found in the various card decks, here is a short list: air assaults, armor, assassinations, biological weapons, blitzkriegs, cease fires, droughts, economic booms, embezzlement, financial collapses, good harvests, mercenaries, naval assaults, strategic nuclear attacks, anti-nuke interceptors, oil, revolts, treason, vaccines and weather control. Without a doubt, getting the right cards and using them properly is essential to victory.

Once the preparation phase is completed, players take their turns in clockwise order. Each player does four things: moves units, performs strategic attacks, has combat, checks for automatic victory before the next player takes his turn.

The actual play mechanics in the game are very simple. Movement is from one friendly area to an adjacent friendly area. That's it—unless a card or Special Ability is used such as Naval or Air Assault, Oil or Canadian Passage. Players can move as many or as few units as they desire as long as they never completely abandon an area.

The various Strategic Attacks are conducted according to easy-to-follow instructions printed on each of the cards. Again, there is nothing difficult here.

Combat consists of the player announcing all his attacks and the order of resolution. The attacker and defender then roll a die for each unit involved in the battle. Attackers hit on a one or two, defenders hit on a one, two or three. Simple, right? The attacker is allowed to play

up to three cards in each battle to try to modify the die rolls. After seeing the attacker's cards the defender has the option to play up to three of his own. Many of the cards cost money to use and the player who's spent too much to purchase cards may find himself without the finances to take advantage of them. In addition to the cards, both the attacker and the defender may utilize their regional Special Abilities to help in the battle.

Once a player completes his combat he checks to see if he possesses the number of territories necessary for an automatic victory. Play stops immediately—there is no need to hold on while other players take their turn and try to counterattack. If the conditions for automatic victory haven't been met, play proceeds to the next player.

Starting at the end of Turn 5, and every turn after that if Automatic Victory hasn't occurred, players check to see if the "ideal of America" has been abandoned by the population. Two dice are rolled—if the result is less than the turn number the game ends. The player controlling the most areas wins. If two players are tied in number of areas, the player with the most Grain Value points is declared the winner.

Like a lot of multi-player games, this one works best with more players. With four to six players, the player dynamics include a healthy dose of paranoia which just doesn't exist in the two-player game. The two-player version is an adequate war game but obviously lacks the diplomatic element which adds another level to game play. In fact, certain rules need to be amended when there are only two players—the assassination rule and the cease fire rule in particular. The game designer should consider this if a second edition of the game is ever published.

As a simulation of some future civil war, *Shattered States* isn't much—but as I said earlier it's a great game—a player's game. The rules can be learned in about ten minutes and it's playable to completion in an evening. The game manages to remain tension-filled from the earliest turns on. Automatic Victory is always just around the corner and once Turn Five rolls around, the possibility of the game ending suddenly even without a player getting Automatic Victory forces the players to continuously scramble for the lead. Despite the quality of the physical components this is a game worth buying—and a game worth playing many times. ●



## Afghanistan

by Russell Jennings

d: Perry Moore

p: Perry Moore, 1991

*Afghanistan* by Perry Moore is a frustrating mixture of professional and amateurish effort, designed to demonstrate combat in the Afghan War. It comes with die cut counters that are professionally done, but both the rule book and maps in my copy seemed to have been put together with a copier, complete with obvious tape 'white outs' and deletions. At eighteen bucks, a one color, black and white map that is hard to decipher does not make it in today's market. That having been said up front, I will continue with the review.

The rules were fairly glitch free, the only obvious error was a statement that only Soviets can move twice per game turn, while the Sequence of play states that Guerrillas can also move twice per game turn. Each turn is broken into eight phases dealing with a unit's mode, movement, and combat. Artillery and air units are present in the game and can be used to either directly attack ground units, or engage in barrage attacks which may generate a combat die roll modification. Combat also takes into consideration such things as defender's terrain, mode of the units involved, and combined arms.

Central to the game's mechanics is the "mode" of the unit. For the Soviets this means whether their mechanized infantry are mounted, in a stronger, road bound mode, or dismounted in a weaker but more terrain mobile mode. The Guerrilla's modes are dispersed, during which they cannot attack, but are also more difficult to attack, or concentrated, where they are stronger and attack capable, but more vulnerable to attack. The Guerrillas are able to change mode twice during a turn in any terrain, while the Soviets are limited to once a turn and then only

in clear terrain or on roads. These mode decisions are crucial to the conduct of the game and to the successful use of the Guerrillas.

There are no zones of control (zoc) in the game and while Soviet units may start and end a turn stacked, they may not move through one and other. Additionally, the Soviets are limited in their ability to stack within rough and mountain hexes, while the Guerrillas have unlimited stacking in any terrain. Combat is voluntary, with barrage attacks conducted first and then combat decided via ratios with column shifts for mode and combined arms, and die roll modifications for terrain and barrages. Retreats and advances are limited by both terrain and unit type. Supply is very straightforward, with limits being placed on how far to a road it can be traced by the terrain a unit is in.

Additional units in the game are U.S. and Pakistani. The U.S. is represented by infantry companies of the 82nd Airborne, their artillery battalions and anti-tank platoons. Some Marine infantry companies are also included, which never show up in any scenarios, but make for some interesting what-if scenarios. The Pakistanis are represented by tank and mechanized companies, as well as artillery battalions. There is a plus one die roll modification for allied combat cooperation, but not for combined allied/guerrilla attacks. The Soviets are allowed to roll for gas attack permission from a Gas Table, if they choose to use it. Gas will essentially nullify the terrain benefits that the Guerrillas enjoy, but its continued use will raise the victory conditions necessary to win the game.

An expansion kit is provided with the game and it includes another map and some plain white unmounted units that introduce "hind" helicopters and SU-25's on the Soviet side, with several weapons type for the Guerrillas. None of these are die cut and have been included to bring the Guerrillas fire power up to a higher level, such as found during the latter stages of the war. However, they stand out like a red

thumb during play and invite massed bombardment on any stack carrying them. Various home made dummies were employed to overcome this. The weapons range from simple machine guns (MGs) through Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs) and Surface to Air missiles (SAMs). Each one has two numbers on it which can be used against hard or soft targets and air units, depending on the situation. Provisions are made for their exhaustion and replenishment during the game.

This was a hard game to review for a definitive conclusion. While the mechanics are straightforward and logical the production values do not recommend the game for purchase; not when four more bucks will buy any number of high quality, zip lock games. I did teach a couple of experienced twelve year olds to play the game proficiently enough for them to make 'interesting Guerrilla opponents. This is not meant to disparage the game, as the logic of the turn made it easy for them to pick up on how the game flowed and the Russian side is definitely the more challenging of the two sides to lay. It is hard to judge the game for historical accuracy, but one can certainly gain a feel for the frustrations felt by both the Soviets and the Guerrillas in attempting to combat one another. Units must be completely surrounded to assure their destruction and this remains a difficult task throughout the game.






There are six scenarios in the package and the *Battle for the Valleys* scenario is the most interesting due to the high number of units involved. Another scenario sets the 82nd Airborne against the initial Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The expansion kit contains an additional scenario for a Soviet Air Mobile raid against "suspected" guerrilla positions. It proved to be a continual challenge that could be played in a fairly short amount of time.

The game production values keep me from recommending it, as I do not feel it delivers "money's worth" for what is charged. I can also level this same standard at Avalon Hill's *Squad Leader* gamettes which occupy the other end of the spectrum at \$45 a piece. Clearly, this is a personal opinion, but one I feel strongly about. In spite of this, the game remains a simple, playable situation whose essentials can be learned and played in a one sitting. ●

What do Generals Guderian, Wenck, Deitrich, Hitler, and Himmler all have in common? . . .

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# LA BATAILLE D'AUERSTAEDT

By Warren E. Kingsley

p: Clash of Arms Games (3rd Edition)  
d: Monte Mattson, Dennis Spors, James  
G. Soto

**La Bataille d'Auerstaedt** (hereafter **Auerstaedt**) is the third edition of this Napoleonic battle game first published by Marshal Enterprises in 1978. Released this past February by Clash of Arms Games, the game covers the hard-fought October, 1806 battle of Auerstaedt where Marshal Davout's French III Corps met and decisively defeated the main portion of the Prussian Army commanded by the Duke of Brunswick.




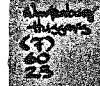



**Auerstaedt** is a two-player tactical level game employing Clash of Arms' *Les Batailles Dans L'Age L'Empereur Napoleon Premier* battle system. Formations depicted are infantry regiments, battalions, and grenadier and voltiguer companies, cavalry regiments and artillery batteries. The grenadier companies are new with this edition, and provide the French Army with even more operational flexibility. This edition's units are printed on the heavy 16 ply cardboard stock used by Clash of Arms in their recent **La Bataille de Preussich—Eylau and Napoleon at Leipzig** games; the thicker counters are a marked improvement over the thin (8 ply) counters found in the previous edition. Counter graphics are stunning, featuring in great detail the uniform colors of the historical units represented—indeed, Prussian units' strength and movement factors are even printed in semi-Gothic script! Clash of Arms' unit counters are the best in the wargame business, game after game. Period.

Game components include two countersheets with some 480 multi-colored unit and informational counters, two dice, Standard and Exclusive Rules booklets (the latter containing a lengthy Historical Commentary reprinted from "Napoleon's Army" by Colonel Rogers), two Army Organization Displays, a front and back-printed Combat Results Table, a Turn Record Chart and a 22 x 34 inch map. All components are of uniformly excellent quality. In particular, the map is a picturesque depiction of the battle area, with woods, villages, streams, slopes and roads elegantly presented.

This edition of **Auerstaedt** also features the release of the long-awaited third edition of the *Les Batailles* system's Standard Rules. These rules are considerably clearer than those of the previous edition, and are written in a smooth, narrative style which reflects considerable thought and proofreading. Veteran wargamers familiar with the *Les Batailles* system will be

pleased with the many clarifications made in this edition of the Standard Rules—players new to the system will have to work somewhat to get into the game, but will then be able to use their new-found knowledge with all of the *Les Batailles* system games (**Austerlitz**, **Talavera**, **Eylau**, **Albuera**, **Wagram** and, soon, **Ligny**, **Quatre Bras** and **Waterloo**)—an investment of valuable "wargame rule-reading" time well worth the effort.

There are no scenarios presented in **Auerstaedt**, only the full battle game which can require 8-10 hours to play. Highly recommended is the basic *Les Batailles* standard rule limiting each player to 10 minute movement phases—this rule considerably speeds play, eliminates the "perfect move player" problem, forces the players to concentrate ahead of time on their operational plans, and basically adds significant tension to the play of the game.

Infantry		Cavalry	
front	back	front	back
			
skirmish	skirmish		
Artillery			
front	back		
			
limbered	unlimbered		
	Cavalry Charge		

The Sequence of Play is the standard *Les Batailles* sequence: Charge, movement, defensive offensive fire, melee, and reorganization. Charges are conducted at the player's discretion, regiment by individual regiment (unless making a grand charge). Fire is performed against designated target hexes, each of which has a defense value determined by its terrain type. Melee is calculated by an odds comparison based on opposing units' individual melee strengths.

**Auerstaedt's** Exclusive Rules provide special provisions which restrict the capabilities of Prussian cavalry, and impose morale penalties on Prussian infantry when deployed in any formation other than line, skirmish or square. (The latter rule gives the French a marked advantage in overall tactical flexibility.) The Exclusive Rules are short: Players familiar

with the system can get into the game in five minutes.

Victory conditions are based on the destruction of enemy forces, the capture of villages, and limiting losses to one's own army. The French win decisively if they can drive the Prussians off the map (as occurred in real life); Prussian victory results from reducing the combat strength of Marshal Davout's III Corps and capturing geographical objectives.

Play balance is skewed in favor of the French (perhaps it should be, given the historical result): Indeed, even a good Prussian player will be hard-pressed to avoid being slaughtered. This does not mean that the Prussian position is hopeless. Rather, the Prussian commander must be patient, allow his significantly larger army to arrive and deploy, and methodically attrit the French. As the Prussian player, avoid closing with the French too soon in an effort to get "into the game." That is the surest way to get "out of the game," fast.

**Auerstaedt** is a beautifully-crafted wargame which can provide gamers with hours of tense, action-packed fighting.

Players of the *Les Batailles* system look forward with anticipation to Clash of Arms' next releases, **Ligny** and **Quatre Bras**, both of which are expected by ORIGINS 1991. Like all games of the series, **Auerstaedt** is well worth its price. ●

[Ed. Note: Detailed articles covering **Auerstaedt** game strategy and the revised Standard Rules for the *Les Batailles* series will appear in the near future in **MOVES** and/or **Fire & Movement**.]



# CLASSIC WARGAME SERIES

## Frederick the Great

by Peter Martin

How many of us remember what wargaming state of the art was back in 1975? How many of us were wargaming at all in 1975? Those who do probably remember it as the era of the tactical wargame. *Panzerblitz* was still very popular and was the creative impetus for many of the hobby's designs at the time. Although strategic wargames were still being played, the excellent *1776* (Avalon Hill) was released the year before, tactical games made up the bulk of the games played. Amidst this backdrop, SPI took a chance on a Frank Davis design. Not only was it a strategic game, but it contained no nukes, NATO's or Nazis. Only SPI, in those days, would take risks like that. The game was *Frederick the Great* and wargaming would never be quite the same again.

In April 1975, when SPI released *Frederick the Great* in *Strategy & Tactics* #49, design work was still caught in the Move and Shoot mind set. You move your armies then you initiate combat. I, then, move my armies and initiate combat. Although simple, it did not take the leadership qualities of certain men into account. Frederick for example, was constantly moving from one threatened sector to another, reacting to the enemy then initiating combat. The Move and Shoot design model simply would not have worked. Not only would it have been unhistorical but it would not have been a fun game to play, either. The Coalition armies, with their overwhelming numbers, would have simply crushed Frederick before he got a chance to react. A different design model needed to be created.

In *Frederick the Great*, an enemy forced march phase was wedged between the friendly march and the combat phase. No longer could you guarantee that magical 3 to 1 attack. Any enemy armies in the area had to be considered before you decided to march to the enemy. It perfectly simulated the "interior lines" strategy utilized by Frederick in the Seven Years War. Although it seems common sense now, at the time it was quite revolutionary.

There are eight phases to the game:

- 1) Reinforcement Phase
- 2) Morale Recovery Phase
- 3) Depot Creation Phase

- 4) March Phase
- 5) Enemy Forced March Phase
- 6) Combat Phase
- 7) Siege Resolution Phase
- 8) Enemy Attrition Phase

Although it looks like quite a bit, in fact, a turn can be completed in as little as ten minutes. Part of this has to do with the designers conclusion (and a correct conclusion, I would add) that armies in the 18th century can do nothing but defend without leaders. This prevents the movement of stray armies which is not only historically accurate but speeds up play as well.

The mobility of the armies centers on supply and creating depots. Since it takes two turns to create a depot, its placement is very important. This neatly simulates not only the importance of supply on an 18th century battlefield but the chess-like movement of armies which stressed mobility rather than manpower. A French general named Napoleon would use this strategy to his advantage, years later when defending Paris.

The frustrating part of the game (for panzer fans, I figure) is that the supply rules prevent you from doing whatever you want, wherever you want to do it. By using interior lines and shuttling his army from one threatened sector to another, he kept his enemies off balance for the entire war. He never blindly gave battle just




are only marginally less threatening than Frederick himself. Also, the Prussians have some inept leadership of their own. Especially with the Hannoverians should Ferdinand die.

Which brings me to the great equalizer which is also known as the leader casualty rule. Everyone, and the Prussians in particular, should prepare themselves for the possibility of leader losses as a result of battle. If this game has one iron-clad rule, it is this: Frederick must never, never go into battle as the only Prussian leader. Since the lowest ranked leader is the one who dies if there is a leader casualty, Frederick must be accompanied by an expendable leader. Again this is god history because Frederick almost never went to the front lines of a battle once it had begun.

Combat is quick in this game. Odds are established and the die is rolled. The revelation here is that losses are taken by percentages rather than numbers. This means a large army that takes a 25% loss will lose more than a small one. After losses are taken, you add the initiative value of your leader to the roll of a die and subtract your losses from this. Your opponent then does the same. Whoever has the highest total wins the battle and forces the enemy to retreat and become demoralized. This worked to the Prussians' advantage only if Frederick is involved. With his high initiative, the Coalition player would have to be pretty lucky to defeat him. Especially if Russian or French armies are involved. Most of the Prussian leaders, though, don't have such high initiative to compensate for their numeral inferiority. Since it did not take overwhelming losses to force your enemy off the battlefield in those days, the percentage of losses are rather low. Like their historical counterparts, players will engage in numerous battles before a decisive result is reached.

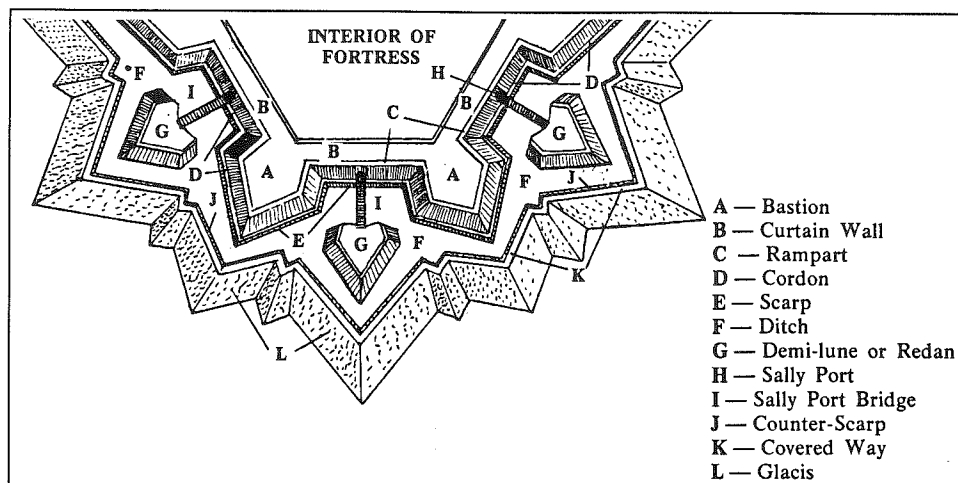
Another interesting aspect is the siege. The only way to take a fortress and its subsequent victory points, is by siege. A siege is handled just like a depot creation. Once the depot is created the real fun begins. After a breach is created, the attacker must decide whether to offer the honors of war to the enemy or to attack the garrison. Both have good and bad points. If you offer it, your men get the fortress without any casualties but the garrison scurries off to another friendly fortress. If you deny it, you could destroy the garrison (worth more victory points). You could also destroy your own army in the process. I play, as in history, players will usually offer the honors of war. Unless the Prussian player is so far behind in victory points that he must kill off enemy troops to catch up, he should always offer it. He has to preserve his army at all costs.

In 1983, Avalon Hill re-released *Frederick the Great* with redevelopment by veteran game designer Joe Balkowski. The basic system was left, pretty much as is. The changes were mostly

Combat Unit		Depot	
	Russia Nationality 1 Combat Strength		
Leader Unit			
Rank Nationality Attack Bonus		Initiative Defense Bonus	
	2 Prussia 1 2		

for the fun of it. A battle was the culmination of weeks or months of campaigning and was used with a specific goal in mind. In the game, a player who goes into battle without a plan or strategy is just asking for trouble.

Another complaint I have heard is that *Frederick* cannot lose and this therefore makes the game unbalanced. This is only partially correct. Against a competent Prussian player, the coalition player can expect to lose the majority of the battles he engages in. This is historically valid. The Russian and French armies were ineptly led and rife with corruption. The main threat, and this is the way Frederick saw it as well, is the Austrian army. The Austrian player has more than one leader capable of giving Frederick a run for his money. Under the leadership of Browne, for example, the Austrians



cosmetic such as, giving the leader counters historical names rather than Leader No. 1 and so on. One change Mr. Balkowski did make to the system involved Prussian losses. In the SPI version, for every strength point lost, one victory point was deducted from your victory point total. In the Avalon Hill version, this holds true until Prussian losses reach twenty strength points. After this threshold is reached the Prussians lose two victory points for every strength point lost. This is as it should be. Frederick's ambitious plans were thwarted as much by lack of manpower as by the enemies armies. It is a good rule that enhances the game as history.

When Avalon Hill released the game, they did their customary issue of the *The General* devoted to it. Anyone who likes *Frederick the Great* should definitely look for it. Included is an excellent article on strategy for the scenarios, additional scenarios on the Sileian Wars (the wars that brought about the Seven Years War), and Mr. Balkowski's own grand strategy scenario on the whole war. The last one is especially interesting because diplomacy (such an integral part of warfare then) comes into play.

After this, however, little was said about *Frederick the Great* in *The General*. This despite the fact that it ranked high in their survey and remains to this day a popular play by mail game with AHIKS. On this last point, it is not difficult to understand its popularity. With a small number of counters on the board, reasonable number of turns and limited number of necessary mailings it is an ideal PBM game.

The same features that make it such an outstanding PBM game also make it a splendid choice for a computer game. With its low counter density and set victory objectives (namely enemy troops and fortresses), even a rudimentary knowledge of artificial intelligence would make for an interesting computer opponent. Add some nice graphics to set the mood and a clearly written rule book and you've got

a winner.

*Frederick the Great* set the stage for a whole genre of operational and strategic games. Most of these games came and went very quickly. One however, by OSG called *Napoleon at Bay*, proved to be something of a legend in its own right. The sequels to that game are still being released. As for the designer, Frank Davis, he proved that *Frederick the Great* was no fluke when he designed *Wellington's Victory*. It was far more complex than *Frederick*, but once you stripped the chrome the relationship to the earlier game was unmistakable. It too was something of a legend.

The recent history of *Frederick the Great* has been less kind. In fact, if you are thinking this is a eulogy you might very well be correct, Avalon Hill in their infinite wisdom let this game go out of print. I can only venture a guess as to why. Perhaps it was insufficient as a cash

cow. In the quest of a fast simple and well designed game their decision to axe a game that contains all of the above has to be questioned. 3W's effort to introduce a new generation to the system, in *Wargamer* vol. 1 #61, *Campaigns of Marlborough*, proved to a noteworthy but futile attempt.

When I talked with Rex Martin (editor of *The General*) at LA Origins '89 about writing an article for *Frederick the Great* and possibly sponsoring a tournament, he pronounced *Frederick* to be a "dead system" and said Avalon Hill would do nothing to promote it. As he said this, I recalled playing it with my roommate in the open gaming area the night before. As we played many people walked by and asked us where they could get the game. Even the older grognards waxed nostalgic as they told us of the days when *Frederick the Great* was a hot tournament event. The irony is it still could be. This is one of the few genuine landmarks designs this hobby has created. ●



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## Hobby News Bulletin Board

by Dr. Christopher Cummins

Please forward any information (Product releases, etc.) pertaining to Hobby News to: **Decision Games**, Attn: F&M-Hobby News Column, P.O. Box 4049, Lancaster CA 93539 or call (805) 945-3862

**Avalon Hill/Victory Games:** *Battle of the Bulge*, the first of a new entry level Smithsonian Institute series of games made its appearance at ORIGINS. Additional games in this line are expected in the future. *Advanced Civilization*, an update of the classic game, is due out in August with more culture and calamity cards and an extensive rulebook and gamer's guide. *Flashpoint: Golan* examines the current situation facing the countries adjacent to the Golan Heights and has been delayed to October. *Gung Ho*, the module which completes the standard ASL rules and provides a Chinese Order of Battle, has been delayed to November. 8-1-91: Tom Shaw, Vice President.

**Clash of Arms:** *Bataille de Ligny* has been delayed to September and *Bataille de Quatre Bras* was delayed to August. A Waterloo expansion kit should be out this Fall. In October, *Prelude to Disaster*, covering the early 1942 operations around Kharkov, and *Chancellorsville: A Season for Glory* should be released. *War for the Union*, a moderately complex strategic American Civil War game, should be out for Christmas. 8-1-91: Ed Wimble, President.

**Columbia Games:** *EastFront* was released at ORIGINS '91. A companion *WestFront* game covering the WWII campaigns in France, Italy, and the Balkans is in the works for release in 1992. 8-1-91: Tom.

**Decision Games:** *Strategy & Tactics* #145 (Sep) will feature *Trajan*, the Roman campaign in the East, 114-117 A.D. and *Strategy & Tactics* #146 (Nov) will feature *Sicily*, the first of a four part campaign game on the WW2 Italian Campaign. *Fire*

& *Movement* #76 (Nov) will feature GDW's *Tet Offensive*. *MOVES* #66 (Nov) will feature *Just Plain Wargames* from Pacific Rim. Next convention is GATEWAY over Labor Day weekend at the LAX Hyatt. 8-1-91: Christopher Cummins, Publisher.

**Englemann Military Simulations:** EMS has relocated their office to: 15 Bowie Ct, Rockville MD 20852, phone 301/251-5927. There are currently no other games in the works. 8-1-91: Karsten Engelman, President.

**Fresno Gaming Assoc.:** *Operation Crusader* was released shortly after ORIGINS. *Civil War Classics* will be released in August and the much awaited *The Eagle and The Sun* should be out this Fall. Also coming up for them are *Civil War*, a strategic game and *Pacific Classics*. 8-1-91: Terry Strum, President.

**Game Designers' Workshop:** *Stand and Die*, the battle of Borodino, 1812 with two mounted maps and 800 counters was released in time for ORIGINS. Coming up in December, we'll see *The Sands of War*, a bookshelf boxed game with 16 geomorphic maps, and a collection of over 30 tactical scenarios on modern warfare in the Middle East (\$35). Also coming out will be *Troubled Waters for Harpoon* which includes navies of the Third World. 8-1-91: Anne Bennett, Marketing Director.

**GMT Games:** ORIGINS release was *Great Battles of Alexander*. Other wargames in the works for 1991 include *Korea: 1950-1953*, *Battle for Italy: 1943-1945*, and *Operation Apache Snow: Battles in the A Shau Valley*. Also in the works is *Thunderbolt Leader*, which will be a follow on to *Hornet Leader* but involves helicopters in close air support missions. 8-1-91: Gene Billingsley.

**Game Research/Design:** The next Europa module, *First to Fight*, a remake of *Case White*, is now due out in the Fall. *Second Front* has been delayed to (hopefully) Christmas. 8-1-91: Winston Hamilton, President.

**Omega Games:** No new information has been provided since 3-1-91.

**Pacific Rim:** *CounterAttack* #3 and four of the six *Just Plain Wargames* were released at ORIGINS '91. *Grenadier* #36 and the other two JPW's are due out at GENCON. 8-1-91: Stephanie Tibbetts.

**Perry Moore:** No new information has been provided since 3-16-91.

**Rhino Game Company:** *Campaign to Stalingrad*, division level, June-Dec, 1942, one and a half maps, 600 counters. Planned for release in 1992 is a 1942 Expansion Kit for *The Legend Begins*. 8-1-91: Mark Simonitch, President.

**Simulations Canada:** No new information has been provided.

**Simulation Design, Inc.:** No new information has been provided.

**The Gamers:** *Barren Victory*, on the battle of Chickamauga was out for ORIGINS. *Omaha* is still planned for October. For 1992, April will bring *Bloody Road South* (Wilderness). *Origins '92* will see *Guderian Blitzkrieg* and *Stalingrad Pocket*. In October, *Perryville* and *Blood of Generals* (Franklin) should be released. 8-1-91: Dean Essig, President.

**TSR:** Released at ORIGINS '91 was *Pacific Theater of Operations*, the companion to *ETO: WWII*. For 1992, TSR is planning a remake of *Creature That Ate Shogun*. Doug Niles is working on a game on the current Civil Wars in the Balkans. 8-1-91: Steve Winter, Staff Designer.

**3W/World Wide Wargames:** *The Defense of Rorke's Drift/Boer War* was released at ORIGINS '91. Upcoming releases include *Star Force One*, which is the first in a new series of card games. This will be a fun and simple game along the lines of *Modern Naval Battles* and designed by Dan Verssen. 8-1-91: Keith Poulter, President.

**XTR (Command magazine):** The next ziplock game is *Wahoo*, battle of Washington following a Southern victory at Gettysburg, and will be released in August. *Red Star Falling*, covering the coming (his words) Russian Civil War. *Command* #12 features *Chaco*, a remake of the old GDW game. *Command* #13 features *Desert Storm*. 8-1-91: Chris Perello. ●



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# CURRENT EVENTS

## Scorched Dice: A Report on ORIGINS '91

by Dr. Terry Alan Baney

Having returned both elated and intact from ORIGINS '91 in Baltimore—these conventions are great for the wargaming psyche but rough on the rest of the body—I hope to pass along in this article one hobbyist's impressions of this annual mayhem. For those gamers who have never attended an ORIGINS, perhaps this piece will provide some of the flavor. For those who attend regularly, all I can say is that I plan to bring my own dice next year!

Actually, I had some doubts as to whether there would be an ORIGINS '91. The less said about ORIGINS '90 in Atlanta the better, although attendees at last year's convention were still grumbling months afterward. Still, news of the 1991 gathering being held in Baltimore drew cheers (Pacific coast hobbyists excepted), and I had fond memories of my last visit there in 1987. However, when I phoned a local hotel to book a room, I was informed by the desk that ORIGINS '91 had been cancelled! My first thought was that the fallout from the Atlanta fiasco must have been far worse than I had imagined. But a quick phone call to the GEMCO Information Line reassured me that all was well. The particular hotel I had phoned was caught up in a contractual dispute with the convention organizers, and the Reservations Desk was telling callers that ORIGINS '91 was not happening. (I realize that the hotel folks were just doing their routine, but telling gamers that ORIGINS was cancelled is the equivalent of calling for an air strike on your own position!)

ORIGINS '91 was indeed happening, and I opted for a more congenial hotel. It was a bit more expensive, but I caught a decent break on the plane fare and everything evened out. One option had been to drive from Connecticut to Baltimore, but the July 4th Weekend is not the time to navigate I-95. Taking the car does mean that one can stuff the trunk with purchased goodies, but there is also the temptation to spend the gas money on one more game. Driving home from Baltimore is one thing; walking home is another!

Arrival day at the convention is usually taken up with the incidentals of getting situated. Even then, one is quickly reminded that an ORIGINS is somewhere wholly different. At the airport baggage claim area, I found myself standing next to a fellow who was trying to collect his luggage while carrying four game boxes. I had

barely said hello when he was met by a friend carrying a lidless box of elves.

ORIGINS '91 was the maiden voyage for GEMCO, a group managing the convention for GAMA. Impressions varied widely on the quality of GEMCO's efforts. I personally encountered no problems whatsoever: my favorite seminars were where and when the convention booklet said they would be held, and as far as I could tell, the only no-show was Bill Gibbs' OMEGA Games. I was a bit taken aback by the long lines of attendees trying to register or collect their pre-registration materials at 7 AM on Thursday, but I got through in little over an hour. On the other hand, quite a few gripes were overheard from gamers who objected to events being overbooked, the lengthy wait in the lines, etc. Some might say that gamers are akin to students who forever complain about cafeteria food. In any case, the hobby will have to get used to GEMCO: they will be handling future ORIGINS at least through the mid-1990's.

Aside from getting through the registration process, convention Thursdays are usually taken up by occasional seminars, open gaming, dealers arranging their wares, and trying to sort out a plan from the listings in the official booklet. ORIGINS '91 was no exception, although I became intrigued with the *Europa* buffs setting up a 1943 scenario on the Russian Front maps. Occasionally I would pass by the game which remained in progress throughout ORIGINS '91. The group added one nice touch: several tables with instructors were set up nearby to teach the basics of the *Europa* system to newcomers. It was rare not to find three to four folks seated at those tables, nodding in agreement as the instructors carefully showed them the ropes on maps and charts.

On a similar note, GR/D deserves praise for their impressive work on the *Europa* line. Although *Second Front* did not make it to ORIGINS '91, the new *Balkan Front* (revision of *Marita-Merkur*) with striking cover art was available, and *First to Fight* (revision of *Case White*) now features introductory rules to help guide newcomers. In a sense, then, *First to Fight* may be GR/D's equivalent of what TAHGC did with *Paratrooper* for the *ASL* series; however, *First to Fight* is also crucial to the full *Europa* display.

Thursday evening featured a seminar on advice from game designers about getting your game

published. There are more negatives than positives bandied about, which is probably fair enough given the limits of the hobby market. Perhaps the highlight of the seminar was actually the presence of a Pacific Rim staff person, carrying copies of *CounterAttack* #3. It actually lives! Can the *Grenadier* be far behind?

A stop at Jeff Tibbett's booth on Friday netted me my subscriber's copy of *CounterAttack* #3, an assurance that August was not out of the question for a new *Grenadier* issue, and copies of *Salla, 1941*, *Demyansk*, and *Bastogne* (the three new "Just Plain Wargames" in white envelopes). My initial thought was that these three small wargames with limited graphics may not be the wisest purchase. Instead, I found them (especially *Salla, 1941*) to be quite entertaining in spite of the limitations in format.

The convention seemed to be evenly divided this year between board wargamers, Fantasy Role Players, Science Fiction buffs, and miniaturists. Railroad based game were particularly popular, including both older and newer titles. Mayfair Games was even selling an English import, called *1835*, and doing nicely. By contrast, computer games appeared to be on the downward slide, both in terms of sales and general visibility. Although the Dealers Area did have a number of computer based booths and several striking games to observe, the atmosphere at ORIGINS '91 seemed no to be conducive to them. One gamer told me his explanation: Boardgames are more fun, involve more people, are more portable, and are better games.

Virtually every company had hot new items at the booth on Friday. The one noteworthy exception seemed to be Richard Berg's SDI. I did not get the opportunity to speak with Richard, but noticed that his *Blood and Sand* design on WWII in North Africa hadn't made it to ORIGINS '91. New products appear to be the driving force for companies today, and the absence of them at the SDI booth probably accounted for its lackluster traffic.

By contrast, GDW (admittedly a larger, more established firm) had an elaborate booth, featuring miniatures and a full line of products. The new *Stand & Die: Borodino 1941* was attracting lots of attention. It's a two map game complete with mounted boards (a first for a GDW historical wargame), and a box that rivals *Axis & Allies* in size. The \$60 price is the sort

that once was reserved for the larger *Europa* titles. Nevertheless, *Stand & Die* was my first purchase at ORIGINS '91, and I patted myself on the back for remembering to bring a sturdy shopping bag!

Next up was Australian Design Group where I quickly bought a copy of the 5th edition kit for *World in Flames*. I'd been actively following the game since its debut at ORIGINS '85, dutifully adding each revision and update and losing count of the evolving expense. Still, I applaud ADG for remaining true to this excellent design, improving its content, and taking obvious pride in the game's popularity. If there is a better global treatment of WWII, I am unaware of it.

TSR intends to put *World in Flames* to the test however. Releasing *WWII: Pacific Theater of Operations* at ORIGINS '91 as a stand alone game or mate to the earlier *WWII: European Theater of Operations*, TSR has a viable alternative. I may have purchased the first one of these as well. *WWII: PTO* sold handsomely and drew a number of observers during its "demo" presentations. If combined with *ETO*, *PTO*'s two maps mean four, making it twice the size of *World in Flames*. Devotees of WWII gaming will not be satisfied until they've enjoyed both ADG's and TSR's efforts.

I knew that I'd get eventually to the TAHGC/VG booth because I was eager for a copy of the introductory *Battle of the Bulge* game. I'm reluctant to call it their "new" Bulge game as it is not necessarily meant to take the place of more intense examinations of the battle. In fact, it is something of a cousin to TAHGC's recent simplified *Gettysburg* revision. Again, however, big box games appear to be in vogue (more cheers for my shopping bag), but the price was an inflation busting \$19. I passed over VG's *Peloponnesian War* (not my topic of preference) and *Attack Sub* (not feasible for solitaire play), but other attendees showed interest in both. Actually, I saw relatively few copies of the Bulge revision being played or even carried around the convention, but *Attack Sub* was in evidence. This may mean that gamers have reached the saturation point on the Bulge as a topic, or simply that the game has not yet received much publicity. Still, I came to enjoy the quick playability of *Gettysburg* and expect similar pleasures from *Battle of the Bulge*.

With my planned purchases safely tucked away in the hotel room, I now wandered freely throughout the Dealers' Area in search of attractive surprises. If the appearance of *CounterAttack* #3 wasn't enough of a shock, one might reel at the availability of Columbia Games' *Eastfront*. A wooden blocks game that cover the full Russo-German War of 1941-45, *Eastfront* was initially discussed in the hobby press as far back as ORIGINS '87. Four years later, *Eastfront* sports an eye-catching map, numerous scenarios, and a hefty \$55 price. The

wooden blocks system is quite a deviation from the typical counters or plastic pieces found in wargames, but has its devotees. I was reminded of this fact, seeing games of *1812* and *Rommel in the Desert* being played in the open-gaming areas, and noticing that the stack of *Eastfront* boxes seemed to get lower each time I passed by Columbia Games' booth.

So many booths; so little room in my luggage! Seeing the Clash of Arms Game booth reminded me to pick up a 2nd edition kit for *Campaigns of Robert E. Lee*. A stop at 3W's corner (not really a full-fledged booth) enticed me to grab *2WW* and *Strategy*, a pair of smallish games that are among the better products currently available for introducing new wargamers to the flow and jargon on the games.

Then there was GMT Games, which has had a remarkably successful first year in the hobby. GMT siphoned off my money for its initial line of releases, and they got more of *Hornet Leader*, a visually attractive, jet aircraft solitaire game. I saw quite a few copies of this game in people's bags, suggesting that GMT has another winner. The graphics work done by Rodger MacGowan is a major asset to the game's appeal, as was the fact that *Hornet Leader* was one of the few predominantly solo games available.

I had attended a seminar run by The Gamer's Inc. on Thursday evening and was subsequently enticed to pick up a copy of their new *Operations Magazine*. Their booth also featured the new *Barren Victory* for the Civil War Brigade series. It should be noted also that Dean Essig seemed much improved from his recent tragic accident, telling gamers that his firm's line of future releases is right on schedule. That includes the mammoth *Omaha*, a four map tactical treatment of the D-Day beachhead, due in the Fall of 1991.

Without question, however, the booth that benefited the most from consumer foot traffic belonged to Fresno Gaming Association (FGA). This is a relatively new game publisher, consisting of two-thirds (Mike and Terry) of the original GMT outfit. Opting to market their own line, FGA appears to be a kind of umbrella entity that houses Historical Games (HG) and Roger Whitney Games (RWG). They have begun to advertise extensively in hobby magazines, beginning in the Spring of 1991 with Ty Bomba's *Command*, grabbing the attention of wargamers with an extensive listing of upcoming projects. Although their initial games, such as *Operation Crusader* and *Civil War Classics*, vol. I (Pea Ridge and Shiloh) missed the convention deadline by a matter of days, display copies were on hand, as were ads and descriptions of Fall '91 titles, such as *The Eagle and the Sun* (a multi-map and counter WWII Pacific game vying to match SPI's *War in the Pacific*) and *The Civil War: Brother Against Brother* (another monster offering.) Despite no immediate availability at ORIGINS

'91, these FGA games were doing a land-office business in prerelease mail orders. The convention discounts were probably a factor, but more important was the visual appeal of the display copies. While the adage is that one can't judge a book (or game) by its cover, the graphics work on these titles is first-rate. A cursory glance through the rules booklet to *Operation Crusader* also suggested that FGA games are meant to be played as well as admired visually. Throughout the convention, FGA's booth drew significantly from word of mouth praise and drop dead stares from passersby: a situation I do not recall having occurred for an unknown publisher since ADG appeared out of nowhere at ORIGINS '85 with *World in Flames*.

Of course, the Dealers' Area also featured other lesser known entities. One such booth had a veteran from New York who was selling his *Vietnam Survival: Tour 365* game. The design seemed to be blend of wargaming (historical focus, plastic figures of troops and helicopters, etc.) and more standard family board games (large mounted board, squares rather than a hexagonal, cartographic map, lots of graphics color, etc.). The game involves competition among up to four players, trying to complete a patrol's year long tour of duty in Vietnam with victory being awarded to the one who can get the most men out safely from the jungles and combat. At \$20 plus UPS shipping, and high-quality components, the game appears to be an amazing bargain. The designer told me that it is already being used by some teachers as a classroom tool and is therefore a proven, play tested commodity. I hope that the vet who did this game can afford to secure some hobby advertising, because I think a lot of gamers would like to know more about the game's availability.

There were also four to five booths selling older, out-of-print games and magazines. In the event that one has not recently noticed, the prices on such goods have skyrocketed! Nevertheless, these booths were constantly crowded and selling large quantities of titles. I considered buying a copy of SPI's original *Blue and Gray II* quadrigame until I noticed the price tag of \$128!

Somewhat ironically, the auction seemed to be a better location for grabbing bargains. The auction sessions have always attracted my attention at previous conventions, but more as an entertaining diversion than as a source of purchases. Too often it had seemed that the auction were dominated by the big collectors and shop owners with apparently bottomless wallets. Such was not the case at ORIGINS '91. While I was only present at the auction on occasions during its three-day run, I was struck by the more open atmosphere. Many of the items went for quite reasonable bids, including older SPI games. Bidders were mainly new collectors and folks who were interested in picking up older games they've been wanting to play. For example, one fellow secured a punched copy of SPI's legend-



ary War in the Pacific for \$95 (a steal by any measure), and he immediately took the seven maps to be laminated (a further \$25).

As a side note, I should mention that laminated paper maps were much in evidence at ORIGINS '91. The booth that does this service was busier than I could ever recall at previous conventions. Regardless of where games were being played or displayed, laminated maps (and also charts/tables) were commonplace. The process is quick, relatively inexpensive (depending on the size and number of copied items), and removes the twin threats of tearing and spilling. It does mean that such maps must be stored in tubes, but it also alleviates the constant folding and leaves the game box for counter storage.

Typically for an ORIGINS, most of the hobby All-Stars were present, including designers and publishers. Perhaps someone ought to unleash a card collection, featuring "Hobby Greats" with photos on the front and notable achievements on the back. I can see it all now: gamers trading a "Tom Shaw" and "Frank Chadwick" for a "Ty Bomba" and "Joe Balkoski."

It would be difficult to estimate the attendance level at ORIGINS '91, but I'd suggest a figure upwards of 6,000. I was not pre-registered and had a badge number well into the 3,000 mark. Having signed on for the full weekend with the early arrivals on Thursday morning, and seeing the sizable number of one day badges later in the weekend, I think my estimate is a reasonable one. I was glad to see quite a few youngsters (and females!) at the convention, lessening the hobby's concern over demographics. I see no reason why the decade of the 90's shouldn't be a banner period for the hobby. More successful gatherings like ORIGINS '91 would go a long way toward achieving that goal. ●

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### Best Miniatures Rules, 1990

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Designers: Sam Lewis, Jordan Weisman, L. Ross Babcock

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*Chaosium, Inc.*

Author: Greg Stafford

### Best Role Playing Adventure, 1990

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*For Shadowrun, FASA Corp.*

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Armintrout, Jerry Epperson, Paul R.

Hume, Lester Smith, and James D. Long

### Best Role Playing Supplement, 1990

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*For AD&D, TSR, Inc.*

### Best Graphic Representation of a Role Playing Game, Adventure or Supplement, 1990

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*For AD&D, TSR, Inc.*

### Best Graphic Representation of a Role Playing Game, Adventure or Supplement, 1990

Seattle Source Book

*For Shadowrun, FASA, Corp.*

Artists: FASA Art Staff

### Best Pre-20th Century Boardgame, 1990

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*The Avalon Hill Game Company*

Designers: Richard Berthold and Robert Haines

### Best Modern Day Boardgame, 1990

Euro rails

*Mayfair Games, Inc.*

Designer: Darwin Bromeley

### Best Fantasy or Science Fiction Boardgame, 1990

Genestealers

*Games Workshop, Inc.*

Designers: Games workshop Studio Design Team

### Best Graphic Presentation of a Boardgame, 1990

Genestealers

*Games Workshop, Inc.*

Designers: Games workshop Studio Design Team

### Best Play by Mail Game, 1990

Illuminati

*Flying Buffalo, Inc.*

Designer: Draper Kauffman

### Best New Play by Mail Game, 1990

Monster Island

*Adventures by Mail*

### Best Fantasy or Science Fiction Computer Game, 1990

Wing Commander

*Origin Systems*

Designer: Chris Roberts

### Best Military or Strategy Computer Game, 1990

Populous

*Electronic Arts*

### Best Professional Adventure Gaming Magazine, 1990

Dungeon Magazine

*TSR, Inc.*

### Best Amateur Adventure Gaming Magazine, 1990

Wargamers Information

*Rick Loomis*

### Hall of Fame, 1990

Sandy Petersen

### Best Play by Mail Game, 1989

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### Best New Play by Mail Game, 1989

Beyond the Stellar Empire-The New System

*Adventures by Mail*



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### Winners of the Charles S. Roberts Awards

CATEGORY	1987*	1988	1989	1990
Best Pre-WW2 Board Game	Shot & Shell (3W)	Lee vs. Grant (VGC)	Siege of Jerusalem (TAHGC)	Kadesh (Command,XTR)
Best WW2 Board Game	Raid on St. Nazaire (TAHGC)	Tokyo Express (VGC)	Hitler's Last Gamble (3W)	Operation Shoestring (GMT)
Best Post-WW2 Board Game	Central America (VGI) TIE) 7th Fleet (VGI)	TacAir (TAHGC)	Modern Naval Battles (3W)	Silver Bayonet (GMT)
Best Pre-20th Century Computer Game	Borodino: 1812 (Krentek)	Battles of Napoleon (SSI)	No Winner	No Winner
Best 20th Century Era Computer Game	PanzerStrike! (SSI) TIE) Stealth Fighter (MicroProse)	Fire Brigade (Panther)	SimCity (Maxis)	No Winner
Best Game Review or Game Analysis	Central America by Tom Slizewski <i>F&amp;M</i> Nr.56	Lee vs. Grant <i>Wargamer</i>	WW2 Anthology by Vance von Borries <i>F&amp;M</i> Nr.60	D-Elm by U. & D. Blennemann <i>Command</i> Nr.2
Best Historical Article	Aesthetics, Function & History in Game Graphics <i>Wargamer</i>	Forrest at Bay <i>Strategy &amp; Tactics</i>	Rush for Glory by Richard Hitchman <i>S&amp;T</i> Nr.127	Borodino by G. Morgan <i>S&amp;T</i> Nr.136 Enter Rommel by F. Watson <i>Europa</i> Nr.15
Best Wargame Graphics	Raid on St. Nazaire (TAHGC)	Campaigns of Robert E. Lee (COA) TIE) Lee vs. Grant (VGI)	Hitler's Last Gamble (3W)	Kadesh (Command,XTR)
JFD Award for Playability & Design	AWARD did not exist at this time	AWARD did not exist at this time	Modern Naval Battles (3W)	Don Greenwood
Clausewitz Award Hall of Fame	Richard Berg	Ty Bomba	Joseph Balkoski	Jack Greene
Best Professional Game Magazine	Strategy & Tactics (3W)	Strategy & Tactics (3W)	Strategy & Tactics (3W)	Command (XTR)
Best Amateur Game Magazine	Volunteers (Bill Koff)	Volunteers (Bill Koff)	Canadian Wargamers Journal TIE) & Volunteers	Canadian Wargamers Journal

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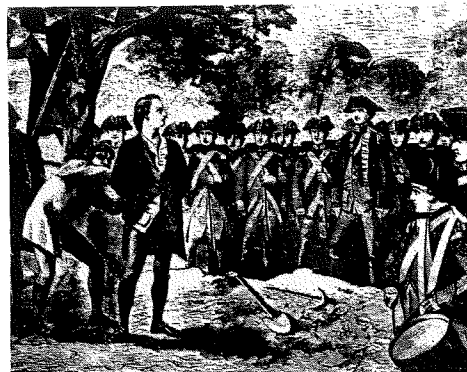
## THE GAUNTLET

### From an Old Timer

When I was invited to write on occasion of *Fire & Movement's* fifteenth birthday (that coincides with this issue) and share my current thoughts on our hobby, my first inclination was to pass. It has been years since as the editor of *F&M* I took an active part in affairs, so who would care? On second thought, though, I accepted, feeling that after all I am perhaps a rather typical specimen from a special niche of wargaming, and one that keeps thriving. Although older than most, I have found many kindred souls interested in exacting play of rather complex games of our century's wars, in teams, umpired, and by mail (or electronic mail) and telephone. Among the most memorable matches have been a series of **Pacific War** carrier operations based on **Flat Top** rules with severely limited intelligence and communications, and another of **Fire in the East-Scorched Earth** campaigns with what I am sure must be the world's sharpest players of those games. Each of these encounters stretched out over more than a year, the longest lasted for more than three.

Today, such of play commands a sizeable following of fanatic devotees, to whom their gaming has become a way of life. What has sprung up around them might almost be called a sub-culture. Typical of this kind of wargaming style and philosophy is **Grand EUROPA**, the vision that originally got Game Designers' Workshop started. You will have heard people speak in awe of **Fire in the East** and **Scorched Earth**, so imagine a huge framework connecting dozens of such big games on all campaigns of World War II in **Europa** and **North Africa** (even a module to connect this juggernaut with a revised and refined **War in the Pacific** is being talked about by some enthusiasts). While Game Designers' Workshop have largely abandoned their brain child, the ball has been picked up by Winston Hamilton with his Game Research/Design, who, helped by notables such as John Astell and Arthur Goodwin, is refining rule systems and honing maps to ever greater perfection. Two magazines are exclusively devoted to **EUROPA**: Winston's now quite professional **EUROPA** and Bill Stone's *E.T.O.*, meanwhile inherited by Arthur Goodwin (and struggling). In comparison, the **Flat Top** clique, although very active, has not become quite as prominent. The same is true for the aficionados of **War in the Pacific**. The **Winter Storm** system might well spawn its own similar cult - too early to tell, as only the recent publication of *Edelweiss* has it given it a sufficiently sound basis.

Ours is an elitist movement within the hobby, one that has little resemblance to the good old world of **Stalingrad**, **Afrika Korps**, and **Midway** in which I and many of my contemporaries got started. Surely we are being criticized for supporting a trend that does nothing to make wargaming look easy for a novice, are perhaps even accused of in that way hastening the demise of the hobby. I must admit that there might be a grain of truth in that



argument—just as in my beloved windsurfing the general decline in interest is mostly attributed to all that wave jumping and acrobatics one sees in magazines and videos and on television, making long-board, moderate-wind lake sailing appear almost disresponsible and so projecting a sport out of the ordinary citizen's reach. But then, we do not claim to be typical representatives of wargaming, nor do we burden the more casual side of the hobby. And, after many years in the mainstream, who says we must proselytize? Are we not entitled to enjoy our own kind of gaming? Our numbers surely are and always will be too small to support a wargame "industry," but they suffice to keep alive those devoted few who, like the guys at Game Research/Design, *Clash of Arms*, and *Omega Games*, work for their own satisfaction and the fun of it rather than to get rich, and professionally produce our type of games and components. Although most of us are middle-aged or senior citizens, I do not believe we shall die out: Enough tinkerers join us each year to make up for the inevitable attrition, and the rapidly increasing availability of personal computers, suitable software, and access to networks is making our kind of play more attractive even for the middle-of-the-road gamer. It might well be that we shall outlive the rest of a hobby that finds it so hard to recruit the beer-and-pretzels newcomer.

Allow me to add a more personal note. My second retirement this fall (not counting my exit from *F&M*) has freed me from the obligation to teach classes every week during the semester. Nevertheless, I find myself doing just as much work as before. It seems on retirement, all one does is graduate to Jane Fonda's status from that of her cleaning lady: We worked hard because we had to, now we do so because we want to. But my new freedom gives me time to travel. I am still well enough known in my academic discipline to have no trouble obtaining lecture invitations that will make trips self-financing, and I hurry to make the most of my meager fame as long as it will last. There is so much to see in this ever-changing world of ours. Having lived and worked in China and got an inside view of conditions in the USSR, it has been quite an experience to see with one's own eyes some of the struggle of the countries of eastern Europe to make the transition to democracy and market economy. And drop in sometime if you want to hear how the battlefields on our maps of the USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Italy, France, Germany, and Holland look today.

*Friedrich G. Helfferich*

## FEEDBACK

After reading this issue of *F&M* please answer the Feedback questions below. Write your answers in the space provided on the Feedback Form (below)—you can either photocopy your answers or cut-out the completed Form and send it to us.

When answering questions, a dash “-” means NO OPINION or NOT APPLICABLE. When a question requires a YES or NO response, 1 means YES and 0 means NO. When the question is a rating question, “0” is the WORST rating, “10” is the BEST rating, “5” is an average rating, and all numbers in between express various shades of approval or disapproval.

1. Firing Line (Editorial)
2. Hornet Leader (Close-up)
3. Balkan Front (Profile)
4. Carrier War (Profile)
5. American Revolution (Profile)
6. Expanding Front- Code of Bushido
7. No question.
8. No question.
9. Conflict: Europe (Computer)
10. Military in Wargaming (Forum)
11. no question.

12. Origins Report (Current Affairs)
13. Players' Notes
14. Hobby News Bulletin Board
15. The Gauntlet
16. This issue overall.
17. Has *F&M* improved or declined in the past year? (0= significantly declined; 5= stayed the same, 10= significantly improved). Please provide specific comments on how we can continue to improve.
18. How many people read this issue besides yourself?
19. How many feedback cards have you sent in in the past year?
20. As a subscriber, would you be willing to pay \$8-10 more per year in order to receive your issues via First Class Mail?
21. We are considering doing a special double-sized (128-page) issue of *F&M* summarizing the World War II Anthology. This special issue would include games not reviewed in the serial column as well as games released since the serial portion appeared. Do you want this special issue done (0=No, 1=Yes)?
22. We will be doing an American Civil War anthology beginning in 1992. Should we do: a serial column only (Mark 0) or a special issue only (Mark 1)?
- 23-33. No Question.

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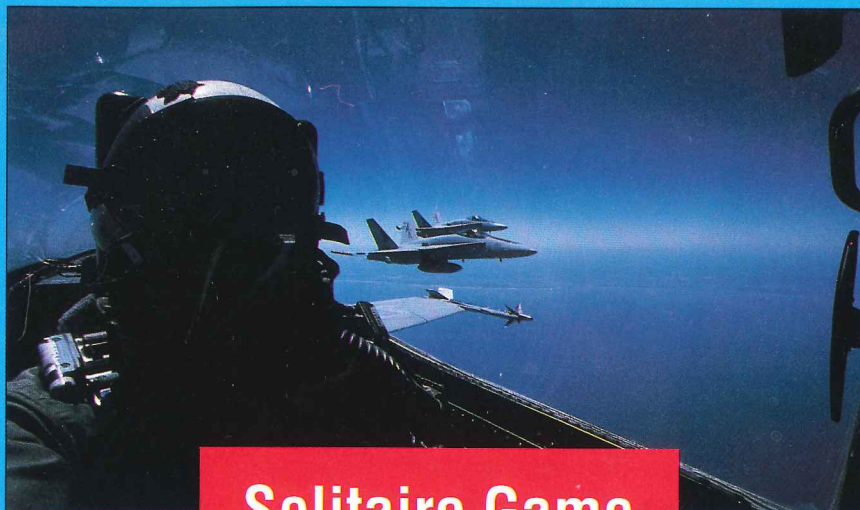
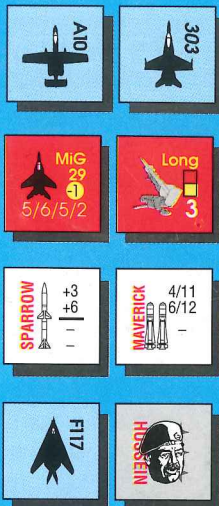


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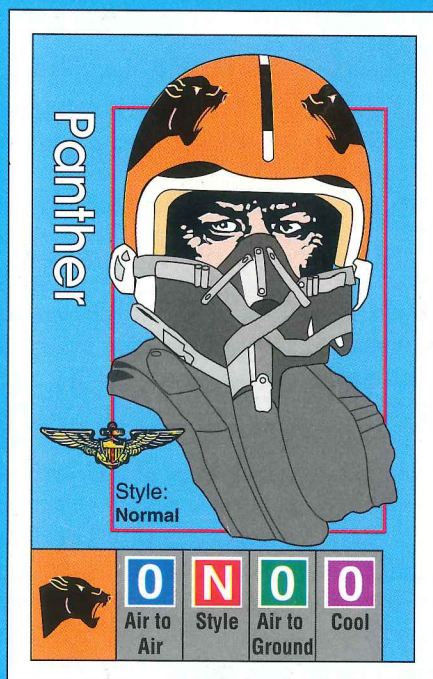
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## OPERATION **DESERT STORM** MODULE

**Game Designer:**  
Dan Verssen  
**Game Developers:**  
Gene Billingsley  
Dan Verssen  
**Art Director:**  
Rodger B. MacGowan



## Solitaire Game



*Hornet Leader* is an exciting solitaire game that challenges you to command a squadron of F/A-18 Hornet strike-fighters in an almost endless variety of combat missions. From the decks of U.S. Navy carriers you lead your squadron against 26 different target types – from naval strikes and fleet air defense to sweeps ground fighter and attacks.



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### Game Features:

- *Hornet Leader* is different every time you play. 26 Target Cards, 33 Mission and Special Event Cards, and 15 Briefing Cards combine to create hundreds of exciting missions in nine areas of the world.
- 200 die-cut counters; One 22x17 inch Combat Display; One 20-page Rules Booklet; 110 Playing Cards
- Playing Time: 15-25 minutes per mission; Nine campaign games vary from 45 minutes to 5 hours playing time.

If *Hornet Leader* isn't available at your local hobby store, use this form to order directly from GMT. You can also call or Fax us for immediate delivery using your Visa or Mastercard.



Quantity	Game	Price	Extended Price
	<b>HORNET LEADER</b>	\$30.00	
	<b>Silver Bayonet</b>	\$29.00	
	<b>Air Bridge to Victory</b>	\$34.00	
	<b>Operation Shoestring</b>	\$39.00	
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		(\$2.50 per game; International 10% Surface, 25% Air) Shipping	
		*6% sales tax for CA residents	
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		TOTAL	

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