

# THE WARGAMER

## PAS DE CALAIS

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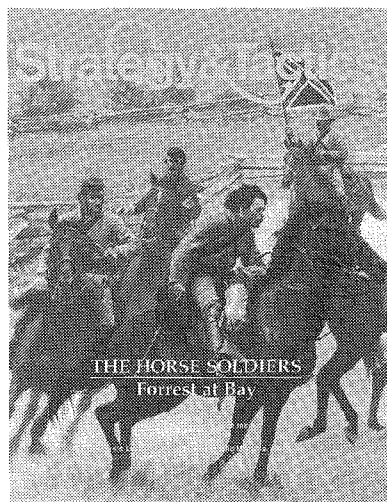
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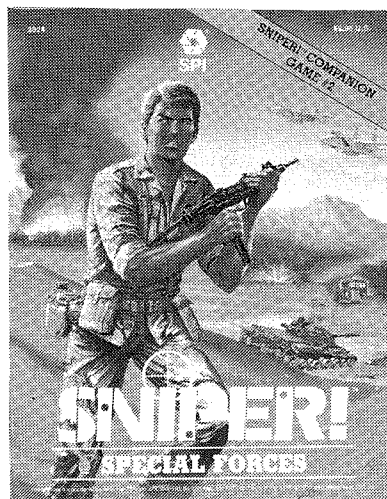


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- #4: IBM PC & Compatibles
- #5: TRS 80, Mod.1, III/4

## Editorial ...

This issue, we are moving the editorial back to the front of *The Wargamer*. We are also adding letters to the editor. The letters received since the change of ownership have been uniformly positive. Over the last two months, the mail bag has divided itself about 45/45/10 between comments about a recent, rather controversial article, interest in subjects for future coverage, and general comments.

Games Goff's "Pro-Nazi Bias" article in *Wargamer* Vol. 2, #4 generated plenty of letters. One was chosen as a fairly representative example of the group, and I thank John, Jeff, Paul, Chuck, and others who also sent their letters. As a group, you demonstrated a range of passionate and considered commentary. Insight into both cultural issues as well as the designer's perspective were represented.

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to the "Pro-Nazi Bias..." article by James Goff in the latest issue of *The Wargamer*. As an historian and wargamer, I felt that his article presented an oversimplified view of the issue. It seems to me that Mr. Goff considers game designers of East Front simulations to be so many Neo-Nazis or utterly devoid of any historical perspective.

Game designers and the companies marketing their games have always faced certain perceptual problems. Surprisingly, Mr. Goff identifies the prevailing market understanding of East Front games without realizing its significance. The vast majority of source material available represents the German/Western viewpoint. The lack of Soviet material and U.S. Cold War bias necessarily shaped the perceptions held by both designers and customers. Titles aside, recent scholarship has found its way into most East Front simulations and no game survives if it does not present a balanced format. So why is there a "bias"? Why are so many names pro-German or worse, pro-Nazi?

Dealing with the pro-Nazi issue first, I feel that Mr. Goff has missed the mark historically. Of all the simulations listed in his pro-Nazi column, only one title truly fits the definition: *Lebensraum*, which existed as an actual Nazi policy. The rest represent a German perspective. Is this to say that the German Army was not a tool of the Nazi state and should be absolved of all guilt? Of course not. The issue here is a matter of degree. The German Army was no more totally Nazi than the Soviet Army was totally Communist. While both states held tight control over their respective armed forces, support of state policies was never universal, as evidenced by Stalin's purges of the 1930's and the bomb plot of 1944 that almost killed Hitler. I feel that it is important to put this period in proper historical perspective.

As to the heavy emphasis on pro-German titles, Mr. Goff deals with the issue and I have paraphrased it previously. Years of an accepted perception do not die easily. The overall view of the "East Front Campaign" may be a little more exaggerated than some other periods but opinionated source material is not the only factor. Consider the cultural difference between east and west. Russia, and later the Soviet Union, has always been a rather mysterious

land. Further, how many average wargamers can read Cyrillic? These points may be secondary to balancing the scale, but if games are going to sell, the customer has to know what he is buying. At \$20+ a shot, he is not going to take a chance on something that he is unfamiliar with. So why change the names? Is this a unique situation?

No. Look at most other periods that wargamers explore and you will find similar bias. The examples are as varied as the games themselves. The modern, hypothetical European games also shortchange the Soviets on titles though I would disagree that the pro-West view is Nazi. Going further back, there is a whole genre of games known as "Napoleonics." Finally, looking at the other theater of World War II, the Pacific, how many games present the Japanese perspective? Most periods in military history are dominated by a dynamic individual or military force. Cultural and political prejudices creep into the equation in the more modern periods but so long as designers attempt a fair representation of the situation, the game titles really hold no sinister intent.

The whole point of this article seemed blown out of proportion. The Nazi regime embodied evil and its destruction was the only possible solution of a sane world. Considering the image that the term Nazi invokes in all of us, it should be used responsibly. Early post-war historians also used Nazi as a blanket term for the German nation. That concept is as invalid as the one depicting all Russians as "Godless Commies." If concentration camp games, with body counts and ovens, were to suddenly appear on the market, I would most readily agree with the sentiments expressed in Mr. Goff's article. But, since these titles show no more favoritism than other periods, I feel that the issue should be discarded as unimportant.

Sincerely,  
Mark J. Perry

The other major group of articles is represented by a letter from Bruce Jurin praising the *Wargamer/Strategy & Tactics* series games (the Napoleonic series in particular). After demonstrating his analytical and writing skills in comments about *Abensburg*, we convinced him to write a feature article for issue #8. Others have also been invited to write. While we do have a staff that contributes the majority of the magazine, we are always on the lookout for new contributors, and our readers are a prime source. If you have a particular game you're interested in, whether it be a *Wargamer/S&T* game or any game on the market, feel free to contact us with your ideas. If a feature length (5,000 words) article is a bit longer than you want to get into, consider getting into our *Moves Review of Games* rotation: 2,000 words on a brand-new game and you get to keep the game. Review copies go out on a first-come, first-served basis, so get your choices in or ask for our current list.

Keep those letters coming. Your comments and input shape *The Wargamer*.



# PAS DE CALAIS

## Volume One of the Westwar Series

By Christopher Cummins

John Schettler's *Pas de Calais* is a brilliant diamond in the rough. His innovations on the impulse system of play and the elements of division level operations simulation are elegant and thorough, yet simple. His thrust into alternative history presents events which were quite possible and might well have led to an earlier ending to the war in Europe.

When I say diamond in the rough, I refer to the design within the physical presentation. It is unfortunate that Vanguard Games has chosen to publish the game in what is a throwback in some respects. The two full-sized four-color operational maps which cover the French coast from Dieppe north to Dunkerque and inland some 100-150 kilometers (60-100 miles) are reminiscent of early SPI games and there are several minor questions about the effects of terrain between hexes and whether some partial hexes are on the coast or inland. There is also a two-color strategic map for movement of German units throughout France and the Low Countries. The 600 one-sided counters are years out of date in terms of their dull color and lack of clarity, and the HQ circles and diamonds are confusing when more conventional symbols are the norm. However this is where the dullness of the game ends. To be fair, part of my view of *Pas de Calais* at this physical level is that there are Strategy & Tactics' and Victory Games' games which, when set up next to *Pas de Calais*, provide a sharp contrast in the use of color and state-of-the-art graphics.

The game comes with a 32-page rules booklet and a multitude of charts to assist play. I found the rules booklet to be difficult and play to be quite slow at first, owing to the number of new and innovative concepts being introduced, but by the time I got through the first three scenarios I was used to this new system of play. The rules are organized into a basic set of rules covering units, command control and supply, zones of control, stacking, and terrain. These are followed by a section of special rules covering unique situations such as Full Scale Operations, Postponing the invasion, Emergency Allied Evacuation (oh, no, not another Dunkirk!), and Flooding, as well as Elite Units (airborne and specialized/heavy armor) and Allied Strategic Air Power.

More examples of play are needed and I highly recommend that new players take a couple of divisions out for maneuvers in the middle of the board until the basic rules make sense. The basic rules are followed by the rules covering pre-invasion and invasion operations. Finally (and I do mean finally), we arrive at the regular turn sequence and operations and combat. I strongly advise new players to read the sequence of play and these last two sections first and then go through the basic rules; the game system will make more sense if approached from the sequence of play and operations framework to the basic rules and details. Don't get me wrong. I give *Pas de Calais* high marks as a game and as a simulation. Vanguard Games' dedication to this game and additional games in this series through a quarterly newsletter are admirable. System changes, errata, scenarios, and other information will be provided. Gamers will be getting a game which will potentially grow and expand to cover D-Day and much of the battle for France.

Players are invited to play six scenarios, ranging from two short hit-the-beach and seize a port to a 60-turn campaign game going from invasion to breakout. Scenarios cover 1943 and 1944 conditions, allowing analysis of a 1944 Calais invasion or of either of the two possible 1943 invasions (Sledgehammer and Roundup).

*Pas de Calais* has some similarities to *Winter Sturm* and *The Last Victory*, Schettler's East Front games, but he has obviously been busy refining his design concepts, as *Pas de Calais* takes some big steps forward. Take a look at the sample units. Units are rated for size with A's and B's for regiments and brigades, C's for battalions, D's for flak batteries and most HQ's and E's for German Kampfgruppe HQ's. Tactical support rates the unit's ability to support any adjacent attacks. Movement allowances are cross-indexed with terrain and mobility (mechanized/non-mechanized) to determine movement costs. Armor units are also rated for armor strength, which provides die roll modifiers in combat and may allow some cancellation of zones of control (more on zones of control later).

Headquarters take on real significance in this game and are rated for offensive and defensive operations, armor/anti-

tank defense capability, and divisional artillery support. Command control and the interaction of HQ's and their subordinate units is at the heart of this game. A particular unit's combat value is found by cross-indexing its combat class with the parent HQ's current value for offense or defense. Using our sample units, the A-2-6 cross-indexed with its parent HQ, the US 4th Infantry Division, we find that its full strength combat value is 16 on offense or 18 on defense. Unit

## 7.0 TERRAIN EFFECTS

TYPE	7.2 CRT/AT	Mobility IO	Class II◇	5.7 ZOC	6.1 STACK	7.3 ARTY
MAJ RIV	4	+3	BR	-2	4	NA
CITY	4	2	4	-2	6	+2
FOREST	3	2	4	-2	4	+1
RIDGE	3	2	4	+/-1	6	+1
TOWN	2	2	3	-1	6	+1
MIN RIV	2	2	+8	-1	6	NA
MIXED	1	1	4	0	6	0
WOODS	1	1	3	0	6	0
CULTIVATED	1	1	4	0	6	0
MARSH *	1	2	6	0	6	0
LOWLAND *	1	2	8	0	6	0
BEACH	1	1	2	0	8	-1
CLEAR	0	1	2	0	10	-1
MIN ROAD	NA	1	2	NA	OT	OT
MAJ ROAD	-1	1	1	NA	OT	OT
FORTS	VAL	OT	OT	-1	4	+VAL

\* Add in Rain +1 +2 -1 -2 0  
 Mobility class ◇ units may only cross rivers at bridges.  
 Ports use the CRT line which corresponds to their printed value.  
 "OT" indicates that other terrain in the hex is consulted.

## COMBAT TABLE

Barrage	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
4	1.25	1.50	2.00	2.50	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	9.00
3	1.00	1.25	1.50	2.00	2.50	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	8.00
2	.75	1.00	1.25	1.50	2.00	2.50	3.00	4.00	5.00	7.00
1	.50	.75	1.00	1.25	1.50	2.00	2.50	3.00	4.00	6.00
0	.25	.50	.75	1.00	1.25	1.50	2.00	2.50	3.00	5.00
0	4*	3*	3*	3*	2	2	2	1	0	1
1	3*	3*	3*	2	2	2	1	0	1	1
2	3*	3*	2	2	2	1	0	1	1	2
3	3*	2	2	2	1	0	1	1	2	0
4	2	2	2	1	0	1	1	2	0	3
5	2	2	1	0	1	1	2	0	3	0
6	2	1	0	1	1	2	0	2	0	3
7	1	0	1	1	2	1	2	0	3	4
8	1	1	1	2	1	2	0	3	0	3
9	1	2	1	2	0	3	0	3	3	4
10	1	2	0	3	0	3	3	4	5	6
12	0	3	0	3	3	4	4	5	6	7
15	0	3	3	4	4	4	5	6	7	8
20	0	3	4	4	4	5	6	7	8	9

## COMBAT FACTORS

HQ Rating	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	Min
A	24	20	18	16	14	12	10	8	6
B	18	14	12	10	8	6	4	2	1
C	12	10	8	6	4	2	1	1	0
D	4	ARMOR	Norm	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	
E	2								

See 2.17 The shaded penalty is applied to total armor values attacking whenever the HQ rating is 6 or lower.

offensive and defensive values are variable, depending on the degree of fatigue and attrition the division has sustained, as well as the type of operation it is conducting.

Here is a central innovation of *Pas de Calais*. Individual regiments and battalions do not suffer losses, rather the division registers losses as temporal (fatigue) and personnel (attrition) reductions in offensive/defensive ratings. Fatigue accumulates as a division conducts operations and, at the end of each turn, is reduced according to the unit's basic morale. Attrition occurs as a result of combat and can be removed only through refitting with replacements. Again, with our sample units, let's say one attrition point had been previously sustained and that the division was currently conducting an advance operation, which costs one fatigue point. Now the unit cross-indexes with a strength of 12 halved down to 6 for attacking on the march. Adjacent units support an attack with their tactical ratings, and armor units add their DRM's (again halved). There is also divisional artillery, as well as tactical air support, naval support (Allies only), and higher level support available to aid the attack or defense. Units must stay within command control or they are sitting ducks; units out of supply also pay severe penalties. If our unit above was out of supply, it would be reduced to 2 on the offense and 9 on the defense if the 4th HQ was at full value. Obviously, headquarters are central to this game.

Zones of control are much more dynamic in *Pas de Calais*, and are labeled either "controlled" or "contested" depending on the tactical ratings of units adjacent to the hex in question. If both sides have units adjacent to an empty hex, it is contested. If one side has at least twice the value on the hex as the other, it is controlled. Also, the strength of control is rated strong or weak. Only the strongest armor brigades and regiments have the tactical rating of four necessary to strongly contest/control a hex by themselves, so units tend to stay together for mutual protection and support.

Players in *Pas de Calais* are cast in the role of Army Commander at the strategic level and Division/Corps Commander in each impulse. At the strategic level, there is a cat and mouse game of guessing what the other side will do. The Allied player must decide when and where to launch the invasion while the German player tries to guess his intentions. The more correct guesses the German player makes, the more rapid his reaction will be to the invasion.

The game starts with the Pre-Invasion phase. The Allied player secretly decides on a semi-monthly target date and picks two strategic locations from the six major areas along the coast as his invasion sites: Dunkirk, Calais, Bulonge, Somme, Treport, and Dieppe. He also decides whether to send the first wave in at high or low tide (going in at the wrong tide adds to the landing conditions, and the second wave goes in under the opposite tide conditions). At the same time, the German attempts to guess when and where the invasion will fall as well as the first wave tide conditions. The more correct guesses the German makes, the more Command/Supply points he gets to add to his initial allotment. The more points, the greater the initial reaction the Germans will be able to conduct. The Germans also get

Now we get to the meat and potatoes of *Pas de Calais*, the Operations Phase. The players have twelve different options to choose from, each allowing from one to five divisions to conduct an operation. Each operation imparts different ca-

At the impulse level, there is a constant interplay between the players leading to a chess-like flavor of move and countermove. Each impulse, the player can conduct one operation. At the end of these impulses, each player gets a final opportunity to expend the remaining points in his pool



TIME:	1943		1944		PLACE:	DROPZONES
Circle	JUN	E	APR	E	<input type="checkbox"/> DIEPPE	_____
Month		L		L	<input type="checkbox"/> SOMME	_____
and	JUL	E	MAY	E	<input type="checkbox"/> TOCQUET	_____
Time		L		L	<input type="checkbox"/> BOULOGNE	_____
Period	AUG	E	JUN	E	<input type="checkbox"/> CALAIS	_____
		L		L	<input type="checkbox"/> DUNKIRK	_____
	SEP	E	JUL	E		_____
		L		L	RESERVE	_____
TIDE:	HIGH		LOW		CMD=	_____
DIVISION COSTS: INF=1, ARM=2, PARA=1, IND=three for 1 Six free Rangers, Commandos, or Royal Marine Units.						

INVASION COMBAT											
LC				▲ ▲				☒			
DIV TAC + SUPP				LANDING COND + OBSTACLES + ENEMY TAC							
7-8	9-10	11-12	13	0-3	4-6	7-9	10-15	16-20	21-25	MAX	
1				D	R	R	R	R	R	R	
2	1			D	D	R	R	R	R	R	
3	2	1		E	D	D	H	R	R	R	
4	3	2	1	E	E	D	B	R	R	R	
5	4	3	2	E	E	E	D	D	D	R	
6	5	4	3	E	S	E	D	D	D	R	
7	6	5	4	B	S	S	E	D	D	D	
8	7	6	5	B	B	S	E	E	D	D	
9	8	7	6	B	B	S	E	K	P	D	
	9	8	7	E	B	B	S	E	E	E	
		9	8	B	B	B	S	S	E	D	
			9	B	B	B	B	S	D	E	

MODIFIERS:  
 Cliff: -1, Special Forces: +4ac, Adjacent LZ secured: +1  
 LANDING CONDITIONS:  
 Weather Factor + Surprise + Tides

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	 <b>ALLIED</b> <b>CMD</b>
9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	
6	5	R	4	3	R	2	1	FR	EX	 <b>GERMAN</b> <b>CMD</b>
9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	
9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	<b>OPERATIONS</b> <b>TRACK</b>
9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	
9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	<b>INITIATIVE</b> <b>PTS</b>
9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	
9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	<b>REACTION</b> <b>PTS</b>
9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	

GERMAN SUPPORT																								
	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1						
DAY	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48
ALLIED SUPPORT																								
★	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	US					
✱	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	BR					
AIR	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	SEA					

OPERATION	# of DIVS	FULL SCALE	OP FAT	MOVE	COMBAT	EXIT ZONE	ENTER ZONE	PENETR	OFF ARMOR	HL SUP
ASSAULT	1	2	2	1 or 2	Full	All	All	All	Full	4
ADVANCE	2	4	1	Half	Half	All	All	Weak	Half	2
COUNTERATTACK	1	2	1	Half	Full	All	All	Weak	Half	2
BARRAGE	3	4	0	HQ only	Arty	None	None	None	None	12
MANEUVER	3	4	1	Full	Tact	Weak	Weak	None	1	0
ROAD MARCH	3	4	1*	Doubled	Tact	None	None	None	None	0
HOLD	5	5	0	1 or 2	Def	All	Weak	None	None	0
DELAY	3	NA	0	Half	Def	Weak	None	None	None	0
REGROUP	3	3	0	1 Hex	Def	None	None	None	None	0
REFIT	3	3	0	None	Def	None	None	None	None	0
RETREAT	3	NA	1	Full	Tact	All	None	None	None	0
STRATEGIC	3	***	0	Half	Def	None	All	None	None	0

\*\*\* Strategic Operations occur only in the Final Resolution Segment.  
\* Two levels of fatigue on the second road march.

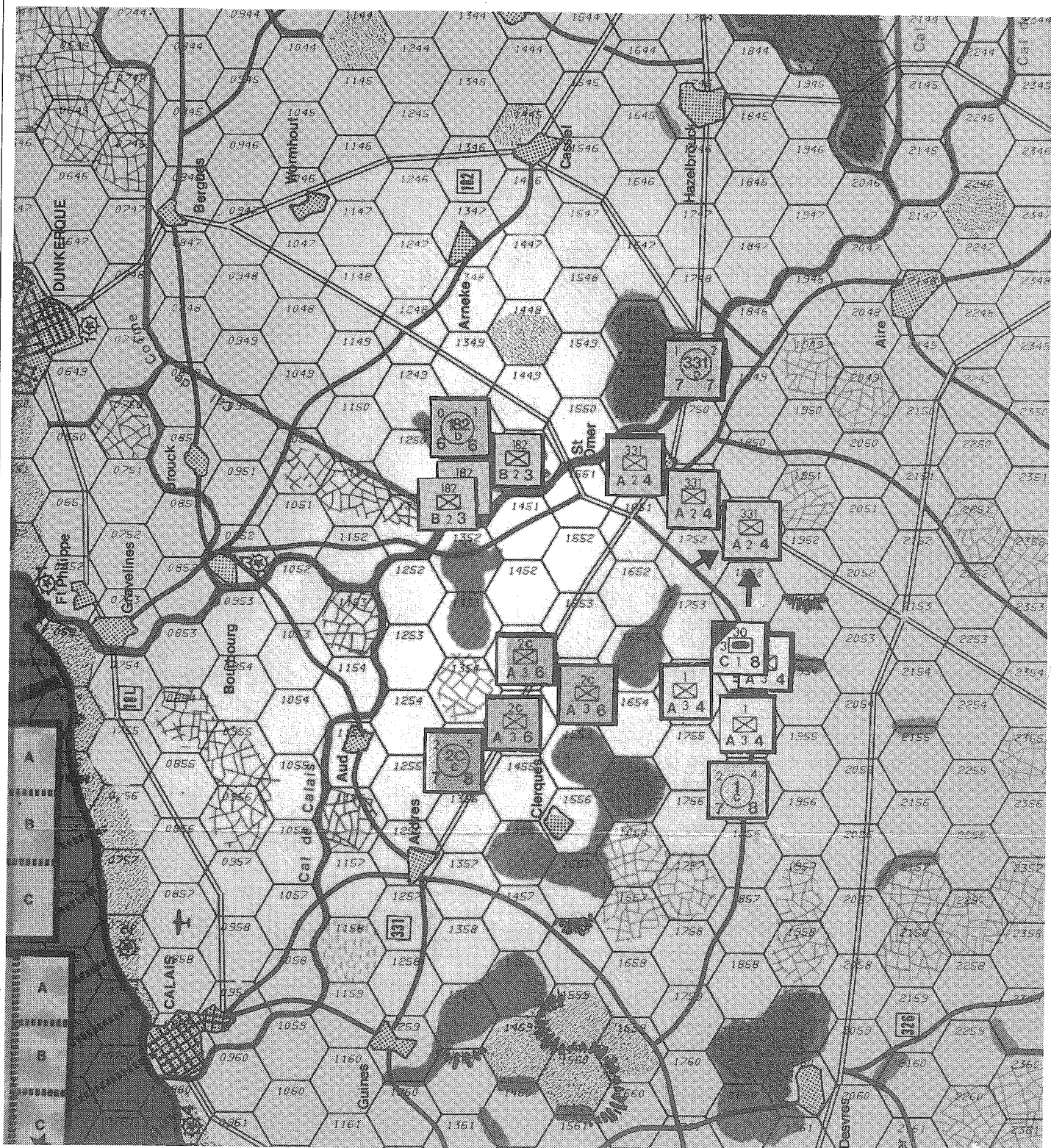
in a final flurry of operations. The reaction player also collects points for initiative player losses and gets a free Counterattack Operation for every three points collected.

For example, the Allied player has gained the initiative with 10 points and the Germans have 5 reaction points. The impulses will proceed with the Allies first, then the Germans, then two more for the Allies, one for the German, and two for the Allies. Then, the German gets a final reaction followed by an Allied exploitation impulse.

Let's take a look at an example of play. Figure 1 shows the Allies seeking to seize the V-1 site at 1351, as well as advance into St. Omer and the airfield adjacent to the southwest. The Germans have suffered some attrition, with the 331st having suffered three points during its fight with withdrawal from near Calais and the 182nd one point last turn. The British 1st infantry has an independent battalion of heavy tanks attached to assist in securing the airfield.

The Allies select an Advance Operation which will let

Figure  
1



them close in while seeking limited attacks. At the southern end of the line, they disrupt and retreat the German defender and cause another attrition point on the 331st HQ, while seeing one of their units fail a morale check and disrupt. Further north, the Canadians decide to wait and see with the possibility of slipping a unit across the bridge at 1550/1551 on an Advance or Assault to turn the 182nd's Aa river line.

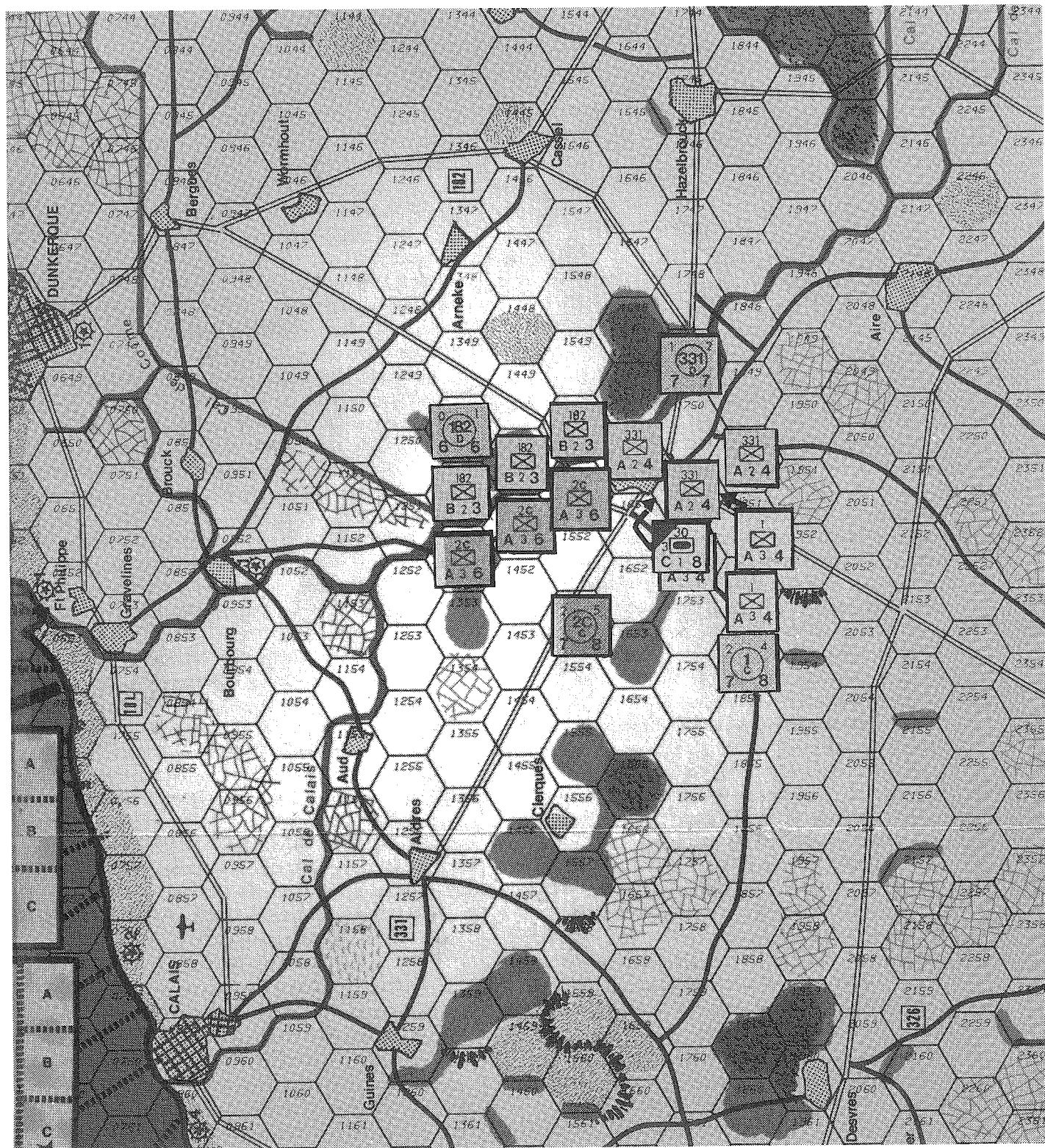
The Germans have a choice between a no cost (no reaction points) Hold Operation to gain a -1 DRM for these

two divisions and three other divisions or a Counterattack Operation to move units to cover the gap in their line. The Germans select a Counterattack Operation and move two 182nd units one hex south along the river to cover the bridge.

See Figure 2. The Allies, seeing that an Advance Operation will not gain them the V-1 site and will reduce their potency on the airfield attack, select an Assault operation for the British 1st (raising its operation fatigue level to the maximum three points).

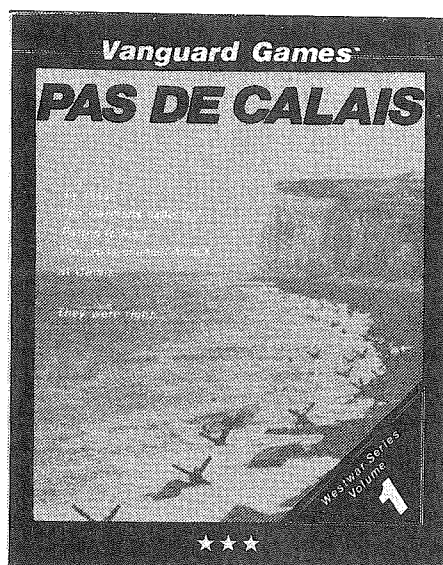
Figure  
2

(continued on page 15)



# PAS DE CALAIS

by John Schettler



## Designer's Response

My thanks to the *Wargamer* for a fair and comprehensive review of *Pas De Calais*. Mr. Cummins demonstrates a good grasp of the rules and system, and the reader should find his article to be an excellent profile of the game. The designer's notes presented with this article have already outlined the reasoning behind many of the decisions made in the course of the design itself. I wanted to take a new look at the old Normandy campaign, a battle in which I have a particular interest. The Allied prospect for an invasion at Calais has always intrigued me, and I am sure that players with a similar interest in the battle will devour this game for the new and untried strategic possibilities it opens up on this classic engagement. The "What If" aspect of simulation gaming has always commanded a large part of my interest in the field. *Pas De Calais* is tailor made for players who like to experiment and "tinker" with a game to construct scenarios and battles which reflect their own analysis of and thinking about a campaign.

As I have always done all of the graphic artwork for the game, I would like to comment briefly on my choices for the physical presentation of the components. It is interesting to note that Mr. Cummins compares the "look" of the game to SPI-era offerings. To be quite honest, I happen to love the Simonsen graphics of the vintage SPI games. To my mind, the artwork I did for *Pas De Calais* is much more reminiscent of the work done for titles like SPI's *Atlantic Wall*, *The Nest War*, *Typhoon* or *Highway to the Reich* during the reign of the great monster games. I played them all to death, and after thousands of hours of gaming, these are still the titles I come

back to time and again. They are, in fact, what I believe a wargame *should* look like on the table, and I have tried to take a leaf from Mr. Simonsen's book in the graphic presentation for *Pas De Calais*.

I chose a soft sandstone paper with two shades of green, blue, and brown to depict the terrain and roadnet for the map. This paper tends to harmonize and blend the other colors, and was deliberately designed to be easy on the eye, considering the fact that players will be staring at it for hours on end. The colors chosen for the countermix fell more to the traditional preferences of green for the Americans, khaki for the British, shades of blue and gray for the Germans with, of course, white on black for the SS. It is my belief that many players familiar with SPI style graphics will feel right at home with these maps and counters, as I do. Frankly, the last thing I want from the physical presentation of a game is a sharply contrasting mix of colors, and God forbid, anything that glows in the dark. Graphics are a matter of style and taste, and the work done for *Pas De Calais* reflects my own leanings in that area. I hope to get better in this aspect as my craft as I go along.

As for the rules organization, this again is reflective of my own "gamer's mind." There is now a large body of serious and experienced simulation gamers that can sit down at a new design and digest it with ease. All they need to know is a few important facts which are common to almost every game: how do I move, what are the terrain effects, zones, and rules of supply. Given this they will master a new system quite easily and be playing competently in a short time. My organization of the rules for *Pas De Calais* favors this experienced gamer. All of the basic parameters for the game are outlined up front in sections 1.0 through 7.0. The "chrome" and optional rules are all together in section 8.0. Then the game begins in section 9.0, with the invasion rules logically preceding the rules for regular turns. You can't play a regular turn until you have invaded.

One note not brought out in the profile is that the rules have been printed on three-ring binder paper instead of the normal stapled booklet. As the system grows and changes, and new material is added, we will issue new pages to replace the old material to all our registered customers free of charge. In short, we are offering a game system, not just a game. Players will not have to search around for "official errata" or new scenarios anymore. It will be sent to them automatically.

Lastly, I would like to extend my appreciation to the cadre of gamers who have fought with me on the East front. With this, my latest offering in *Pas De Calais*, I welcome you to the West.

## Designer's Notes

The first decision that a designer usually makes after he has chosen a subject to work on is setting the scale of the battle. The entire gaming system and its simulation mechanics will hinge on this question, and it is important to note that a designer must also consider budgetary constraints which will serve to limit the physical size of the components

available for the game. In the case of *Pas de Calais*, the raw material available for the design amounted to a mapboard playing area which could not exceed 32 by 40 inches, six to eight hundred playing pieces, and a rule booklet of roughly 28 pages.

The original design for the game was already well outside these boundaries when first produced in 1986. It was comprised of two 24 by 36 maps, and well over a thousand counters on regiment and battalion level. Thus the first thing that had to be done when the game entered the development stage was to pare down the components so that they would fit into the budget of a small company trying to make a start in a very competitive and limited market.

In the beginning the temptation to tie the Normandy Campaign to the Calais game was great. Would the players accept a purely hypothetical design on WWII? There were other titles published along these lines, such as *Sealowe* and operation *Olympic* by SPI, but these games would not number among the top sellers in the industry. Though virtually every contemporary game published from *Sixth Fleet* to *Next War* was hypothetical, it seemed that gamers were less likely to permit a designer to tamper with the historical outcomes of WWII, long since etched in stone and depicted in hundreds of games to date.

The original scale of the game, roughly three miles per hex, was tinkered with and new maps drawn which would comprise both the Normandy and Calais beaches. The rationale was to give the gamer the full range of options available to both sides on attack and defense when considering an invasion of France. This change was dramatic and threatened to completely alter the complexion of the original design. In the end it was decided that since an invasion at both sites was very unlikely, the players would be operating on only one of these two map areas at a time, rendering the second beach area useless and not allowing for enough playing space on the remaining map. I was back to the same question the Allies faced — where would the simulation land? If Normandy was to be included, Calais had to go, so the decision did not take long. Patton would lead the assault at Calais.

This decision now opened both maps up again for the single beach area, and with some minor trimming and offsetting of the maps, it became possible to present a playing area of reasonable depth on the original scale of three miles per hex. The maps were drawn from a direct projection of a Michelin road map, with minor alterations to account for terrain variations in the 1940s and to allow certain features to better conform to the hexagon grid. The Calais design had a new look, but was still essentially the same game as the original finished in 1986.

The next consideration was the countermix. In this I was working from a personal bias, preferring the counters in my games to be clean, simple, and uncluttered with a great deal of unnecessary and irrelevant color or data. Including regimental and battalion identification numbers on each piece may add a little flavor to the game and demonstrate that the designer has taken the time to look up the numbers, but beyond that, if the specific unit ID is not an essential

ingredient in the gaming system, it is irrelevant. I made the decision early on to produce the counters with a simple division ID number, unit type symbol, and only data relevant to the system — no setup hex numbers or chrome.

The next question was: "How many?" The original counter mix included all of the independent tank, AT, and artillery units on both sides in battalion size units. Thus the average Allied infantry division was pushing ten to twelve counters and the US armored divisions had all of the tanks on battalion level also. Producing the counters this way meant that fewer divisions could be included in the mix, and it would be impossible to include units for the 1943 scenarios on the German side. Beyond this economic constraint, I noticed that players would tend to stack their battalions anyway, creating maneuver elements that were closer to regiments and brigades, when considering the stack as a whole. This was the only way they were going to get sufficient combat strength for effective play on both attack and defense. Thus the decision to move to a simple regimental organization for the divisions made sense on both counts. It replaced the stacks of battalions with a single counter, and fit nicely into the budget target of 600 heavy-stock playing pieces.

The mix was redone and tested in the prototype with good results. The original "feel" of the game was not altered, and the playing board was much less crowded and easier to manage without the cumbersome need to stack. The anti-tank battalions and artillery units became values instead of counters, and were printed on the HQ counter for each division. Corps level units were either grouped into discrete brigade-sized units which represent two or more battalions, or eliminated altogether and depicted by a simple support track mechanic. The end result was a clean, simple countermix with more room for new divisions and less clutter on the board.

At this point something needs to be said about the manner in which the units were assigned their combat ratings. In general, a three-battalion regiment was given a class A rating, though some German regiments being reduced to two battalions were assigned a class B rating. The quality of the troops was accounted for by the Division HQ ratings for offense and defense, and by assigning the unit tactical rating. Values were calculated using formulas presented by Colonel T.N. Dupuy in his *Quantitative Judgment Analysis Method* (QJM.). The morale and performance of each division was further tailored by the Division ratings, which were largely derived by analyzing engagements in which the division actually fought and through the historical research on the Normandy campaign. Players may be surprised to find seasoned divisions like the British 51st Highlanders to be rated quite low, but this division performed very poorly in the Normandy Campaign. On the German side a few infantry divisions that were actually three-regiment organizations were pared down to two regiments, under the assumption that the third regiment was retained in its original defense position to man the coastal front.

The infantry divisions were relatively easy to construct, but creating the panzer and armored formations led to some

interesting decisions. Three basic mechanized symbols were used in most armored divisions, and they are interpreted differently in this game than the actual military-type symbol. The pure armor symbol in the allied divisions represents a "tank-heavy" formation with minimal infantry support. The number of actual tank battalions in the unit were factored at a rate of two armor points per battalion. Thus the pure armored unit in the American 2nd Armored division represents three battalions of tanks. The Armored Cav symbol represents a mixed formation with emphasis on the armor. The single infantry slash in the symbol will actually mean that one battalion of infantry is depicted in the counter, with the rest of the regiment as pure armor. Combat Command B of the US 2nd Armored is therefore an organization of one infantry and two tank battalions. Similarly, the Mech infantry symbol represents an infantry-heavy formation with some armored support, perhaps from a single tank battalion or tank destroyer unit along with two battalions of infantry.

Though the German panzer division was a three regiment organization, it seemed unrealistic to depict it with the usual pure armor regiment and two panzer grenadier regiments. The panzer regiment normally fielded two battalions of tanks, and one would operate with each grenadier regiment. Thus the German Mech infantry units are rated with strong armor factors because the panzer battalions were presumed to be attached. The discrepancy between similar regiments of the same division is accounted for by the fact that some units were tracked, while others were using trucks for transport. Also, by 1944 the panzer divisions all had at least one panther battalion along with the normal Pz IVs. Grenadier regiments which are rated with a tank value of 5 are presumed to have the panthers operating with them. The German tanks were given an "edge" over their allied counterparts, with a battalion of Pz IVs rated at 2 armor points, Panthers at 3, and Tigers at 4. The third counter bearing the armored cav symbol is a conglomerate of the division recon battalion, mobile anti-tank elements, and perhaps a company of tanks for good measure. In general, units with mobile infantry were given higher tactical ratings to simulate the effects of combined arms. If the infantry was operating in halftracks, the ratings are higher yet, as in *Panzer Lehr*, which had all of its infantry in tracked AFVs.

The original design concept of cross-indexing a unit combat class rating with a division offensive rating remained unchanged. This mechanic made it unnecessary to backprint counters or provide hundreds of step-loss markers for every unit in the game. Again, the intention to produce a clean and uncluttered system was uppermost in mind. Players will recall how the early CRTs with exchanges and eliminations gave way to more sophisticated step reduction systems with "second generation" games. The division attrition system used in *Pas de Calais* was substituted for a step-reduction system and provided for a more playable game.

Step-loss systems quickly see the wholesale elimination of units, as a counter can have only two sides or "steps." It was rare, however, for a unit to be completely eliminated in

actual combat. Even after units were virtually destroyed, their regimental organizations still existed and remained in the order of battle, even if they were only shadows of their original size and strength. The premise behind the HQ attrition system assumes that losses sustained by one element of a division would be made good by other fresh elements as replacements and reinforcements were sent to threatened areas. Thus it is possible to sustain a regiment as a fighting organization at the expense of weakening the division as a whole if the player so elects. In light of the decision to go to the regimental organization, it was necessary to allow the units to have a reasonable staying power. Otherwise there would simply not be enough units to hold the line. Thus, if the player wishes, his units could absorb "hits" equal to the full defensive rating of the division, which is usually from six to ten points.

Now to the system itself. Depending on the "state of the art" at the time they were designed, most games will either use what I call a "sequential" movement/combat system to regulate play, or an "integrated" system. Sequential systems have all the units of one side moving prior to any combat, and then all combat resolved in a separate segment of the turn. Sometimes a second movement phase would be inserted to allow for exploitation after successful combats, but in the main these early games were fairly rigid until the reign of the great SPI era "monster games" ended. Though successful in their day, these systems always seemed too unrealistic and tedious to me. To have every unit on a given side moving up to its full capability and conducting combat was a feat seldom accomplished by real battlefield armies. Beyond this, returning to the end of the line after a two hour movement phase and trying to remember just how you planned to attack a given hex was cumbersome.

By the late '70s and early '80s a new "integrated" system began to appear which combined movement and combat into one process. The design work done for my first title, *Winter Storm*, used such an integrated system which was ideally suited to the fluid armor battles of the east front. Though far superior to the older sequential systems, this still saw most activity by one player completed while the other watched. In the *Westwar* system I decided to create an alternating initiative impulse system where the action constantly shifts from one player to another. The resulting effect was to produce a game where battles developed from the moves and countermoves each side made in the turn. Not only is this more realistic, but it is also much more engaging and involving for the players. They are forced to "think on their feet" and make decisions constantly throughout the turn.

The next problem I tackled in the system was the seemingly superhuman capabilities most older designs endow units with. In these games a unit's capabilities and strength remained fairly cohesive no matter what it was doing: attacking, retreating, marching, etc. Some designers tried to correct this system flaw with a flurry of "status" markers which most players are now familiar with. Counters to simulate engaged or disrupted units, fatigue, supply status and command failure all made positive and much needed contributions to the state of the art. But other concepts soon

appeared to replace them and help relieve the clutter on the board.

Many modern designs used a division "mode" system to simulate the fact that a unit has different capabilities depending on its deployment. It was only necessary to mark the HQ of the division with a mode marker to transfer certain movement or combat penalties to subordinate units. Why did designers of WWII games fail to employ some of the excellent innovation and leading edge design concepts pioneered in contemporary titles for their own games? WWII was a very mobile war on almost all fronts, but designers still kept releasing games tied to the older sequential play systems. It was time for a change.

In battle a division was usually given an "order" by the superior command and would assume the necessary deployment to carry it out. Units preparing for a major assault would strengthen the front, tie in with their artillery, preposition reserves, and coordinate fire support from other army assets. All of this took time, and it always bothered me that most units in WWII designs could race across the board and unleash their full combat power against the enemy.

I decided to use the basic concepts pioneered in modern designs where "modes" would limit a unit's movement and combat capability, but there was neither room for nor a desire for a host of mode markers in the counter mix. I reread accounts of battle engagements and overlaid a system of orders to simulate what the unit was doing. Each "order" would tailor the movement and combat of a division while fitting nicely into the shifting initiative impulses I had designed to regulate the flow of play. The operations chart quickly took shape and jived nicely with the operations the units undertook historically.

Full-blown assaults by divisions were relatively rare, and even when the division did commit itself to a major attack, it was usually a "two up, one back affair" with the regimental deployment, and often only one or two battalions would be committed from the front line regiments! This meant that the average "assault" might begin with four battalions and be reinforced to six if required. More often than this a division would be conducting an "advance" along its front, with a smaller portion of its total combat strength committed to the line of attack. Soon the operations chart had been fleshed out to its present form.

By chopping up the movement and combat capabilities enjoyed by most units each turn in other games, and metering them out in a graduated way, I tried to create a more realistic set of "operations" that a division might undertake. The time span of the game made it feasible to allow a division to receive new orders each impulse and eliminate the need for HQ mode markers. The operational fatigue rule was inserted to prevent players from pushing the same divisions over and over again without penalty. Each time a division operates it loses effectiveness.

The final result is a system in which both players engage one another like two chessmasters. How would a chess game be if one side got to move all his pieces once before the other could begin? The *Westwar* system was a refreshing alternative to its venerated though honored ancestors. ■

## PAS DE CALAIS Volume One of the Westwar Series (continued from page 11)

Sliding their combined arms team to 1651, they assault the airfield at 1751. The Allies have added their divisional artillery of 4 and two points of higher level support to augment the combat factors of the attacking units and achieve an odds ratio of 2.5 to 1. The tanks add a +3 DRM, which is partially offset by the defender's AT rating of -1 DRM. As the target hex is clear terrain, the Germans gain no defensive AT die roll modifier for terrain. The Allies throw in one last positive die roll modifier for tactical air to bring their modifier total to a net +3. This brings their die roll of three up to six on the 2.5 to 1 column cross indexed with the terrain code of zero for a clear terrain hex. The result of 4 forces the German defenders to disrupt, retreat two hexes, and suffer an additional attrition point on their HQ. On their die roll of 3, the German unit disrupts and retreats two hexes to the Headquarters and add yet another attrition point to the 331st. The Allies advance to secure the airfield and place a breakthrough marker on 1750, which they use later to cut off the 331st German regiments from Command Control. However, the Germans will probably pull the nearly worn out 331st out of the front line for refit rather than watch it destroyed.

*Pas de Calais* definitely forces players to act and react. The initiative player must consider the reaction player's responses to his operations. The reaction player should seek to disrupt the tempo of the initiative player forcing him to waste impulses and operations. The initiative player, especially the Allied player, should seek to gain breakthrough results and exploit any gaps that appear because they will probably not be there the next impulse.

At the strategic level, the Allies need to land such that they secure one port rapidly and a second port by about D+10 if they are to win. One port plus the beachheads and mulberries will provide them with enough Command points and additional divisions to maintain the initiative. Two ports will add an occasional Full Scale Operation and plenty of units for a refit rotation that will eventually overwhelm the Germans. The Allies need not fear a battle attrition with their 6:1 advantage in refitting, in fact, they should encourage it.

Armor is a real spearhead in this game, providing major punch in strength, but largely through die roll modifiers. Armor attacks against exposed infantry may see the defender remove the regiment rather than take multiple attrition points against the HQ, as well as set up a breakthrough and a possible exploitation into the defender's rear. One impulse and an opening, and a mechanized division can be halfway to Germany or down to the beaches before you know it.

All in all, *Pas de Calais* may suffer from some image problems, and its alternative history topic may not interest some people, but the Westwar Series will later include Normandy and more of the historical French battles as well as a longer and more comprehensive treatment. My advice is to get in now on a great game and a great game system. *Pas de Calais* may be the sleeper of the 1988 lineup. ■

## Historical Alternatives: 1943 vs. 1944 Calais vs. Normandy

### PAS DE CALAIS

by Christopher Cummins

By late 1942 or early 1943, the Americans believed an attack on the French coast was militarily possible. As early as the ARCADIA conference in January 1942, the British put forth the idea of an attack against France to reduce the pressure on the Russians. Code named "SLEDGEHAMMER", it would have seen initial landings on a five brigade front between Dieppe and the Somme, building to a total of seven infantry and five armored divisions within a two to three week period. The British backed off the plan, however, stating the danger from the German Luftwaffe and U-boat attacks, the lack of adequate shipping, and the strength of the Axis forces relative to their own were too great.

These arguments would not hold up with a realistic military point of view. By mid-1942, both the U-boat and Luftwaffe threat had been eliminated as major determinants, and the Allies had the sealift capacity for a major invasion. Finally, as will be reviewed, the Axis forces were not as formidable as they appeared in the west, owing to their heavy commitment of troops and equipment in Russia. However, the British steadfastly believed that an early invasion would end in disaster and promoted a Mediterranean strategy beginning with the "GYMNAST" invasion plans for North Africa.

In April 1942, a second invasion plan was presented by General George Marshall and U.S. Secretary of War Henry Stimson, and was backed by General Eisenhower and much of the American military command. The Americans pressed for an invasion in 1943 under the code name "ROUNDUP." It was to be preceded by "BOLERO," a massive American buildup of troops and materials in England. ROUNDUP was to see a landing of three divisions on the French Coast between the ports of Le Havre and Boulogne, building up to ten to twelve divisions in a few weeks. The British supported BOLERO because of the materials that would have become available to them in the UK, but they opposed ROUNDUP for the same reasons they had discarded their own operation SLEDGEHAMMER. The British continued to believe that unless the German morale was cracked first, the Allies did not have a chance of succeeding against them in France. With GYMNAST actuated in the TORCH Landings to finish the Axis occupation in North Africa, it was clear that the British wanted a peripheral strategy. The Americans were against the British plans to attack Sicily and Italy, the "soft underbelly,"

considering it a needless waste of Allied manpower and equipment.

The British resources were limited, and Churchill knew it. An indirect strategy would focus those limited resources where the Axis forces were weaker (in the Mediterranean theatre), providing a good chance for battle victories, while still serving to drain Axis resources and forces from their main effort in Russia and lowering the morale of Germany and its allies, especially Italy.

Throughout the winter of 1942-43, Allied forces built up in England, even with the TORCH landings and fighting in Africa. By April 1943, the Allies had available a superior set of forces in almost every respect when compared with the German Army in the West. The Americans had assembled six infantry, two armored, and one airborne division by early Spring. Another airborne division was to be ready in July and three more infantry divisions in August. The three divisions earmarked for the Pacific could have been easily diverted to France for an invasion operation. Altogether, the Americans could have brought twelve divisions ashore with four or five in reserve to a August 1943 ROUNDUP.

Beyond the American contribution, the British could have provided at least nine infantry, four armored and one airborne division. Among the other Allies, the Canadians could have fielded three infantry and two armored divisions, and the French had three infantry and at least one armored division by September of 1943. Altogether, the Allies could have easily landed some twenty divisions in an August ROUNDUP with up to twenty more divisions available during the Fall for the liberation of France and a potential drive on Germany.

On the other side of the equation, British General Brooke reported that the Germans had forty divisions of their own and could build up against an Allied landing faster than the Allies, dooming the invasion to failure. The August 1942 disaster at Dieppe was used as an example of the tremendous difficulty of achieving a secure beachhead against professional German defenders. However, this was a small operation with limited objectives and no expectation of staying ashore. Further, it showed the folly of assaulting a port directly. An examination of the German order of battle reveals that they were much weaker than Allied intelligence believed. In April 1943, the Germans did have some forty-plus divisions along the Atlantic Wall and in the Western theater, but they were largely composed of second-line troops. Much of the infantry was

configured in light (understrength) divisions labeled "occupation" or "reserve." Several units had only two regiments, and almost all regiments were significantly understrength. These divisions were often thrown together out of cadres of burned-out units from the Eastern front and filled out with poorly trained *Kriemhilde* replacements, *Walkure* units, *Ost* battalions, and Kiwis (non-German "volunteers" or Germans who did not qualify for first-line units). Younger soldiers were replaced by older recruits and sent East for the critical 1943 campaign. Many divisions were reduced to seven infantry battalions and average company strength was 30-40% below normal. Clearly, the Germans were using the west as a reserve area, believing the Allies would not attack their *Festung Europa*. Units were generally armed with older WWI artillery, or weapons captured from the French or Czechs. Many units had little organic transport, with some divisions relying entirely on civilian transportation or horse and cart to move their service elements. There were about fifteen to twenty divisions of this type and the rest were first-line units either refitting for rotation to Russia or were the few actually stationed for Atlantic Wall duty. The vaunted Panzer divisions in France were severely understrength, fielding only twenty to sixty tanks per division, while the vast majority, and the newest tanks, were shipped off to Russia for Kursk. Even the SS Panzers, which would prove themselves tough defenders in 1944, were only beginning training in 1943.

Clearly, the German strength present in the west was insufficient to combat the possible ROUNDUP operation without canceling the Eastern offensive and transferring significant forces to France. The Axis forces across the Channel were only just beginning to dig in behind their Atlantic Wall, and both the strength and morale of the Germans and other Axis forces in the West were questionable. Still, the Dieppe raid shaped Allied thinking. The concern that the invasion would fail, with the loss of men, equipment, and morale, overshadowed the rewards of an early end to the war. The British fear was particularly for the American forces, for which they had little regard. They cited Kasserine as an example, claiming that the Americans were not ready to face the "real" German army in France. Yet, while green Americans did suffer initially against some of the best and most experienced Panzer troops under Rommel, they held the line and the field by the end of Kasserine. With hindsight, it is clear that the US forces suffered undue criticism as a result of this engagement, and that actually they did quite well for their first major effort, demonstrating great tactical flexibility under trying circumstances.

But the British refused to take the risk. Even if the Allies did have the units needed for the assault, how would they get them there and keep them supplied? They asserted that the shortage of landing craft would make an attack on France impossible, but this was only because of the diversions to the Mediterranean and the Pacific. A look at the operations that the Allies actually did conduct in the Summer of 1943 reveals an amazing capability. In July, they landed seven and a half divisions in operation HUSKY against Sicily. One hundred

and sixty thousand troops took part in that attack along with 14,000 vehicles, 600 tanks, and 1800 guns. Compare this to the figures for OVERLORD in 1944 and the Allied capability becomes apparent. (Six divisions with 176,000 men, 20,000 vehicles, 1500 tanks, and 3,000 guns.) The HUSKY operation was not as big, but it clearly was in the same league with OVERLORD and could have been applied to the French coast. In Sicily, the Americans proved their mettle against the best the Germans had available. Consider what might have happened had they gone against the weakened defenders of France.

The military facts all add up to a clear Allied potential for invasion in 1943. By diverting forces to Italy, the Allies gained little. After the African disaster, the Italians could have contributed little to the defense of France, and were essentially out of the war, other than to defend themselves weakly.



German coastal artillery. (Ullstein)

The last argument, that of allowing the Russians to bleed the enemy in the East so that resistance in France would be lessened, is eliminated by examining the tremendous improvement in German troops and defenses in the West by 1944. In the Summer of 1943, the Allies would have faced four or five understrength Panzer formations with older and fewer tanks that their own tanks were quite capable of overcoming. The chief conclusion to be drawn was that the decision to wait another year was largely political. And so the opportunity was lost.

What of the strategic possibilities for 1944? By the end of 1943, everyone knew what the final result would be; it was

just a matter of when and at what cost. As winter and spring 1944 passed, tension mounted in Europe, with the expectation that an invasion was now imminent. All eyes seemed to be on Pas De Calais, which had been subjected to the scrutiny of the Allied planners as early as 1942. The French destination of the most direct route across the Channel, the beaches of Calais offered the possibility of rapid turnaround in the sealift forces, which might enable a speedy buildup after the invasion. An attack there also opened the most direct route to the heart of German V1 and V2 missile sites ready to unleash their barrage on England as well as Paris, and to Germany's Ruhr Valley industrial complex. The major ports of Le Havre and Antwerp flanked the invasion area, which itself was straddled by a series of smaller ports at Dieppe, Boulogne, Calais and Dunkirk. These facilities, combined with the mobile "mulberry" ports the Allies planned to bring with them, promised more than enough support to sustain ten to twelve divisions ashore in the first month of the campaign. The main disadvantage of this choice was that it seemed too obvious and direct. Allied planners quickly learned that the German defensive dispositions favored Calais, and also had the attention of Hitler, and later Rommel, who believed the invasion would likely come there.

The second alternative was the historical site at Normandy, which was chosen largely because it provided good beaches and a large port at Cherbourg, and a weaker defensive front than Calais. The actual invasion achieved complete

levels for operational planning. In a quirk of fate which played directly into the Allied deception, Roenne decided to double his actual estimate of enemy divisions, expecting that it would be halved to the accurate figure by the SD. In fact, the officer responsible for the undervalued reports was transferred, and at the same time Roenne's doubled estimate was suddenly accepted as accurate. This led the German planners to believe that there were some eighty divisions assembling in England for an invasion of France, when in actuality it was closer to forty. When the Allies landed at Normandy, the Germans thought they were seeing only a diversionary attack, and that the "real" invasion was still coming at Pas de Calais, an error that cost them the campaign.

During the preceding weeks before June 6th, Hitler had ordered the strengthening of the Normandy front based on a "hunch." Rommel was also giving the area a second look and was slowly pushing his mobile divisions forward toward the coast in accordance with his belief that an invasion must be met and defeated on the beaches. The German high command had been bickering over the deployment of the Panzer Divisions for months. While Rommel wanted to fight on the beaches, Runstedt and Geyr wanted to retain the Panzers further inland for a decisive counterattack. In the end, Hitler divided up the Panzer divisions among the three generals in such a way that neither plan could succeed.

While Rommel managed to position his three divisions to within a few hours' march of the beaches, it is interesting to

note that both the 2nd Panzer and the 116th Panzer were covering the Pas De Calais region, with the 21st at Caen near the Normandy site. It is also interesting that the so-called "OKW" reserve divisions of Panzergruppe West were not concentrated in any central location, rather they were dispersed over a 300-mile front in a second echelon of defense. This wide dispersal of the decisive "counterattack" force is testimony to the extent to which the Germans remained un-



surprise, largely because of the tremendous credibility of the threat to Calais, a credibility reinforced by elaborate Allied deception operations, and the refusal of the German high command to see Normandy as more than a diversion until too late.

In one of the most crucial events that befell the Germans before D-Day, Roenne, a German intelligence master, had been frustrated by operatives in the SD (German intelligence organization), which consistently downplayed the information he sent it about the Allied buildup in England. His data was apparently being halved before being passed up to higher

certain of the allied intentions. If Rommel had had his way, Normandy would have been beefed up considerably and Panzer forces would have been positioned much closer to the beaches, making Pas de Calais a more attractive target for its strategic value. In the end, Normandy was chosen for its tactical advantages, as well as the expectation of significantly fewer losses. The Allies lucked out in some respects on slow German reactions. They might well have been bottled up on the Cherbourg peninsula in another Anzio, or even driven off the coast, had the Germans reacted swiftly. In the end, history has determined the outcome, but we, as gamers and students of history, will never stop exploring the alternatives and asking, "What If?"

Rommell observes landing-craft traps. (Ullstein)



## HITTING THE BULL'S EYE

by Steve Winter

I find it immensely interesting that when I first started revising the *Sniper!* and *Patrol* games in 1985, there were only two other wargames (that I am aware of) that covered modern combat at man-to-man scale. Since then, at least three more have been published (two of which, like the *Sniper!* game, were based heavily on previously published games). Yet, despite this surge of man-to-man games, very few articles have been published about any of them.

For anyone unfamiliar with it, the *Sniper!* game uses a ground scale of two meters per hex, a time scale of thirty seconds to five minutes per turn, and a unit scale of one man per counter. The game focuses on soldiers rather than equipment. An understanding of the dynamics of fire and movement is essential to success in the game.

Currently, there are three games in the line: the *Sniper!* game, which deals in broad strokes with man-to-man combat in all theaters of World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and modern Europe; *Hetzer*, which covers in detail the fighting on the western front in World War II; and *Special Forces*, which focuses on elite units in modern settings. A fourth game, *Bug Hunter*, is currently in production. It examines the popular science fiction theme of embattled humans threatened by vicious alien creatures in space and on the ground.

This article addresses some of the common problems that must be overcome during a *Sniper!* scenario and provides some guidelines to players on how to get the most out of their soldiers and weapons during the game. Besides this general advice, specific pointers are in-

cluded on one of the more common situations: assaulting and defending a building. But first, the beginning.

### Organizing the Squad

The first, and perhaps the most important, decision each player has to make is how to organize his squad. Each situation places its own restrictions on deployment, but the tactical guidelines that follow can be applied universally.

The first stage in organizing is planning. Look at the scenario and decide what the best course is for achieving victory. Do you need to attack? Does the terrain allow long-range fire support? How much time can you afford to spend fighting and how much must be spent maneuvering against an objective?

Many players make the mistake of assuming that, in a game as tactical as *Sniper!*, the situation changes too rapidly for any overall plan to be effective. It's true that the tactical situation can change alarmingly in a single turn, but that doesn't make planning unnecessary. A plan is every bit as important in a *Sniper!* scenario as in an operational or strategic game. The player who approaches the game with the attitude, "I'll just shoot and see what gives," is the player who probably is going to lose.

Once you have a plan, the squad can be organized to carry it out. Proper organization is crucial to success. Remember that a squad leader (whose role the player fills) is primarily a manager. The most important part of his job is knowing the strengths and weaknesses of each soldier under him and assigning each soldier to a job that suits his ability.

Toward that end, organize the squad into two elements: a maneuver (or assault) element and a fire support element.

Maneuver is the more dangerous of the two jobs. Soldiers with activation ratings of one, two, and three belong in the maneuver element. With their low activation ratings, these soldiers can operate independently or in small teams. They react quickly to enemy moves and take advantage of mistakes. You can rely on them to perform well in any situation.

Soldiers with high activation ratings — four, five, and six — belong in the fire support element, along with the squad leader and the squad's automatic weapon (machine gun or automatic rifle). These soldiers tend to do very little of anything if left to themselves. But with their squad leader nearby to kick them into action, they can provide excellent covering fire.

If most of your machine pistols are in the hands of soldiers with activation ratings of four or more, consider switching the roles of the two groups. Two or three machine pistols can give your maneuver element tremendous punch.

Organizing your squad this way allows maximum flexibility and guarantees that you will get the best performance from each soldier.

### Placing and Using Weapons

The various weapons of the *Sniper!* game have differences that go beyond the Firepower table. Often, putting the right weapon in the right place can achieve an effect far greater than its firepower would suggest.

Rifles are not really meant for killing enemy soldiers in offensive action. Their presence on the battlefield is supposed to discourage enemy

soldiers from getting too close to friendly soldiers. At the ranges depicted in the *Sniper!* game, however, the enemy is already too close. At such short range, rifle fire can be quite deadly. This forces the enemy to be careful and keep his head down. Don't expect rifles to inflict many casualties; they're too easy to hide from. Always assign a few riflemen to protect the machine gunner. If nothing else, at least that means someone is available to pick up the MG if the gunner is killed.

Machine pistols are primarily assault weapons. Put as many MPs into the maneuver element as possible. They are murderous at point blank range (10 hexes or less). Machine pistols are also excellent for opportunity fire because of their high firepower. They have two dangerous weaknesses: they tend to run out of ammo at inopportune times, and they can't shoot through interior walls. Nothing can be done about the first problem. The second problem can be sidestepped with grenades.

Machine guns dominate the firefight. Expect most of the killing to be done by machine guns. With its high firepower, a machine gun is lethal at any range. Don't feel compelled to haul it in close to the enemy. Always fire it prone or with a supporting ledge to avoid the reduced firepower penalty. Always assign a loader; the firepower that you gain by guaranteeing that your MG won't run out of ammo far exceeds what you lose by taking a rifleman out of the firing line. Always protect your machine gunner; it is almost never worth trading his life for an enemy rifleman. More than anyone else, the machine can afford to use quick fire. His firepower is so high that he probably won't notice it's been reduced for quick firing.

Automatic rifles can be irritating. They are supposed to fill the role of a light machine gun, but they have less firepower and also tend to run out of ammunition at the worst possible times. Still, the same guidelines apply to their use as to machine guns. It's the best weapon you have, so use it as much as possible and protect it as best you can. (Some people have asked what qualifies a weapon to be an automatic rifle. An AR is any light automatic weapon that is primarily clip fed: the Browning automatic rifle, Bren light machine gun, Nambu light machine gun, and DP 1928 are all ARs.)

Shotguns are just big rifles. The best place for a shotgun is covering a door, staircase, or corridor — places where an approaching enemy will be funneled through a single hex and forced to either slow down or stack. If he stacks, a shotgun blast should kill or incapacitate everyone in the hex. Besides this, the terror aspect of a shotgun is sometimes more useful than the shotgun itself; some players are irrationally afraid of shotguns.

Assault rifles (abbreviated AW for lack of anything better) change the complexion of the game considerably. Suddenly, with their inclusion, everyone has tremendous firepower. Ap-

proaching within 20 hexes of the enemy is extremely dangerous in modern scenarios. Assault rifles should use automatic fire most of the time (especially with the revised standard rule that prevents automatic weapons from firing on the zero firepower column of the CRT). AWs definitely should be quick-fired almost exclusively. To do anything else is suicide.

**G**renades are the most dangerous weapons in the game. Machine guns kill more people, but grenades inflict more casualties. Consider: grenades are the only weapons that can attack unseen enemies; grenades attack everything within their burst radius; grenades stun people even if they have no other effect.

The best way to use grenades is in salvos. Instead of having one soldier throw one grenade, have three or four soldiers throw grenades simultaneously. An attack that heavy should clear any location.

You get the most effect from your grenades by throwing them at the beginning of the turn rather than the end. Stunned soldiers recover at the end of the turn, so by throwing your grenades early in the turn you ensure that enemy soldiers will be stunned longer. Defensive grenades are usually preferable to offensive grenades because their larger burst radius stuns more soldiers.

Be very careful when throwing grenades. They can scatter back and stun or wound your own soldiers. This is a particular danger in urban scenarios where soldiers try to throw grenades through a window just across the street. The street is only four hexes wide. With a -2 modifier for throwing through a window, a bad dice roll can easily drop that grenade right at your man's feet. Whenever possible, drop your grenades through windows and doors instead of throwing them. That way your soldiers aren't exposed to any blast or counterattack and there is no danger from scatter.

If the enemy is out of throwing range, or in the upper floors of a building, use rifle grenades instead. Too many players see that a rifle grenade takes two or three rounds to prepare and decide that the weapon is useless. But its accuracy and range make the rifle grenade one of the most powerful weapons in the game, despite its slow loading time.

Don't forget about smoke grenades, either. The randomness of the smoke pattern makes them somewhat unreliable. The solution, as with fragmentation grenades, is to throw three or four at once. This should crisscross any open ground with enough smoke to cover your movement. Or, if your enemy is in a building, throw the smoke through the window right into the enemy position. It will obscure their vision just as effectively as it would in the street, it lasts longer, and it isn't subject to the vagaries of the directional die roll.

Everything that applies to grenades applies in spades to grenade launchers. A GL allows

you to fire grenades farther and more accurately than you can throw them, and much faster than you can fire rifle grenades. If your squad has a grenade launcher, use it. It should be firing as fast as possible at anything it can see. (If you find yourself in the distinctly uncomfortable position of not having a grenade launcher when your enemy does, you don't have many options. Either stay well out of his line of sight, or knock out the grenade launcher, or charge until you are inside the grenade launcher's minimum range. With plenty of guts and luck, you have a small chance.)

Satchel charges, on the other hand, are not just big grenades (except in the Raid scenario, where they work dandy for stunning a large portion of the enemy). The satchel charge's power to create a breach is more important than its burst radius. The best place for a breach is between adjoining buildings. There, the attackers have cover to assemble before their attack. If you are above the enemy, use your satchel charge to breach the floor and dump grenades through to the lower level. If you are falling back, set the satchel charge to cover your retreat. When the enemy sees it, he should at least slow down. If your opponent is cautious and you suspect he will wait for the satchel charge to explode before advancing, give it a two or three turn delay. He'll lose his mind waiting for the thing to go off.

Rocket launchers are useful for much more than just attacking vehicles. Use them anywhere you would use a grenade launcher or rifle grenade, or even a satchel charge. Their one drawback is backblast. Look for places where your rocket launchers can be fired before committing them to any location on the map. Many buildings are just too small to safely house a rocket launcher.

The flamethrower's power is as psychological as it is physical. Its use is voluntary, and it is interesting to see what sort of player opts to use a flamethrower. Used carefully against a fortified position, a flamethrower is devastating. Used carelessly, it is also devastating, but against its own squad. In either case, the results are dramatic.

The flamethrower's strength is that it ignores terrain modifiers. It is as effective against a pillbox as it is against a clump of grass. It also doubles its victim's preservation penalties. A squad that is subjected to flamethrower attacks will collapse very quickly. The flamethrower's weakness is that it is very difficult to bring a flamethrower to bear against the enemy. Your opponent is going to throw everything he can against an approaching flamethrower, and the unfortunate FT operator can't even fall prone to protect himself.

The only defense for a flamethrower is cover and movement. It is essential that the flamethrower have a covered approach to its firing position. Until it is in position, keep it moving. And provide lots of covering fire. An

enemy with his head down can't shoot at your flamethrower.

Another interesting use for the flamethrower is in ambush. Remember, it can be substituted for a rocket launcher in any scenario. If your opponent is driving into the scenario in trucks, a flamethrower can be much more effective than a rocket launcher. A single burst into a tightly-packed truck will push a fragile squad past its preservation limit. And don't overlook the possibility of putting a flamethrower in a second story, third story, or rooftop hex. A flamethrower can be fired from positions where a rocket launcher cannot, and with the advantage of elevation it can fire down into the passenger compartment of a halftrack.

Mines serve the same purpose in the *Sniper!* as they do in any other tactical game — they deny the use of advantageous terrain to the enemy. Slopes and treelines are obvious locations for mines, as are any other covered approaches to your position. If you are convinced

you will be overrun, seed mines throughout your position and then fall back, drawing the enemy into the trap. Put two or three mines in crucial hexes; you might get lucky and nail some sucker who thought, "Lightning never strikes the same place twice."

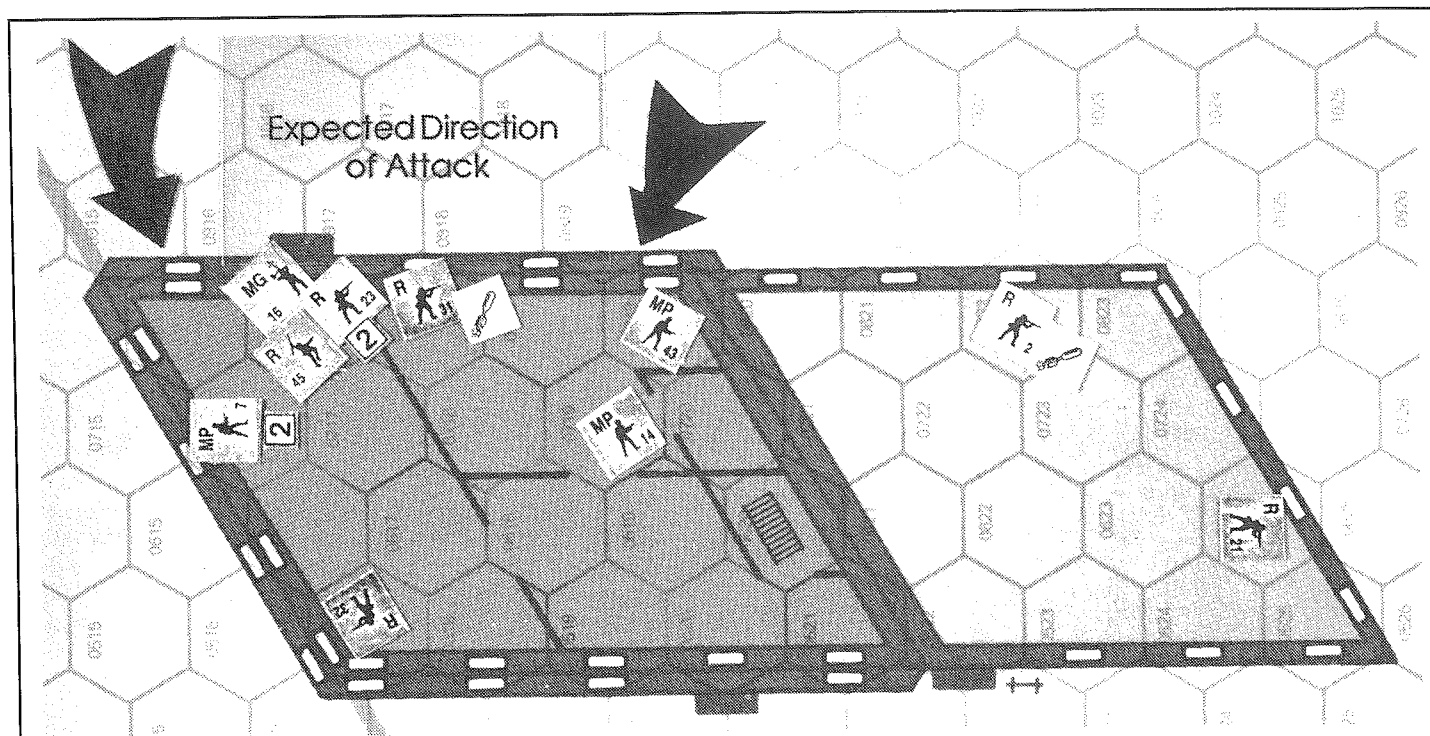
Claymore mines are tremendous if the enemy blunders into them. To assure maximum effectiveness, group your claymores so their burst zones overlap. Alternately, arrange them so that the first blast motivates the enemy to take cover in the area that will be affected by the second blast. Heavy cover reduces a claymore's effectiveness significantly, so try to position the mine to take advantage of unavoidable open ground. In all cases, a human trigger is much more reliable than a tripwire. Use tripwires only where a human operator has no safe overwatch position.

The inclusion of artillery in the game is something of a concession to the completists. At the extremely short ranges typical of *Sniper!*

scenarios, artillery is awfully hard to use effectively. Its effects in the game are highly abstracted. The most profitable game use of artillery is to drop one or two rounds per turn slightly behind the enemy position to stun as many enemy soldiers as possible. Be extremely careful with your targeting, however, as even a small mistake can be disastrous. And don't forget about smoke rounds, especially if you're attacking. They'll provide good cover and at least assure that you don't blow up any friendly soldiers.

## Understanding Geography, Terrain, and Tactics

The *Sniper!* maps represent a wide range of terrain but they all have something in common: severe line-of-sight restrictions which allow combatants to get very close to each other before opening fire. Examining the types of terrain prevalent on the maps, and their effects, will improve your game immensely.



### BLOCK DEFENSE

A German squad is defending this small, two-building block. The attack is expected to come from the top of the diagram. Building A has no interior cover so it cannot be defended for long. If the enemy has satchel charges, however, it provides a covered assault position against the rest of the block. The Germans have occupied the building to keep the enemy out at least temporarily. Two soldiers were sent to avoid isolation. When the battle gets too intense, they will try to fall back to the main building, under cover of

smoke if necessary. From their setup positions, they can get into room D in one move.

Room B is the most likely target for the initial assault because it has a door facing the enemy. Even though the door provides the best forward-facing cover, it is a risky position for the machine gunner because of the room's vulnerability. The gunner and loader will have to fall back when the assault mounts. Rifleman 32 watches the back of the building for flanking moves and can turn to attack anyone coming through the door.

Room C has no outside doors so it is fairly secure. Adjoining room E provides a final fall-back position. The squad leader is present to activate soldiers 31 and 43.

Soldiers 7 and 23 are on the second floor. The advantage to being upstairs is that a single grenade can't stun or injure everyone in room B. From their setup positions, both soldiers can reach the stairs in a single move.

Riflemen 2 and 31 should be armed with rifle grenades to break up enemy concentrations before the assault gets rolling. ■

The cities depicted on *Sniper!* maps are strange combinations of fantasy and reality. On one hand, they seem to be heavily damaged and fought over: there are no doors in the doorways, no glass or shutters in the windows. At the same time conditions suggest a city that is in good repair: there is no furniture debris in the rooms, no rubble in the streets, no shellholes in the walls. All of these are simplifications for the sake of playability.

All three categories of urban terrain are represented on the maps (if you include *Hetzer* and *Special Forces*): isolated buildings surrounded by relatively open ground; detached buildings clumped into groups, but with narrow walks and alleys between; and dense blocks where buildings share common walls, separated from other blocks by wide thoroughfares.

The best position in urban terrain is to be prone in a doorway. This gives a defense multiple of four. A window by itself yields only defense multiple two, which is some protection against a rifle, but has no effect on automatic weapons. Being prone by itself is the same thing.

The defensive power of buildings comes from the fact that you can hide behind a wall and be completely protected against enemy fire. The problem is surviving when you pop your head up to shoot. And the solution is to use quick fire and quick throw instead of direct fire and throw.

Many players underestimate the usefulness of quick fire and quick throw. They see the reduction in firepower and accuracy and decide that these are desperation measures. In fact, there is seldom a time in city fighting when a soldier should be attacking any other way. The only excuse for performing direct fire is that you are willing to gamble your soldier's life that there will be no return fire.

In fact, quick fire is quite a bargain. Using QF reduces your attacks to one-fourth of their usual firepower (each attack is halved and you can attack only half as often). But it also reduces your opponent's attacks to one-eighth of their usual firepower (he is halved for opportunity fire and quartered for shooting at a moving target) and leaves your soldier under cover at the end of the turn.

Consider a common situation: Two enemy soldiers are both behind window hexsides and within 10 hexes of each other. Your soldier is using quick fire. The enemy soldier can shoot at you only if he is prepared for opportunity fire. Assuming he is, his firepower is divided by 16 (halved for opportunity fire, halved for the window, and quartered for the moving target). If armed with a bolt-action or semi-automatic rifle, he is firing on the "1" column of the CRT and needs to roll an 11 to wound you. An assault rifle, automatic rifle, or machine pistol fires on the "3" column (needing a 10 to wound). In

return, your firepower is divided only by four (halved for opportunity fire, halved for the window). With a rifle, you attack on the "5" column (needing a 9 to wound). With an automatic weapon, you attack on the "15" column and need only a 6 to wound your target. And when the exchange is over, your soldier will again be hidden behind hard cover where the enemy can't get at him.

The same argument applies to grenades. The grenade is more likely to scatter when quick-thrown, but anyone who can shoot at you is exposed to the blast anyway; the grenade doesn't need to go through the window. And your soldier will again be hidden behind his wall by the time the grenade explodes.

Along with direct fire, many players seem fascinated by upper floors. There are a few cases where upper positions are superior to ground level, particularly during ambushes and stand-at-all-costs defenses. More often than not, however, upper floors become traps for soldiers who stay at their posts too long. If the enemy captures the ground floor of the building while half of your squad is upstairs, you can be destroyed piecemeal.

When springing an ambush in town, choose your targets with an eye toward blocking the road with wrecks.

The city is blind spot heaven. There's no excuse for being exposed to enemy fire unnecessarily. Use cover during your approach and assembly. At the same time, of course, try to disrupt enemy movements and deny crucial buildings to him. Machine guns are the best weapons for this type of work. Heavy machine guns are even better, if you're playing *Hetzer* or *Special Forces*.

If the sewer rule is in use, take advantage of it. Sewers are most useful for crossing dangerous streets without getting shot to pieces. Do not, however, try to move through a sewer directly into an enemy-held building. Unless your opponent is a fool, he will see you coming and annihilate your assault team with grenades.

Dense outdoor terrain is similar to city terrain, but the differences are crucial. Movement is extremely slow. Don't expect flanking moves to go unchallenged. Defense values are much higher, also, so don't expect to get many easy kills. Because the defense multiples are high, you can afford to be more aggressive with your machine gun, assuming it's set up in good protective terrain. Grenades will inflict fewer casualties because of the high defense multiples, but they still stun everything in their burst radius, so use them liberally.

Mixed terrain is characterized by islands of protective terrain surrounded by open seas of death. Movement is quick and good cover is generally available, so firefights are fluid. Protect your flanks and challenge the enemy's. Slopes are the best positions because they provide complete concealment when it's needed. Remember that slopes can also block line of

sight, allowing you to move safely through otherwise open ground. Finally, don't be reluctant to fall prone and crawl the last few hexes into firing position. It's better to get there a turn or two later than expected than never at all.

Open terrain is very dangerous. There is precious little cover, and it is all close to the ground. Movement is slow; expect to evade and crawl a lot. It is essential that you get either good cover or the first shot. If you surrender both to your opponent, you're in for a very rough time (and probably a short game). Firefights rarely happen at such close range in open terrain, and you'll see why when the bullets start flying. Stay out of grenade range if possible. Grenade range is probably only 10 hexes because everyone will be prone. Standing up in enemy line of sight to throw a grenade is suicidal. Keep your soldiers spread out and cover every possible approach; open ground that no one is watching is as good as covered ground for infiltrating. When in doubt, keep moving. And if things look bad, pour on the fire. The best defense in open ground is heavy fire. You'll be safe as long as the enemy is afraid to stick his head up.

Bocage is unlike any of the other terrain types. There is very little ebb and flow in bocage. Either you hold the hedgerow or you don't. If you get flanked, you must fall back. Always defend the back side of the hedgerow, not the forward side. Place foxholes in the bocage if you can. A foxhole in bocage is wonderfully safe. Place your Clear Terrain markers to create holes in the hedgerows that your soldiers can use to shift positions rapidly. And control the road if you can. The squad that controls the road has much more freedom of movement than its opponent. If you can't control the road, blow up an enemy vehicle and block it. Remember that you can buy six or seven mines for the price of a single rocket launcher and they are more likely to immobilize a vehicle than is a rocket.

## Follow Me, Boys

Your squad leader is the cornerstone of your squad. Choosing a good leader and using him correctly can easily double a squad's effectiveness.

Unfortunately, you don't always have a lot of control over who becomes the squad leader. It is important that all three candidates have the qualifications to be an adequate leader, at least.

The things to look for in a squad leader are his activation rating and his panic rating. No other abilities have any bearing on his quality as a leader.

The leader's activation rating should be two or three. Anything higher than a three means that he won't be active often enough to make much difference. And you don't want to waste your activation-one soldiers in leader positions; they are much more useful as fighters.

Even more important than his activation

rating is the leader's panic rating. This must be as low as possible; two is best, three is acceptable. A panic rating any higher than three means that your leader may spend much of the scenario panicked and absolutely useless to anyone. A leader with an activation rating of four and a panic rating of two probably will be more effective than one with an activation rating of two and a panic rating of four.

A leader serves two roles: he activates sluggish soldiers and rallies panicked soldiers. Of the two, the first is far more important. A panicked soldier will recover eventually on his own. A soldier with an activation rating of five or six may sit out an entire firefight without doing anything.

Always remember that your leader's job is to lead. He might never fire his weapon or throw a grenade in the entire scenario. There's nothing wrong with that if he is spending the time activating other soldiers instead. Every time your leader shoots at someone, he probably is exposing himself to enemy fire. If he gets plugged, you'll quickly find yourself in a lot of trouble. Keep him out of the line of fire so he can do the job you selected him to do.

## Isolation, Panic, and Preservation

Any one of these three conditions can be crippling. The best way to deal with them is to avoid them altogether.

Isolation is easy to avoid. Never send anyone anywhere alone. Three-man teams are best, but two will do. Isolated men move normally, so if someone does become isolated, either pull him back to rejoin the squad or send someone else to join him.

Panic is unavoidable and largely uncontrollable. It is also temporary, so try your best to weather it out. If a soldier bolts, get him into cover, even if that means moving toward the enemy. If the soldier panics in the open, cover his position with smoke until he can crawl to safety. The best location for the smoke is right in the panicked soldier's hex.





Use your leader to rally panicked soldiers only if that doesn't interfere with something more important, or the panicked soldier is in grave danger and your preservation limit is low.

The initial panic check can be used to your advantage if you get to fire the first shot. Move everyone into cover and then fire the shot. Your opponent probably will still have a significant portion of his squad in the open, where they will panic and be pinned. If you control the situation to that extent, it is always worthwhile triggering the initial panic check even if your shot has little or no chance to hit anything.







Don't ignore an enemy soldier just because he's panicked. He might recover at any time. And a panicked soldier who is killed or wounded counts against the enemy's preservation limit the same as anyone else.

## A WELL ORGANIZED SQUAD

### Maneuver Element

	1 - 3
	1 - 3
	3 - 3
	3 - 4

### Fire Support Element

	2 - 2	Squad Leader
	4 - 4	
	4 - 3	Assistant Squad Leader
	5 - 4	
	2 - 4	MG Gunner and Loader
	6 - 3	

This German squad is organized for maximum flexibility. All soldiers of the maneuver element are able to act independently. The squad leader can easily activate the men in the fire support element. If the machine gun is detached, the gunner activates the loader. Rifleman 21 was the third leader candidate. (Top number is the soldier's activation rating, bottom number is his panic rating.)

Preservation is the key to victory, even in scenarios where it isn't directly mentioned in the victory conditions. Never trade soldiers one-for-one unless your preservation limit is much higher than your opponent's. If your preservation limit is low, defense must take top priority. Counterattack only to inflict casualties, not to harass. Use grenades wherever possible.

If you have the misfortune to be pushed past your preservation limit in a scenario where that does not automatically end the game, your squad leader doubles in importance. Remember that every soldier he activates is eligible to perform any task the leader is eligible for. Even soldiers with activation ratings of five and six, who are normally rendered pretty useless by

preservation effects, can continue fighting if their leader's activation rating is sufficiently low.

## Vehicles

Vehicles are of the great unknown. You can play a scenario once and annihilate the enemy with just a tank, and the next time you play the tank is destroyed on the first turn before it can fire a shot. The big question surrounding vehicles is, how aggressive can you afford to be with them? The answer depends on how much they scare your opponent.

Don't even think about being aggressive with trucks. They aren't combat vehicles. The passengers are not only exposed to all attacks, but bunched into neat stacks. If your force is

equipped with trucks, drive real fast and hope you get lucky.

Halftracks and enclosed APCs are much better than trucks. Their machine guns give them some firepower and both the driver and passengers have some protection. They are still primarily transport and fire support, however. Don't try to overrun the enemy if he has any anti-tank weapons.

Tanks are the most ferocious of the vehicles, and therefore the most feared. As long as your tank commander doesn't make any mistakes, he should live a long time.

Mistake number one is leaving the tank opened up. Button down and swallow the penalties that entails. They aren't half as bad as getting the tank commander picked off by a sniper and watching the entire crew bail out.

Use your machine guns as much as possible. In all likelihood, your tank will be fighting infantry. That's what the machine guns are for. The main gun is for fending off enemy armor. Go ahead and use it if you have the time and the inclination, but the MGs are your primary anti-infantry weapons.

If the enemy has pillboxes, go after them with your tank. Driving over the pillbox destroys it, and a rocket launcher can't be fired from inside a pillbox.

Always watch out for rocket launchers. A shot into your flank or rear can knock out the tank at respectable range. There is no such thing as an ignorable threat.

Mines are even worse than rockets. They're cheap, they're invisible, and they're very reliable. Unfortunately, there's not much you can do to counteract mines except avoid them. Since you don't know where they are, avoiding them is tricky. You do know where they might be, however. Just look at the map, decide where you would most like your tank to be, and assume that that's where the mines are.

Don't forget that your tank also serves one other secondary, but potentially decisive, function. It creates temporary cover and line-of-sight obstacles wherever it goes. Having trouble getting across a street? Park your tank in it and cross behind it.

## Officer Candidate School

After all the specific advice of the preceding sections, some general advice is in order. These guidelines apply in all situations, offense and defense, to quality troops and conscripts.

You're not in a hurry. Only a few scenarios have turn limits. Assuming you aren't playing one of them, take your time and do things right. Coordinate your movements and attacks. One of the worst mistakes you can make is to rush into an unsupported assault because you hate to see soldiers sitting around doing nothing. They are doing something very important if they are waiting for their fire support to get into position.

Stay on the move and expose your soldiers

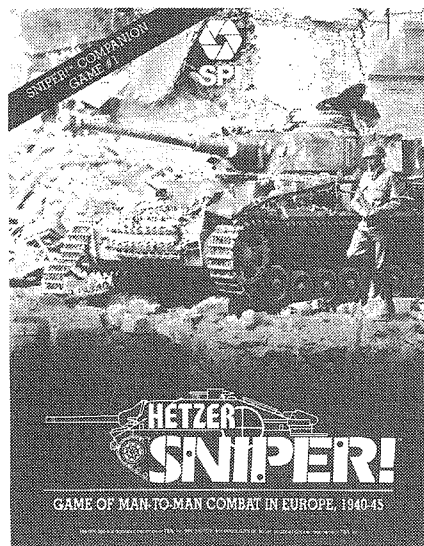
to enemy fire as infrequently as possible. Always use quick fire and quick throw in preference to direct fire and throw unless there is a reason to throw away one of your soldiers.

Have a plan. You can change it and adjust it in reaction to enemy moves, but think about it ahead of time. Ideally the best way to play a *Sniper!* game is to spend 15 minutes planning before playing the first turn and then play the game as quickly as possible. This is an ultra-tactical game. The more time you spend thinking and plotting during the game, the less real it feels. Encourage yourself (and your opponent) to think fast. You'll make more mistakes but you will also have more fun.

Keep track of your heavy weapons. Know where your machine gun, automatic rifle, grenade launcher, and rocket launcher are at all times. If these weapons aren't doing something important, it's time to either start shooting or start moving to a better position.

Avoid upper floors of buildings except where necessary. Ground floor allows much faster redeployment at only a small cost in visibility.

If your turn ends early (like when your first draw is the "6" chit), either place lots of sighting markers or get everyone moving. Moving is an excellent defense, because the Move marker stays on your soldier until the end of the turn, regardless of how many rounds your opponent gets. Sighting is risky. It gives you the option of shooting later in the turn but also leaves your



soldiers exposed to multiple counterattacks. An excellent alternative is to place the sighting markers defensively — on top of the sighting soldiers, not peering through a window or door. This leaves the soldier under cover but allows him to shoot at anyone who pokes his head through the window or door.

Don't rely too heavily on sighting markers and opportunity fire. Opportunity fire keeps the enemy honest — it makes him work for his

ground. But at the same time, it exposes your soldier to attack. A few well-placed grenades can make a shambles of your squad if you leave too many men sighting out the windows. Two or three markers is plenty to place during the Initial Sighting phase.

## Block Clearing

The Block Clearing scenario is the most fun and the most challenging of the *Sniper!* scenarios. Every offensive and defensive trick described in this article comes into play in this scenario. An examination of its ins and outs reveals a lot about how the game works. If you play the Block Clearing scenario well, you can play any of the scenarios.

This analysis of a block clearing operation is intended to show how the principles described in this article can be applied in the game.

The attack breaks into three stages: moving into position, getting into the building, and clearing the building.

Make maximum use of cover when moving into your assault positions. There is no reason why the defender should get to shoot at anything during this period of the game. If you clump soldiers together in a single room, expect a grenade to come through the window. If you plan to attack from more than one side, some of your soldiers will have a few turns to sit and smoke while the others complete their approach. Resist the temptation to start a fire-fight with only half your squad. By doing so, you hand the advantage to your opponent and allow him to concentrate against only a portion of your force. Splitting your squad in this scenario isn't a good idea anyway. The defender can easily isolate each group and prevent shifting between them.

As the defender, keep your eyes open while your opponent is deploying. He isn't going to allow you many opportunities to attack, but if he slips, let him have it. If he concentrates too much, toss a grenade. If he tries to cross a street, close it off with a machine gun. If he brings the tank too close, hit it with a rocket. If you jump to an early lead, you may demoralize your opponent enough to make him careless.

If they are available, both players should start preparing one or two rifle grenades right now.

Getting into the block is the most dangerous part of the assault. There is no safe way to cross a street, especially if the enemy knows you're coming and from which direction. The only way to get across safely is to suppress the defenders with fire and grenades, fill the street with smoke, and run for it. If you make that forward wall hot enough, the defender must fall back. Machine guns generate a lot of heat, as do grenades. This is a critical point in the game, so don't be afraid to expend ammo.

If the defender has soldiers on upper floors covering the street, they are hard to get at with

hand grenades. This is the realm of rifle grenades. If you have one or two prepared ahead, use them now to stun or wound the defenders in upper floors.

The defender can win the game right here. Slaughter the attacker in the street and he loses.

Have one or two grenades ready when you see the attack building. When the attacker pops his smoke, roll your grenades out the windows. The explosions should clear the smoke away from your walls and leave his mouth hanging open.

Remember those rifle grenades you were told to prepare? They should be positioned at the wall. When the smoke appears, get ready for opportunity fire. His smoke now protects you as much as it does him. Because of the smoke, attacking soldiers may not be able to get completely across the street in a single rush. When there's a nice group out in the open, fire the rifle grenade. Unlike a hand grenade, it detonates immediately — instant gratification.

If the attacker establishes a foothold, throw him back immediately. His men are vulnerable until they are reinforced. Two or three defending soldiers should be positioned in interior rooms adjoining those the enemy is likely to take. When the assault team gets inside, roll grenades through the door and cut them down with automatic weapons.

From what's been said to the defender, the

attacker should see that his only chance lies in generating such a volume of fire that no defenders remain in forward positions to oppose him.

Once the attacker gets into the block, expect some of the most vicious fighting imaginable. The grenade is king in this environment.

A king, of course, needs a queen, and she is the satchel charge. Satchel charges give the attacker flexibility. No longer do you have to fight your way through heavily guarded doors; you make your own.

Once in the building, there are two ways to clear it: top to bottom and bottom to top.

Bottom to top is more common because the ground floor is usually the first one captured. Clear that floor completely. Then, using machine guns or automatic rifles, fire through the ceiling at defenders above. When the area around the stairwell is clear, dash up to the next level and get out of the stairwell as soon as possible. Stairwells are death traps, so spend the least possible time in them. Repeat this procedure one floor at a time until you reach the roof.

Clearing from top to bottom requires a good supply of satchel charges. You can get at the top of the building from adjacent roofs or by making a heroic dash up a ladder. Once there, use a satchel charge to breach the floor. Dump grenades through to make sure it's safe, then clamber through the hole. If you make your breaches near the stairwell, you can use it to

descend safely instead of risking a jump.

Bear all this in mind when you are the defender. Cover the stairs with grenades and machine pistols. Shoot through walls and floors where necessary. Watch out for enemy soldiers moving up to areas where there are no doors — they probably have a satchel charge.

In room-to-room fighting, always operate in twos or threes to avoid isolation. Don't bunch up more than that or you'll attract grenades. To clear a room, follow this sequence: one soldier prepares a grenade, both soldiers move adjacent to the door or breach, drop the grenade through the door while the other soldier prepares quick fire, mow down the stunned survivors.

Of course, expect the enemy to do something during this ballet. He'll either drop a grenade of his own, shoot at you through the wall, or evacuate. If he drops a grenade (and you survive), you'll be stunned but he'll be unarmed. If he shoots through the wall, you have the advantage of movement and probably won't be hurt. If he clears out, you've accomplished something.

These are the basics. There is, of course, no substitute for experience. You can learn more by playing the game once than by reading this article ten times. If you forget everything else written here, remember this: if your opponent isn't squirming, you're doing something wrong. ■



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# **SNIPER!**™

## Designer's Notes

by Rick Swan

### **SPECIAL FORCES**

*Special Forces* is a simulation of modern commando and anti-terrorist warfare based on TSR's *Sniper!* game by Steve Winter, which in turn is a revision of SPI's original *Sniper!* designed by Jim Dunnigan. *Special Forces* examines military conflicts and terrorist operations in various hotspots around the

world. The game is intended to be user-friendly (as a stand-alone game, familiarity with the original *Sniper!* isn't necessary), playable in an hour or two, and interesting enough so it'll spend more time on a game table than on a shelf. TSR was also kind enough to keep the price down without skimping on components.

I was more or less given a free hand to set the scope of the game, so the first design decision was to establish parameters. It seemed it could go one of two ways — it could either focus on a few select forces in specifically chosen conflicts, or it could take a broader view and allow for forces from around the world to participate in a variety of situations. The first option would demand a more detailed and complicated system than I wanted, not to mention requiring the answers to questions I wasn't comfortable answering (Which nationalities should be included? What's a "typical" terrorist operation?). The second option was more attractive — not only would it give players a lot to pick from, it sounded like it'd be more fun to design and more like a game I'd like to play.

That decided, the next item on the agenda was cooking up a method to generate soldiers. If the squads were to have their own character, the soldiers needed unique abilities dependent

#### **New Scenarios for *Sniper!: Special Forces*** by Rick Swan

Following are new situations for the scenarios given in the *Special Forces* scenario book. All set-up and special rules for each scenario are presumed to be in effect.

##### **[126.0] Raid**

*Terror In Belgium*

Map: urban

Weather: Thick Fog or random Spring

Revolutionaries for Proletarian Action/FRAP (Alpha): terrorists; 6 MP, 3 SR, 1 MG, 1 FT, 2 SC, 1 truck; track D; pres 21

Belgium (Bravo): elite infantry; 8 AR, 4 AW; track C; pres 21

##### **[127.0] Assault**

*Contra Drive*

Map: rural; mixed terrain; shallow stream

Weather: Clear or random Summer

Contras (Alpha): 8 SR, 2 AW, 2 MG, 1 IFV; track F; pres 24

Sandinistas (Bravo): 12 SR, 1 HMG, 2 SC, 1 RL, 6 mine points; track E; pres 26

*War In India*

Map: rural; mixed terrain; shallow stream

Weather: Clear

Pakistan (Alpha): regular infantry; 9 AW, 3 SR, 3 MG, 2 IFV; track C; pres 30

India (Bravo): elite infantry; 8 AW, 2 MG, 2 RL, 10 mine points, 50 artillery points; track D; pres 24

##### **[128.0] Urban Siege**

*Manila Assault*

Map: urban

Weather: Clear

Moro militants (Alpha): guerillas; 5 BR, 6 AR, 2 RL, 4 SC; track E; pres 22

Philippines (Bravo): conscript infantry; 7 AW, 4 SR, 1 nest, 20 mine points; track F; pres 19

*Village Engagement: Bekka Valley*

Map: urban

Weather: Clear

Lebanese Shiites (Alpha): terrorists; 5 AR, 3 MG, 1 HMG, 2 FT, 1 GL, 3 SC, 1 truck; track E; pres 27

PLO (Bravo): terrorists; 6 BR, 2 AR, 1 MG, 1 GL, 1 nest, 20 mine points; track F; pres 18

##### **[129.0] Border War**

*Syria/Israel*

Map: rural; mixed terrain; shallow stream

Weather: Clear

Syria (Alpha): regular infantry; 9 AW, 3 MG, 1 RL, 2 SC, 2 APC, 15 mine points; track D; pres 25

Israel (Bravo): regular infantry; 4 SR, 5 AR, 1 HMG, 3 RL, 1 tank, 20 mine points; track E; pres 28

##### **[130.0] Strongpoint**

*Rebel encampment on the Gulf of Fonseca*

Map: rural; mixed terrain; shallow stream

Weather: Clear

El Salvador (Alpha): elite infantry; 10 AW, 1 MG, 1 HMG, 2 RL, 2 SC, 1 APC; track F; pres 28

Rebels (Bravo): guerillas; 5 SR, 5 AR, 1 HMG, 2 foxholes, 2 nests, 1 APC\*, 15 mine points; track E; pres 23

\* The APC is deployed behind the wooden building. All set-up rules for moving and fighting that apply to Bravo soldiers also apply to the APC.

#### **New Scenarios**

Following are new scenarios for *Special Forces*. Each scenario gives the situation being simulated, the set-up, special rules, and victory conditions, followed by orders of battle for several specific situations. Players can use the Build-Your-Own Squad rules from *Special Forces* to create situations of their own design based on these scenarios. The scenarios are experimental; players may wish to adjust the victory conditions and orders of battle to maintain balance. All standard, intermediate, and advanced rules are presumed to be in effect.

##### **A. Zero Hour**

An isolated squad must entrench and hold off the advancing enemy until the arrival of a friendly artillery barrage.

not only on their training, but also their nationality. Training is reflected in five possible troop types. Elite forces (such as the Green Berets and the Israeli Defense Force) are the world's best, with a subdivision of elite counterterrorists which are even better. Regular infantry (such as the U.S. Army) are a country's standard fighting men, while drafted civilians comprising the conscript infantry are less motivated and less effective. Guerillas (such as the Afghan Mujahadeen and the Nicaraguan Contras) are not as well organized or well equipped as formal armies. Finally, terrorists (such as the Basque ETA) are squads of organized zealots, unpredictable and highly motivated. Each of these troop types has specific modifiers for activation, panic, and combat abilities. Elite infantry, for instance, are generally more able than guerillas; terrorists are less likely to panic than conscript infantry.

Each of the 36 nations represented in the

game is capable of producing all five types of fighting men. Each nation has specific modifiers for four ability ratings (moving, firing, grenade throwing, and hand-to-hand fighting) along with modifiers for activation and preservation. Additionally, each nation lists a major arms supplier, indicating which table to use when purchasing weapons. (Terrorists have a special arms table all to themselves.) Admittedly, this method of assigning primary arms sources is simplifying a complex situation. Even though the USA and USSR are far and away the world's major arms suppliers, anybody's weapons can show up anywhere, as the Iran-Contra affair so neatly demonstrated. For those uncomfortable with this rule, the designer gives official permission for players to assign arms suppliers as they wish, perhaps auctioning weapons to the highest bidder.

*Special Forces* introduces road, bridge, and stream hexes as new terrain features not present

in previous *Sniper!* games. Incidentally, the water hexes were originally supposed to be a river. (It was pointed out to me that in the game scale of two meters per hex, the "river" was about fifteen meters at its widest point. The puny river thus became a mighty stream.) None of the new terrain posed any design problems, with one tricky exception. In the *Sniper!* system, panicking soldiers bolt in a random direction. If a soldier panicked toward the stream, would he stop short or dive in? In real life, I suppose this would depend on how desperate the soldier was to get away. Rather than introduce a desperation modifier, the game goes for the most entertaining solution. Panicking soldiers heading for the stream can count on getting wet.

Entertainment value settled a lot of decisions in *Special Forces*. Take, for instance, the lethality of terrorists. The rules allow for terrorists to designate members of their team as

### 1. Set-Up

The Bravo player sets up his men in map sections A and H behind the stream. The Alpha force sets up in sections D and E.

The Bravo player receives one pillbox. Bravo men not deployed in the pillbox are deployed in foxholes. The Bravo player uses concealed deployment and places a smoke marker in every hex that contains one of his men or a pillbox; the Alpha player knows where they are, but not what they are or how they're armed.

The locations of Bravo's mines, if any, are recorded secretly and revealed only when someone detonates a mine. Mines can be placed in any non-water hex in areas A, B, C, F, G, and H. If barbed wire is used, it is deployed openly.

### 2. Movement to Contact

Players follow the normal sequence of play with the following exception: Bravo soldiers cannot fire any weapons until the first impulse of turn two.

### 3. Special Rules

Before the game begins, the Bravo player rolls one die to determine how many artillery points he receives. The result is recorded in secret on his roster. The Bravo player can purchase any type of artillery with these points.

1 = 50 points	4 = 80 points
2 = 60 points	5 = 90 points
3 = 70 points	6 = 100 points

The Bravo player then rolls a second die to determine on what game turn the artillery will arrive. The turn of artillery arrival is recorded in secret on his roster. Bravo artillery can arrive on no turn other than the one indicated by the die roll.

1 = turn 6	4 = turn 9
2 = turn 7	5 = turn 10
3 = turn 8	6 = turn 11

Alpha and Bravo soldiers may exit from any map edge. Once exited, they can not return.

### 4. Victory Conditions

The game lasts 15 turns. The Alpha player wins if he exits two healthy or wounded men from map edge AH after first crossing the stream. If only one Alpha man is exited, the game is a draw. If no Alpha men exit the map, the Bravo player wins.

### 5. Orders of Battle

#### *Cambodian Crush*

Map: rural; dense terrain; shallow stream

Weather: Clear or random summer

Cambodia (Alpha): guerillas; 4 BR, 4 MP, 3 SG, 1 RL, 1 FL; track E; pres 19

Vietnam (Bravo): regular infantry; 3 SR, 6 AW; 15 mine points; track E; pres 17

#### *Angola Assault*

Map: rural; mixed terrain; dry stream

Weather: Clear or Heavy Rain

Angola (Alpha): guerillas; 9 SR, 6 AR, 1 APC; track F; pres 21

Zaire (Bravo): elite infantry; 6 SR, 2 MG, 1 MG, 1 RL, 20 mine points; track E; pres 17

#### *Iranian Offensive*

Map: rural; open terrain; shallow stream

Weather: Clear

Iraq (Alpha): regular infantry; 9 AR, 3 MG, 2 RL, 1 truck; track E; pres 20

Iran (Bravo): regular infantry; 3 AW, 5 AR, 1 HMG, 15 mine points; track F; pres 18

#### *Into the Western Desert*

Map: rural; open terrain; dry stream

Weather: Clear

Libya (Alpha): elite infantry; 8 AW, 3 MG, 2 RL, 1 tank; track D; pres 22

Egypt (Bravo): regular infantry; 3 AW, 5 AR, 2 MG, 1 APC, 15 mine points; track E; pres 18

### B. Communication Breakdown

Since a loss of communications can cripple an army's efforts, the communications center is a prime objective for infantry and terrorists alike.

#### 1. Set-Up

The Bravo player selects a room on the floor of any building in area A, B, F, G, or H to be the communications center. This location is made available to the Alpha player before play begins.

The Bravo player deploys his forces using concealed deployment. No more than two Bravo soldiers can be deployed in the communications center and no more than a total of four Bravo soldiers can be deployed on the floor of the building containing the commu-

suicide units. Suicide units can be human bombs (who detonate themselves at an opportune moment) or truck bombs (detonated by a driver bent on demolishing as many bystanders as possible). Wounded human bombs can still detonate themselves, but how about incapacitated ones? For all practical purposes, incapacitated soldiers are out of action in the *Sniper!* system. Yet, imagine the fun when an advancing soldier enters the hex of an incapacitated enemy, and the enemy abruptly blows them both to kingdom come. Too good to pass up, so in the final polish, incapacitated human bombs (as well as the incapacitated driver of a truck bomb) can make one last attempt to detonate himself with a 50 percent chance of success. (Credit for this suggestion, along with credit for much of the game's fine tuning, to Jon Pickens.)

Although *Special Forces* emphasizes combat as experienced by the individual soldier, it

also has rules for vehicles — rubber rafts, armored personnel carriers, infantry fighting vehicles, and tanks. Tanks presented the most interesting design considerations. Modern tanks are heavier and deadlier than their World War II counterparts, but they are also larger and more vulnerable. After frustrating experiments with adjusting the combat tables, I took the easy way out and made the tank counters larger, taking up eight hexes instead of six. With main guns comparable to light artillery, tanks can still cause a lot of trouble, even though they make a bigger target.

A problem designing games set in the modern world is that many of the weapons haven't been used much. It's hard to determine how effective they actually might be. For example, how well would modern tanks operate on the battlefield? Tanks are complex machines requiring a lot of maintenance — would breakdowns be a frequent problem? My feeling

is that they would, so I originally required a dice roll before a tank moved. On a roll of 2-11, the tank moved normally. On a roll of 12, the tank suffered a breakdown and was unable to move for the rest of the game, although it could fire normally. The rule didn't make it into the final draft — it slowed play, for one thing — but in retrospect, I think I let tanks off too easy. (That is, if my assumption about their susceptibility to breakdowns is correct. Think I could get the Pentagon to run a field test?)

The weaponry in *Special Forces* ranges from poisoned pit traps to laser-guided artillery. Since nuclear weapons are piled high to the sky, why weren't they included? Well, I wanted them. They were in the first draft, but ultimately they had to go. Here's why. At its widest point, the game map represents an area of about 100 meters. The smallest tactical nuclear weapon in today's world is about one kiloton. A one kiloton bomb would wipe out 95

communications center. The rest of the Bravo soldiers can be deployed anywhere in areas A, B, F, G, and H, but they must be at least 10 hexes away from the communications center.

The Alpha force enters the map on turn one anywhere along the DE map edge.

## 2. Movement to Contact

The normal sequence of play is followed with one exception: Bravo soldiers cannot fire or move until they spot an enemy soldier within 10 hexes. Spotted units are placed on the map. All Bravo soldiers are eligible for opportunity fire at the beginning of the game.

## 3. Special Rules

Bravo must destroy the communications center by planting a satchel charge inside it and blowing it up. Any Bravo soldier can plant a satchel charge. A delayed fuse is attached to the satchel charge which causes it to explode in 1-6 rounds. The Bravo player decides the length of the fuse when the satchel charge is planted and secretly records this information on his roster sheet.

Detonation is not automatic. On the round when the satchel charge is scheduled to explode, the Alpha player rolls two dice. On a roll of 2-10, the satchel charge is defective and does not explode. The Alpha player can attempt to plant another satchel charge in the communications center and try again.

The Bravo engineer can attempt to defuse the satchel charge by entering the hex containing it. Once the engineer has entered the hex to examine the charge, the Alpha player must tell him when the charge is set to explode. To attempt to defuse the charge, the Bravo player rolls one die. On a roll of 1-5, the charge is defused. On a roll of 6, the attempt has failed, and the charge will detonate on schedule. The engineer can make only one attempt at defusing any charge.

## 4. Victory Conditions

The game has no set length. Play continues until one side achieves a victory. Victory is assessed as follows:

Alpha major victory: A satchel charge successfully detonates in the communications center, and the Alpha soldier setting the charge escapes off any map edge in wounded or healthy condition.

Alpha substantial victory: A satchel charge successfully detonates in the communications center, but the Alpha soldier setting the charge is killed or incapacitated before leaving the map.

Bravo substantial victory: An Alpha soldier carrying a satchel charge enters the communications center, but the charge is never detonated.

Bravo major victory: All Alpha soldiers are killed or incapacitated before ever entering the communications center.

## 5. Orders of Battle

### *Terrorist Strike: France*

Map: urban

Weather: Clear or random Spring

Action Directe (Alpha): terrorists; 7 AW, 2 MG, 3 SC; track D; pres 15

France (Bravo): regular infantry; 6 AW, 2 SR, 1 truck\*; track C; pres 14

\* The truck can be deployed behind any building containing Bravo soldiers.

### *Attacking the Great Satan*

Map: urban

Weather: Clear or Snow

Shiite Moslems (Alpha): terrorists; 2 BR, 4 AW, 2 MG, 1 FT, 3 SC, 1 truck; track E; pres 20

United States (Bravo): elite infantry; 6 AW, 2 MG, 1 HMG; track D; pres 17

### *Guerilla Headquarters: Philippines*

Map: urban

Weather: Clear or random Spring

Philippines (Alpha): elite infantry; 8 AW, 1 MG, 1 RL, 3 SC; track F; pres 16

Moro militants (Bravo): guerillas; 6 SR, 3 AW, 15 mine points; track G; pres 15

### *IRA Surprise*

Map: urban

Weather: Clear or random Autumn

IRA (Alpha): terrorists; 6 SR, 4 MP, 1 FT, 1 MG, 4 SC, 1 truck; track B; pres 22

Great Britain (Bravo): regular infantry; 5 AW, 2 MG, 2 MP, 15 mine points, 1 truck\*; track C; pres 17

\* The truck can be deployed behind any building containing Bravo soldiers.

## C. Duel

Opposing factions struggle to recover vital documents from the debris of a previous battle.

## A. Set-Up

to 99 percent of the soldiers on the map, regardless of where it was detonated (buildings or other fortifications would offer modest protection — for a while). If ten game maps were laid end to end and a one kiloton bomb detonated on the far edge of the last map, at least 50 percent of the soldiers on all ten maps would be killed. Consider that a twenty kiloton bomb was dropped on Japan in World War II. See what I mean?

## Strategies

Since *Special Forces* covers a wide range of situations, it is difficult to generalize about strategies. However, here are some tips for some of the basic scenarios. All rules are presumed to be in effect.

**Patrol:** Both sides enter the map at the beginning of the game intending to inflict as many casualties as possible while advancing friendly soldiers to the opposite map edge. Note that the game ends if either player has his

soldiers leave the map. Of course, this means giving up ten points to the enemy for possessing the field, but if the friendly tally is high enough, it's worth doing. Unless a player has a good chance of controlling the field, it's not worth the trouble dragging incapacitated soldiers off the field. Heartless, but too risky and too time consuming.

**Assault:** Since forcing an enemy to his preservation limit divides his victory point total in half, this scenario rewards the aggressive player. For that reason, heavy armaments (tanks, flamethrowers, satchel charges) are especially useful. Bravo shouldn't worry too much about knocking out Alpha tanks, as the victory point award is the same as for incapacitating an enemy soldier.

**Urban Siege:** Each side must keep in mind the advantages and disadvantages of fortified buildings. Most of Bravo's fortifications should be deployed as far back from the advancing

enemy as possible. The Bravo player should take early advantage of opportunity fire to wear down the advancing troops. Bravo should strike early and hard; he will find snipers to be particularly effective. The Alpha player must send an expendable point man to reveal enemy positions. From then on, the strategy of the Alpha player is essentially the opposite of the Bravo player. He needs to assess Bravo's strength and determine where that strength is concentrated. Caution, not haste, is the key to an Alpha victory.

**Border War:** The strategy is essentially the same for both sides. Careful deployment of mines and booby traps can keep advancing soldiers at bay. If possible, take out enemy vehicles early, as their mobility can prove disastrous as the game progresses. Be sure to keep some forces in reserve for later in the game. This situation rewards the player who advances slowly and steadily. ■

Select any three unused truck or APC counters. Roll once for each counter on the following table. If the same result is rolled twice, re-roll.

1 = 2525	4 = 2530
2 = 2025	5 = 2029
3 = 1725	6 = 1730

Center each counter with its wrecked side up on the indicated hex on the rural map. Facing of the counter is not crucial.

Select three unused Activation markers; one should be labeled 1, the others should be labeled with two different numbers. The Activation marker labeled 1 represents the documents. Invert the markers and mix them so neither player knows which is labeled 1. Place one marker on each of the three wrecked vehicle counters.

Each player sets up his forces on a different map. Forces are deployed in secret. The Alpha player deploys his men on the wreckage map within 10 hexes of map edge AH. The Bravo player deploys his men on the other map within 10 hexes of map edge DE. When the forces have been deployed, the Bravo transfers his men to the corresponding hexes on the Alpha player's map. Vehicles enter the game from map edges AH (Alpha) and DE (Bravo) on the first turn.

### 2. Movement to Contact

No action other than movement can be taken on the first turn. The normal sequence of play is in effect in subsequent turns.

### 3. Special Rules

The objective for each side is to recover the documents and remove them from the player's map edge. Any soldier can discover and remove the documents. To discover the documents, the soldier must be in a wrecked vehicle hex and take no actions that turn other than searching. To search, roll one die. On a roll of 1-2, the marker on that vehicle is revealed. If it is the documents marker, the soldier can take it. If it is not the documents marker, the marker is removed from play; both players now know the documents are in a different wreckage. On a roll of 3-6, the search is incomplete. The soldier must search again on his next turn. The third turn of searching is automatically successful. If the searching is interrupted, that soldier or any other soldier must start over. Two soldiers searching the same wreck on the same turn can both make search rolls.

When the documents are discovered, place the documents marker under the soldier carrying them. The documents can be

passed between soldiers occupying the same hex. A soldier can retrieve the documents from a killed or incapacitated soldier who was carrying them. The documents cannot be destroyed by weapon fire or explosions.

### 4. Victory Conditions

The Alpha player wins if the documents are moved off map edge AH. The Bravo player wins if the documents are moved off map edge DE. There is no time limit; the game continues until one side wins.

### 5. Orders of Battle

#### *Showdown in the Sand*

Map: rural; open terrain; dry stream

Weather: Clear

Arab Legion (Alpha): elite infantry; 10 AW, 2 MG, 3 SC, 1 truck, 1 APC, 40 artillery points; track c; pres 25

Israeli Defense Force (Bravo): elite infantry; 7 AW, 4 MG, 2 RL, 2 SC, 1 tank, 20 artillery points; track B; pres 25

#### *In Darkest Africa*

Map: rural; dense terrain; shallow stream

Weather: Clear or Heavy Rain

National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (Alpha): guerillas; 9 AW, 3 MG, 3 SC, 2 FL, 1 truck; track E; pres 21

Angola (Bravo): elite infantry; 8 AW, 2 RL, 2 MG, 1 HMG, 1 IFV; track E; pres 19

#### *Terrorist Rumble*

Map: rural; clear terrain; dry stream

Weather: Clear or random Summer

Black September (Alpha): fanatic Terrorists; 4 BR, 4 AW, 2 MG, 2 RL, 1 truck; track E; pres 34

PFLP (Bravo): fanatic terrorists; 7 AW, 2 AR, 1 MG, 1 HMG, 1 truck; track D; pres 30

#### *On a Silent Field*

Map: rural; mixed terrain, shallow stream

Weather: Clear or random Spring

U.S.S.R. Spetsnaz commandoes (Alpha): elite infantry; 7 SR, 7 AW, 3 MG, 1 HMG, 3 RL, 1 truck, 1 tank, 20 artillery points; track D; pres 38

U.S. Special Forces (Bravo): elite infantry; 10 AW, 4 MG, 2 RL, 2 SC, 1 IFV, 1 tank, 30 artillery points; track C; pres 40 ■

# CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS

## A LOOK AT NORTH GERMAN PLAIN

by Rick Swan

**C**harles T. Kamps Jr. gives gamers a disturbing preview of what is hopefully an avoidable future with *North German Plain*, the feature game in *Strategy and Tactics* #117. Kamps takes a look at the consequences of a surprise attack by Warsaw Pact invaders against North Atlantic Treaty Organization forces in northern Western Germany that takes place in the early 1990s. The first of a planned *Central Front* series, *North German Plain*'s tight design and concise rules bring the subject vividly to life for the newcomer while providing enough chrome and options to rivet the interest of the veteran. At first glance, the game appears to stick to fairly standard design conventions, but a closer examination reveals a lot of twists and turns. Veteran gamers may find that a victory in *North German Plain* requires a reassessment of conventional strategies.

### Overview

*North German Plain* is a two-player game with one side controlling the attacking Warsaw Pact forces and the other handling the NATO defenders. The PACT (Warsaw Pact) and NATO players alternate turns, with a turn consisting of four phases: ground movement (including arrival of reinforcements), helicopter movement, helicopter reaction, and combat. The hypothetical battle takes place over a period of five days. The game lasts 15 turns. Two turns representing six hours each of daylight are followed by a turn representing 12 hours of night.

Each map hex represents four kilometers. A quick look at the mapsheet shows that the area is far from being just a flat plain. The southern portion of the map is covered with patches of rough terrain and thick woods. There are several swampland areas, most notably in the northwest, west central, and east central regions. Urban clusters are prominent around Hamburg and also in the Habenhausen, Oldenburg, and Bremerhaven areas in the north. Perhaps the most notable terrain features are the high water areas produced by the Elbe River, a result of the region's high water table and generous annual rainfall.



*North German Plain* represents formidable mobility challenges to both sides. Understanding the terrain limitations and advantages is of paramount importance in

mastering the game. The limited access to roads and autobahns, for instance, and their built-in movement restrictions are headache inducers for the PACT player. PACT's western drive is hindered by the dense forests and roughs in the south, the water hexes of the Elbe River in the north, and the proliferation of urban hexes in the south. Urban hexes are especially aggravating, as PACT units must spend twice as many movement points than the NATO player to pass through them. Marsh hexes sprinkled liberally over the game map can cut movement to a single hex. Moving a unit more than a couple of hexes per turn is tough, making the control of roads and autobahns crucial to any game plan.

Access across the rivers is also limited. There are, for instance, only six bridges crossing the Elbe River. Three of these (hexes 1337, 1438, and 2239) are surrounded by woods and roughs. Two others are actually multiple bridge routes (2542 to 2540 to 2438, and 2938 to 2737). The sixth is in Hamburg, and to make matters worse, it's another multiple (3335 or 3535 to 3338). Furthermore, the high water hexes adjacent to many of the bridge and river hexes severely restrict river crossings in wet seasons when the movement point cost is increased from one to four.

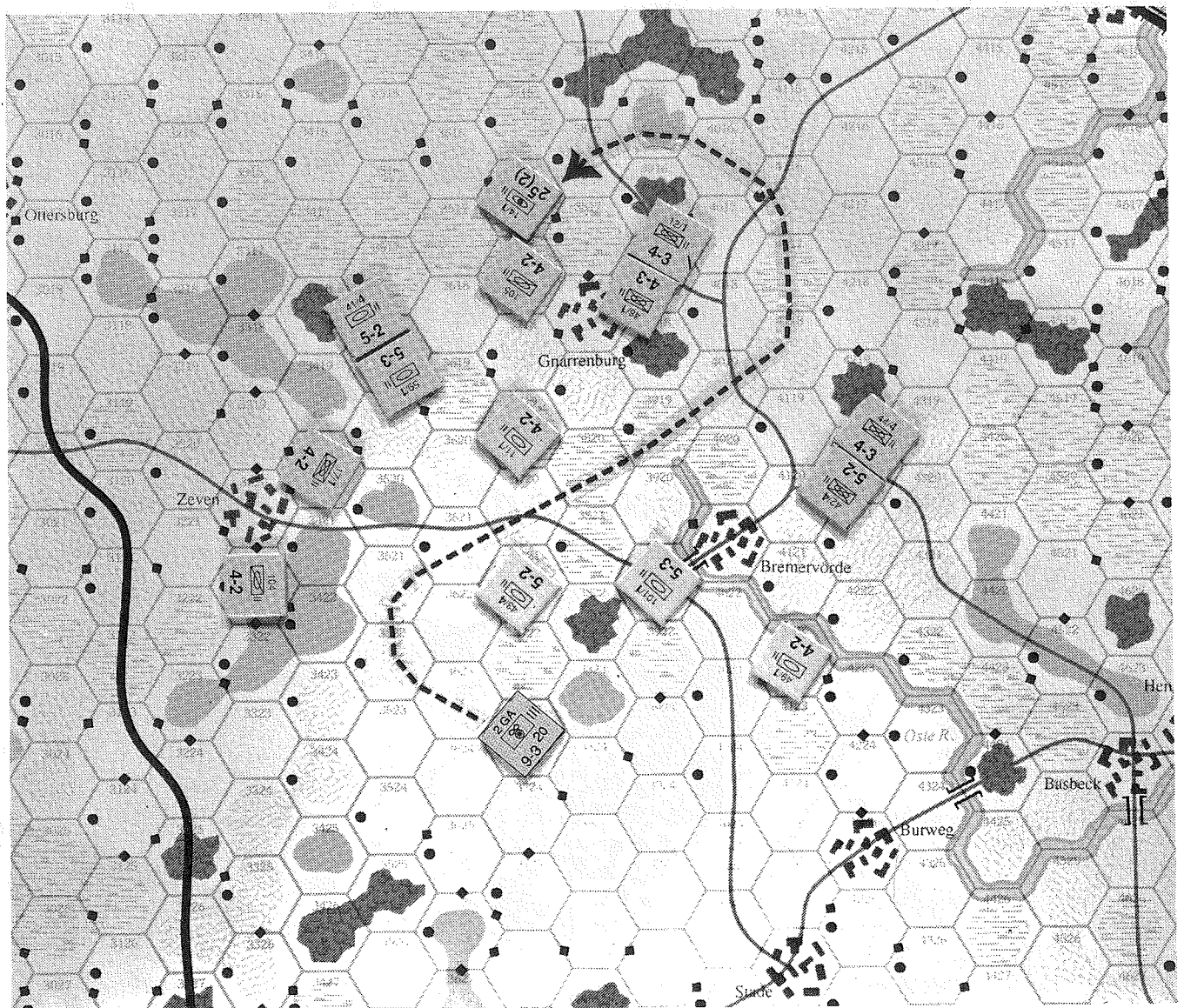
Units are divided into four general categories: companies (including batteries and troops), battalions, regiments (including artillery groups), and brigades (here, a group of artillery battalions). Each side has units from various nationalities. NATO

forces include the Netherlands, West Germany, Britain, and the United States, while PACT forces are the Soviets and Polish. The RNA (Royal Netherlands Army) is assigned the defensive sector near the Elbe River and will likely take the brunt of the PACT assault in the early stages of the game. The tough British BAOR forces begin in a good position, entrenched in favorable terrain near Bergen-Hohne and Fallingbommel. The United States force consists of a brigade of the 2nd Armored Division. Though only a few units in size,

the US force is strong and mobile, with easy access to the roads. The numerous West German forces are also positioned for mobility and can easily concentrate against a PACT invasion from just about any direction. The PACT invaders are the tough, intimidating units of the GSFG (Group of Soviet Forces Germany) and Polish forces represented by the Pomeranian Military District who enter the game on the fifth turn, adding reinforcements on turns 8, 9, and 12.

The efforts of both sides are supple-

mented by helicopters, air strikes, and electronic warfare. Helicopters can conduct combat at extended distances, but are primarily useful in transporting eligible ground units over area of difficult terrain. Air strikes are represented by a variable number of strike points awarded at the beginning of each turn. Points may be used to help units disengage from enemy zones of control, hinder zone of control disengagement of enemy units, and modify both friendly and enemy attacks. Note that NATO has a distinct advantage in air



**Map 1** In North German Plain, the shortest distance between two points is seldom a straight line when it comes to helicopters. The Soviet 9-3-20 helicopter in hex 3721 wishes to attack the Netherlands artillery unit in hex 3716. The copter could head due east and take its chances with enemy air defense fire, but a close look shows an approach that guarantees its safety. Using the route shown, the copter enters just a single enemy-controlled hex (3720). Since a copter can enter one enemy-controlled hex at no penalty, the copter undergoes no defense fire at all.

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operations, receiving 44 strike points over the course of the game compared with PACT's total of 20. Chemical attacks support friendly combat in conjunction with air support or artillery. Electronic warfare is used to render enemy air support (including helicopters) ineffective as well as negating enemy artillery efforts. Like air support, chemical attacks and electronic warfare are represented by points awarded at the beginning of each turn. The PACT forces receive substantially more

electronic warfare points during the course of the game (135 total for PACT, 91 total for NATO), somewhat offsetting NATO's air strike superiority.

### Key Rules

*North German Plain* has a number of rules that are either contrary to those typical of wargames of this scale or unique to this design. While the rules are clear, veteran gamers may find old habits hard to break and should make a point of studying

the details of this system. Here are some of the more important ones along with their implications.

*No Supply Rules.* There are no supply considerations of any kind in *North German Plain*. As supply rules introduce their own set of complications, newcomers will likely welcome their absence. However, veterans should note that the freedom of maintaining supply lines allows for isolated units anywhere on the map. Working in conjunction, isolated units can take



**Map 2** The hedgehog and facing rules of *North German Plain* have a major effect on establishing zones of control. (Hexes into which units exert zones of control are indicated with arrows.) Because units have only two frontal hexes, care must be taken when building defensive lines. Note that the line made by the three units labeled A leaves gaps for invaders; there must not be more than a single hex between units in a line (units labeled B). The other configurations illustrate the advantage of hedgehogs. The hedgehog labeled C does a better job of controlling hexes than the convoluted arrangement of the three units labeled D.

advantage of their zones of control to cut off enemies or tie them up.

**Facing.** Unlike many games, units in *North German Plain* are positioned on the map so their front edge faces the corner rather than the side of a hex. The two hexes adjacent to the front edge of the unit are front hexes, the hexes on each side are flank hexes, and the two adjacent to the unit's bottom side are rear hexes. A unit exerts a zone of control only into its front hexes. This is a major difference from games which allow a unit to exert zones of control into all six adjacent hexes and from games where a unit aligned with the side of a hex exerts zones of control into three frontal hexes.

The facing rules have an important effect on the creation of defensive lines. In three-hex frontal games, units can have two empty spaces between them and still create lines fully covered by zones of control. In *North German Plain*, units can have only one empty space between them and still create fully controlled lines. Players can compensate somewhat for these restrictions by taking advantage of the hedgehog rule. By placing two units back to back in the same hex, flank and rear hexes are eliminated, and the hedgehog units surround themselves with zones of control.

Note that zone of control considerations are especially critical in certain terrain; there is only a 50 percent chance of successfully disengaging from an enemy ZOC in flat, broken, and high water/dry hexes. Hedgehogs can be particularly advantageous for defensive lines in these terrain types.

**Road Movement Restrictions.** As if the terrain didn't make movement hard enough already, *North German Plain* imposes severe restrictions for using the roadways for PACT forces. PACT units may not use the roads while stacked and, worse yet, must leave a space of one hex between friendly units on the road. If a PACT unit moves through a road space already occupied by a friendly unit, it must pay one movement point for the occupied hex and one for each of its adjacent hexes; a unit therefore spends a total of three points where it would have cost only 1 1/2 had it been unoccupied. Since a six unit "train" actually takes up 11 hexes, the PACT player can avoid much of this diffi-

culty by limiting the number of units moving on a road. The PACT player should also remember that a train comes to a screeching halt as soon as the lead unit enters an enemy zone of control or enters a hex with prohibitive terrain and lacks the points to continue (such as a bridge hex).

**Helicopter Movement.** Helicopters have a radius of action rather than movement allowance, enabling them to theoretically traverse nearly half the map in a single turn. The helicopter can move through one enemy-controlled hex at no penalty, but subsequent entry into enemy controlled-hexes requires the helicopter to undergo attack from enemy air defense fire. Since the helicopter has a one in six chance of elimination for each such air defense attack, whipping through enemy ZOCs poses considerable risk. By remembering that units exert ZOCs only into their two frontal hexes, helicopters weaving a carefully planned route can limit the number of these attacks.

**Variable Combat Strengths.** Ground and helicopter units have two different combat strengths — mobile and close — that are applicable according to the terrain of the defending unit. Both the defender and the attacker must use the indicated strength. Mobile strength is used in flat, high water, broken, and marsh hexes. Close strength is used in wood, rough, and urban hexes. For just about every unit, mobile strength exceeds close strength.

However, it is the degree of difference that is the crucial consideration. Whereas mobile and close strength for certain RNA mechanized infantry is negligible (4 and 3) and identical for certain cavalry units (1), the strength differences for Soviet units can be dramatic. Some of the Soviet tanks have respective mobile and close strengths of 12-6, 17-6, and 19-8, making the tank's effective combat strength significantly higher in favorable terrain. Obviously, it is best to end a unit's movement in a hex giving the optimum defensive advantage — in these examples, woods or rough hexes for the RNA units (to force any attacks from strong enemy units to use their weaker close strength) and flat or broken hexes for the Soviet tanks (to discourage enemy attacks by capitalizing on their superior mobile strength). This tactic may violate the ingrained convictions of veteran players, but in *North German*

*Plain* it isn't always wise to secure units in traditionally preferred defensive terrain such as urban and wooded hexes.

**Advance After Combat.** When a defending unit retreats as a result of an attack, it leaves behind one or more hexes as a path of retreat. The attacking unit or units may advance along this path, stopping at any point they wish. That in itself is not unusual, but there are a couple of interesting exceptions. First, all units in an attacking stack may advance regardless of whether or not they participated in the attack. Second, and more notable, PACT units adjacent to an attacking unit but not adjacent to the defending unit (and not in an enemy ZOC) act as a second echelon and may advance along the path of retreat as if they had participated in the attack. Additionally, two hexes are added to the distance it can advance after combat. This is a clear incentive for the PACT player to keep his units in bunches; considering that the basic movement allowance is 6 points and that a single hex of marsh or wooded terrain can eat up most of this, the benefit of a second echelon advancement can amount to an extra turn of movement in many circumstances. Advancement after combat rewards the aggressive player, particularly the PACT player.

**Counterbattery Fire.** Generally, artillery fire must be used in conjunction with ground force attacks. However, artillery units are allowed to use a special type of indirect attack called counterbattery fire against enemy artillery. A player may attack with as many friendly artillery units as are in range of the target artillery. If available, counterbattery attacks may be supported by air strikes and chemical attacks. The defending unit uses its special defense strength to resolve the attack; this strength is no more than 2 for units of any nationality.

The counterbattery fire rule should be considered a gift from the designer. Artillery fire is exceptionally deadly — the less available to the enemy, the better. The wise player should attempt counterbattery fire as often as possible in the early game turns to knock out as many of these long-distance nuisances as he can.

**Forbidden River.** The Elbe River hexes that extend towards the north map edge from Hamburg (beginning in hex 3533) cannot be crossed. Players of either side

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who allow their units to be trapped in the pocket flanked by the Elbe and the swamps to the east (the general area of Bramstedt and Elmshorn) probably deserve what they get. On the other hand, if the NATO player goes out of his way to avoid this area, the PACT player might consider a sweep up and around (say, from the Bargteheide area up through the Hendtedt-Ulzburg/Kaltenkirchen area) to attack Hamburg from the north.

### Victory Conditions

It's difficult to plan a game strategy without a clear idea of what constitutes a victory. *North German Plain* is especially challenging in this regard as the victory conditions are more or less left up to the players. Four objectives are given, and while achieving all four can certainly be considered a major victory, there are no game mechanics for determining victory levels when considering them together and fewer than all four have been successfully achieved.

All victory objectives are considered from the perspective of the PACT player. Objective one is PACT control of the Baltic approaches, measured in terms of the number of PACT units exited off the north edge of the map between hexes 4729 and 4752. Since this can be accomplished with late-arriving reinforcements whose participation isn't necessary in the main battles (or shouldn't be, if the PACT player is on the ball), this objective is the easiest to achieve. Objective two is the isolation of Hamburg, attained by having a single ground or artillery unit adjacent to the Elbe River north of hex 3632 at the end of the game. Assuming the PACT is in good enough shape towards the end of the game to have the unit to spare, this is also an easily achievable objective.

Objective three is the disruption of the US supply line, accomplished by a PACT ground or artillery-type unit occupying either hex 4612, 4613, 4712, or 4713 at the end of the game. This objective is more difficult, owing to the distance involved. Success in Objective four is measured by how far PACT is able to penetrate westward into West Germany; NATO considers a 100 kilometer penetration unacceptable, while PACT considers a defeat to be anything under a 35 kilometer per day advance. In game terms, PACT must ad-

vance a unit at least to the east of the Weser River or west of a hex numbered XX23; NATO scores for holding PACT units to hexes numbered XX24 to XX29, with the optimum being on or east of hexes numbered XX36.

Because the objectives are of varying difficulty, it is unfair to assign them equal weight in determining an overall victory. If for instance, a tactical PACT victory required success in two of the four objectives, the PACT player would obviously concentrate on Objectives one and two rather than the more difficult three and four. A fairer way of determining overall victory is to assign a weight to each objective based on difficulty and military importance (Objectives one and four — control of the Baltic Approaches and penetration into West Germany — are the most desirable objectives from PACT's point of view), translate those weights into victory points, then assign victory levels based on the total number of points accumulated at the end of the game.

Here is a suggested victory point schedule. All points are assigned to the PACT player. This table supersedes the victory conditions presented in rules. These suggestions should not be considered "official" rules but rather a template with which players may experiment.

### Victory Points Table

Each PACT division-level equivalent\* exited off the north edge of the map between hexes 4729 and 4752 inclusive by the end of Game Turn 15: **1 point**

Bonus for exiting 4 PACT division equivalents by end of Game Turn 15: **1 points**

One ground or artillery-type unit adjacent to the Elbe River north of hex 3632 at the end of Game Turn 15: **4 points**

One ground or artillery-type PACT unit occupying hex 4612, 4613, 4712, or 4713 at the end of Game Turn 15: **5 points**

PACT doctrinal advance: **\*\***

PACT tank or mechanized unit on hex numbered XX30 to XX35 inclusive at end of Game Turn 15: **2 points**

PACT tank or mechanized unit on hex numbered XX24 to XX29 inclusive at end of Game Turn 15: **3 points**

PACT tank or mechanized unit east of the Weser River in or west of hex numbered XX23 at end of Game Turn 15: **4**

**points**

PACT tank or mechanized unit west of the Weser River at the end of Game Turn 15: **5 points**

PACT tank or mechanized unit exits west map edge by end of Game Turn 15: **6 points**

\* A PACT division equivalent is considered to be 6 units.

\*\* Points for PACT doctrinal advance are awarded only once at the end of the game for the single farthest advanced PACT tank or mechanized unit which is west of the Elbe River.

At the end of Game Turn 15, the PACT player totals his victory points, then victory is assessed according to the following table. (Again, this is not part of the "official" rules, but rather a suggested method based on the victory point table above.)

### Level of Victory

20 points:	PACT Strategic Victory
19-15 points:	PACT Tactical Victory
14-10 points:	PACT Marginal Victory
9 points:	NATO Marginal Victory
8-5 points:	NATO Tactical Victory
4 or less points:	NATO Strategic Victory

If these charts are used, the PACT player would be well advised to study them closely before planning his game strategy. The PACT player cannot win only by achieving Objectives one and two (worth 5 and 4 points respectively) or Objectives two and three (worth 4 and 5 points); the NATO marginal victory level was purposely set at nine to discourage the PACT player from exclusively concentrating on two of the easiest objectives. PACT can score a strategic victory only by achieving the maximum number of points for all four objectives. By a good showing in all objectives, the PACT player can reasonably expect to achieve a tactical victory. Note that a tactical victory cannot be achieved without some success in Objective four, an intentional consideration as this is PACT's key objective.

Players of equal skill will find these tables especially tough for the PACT side. Even a PACT marginal victory is difficult — a PACT strategic victory is cause for celebration. If play balance continues to be frustrating, the PACT player can be com-

compensated by awarding a handicap — a bonus of two points is a good place to start. Alternately, players may agree to include one or more of the optional rules to restore balance. (See the last section of this article for suggestions.)

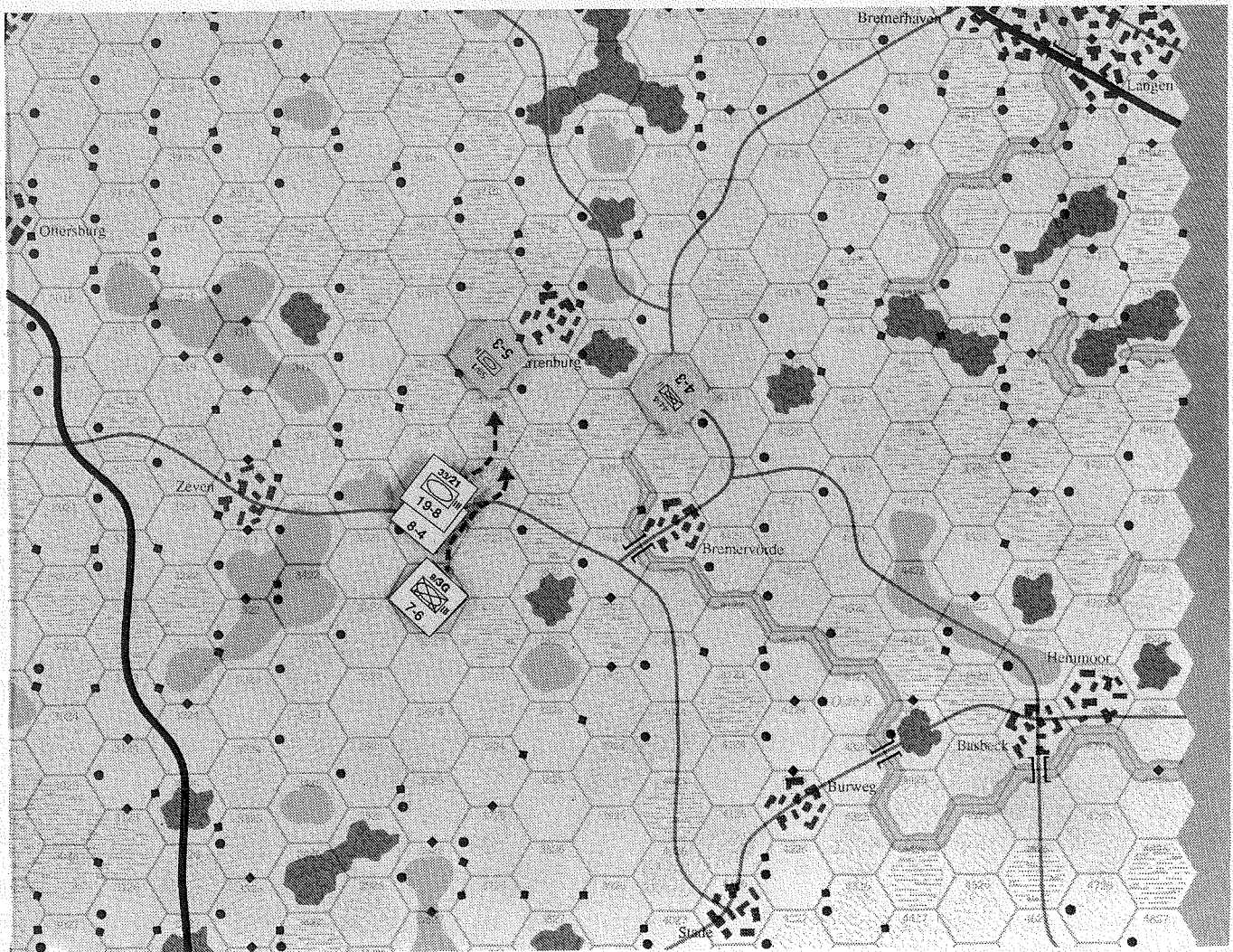
## Strengths and Weaknesses

*North German Plain* awards very specific and very different strengths and weaknesses to the NATO and PACT players. Taking advantage of the strengths while minimizing the weaknesses is vital

to a player's success; each should assess their strong and weak points before play begins. Here's a look at both sides.

**PACT:** Mobility limitations pose the biggest problems for the Warsaw Pact player. As the PACT units drive west, they continually encounter areas of hostile terrain. The easternmost region is as good as it gets; with the exception of the area west of the Weser River, this region has the greatest density of clear hexes. Approaching the Elbe River, PACT faces roughs and woods to the south and Hamburg's central

urban sprawl. The urban hexes are particularly tough on PACT as passage requires one movement point compared with NATO's 1/2. PACT is also faced with crossing the rivers. This costs one for battalion/companies and two for regiment/brigades if they're fortunate enough to find an underdefended bridge. Otherwise, they move at a sluggish cost of two or four if the river must be forded. PACT can count on NATO units forming zone of control lines at the Elbe River and secondary lines further west. Finally PACT



**Map 3** An example of advance-after-combat. The 19-8 Soviet tank unit in hex 3621 attacked the 4-3 Netherlands mech infantry unit that was in 3720. The 8-4 Soviet 3G tank stacked with the 19-8 did not participate in the attack. A roll on the Combat Results Table required the 4-3 unit to retreat three hexes; the NATO player retreated the unit to hex 4019. The 19-8 unit will now advance. Even though the 8-4 didn't participate, it is allowed to advance with the 19-8 as it was stacked with it. The first hex entered must be 3720, the first hex vacated by the retreating unit. The stack may then advance to any adjacent hexes from that point on. The stack advances to hex 3719 where it enters the zone of control of the 5-3 Netherlands tank unit and must stop. The 7-6 26G mech infantry was used as the PACT second echelon unit and followed the advancing stack, stopping in hex 3720.

## CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS

### Tactical Tips

units cannot use the roads with the same ease as NATO, as the PACT units on a road must be separated by a hex. PACT's primary movement advantage is its ability to send second echelons along an enemy path of retreat. Used to capacity, the second echelon rule goes a long way to offset PACT's mobility disadvantages.

PACT is burdened with some frustrating stacking limitations. Where NATO may stack two ground and/or artillery-type units in a single hex; PACT may stack a total of one ground unit plus one artillery-type unit (or two artillery-type units). Depending on how the NATO player's stacked units are orientated, both must be attacked from the flank or rear for a PACT attacker to qualify for a combat modifier; NATO units in a hedgehog have no flank or rear hexsides. The hedgehog option is denied the PACT player. Units in a PACT stack must be oriented in the same direction.

Although PACT can't use deep interdiction air attacks, they have several combat advantages over NATO. PACT has extended range capabilities for Soviet artillery units, especially deadly for the 9-4-2 and 7-4-2 "DAG" units which fire at a strength of four at ranges of five to seven hexes. PACT also has superior electronic warfare support, nearly double that of NATO in the final game turns. PACT can use chemical weapons to support attacks.

PACT's primary advantage is in its superior combat units. Only a handful of NATO units have strength in excess of six. PACT has more than 40 units whose strength exceeds 10. Most of the PACT mechanized units are all but unstoppable; it can take a good half-dozen or more NATO units in a coordinated attack to threaten a single one in the heavier Soviet mech units. While PACT is heavily outnumbered at the beginning, NATO reinforcements arrive steadily throughout the game. No NATO reinforcements are available after Game Turn 8. PACT is still receiving substantial reinforcements on Game Turns 9, 10, 12, and 13.

**NATO:** Though unit for unit PACT's forces are stronger, NATO has them outnumbered, overwhelmingly so in the early stages of the game. This gives NATO an advantage in mobility into sturdy zone of defense lines to hinder the advancing enemy. In a sense, all of NATO's units are

expendable, as there is no victory point penalty for casualties. All NATO has to do is hold PACT back.

NATO has a strong air strike advantage. NATO gets off to a slow start in available air points — in fact, none are available in the first three turns — but acquires instant air superiority in Game

Turn 4 (4 points to PACT's 3) with a steady supply of three or four per turn for the rest of the game. In contrast, PACT never gets more than two points per turn and has none at all every third turn. Automatic deep interdiction attacks is another plus for NATO, although not as much of an advantage as it first may seem. Deep inter-

### North German Plain: Reinforcement Schedule Analysis

The following tables provide a reinforcement schedule breakdown for both the NATO and PACT players. The first column lists the Game Turn number. The second column gives the total number of units entering the game on that turn, followed in parentheses by the same number expressed as a percentage of the total number of units available for the entire game. The third column gives the total number of mobile strength points entering the game on that turn, followed in parentheses by the same number expressed as a percentage of the total number of mobile strength points available for the entire game.

NATO Reinforcements		
Game Turn	No. of Units	Mobile Strength Points
Set-Up	72 (60.5)	301 (62.2)
1	8 (6.7)	37 (7.6)
2	none	none
3	none	none
4	4 (3.4)	16 (3.3)
5	4 (3.4)	16 (3.3)
6	10 (8.4)	38 (7.9)
7	10 (8.4)	39 (8.1)
8	11 (9.2)	37 (7.6)
9-15	none	none

PACT Reinforcements		
Game Turn	No. of Units	Mobile Strength Points
Set-Up	27 (33.3)	412 (47.5)
1	6 (7.4)	63 (7.3)
2	none	none
3	none	none
4	6 (7.4)	63 (7.3)
5	6 (7.4)	46 (5.3)
6	none	none
7	6 (7.4)	57 (6.6)
8	6 (7.4)	46 (5.3)
9	6 (7.4)	49 (5.6)
10	6 (7.4)	44 (5.1)
11	none	none
12	6 (7.4)	49 (5.6)
13	6 (7.4)	37 (4.3)
14-15	none	none

Examining these tables reveals information useful to both players. Though NATO outnumbers PACT by nearly 3 to 1 in units in play at the beginning of the game, NATO has superior mobile strength. (While only mobile strength is considered in these tables, an analysis of comparable close strength would yield similar results, though not as heavily favorable to PACT.) What's more, NATO has nearly 2/3 of its total mobile strength in play at the outset, while PACT has less than half. About 2/3 of the total number of NATO units are in play before Game Turn 1, compared with about 1/3 of the total number of PACT units.

The greatest number of reinforcements for NATO is the 11 arriving on Game Turn 8, but they bring with them only 37 mobile strength points. While PACT's reinforcements stay at a steady six units, the least number of reinforcement strength points for NATO in a single turn is 37 (Game Turn 13) while the most is 63 (Game Turn 4). Most significantly, NATO's reinforcements end with Game Turn 8. PACT still has 24 units to come (nearly 30 percent of its total), bringing with them a formidable 179 mobile strength points. ■

diction succeeds only on a roll of one, and this may be countered by PACT's roll of five or six. There are nine PACT divisions scheduled to enter the game as reinforcements. It is therefore highly unlikely that NATO will succeed in more than a single deep interdiction attempt.

Since PACT's direction of attack is extremely limited in the early turns, NATO is in an excellent position not only to size up and counteract PACT's initial assault, but also to exploit PACT's movement restrictions. If PACT is unable to regularly use its second echelons, NATO can take advantage of road and urban hexes to maintain restrictions of its own to deal with. First, NATO units are forbidden to cross the East German border at any time, and second, units of the West German 6th Panzer Grenadier Division (except the 6/6 helicopter) can't cross the Elbe River. The effect is to limit the number of NATO units available to overwhelm advancing invaders, but since PACT must sooner or later press westward, it is unlikely that either of these restrictions will hinder the NATO player to any great degree.

The bulk of the NATO forces are in play at the beginning of the game. Since the swarm of units is harder to manage than a small number, the NATO player is more apt to make crucial errors (most likely, failure to establish adequate defensive lines) in the first few turns. The NATO player also runs the risk of overconfidence; PACT's efforts seem hopeless in the first third of the game, but his reinforcements have barely begun to arrive. Failure is all but assured for the NATO player if he suffers heavy losses in the first half of the game, as his last reinforcements arrive on Game Turn 8.

## General Strategies

**PACT:** The best advice to the PACT player is to carefully consider the four objectives which can generate victory points for him and prioritize them before the game begins. Objective four — the doctrinal advance — should be at the top of his list. This objective stands to net him the most victory points, but it also requires the most planning. Because movement is difficult for PACT units, it is vital to send a group of units on their way west immedi-

ately. There is no ideal route, but the units should stick to the southern side of the map in a dry season and watch for a central opening in wet seasons to avoid the high water hexes in the southeast. The northern section of the Elbe River is impenetrable, and PACT will inevitably encounter a substantial number of NATO units in the Hamburg region. From the East German border to the western map edge is a distance of about 40 hexes. This means an advancing unit must average just over two hexes per turn. With a limit of six movement points per turn, an advancing PACT unit has little time to waste.

The PACT player should be the least concerned about Objective one. Four complete PACT division equivalents enter the game beginning on Game Turn 9, the turn after NATO has exhausted all its reinforcements, meaning that PACT should have plenty of available forces to meet Objective one in the final third of the game. Likewise, there should also be a sufficient number of units available in the final five turns to meet Objective two. (If PACT has suffered heavy losses and limited western advancement by mid-game, he might consider holding back two or three weaker units that can be put in place for Objective two near the end of the game. This frees up reinforcements for combat and to meet Objective one.)

Meeting Objective three requires moving a significant distance. The PACT player should decide within the first few turns which unit or units he will be sending to Bremerhaven. Notice that Objective three units must travel around the Elbe River and will likely want to avoid Hamburg. Again, a southern route is probably the safest, even though at first glance it seems circuitous. For both Objectives three and four, units with a strong close strength are the best choices to take advantage of the defensive terrain in the south (woods and rough).

Since the biggest obstacles to PACT progress are rivers, PACT units should waste no time in heading for the bridges. Units should not be sent in the same direction. A formidable number of units should be sent towards the bridges in hexes 2542, 3246, 3546, and 3849. It is to the NATO player's advantage to control the bridges, but with PACT advancing on several of

## North German Plain:

### Expanded Sequence of Play

#### A. PACT Reinforcements

1. Check Game Schedule (27.1) for air strike points, electronic warfare points, and chemical attack points available for current turn.

2. Check reinforcement schedule for reinforcements available to enter on the current turn. All units enter by road movement on the east edge of the map. No unit may enter the map north of hex 3853. Soviet units may enter on or south of hex 3853 by road movement or may enter directly on the railhead at hex 2444. Polish units may enter on or north of hex 2453 by road only.

3. As each reinforcing division is about to enter the map, the NATO player rolls for a deep interdiction attack. If NATO succeeds with a roll of 1, PACT negates the attack on a roll of 5 or 6. If PACT rolls 1-4, the reinforcing division may not enter. The division can attempt to enter again on the next turn.

#### B. PACT Ground Movement

1. Units occupying a NATO zone of control must attempt disengagement before moving by rolling on the Disengagement Table (4.4). PACT may spend air support points to help units disengage, and NATO may spend points to hinder disengagement.

2. Non-helicopter units move according to the rules of movement. Stacks can consist of one ground unit plus one artillery-type unit (or two artillery-type units) in a single hex. For urban hexes west of the border, units must pay one movement point per hex. Units using road movement must not travel stacked and must leave a road movement space of one hex on each end of a unit.

#### C. PACT Helicopter Movement

Helicopter units can move to any hexes within their radius of action not occupied by NATO units and can transport air mobile units that have not yet moved during the current turn. Helicopter units can enter one NATO-controlled hex at no penalty. For each additional NATO-controlled hex

*(continued on page 38)*

**Expanded Sequence of Play***(continued from page 37)*

entered by a helicopter, NATO rolls one die. On a roll of 1, the helicopter and any transported ground units are destroyed and removed from play.

**D. NATO Helicopter Reaction**

NATO helicopters can move helicopter units to any hexes within their radius of action not occupied by PACT units and can transport air mobile units that began the phase stacked with them. Entering PACT-controlled hexes is resolved as explained above.

**E. PACT Combat Phase**

1. Ground, artillery-type, and helicopter units conduct attacks according to the rules of combat. PACT can spend air points to support attacks. NATO can spend air points to support defense. PACT electronic points can be spent in an attempt to hinder NATO artillery and air support. PACT can spend chemical points to support attacks in conjunction with at least one artillery-type unit or air support point.

2. Any or all victorious attacking units can advance along the enemy path of retreat. A PACT unit or units which began the combat phase adjacent to an attacking unit but not adjacent to the defending unit and not in a NATO-controlled hex can advance along the path of retreat as a second echelon as if they had participated in the attack. Two hexes are added to the distance a second echelon unit can advance, but the first hex entered must be a hex from which a friendly unit attacked. Stacking restrictions apply at the end of the advance.

**F. NATO Reinforcements**

1. Check Game Schedule (27.1) for air strike points and electronic warfare points available for current turn.

2. Check reinforcement schedule for reinforcements available to enter on the current turn. Units enter using road movement at the hex listed, with the number of movement points indicated left to move.

**G. NATO Ground Movement**

1. Units occupying a PACT zone of control must attempt disengagement before moving by rolling *(continued on page 39)*

them, the NATO player must divide his forces. This strategy maximizes the number of PACT units able to cross the river. Note that the early turns are also PACT's best opportunity to use the roads while NATO is occupied forming defensive lines.

PACT needs to strike fast and strike hard before NATO can mobilize. Remember that successful attacks enable the use of second echelon movement, extremely helpful for the long trip west. Knock out enemy artillery whenever the opportunity presents itself; NATO artillery is an increasingly dangerous annoyance as the game progresses. NATO is likely to use air support heavily — PACT gets no benefit from hoarding their electronic warfare points.

*NATO:* Compared to the PACT player, NATO's strategy is simple. NATO must contain PACT; the further east it holds them, the more successful it will be. NATO must concentrate its forces early, leaving enough units in the west to pick off any stray PACT units that manage to get past the Weser River. Assuming the suggested victory point schedule is used, holding PACT east of the Elbe River limits it to a marginal victory at best. If NATO secures Bremerhaven and ties up any stray PACT units heading west through the southern woodlands, a NATO victory is assured.

NATO should be more concerned about slowing down PACT than inflicting casualties; in theory, if every single NATO unit is destroyed, PACT still can't win if the territorial objectives aren't met. In the early game turns, NATO forces must concentrate on establishing a defensive line at the Elbe River, being sure to limit PACT access to the bridges. NATO forces should use their hedgehog option whenever possible to increase their effective zones of control. Owing to their more powerful units, some PACT forces are bound to break through even the most carefully established defensive line at the Elbe. For that reason, NATO should hold back some of its units to establish defensive lines in the south, the most likely route of advancing PACT units. NATO should move to quickly control the roads; if enough units aren't available to control them, small units (such as West German

cavalry) should be placed at key junctions of the roads to restrain PACT movement.

Since they are generally less powerful than PACT units, NATO units should choose their defensive terrain carefully — mobile strength defends best in flat, high water, and marsh; close strength defends best in woods, rough, and urban. NATO units are especially vulnerable to isolation. An isolated Netherlands unit of almost any type doesn't pose much of a threat to an advancing Soviet tank. A group of three or fewer NATO units generally makes an irresistible target.

Because of PACT's increase in electronic warfare points, air support becomes more and more difficult for NATO as the game progresses. Use air strikes hard and heavy in the middle third of the game before PACT's EW kicks into full gear. Deep interdiction should provide several golden opportunities for NATO — a successful deep interdiction should signal the NATO player to follow up with his most aggressive assaults.

NATO forces outnumber PACT forces, though PACT units are stronger. NATO can anticipate a fair number of casualties; for this reason, it is a good idea to offer up the weaker Netherlands units on the front lines. British and United States units are best held back, as is the West German helicopter; the helicopter is NATO's ace in the hold for delaying any PACT unit on the verge of meeting Objective four.

NATO's biggest problem is anticipating PACT's overall strategy, particularly since the strategy may not be entirely clear before the middle of the game. For this reason, it is a good idea for NATO to think of the game in groups of five turns and focus on specific defensive goals for each (allowing, of course, for any surprises). In Game Turns 1-5, NATO should mobilize its forces — establish a defensive line at the Elbe (heavy on expendable Netherlands units), concentrate reserve forces (heavy on British, United States, and some of the tougher West German units), and place defensive units on roads and key bridges. During Game Turns 6-10, the PACT strategy should be clear (if PACT is still struggling to cross the Elbe by Game Turn 10, NATO doesn't have much to worry about). NATO should focus on preventing PACT's meeting Objectives

three and four in the middle turns. If NATO has sufficient forces available to give PACT a hard time with Objectives three and four by Game Turn 10, the last third of the game can be spent addressing Objectives one and two, remembering that the wise NATO player won't do much with Objective one until the final game turns.

## Handling Variables

Aside from the whims of the Combat Results Table, there are two variables in *North German Plain* that neither player can control which present their own complications: season determination and electronic warfare results. Both variables must be taken into account when organizing strategies.

The season is determined by a die roll at the beginning of the game. There is a 50-50 chance of a dry season (winter or summer) resulting in dry high water hexes or a wet season (fall or spring) resulting in wet high water hexes. Seasons have no effect on defense — both wet and dry high water hexes use mobile strength — but they have a major effect on movement. Dry hexes cost one movement point while wet hexes cost four. Since PACT is already at a mobility disadvantage, a wet season is good news for NATO.

In a wet season, PACT should avoid high water hexes, and this means minimizing the use of the bridges at 2541, 2838, and 2637. Instead, consider paying the movement point cost to cross rivers at unbridged hexes; the cost of four movement points for a regiment/brigade is preferable to struggling across a series of wet hexes surrounding a bridge hex. Note also that wet seasons make Objective four more difficult, as the southern route is clogged with wet hexes in the southwest and central portions of the map. A central route in the general areas of Verdun and Bruchhausen-Vilsen is preferable to a strictly southern route in a wet season.

Seasonal differences don't make as much difference to NATO. Like PACT, it is a good idea for NATO to avoid wet hexes in a wet season, but NATO's superior mobility should adequately compensate for any seasonal movement limitations. Anticipating a more central route for advancing PACT units, NATO should station several units in the Bremen area to

hold them off; the crossroads at 2913 is a good central location for NATO.

An electronic warfare attack is determined by a die roll, with a 50-50 chance of success. Although both players use the same table and the same results, they are not equally affected — since the PACT player has more electronic points available to him in the game, he will use the table more often, and since there is no penalty for failure, the effect is more uncertainty for the NATO player. Assuming that half of the PACT electronic warfare attacks will have no effect, this means that NATO's air support will be severely restricted, increasingly so in the latter part of the game when PACT can expect five or six successful EW attacks per turn. Since EW points cannot be used for defense, the NATO player should use his air strikes to exclusively support friendly attacks as the game progresses.

## Optional Rules

Optional rules do not affect players equally. As seen, wet seasons hurt PACT more than NATO, so the PACT player should think twice before agreeing to optional rule 20.0.

Rule 21.0, which allows for concealed deployment to both sides, helps PACT more than NATO. The majority of the NATO units have mobile strengths in the 5 to 3 range, but the mobile strengths of Soviet units range from 8 to 19. Since the Soviets have more to hide, hidden deployment favors PACT.

The benefits of the final four optional rules are obvious. Rule 22.0 severely limits the reliability of Polish units, a big plus for NATO. Rules 23.0 and 25.0 are also major advantages for NATO, especially 25.0 which gives a tremendous boost to NATO by awarding it an extra movement turn and earlier reinforcements. This advantage can be offset by employing rule 24.0, which accelerates PACT reinforcement and allows PACT to set up the 1st Guards Tank Division at the beginning of the game.

Judicious use of the optional rules can restore game balance between players of unequal ability. Consider using 25.0, 22.0, and 20.0 (wet season) to help out a weak NATO player, and 24.0 and 21.0 to assist a novice PACT player. ■

## Expanded Sequence of Play

(continued from page 38)

on the Disengagement Table (4.4). NATO may spend air support points to help units disengage, and PACT may spend points to hinder disengagement.

2. Non-helicopter units move according to the rules of movement. Stacks can consist of two ground and/or artillery-type units in a single hex. Stacks can form hedgehogs. Entering any urban hex from any direction is like Autobahn movement (1/2 movement point per hex). Stacks cannot use road movement. If a unit enters a road hex occupied by a friendly unit, it must pay 1 movement point to enter instead of 1/2 point.

## H. NATO Helicopter Movement

Helicopter units can move to any hexes within their radius of action not occupied by PACT units and can transport air mobile units that have not yet moved during the current turn. Helicopter units can enter one PACT-controlled hex at no penalty. For each additional PACT-controlled hex entered by a helicopter, PACT rolls one die. On a roll of 1, the helicopter and any transported ground units are destroyed and removed from play.

## I. PACT Helicopter Reaction

PACT helicopters can move helicopter units to any hexes within their radius of action not occupied by NATO units and can transport air mobile units that began the phase stacked with them. Entering NATO-controlled hexes is resolved as explained above.

## J. NATO Combat Phase

1. Ground, artillery-type, and helicopter units conduct attacks according to the rules of combat. NATO can spend air points to support attacks. PACT can spend air points to support defense. NATO electronic points can be spent in an attempt to hinder PACT artillery and air support.

2. Any or all victorious attacking units can advance along the enemy path of retreat. Stacking restrictions apply at the end of the advance.

## K. End of Turn

If this ends Game Turn 15, assess victory according to PACT's successful completion of objectives. ■

# HORSE SOLDIERS™

## Tupelo

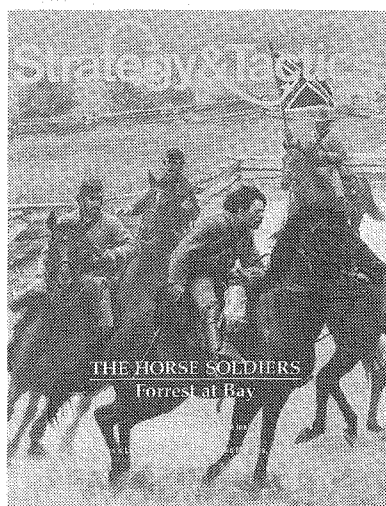
by Paul Dangel

**T**he battle of Tupelo (July 14, 1864) was probably typical of most Civil War battles in so far as the events of the day bore little resemblance to the plans conceived by the leaders on either side. In a period when battlefield communication was limited for the most part to word of mouth or a hastily scribbled note, it is surprising that any instructions were capable of being carried out as intended. Difficulties with the coordination of movement between formations, unforeseen obstacles, lost or misunderstood orders, enemy fire, intransigent subordinates and the untimely death of a key leader, to mention a few, all conspired to undermine the best laid plans of any army commander. The passage of information from the firing lines back to the commander was just as uncertain when subordinates, faced with circumstances that precluded consultation with their "superiors", were forced to take independent action. It was the soon-to-be-unemployed general who did not quickly realize that "It is a bad plan that admits no modification."

With the introduction of Richard Berg's new system for the long enduring *Great Battles of the American Civil War™* game series, players are treated to a hefty dose of the frustrations Civil War leaders had to swallow during a battle. In this system a player must achieve a diceroll result within a particular range before he can move, fire, melee, change formation and such with any unit or formation of units. If he rolls the required number he carries out his orders; if not, the initiative passes over to the other player. The chances of "orders" being obeyed are increased or decreased by the command rating of the army commander, the brigade commander, the line of communication, and the current state of fatigue of the unit

receiving the orders. (There is a good chance that the commander of an exhausted brigade will tell your courier to "buzz off".)

Gone is the total assurance that you will be able to march a brigade down a road, shake it into battle formation, fire a couple of volleys, and go right in with the bayonet while the enemy sits and watches. The first time one of your brigades gets meleed in road column because you lost the initiative *before* you could change its formation, or when you cannot get that exhausted brigade to make one more attack that will open up the enemy line, is when you begin to appreciate the anxieties and frustrations the real army commanders faced. The system also succeeds in showing that even the best generals had to be willing to take risks, since the highest rated leader in the game has no guarantee of being obeyed by his subordinates.



*Tupelo* is the first of the GBACW™ game series to use this system. It simulates the attack by Nathan Bedford Forrest's "cavalry army" under the command of Stephen Lee on the Federal 16th Corps

under A.J. Smith (of Pleasant Hill fame). Forrest had been harassing the line of communication of Sherman's army which was moving on Atlanta. He had also routed a Union force larger than his about a month earlier at Brice's Crossroads. All this provoked Sherman to exclaim that he would be willing "to lose ten thousand men and empty the Treasury" if that is what it would take to get Forrest. Smith maneuvered his infantry corps, including cavalry, into a position near Tupelo, Mississippi in which Forrest (Lee) would be compelled to attack him. After several unimaginative and murderous assaults across open ground on the morning of July 14, 1864, the Southerners finally yielded the field to superior Union firepower and withdrew.

What follows is a somewhat detailed account of a playing of the *Tupelo* game. It is not an example of how to play the game "perfectly" for one will find mistakes, sometimes stupid ones, errors in judgment, and just plain bad luck; in other words, a typical game and not a showcase. The optional set-up for the Confederates was used since the players felt this option provided better play balance.

## The Armies

The Confederate army consists of seven cavalry brigades and an independent infantry brigade (historically termed a "division"). (See CSA Command Structure Chart.) The cavalry brigades are organized into three divisions, two of three brigades and one of two brigades. There are five artillery batteries, each with four guns, which are distributed among the cavalry divisions. Because of its dragoon-like method of operating, this army has been termed a "cavalry army" by some and a "mounted infantry army" by others. Below is a brigade-by-brigade examination of the army showing Strength Points

and averaged Morale Ratings:

	Strength Points	Ave. Morale M/DisM.
<b>Chalmers' Div.</b>		
McCulloch's Bde	28	4/4
Rucker's Bde	18	4/4
<b>Buford's Div.</b>		
Crossland's Bde	18	3/4
Bell's Bde	26	5/5
Mabry's Bde	20	4/4
<b>Roddey's Div.</b>		
Patterson's Bde	14	5/4
Johnson's Bde	16	5/4
<b>Lyon's Inf. Div.</b>	42	-/3
Forrest's Escort	2	6/5
<b>Total</b>	<b>184</b>	

The greatest problem for the Confederates is that their army is much smaller than the Federals (184 points to 237 points and 20 guns to 24) in addition to being shouldered with the burden of the attack. But the Rebel disadvantages are balanced by some positive points.

First of all two-thirds of their army is

mounted, giving them superior mobility when presented with the opportunity to overwhelm a portion of the enemy and exploit any breakthroughs. The threat of a cavalry charge is a tactic whose bark is usually worse than its bite, especially in Civil War days. Units in good order in good defensive positions usually have nothing to fear from even the most perfectly executed charge. However, disordered units caught in the open are as good as finished when ridden down by cavalry. Again, the charge threat alone is usually enough to keep an opponent from trying anything too daring.

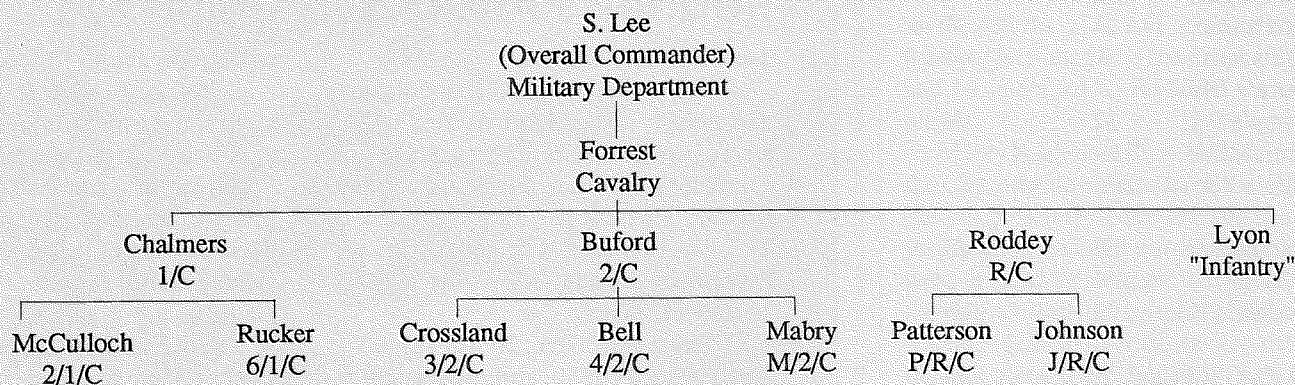
Secondly, three of its eight brigades may use dismounted pistol tactics, which allows these units to let go a volley in their enemy's faces just prior to an assault.

Thirdly, the CSA command structure gives the Confederate player an additional level of command. Lee is Forrest's commander and Forrest commands everyone else. Lee's command abilities were certainly inferior to Forrest's and in game

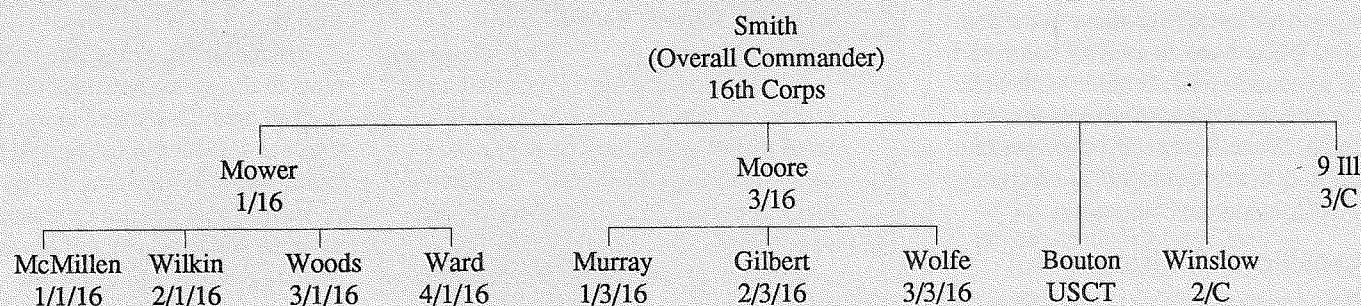
terms this means that the CSA overall commander has a lower command rating than his immediate subordinate. Forrest can be used to perform the essential but rather unexciting duty of moving unattached batteries and supply wagons. His cavalry charge bonus can also be used when the circumstances permit. Forrest is most important as the backup commander to Lee. Should Lee become a casualty, Forrest would become overall commander. I am not suggesting that the Confederate player send Lee on a "death ride" into the Union lines just to get him out of the way. The scenario's penalties for that action are very severe.

Overall, the Confederate player has an uphill struggle. Forrest's victory at Brice's Crossroads was won against a force also superior in strength. But the Union army in that battle was poorly led with most of its manpower arriving on the field exhausted and disorganized. Forrest exercised superb leadership, using the mobility of his forces to take advantage of every Federal

### CSA Command Structure at Tupelo



### USA Command Structure at Tupelo



## CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS

### Once More Into The Breech

mistake. At Tupelo the Union army will be better led and in secure defensive positions. But worst of all, Forrest will not be in command.

The Union force at Tupelo, under command of A.J. Smith, is composed of nine brigades, seven of which are infantry brigades of the 16th Corps. (See USA Command Structure Chart). This corps is organized into two divisions; the First (Mower's) having four brigades and the Third (Moore's) with three. Attached to Smith's command is a brigade of United States Colored Troops under Bouton, and the Second Brigade of Grierson's cavalry division under Winslow. These last two brigades were present at the Brice's Crossroads debacle. The force's artillery complement contains 24 pieces in 6 batteries.

While Smith's corps cannot be called an elite unit, it is fighting components are pure "bedrock" in matters of numbers and morale.

	Strength Points	Ave. Morale M/DisM.
<b>Mower's Div.</b>		
McMillen's Bde	20	-/4
Wilkin's Bde	35	-/4
Wood's Bde	24	-/4
Ward's Bde	9	-/4
<b>Moore's Div.</b>		
Murray's Bde	32	-/4
Gilbert's Bde	31	-/4
Wolfe's Bde	25	-/4
 Bouton's Bde	36	-/3
 Winslow's Bde	23	4/4
 9 Ill Cav (3rd Cav) 2		4/4
<b>Total</b>	<b>237</b>	

The Union player enjoys the advantages of superior numbers and the defensive role in the game. His regiments are strong and are average to above average in morale. While weak in cavalry compared to his opponent, his essentially defensive role in the game better suits his solid infantry force. When his cavalry does get into action it is better equipped in weaponry than its Confederate counterpart.

### Dispositions & Plans

Since most of Smith's set-up positions are fixed, there are few options to discuss concerning his deployment. The only

meaningful choices the Union player is permitted to make are for the placement of Bouton's Colored Brigade, the assignment of the 9 Ill cavalry regiment, and two of Winslow's cavalry units. The Colored Brigade is deployed to extend the line of Wolfe's brigade (3/2/16) southeastward beyond the southern irrigation ditch in the direction of the Victory Point hex at 3306. The USCT artillery is placed on the knoll at 3008 to cover the high ground that reaches up to the woods. The 9 Ill is placed on the VP hex at 3306 and is assigned to Bouton's Brigade, although its initial deployment places it out of command. Winslow's 3 Iw (a) and 4 Iw (a) dismounted units are placed in the woods and cornfield, respectively, west of VP hex 1221 to slow any Confederate advance along the road. They are supported by the remainder of Winslow's brigade in mounted formation at Harrisburg.

Mower's division (1/16) is stretched along the north edge of the ridge overlooking the stream and cornfield at the north

end of the map. Moore's division (3/16) meets the west end (left flank) of Mower's line at right angles and continues the Federal front southward. Murray's brigade (1/3/16) faces the west and extends nearly to the northern irrigation ditch. After a sizable gap of open ground to Murray's left, Wolfe's brigade (3/3/16) spans the area between the two ditches with the woods directly to its rear. Moore's third brigade, Gilbert's (3/2/16), is held in reserve at Smith's HQ near the orchard at 1006.

The Union player realizes that all his plans must be in reaction to what the CSA player does. Smith's force already has a lock on enough VP hexes to win. The battle is simply a matter of holding on to them.

The decisions the Confederate player makes even before the game begins are ones that he will have to live with for the whole battle. The scenario rules require him to enter at least five of his eight brigades through at least three of the CSA Entrance areas on the west edge of the map

#### Insert #1

### Roddey's Attack On Wolfe

#### Turn 9 (3:00 PM)

After a round of fire combat the units of Roddey's division and Wolfe's brigade positioned as illustrated here.

**Confederate Action:** Divisional Assault (Roddey's Division)

TCT Rolls: Johnson's Brigade — 7  
Patterson's Brigade — 8

**Declared Melees:**

- (1) Patterson, 5 Ala., 10 Ala. (a), Stuart against G/2 Ill. artillery section.
- (2) 4 Ala. (a) against 49 Ill.
- (3) Johnson, 4 Ala. (b), Williams against Wolfe, 52 Ind.

#### No Union Retreat Before Melee

**Effected Melees:**

(1) Patterson and the 5 Ala. assault the artillery section. The 10 Ala. (a) is disordered by defensive fire and does not assault. Stuart fails the morale check and does not assault. G/2 Ill artillery section is captured.

(2) 4 Ala. (a) survives defensive fire, passes its morale check and performs dismounted pistol fire only to be

repulsed by the 49 Ill.

(3) Johnson's stack assaults Wolfe's stack and the result is an Engaged (see modified Engaged procedure below). Wolfe elects to continue the melee and brings in the 49 Ill. as reinforcements. Second round of melee results in an Attacker (Wolfe) Retreat.

The divisional assault ends with Roddey's two brigades overrunning Wolfe's position, including the capture of 2 artillery pieces.

#### Modified Procedure for Engaged Melee Results (12.84):

Instead of "freezing" the engaged units in the melee hex until the next Assault action, as stated in the rules, the original defender in the assault may continue the melee immediately. This continued melee is not considered a separate action and any of the defender options presented in 12.84 may still be used (counterattack, reinforce and counterattack, or retreat).

To win, the Confederate player must accumulate enough Victory Points to exceed the Union player's total. The easiest way to do this is to grab VP hexes without going "toe to toe" against the bulk of the Union army. Because cavalry casualties are worth double infantry losses, the CSA player must try to avoid attrition battle situations or it will not matter how many VP hexes he grabs. An examination of the map and the Union deployment reveals

Buford's division (2/C) of 3 brigades is assigned to enter in mounted formation through area D on turn 1, and push through the woods and take the VP hex at 1221 and the one deep in the woods at 2205. This will require Buford to cut through Bouton's brigade and brush aside Wolfe's, by which time the Union player will likely be sending reinforcement over from the northern end of his line. To counter this Chalmers' division (1/C) of two brigades will also enter on turn one through areas C and B, which will also satisfy all the CSA deployment requirements. The role of these two brigades will be to clear the high ground west of Harrisburg occupied by Winslow's cavalry and capture the VP hex at 1221. From there it will cautiously move

Rucker's division (R/C) is scheduled to enter the map on turn three (9:00 AM) in mounted formation at Entrance Area C. By this time Buford's division should be exiting the woods in front of Bouton and Wolfe. Rucker will be in a position to assist either Buford's advance or Chalmers' demonstration. Lyon's infantry "division" will enter the map at area B on turn 4 in a fatigued condition. Its role will be to occupy the ridge west of Harrisburg and defend the VP hex at 1221. After it has rested it will release Chalmers' division so it may move southeastward to assist the main attack being carried out by Buford.

## Turn One (7:00 AM): Automatic CSA Initiative

Mabry's advance from area D reveals the Confederate hand to the Union player, but the presence of one brigade is hardly justification to shift the army to face southwest. Instead he attempts and succeeds in moving some of the regiments of Murray's brigade (1/3/16) to close the gap between that brigade and Wolfe's right flank. Next, he orders Winslow to move his mounted units from the Harrisburg west to the open ground just east of the church and cemetery. Here they change from column to line formation. Becoming anxious about the lack of support in his center, he orders Gilbert's brigade (2/3/16) plus a battery and a supply wagon closer to the cornfield behind Murray's position. Since there are too few Confederate units on the map to ascertain their true objectives, the Union player voluntarily PASSES.

## CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS

### Once More Into The Breach

nally Forrest with his escort. Switching to Entrance Areas B and C the Confederate player orders McCulloch's brigade plus one battery and a supply wagon onto the map. This brigade's left rests on Pontotoc Road with the remainder of its units extended south. Its objective is to occupy the high ground and woods west of the church. As it enters the woods atop the ridge it encounters Winslow's 3 Iw (a) cavalry. Advancing onto the map in line north of the road is Rucker's brigade supported by a battery. It runs into Winslow's other advance cavalry, 4 Iw (a), deployed in the cornfield at the north end of the high ground. One battalion of the 8th Miss. works its way behind the dismounted cavalry threatening to cut it off. In preparation to attempt a divisional assault, he tries to bring the division commander onto the map but he rolls a 2 ("snake-eyes") and his turn ends immediately.

The Union player sees the danger to the exposed 4 Iw (a) dismounted cavalry and orders the 4 Iw (b) to charge the Mississippians. The charge is perfectly executed without loss and the cavalry wheels to its right to melee the other half of the 8th Miss. regiment. This unit retreats before melee and the charge ends. Winslow's brigade, an independent unit, is out of the command range of any Union division commander and must use the "C" line on the TCT for its action attempts. The Union player rolls a 3 (FINISHED) trying to get his cavalry to fire on Chalmers' division. Since the Confederate player's turn is already over, this ends turn one.

The first hour of battle did not go well for the Rebel player. Buford's division, while completely on the map, got only one of the two marches it needed to stay on schedule. Chalmers' division only began to meet its objective before the turn ended. The Union player has a good idea of what the Confederates are up to with two of their three divisions on the map; however, just where they will strike his line remains a question.

### TURN 2 (8:00 AM): CSA Wins The Initiative

The free initiative action is used to move Mabry's brigade further northeast in the direction of the southern irrigation ditch. In order to avoid having to make his

TCT diceroll on the "D" line, the Confederate player attempts and succeeds in bringing Lee on at area B. Bell is able to move his brigade abreast of Mabry's right flank but the attempt to do likewise with Crossland fails on a diceroll of 5 (PASS).

Seeing the direction Buford's brigade is taking, the Union player is able to move Gilbert's brigade (2/3/16) further to the south so it is placed behind Murray's right flank. Shifting attention to Winslow's cavalry, he successfully rolls for several rounds of brigade fire resulting in Confederate return fire, all of which causes Rucker's brigade to lose two strength points before the Union rolls a PASS.

Crossland finally moves up to Bell's right flank and the Confederate player succeeds in moving that brigade a second time (Action 2 for Bell). Buford and Mabry (Action 2 for Mabry) continue to move through the woods keeping up with

Bell. By now both brigades are one march away from the open field in front of Wolfe's (3/3/16) and Bouton's positions. The attempt to move Crossland a second time fails when the Confederate player rolls a 3 (FINISHED).

Gilbert's brigade is moved once again, this time to the stream east of the northern irrigation ditch. He is accompanied by the 9 Ind artillery and a supply wagon. The Union player decides the time has arrived to shift his 16th Corps to face the threat from the southwest. He pulls McMillen's brigade (1/1/16) out of its position and marches it in the direction of Murray's brigade west of the cornfield. Moving back to Winslow's cavalry, the remaining mounted cavalry units are dismounted and sent into the woods west of the church to prevent McCulloch's brigade from sweeping around the Federal left. A dozen or so rounds of brigade fire and return fire result

#### Insert #2

### McMillen Rupulsed by Lyon

#### Turn 12 (6:00 PM)

McMillen's brigade (1/1/16) advances on the church and cemetery west of Harrisburg hoping to capture VP hex 1221. Confronting it is Lyon's "infantry division" atop the high ground. The Union player realizes that Lyon outnumberes him in strength points by over two to one but the Union morale is generally superior. If he can get three or four of Lyon's units to disorder or rout by fire combat he can close for an assault on the VP hex.

#### Union Action 1: Brigade Fire

TCT Roll: 10 (CONTINUE)

Fire: 10 Minn, 72 Ohio, 95 Ohio (11 SP's) at Neely (a) in hex 1221 — Result 9 (no effect)

Return Fire: Neely (a) (6 SP's) at 72 Ohio — Result 7 (1 hit, morale check — passed)

Fire: 114 Ill., 93 Ind. (9 SP's) at Neely (b) in hex 1122 — Result 10 (no effect)

Return Fire: Neely (b) (6 SP's) at 93 Ind — Result 7 (1 hit, morale check — passed)

#### Union Action 2: Brigade Fire

TCT Roll: 7 (CONTINUE)

Fire: 10 Minn., 72 Ohio, 95 Ohio (10 SP's) at Neely (a) in hex 1221 — Result 2 (2 hits, morale check — passed)

Return Fire: Neely (a) (4 SP's) at 72 Ohio — Result 4 (1 hit, morale check — passed)

Fire: 114 Ill., 93 Ind., (8 SP's) at Neely (b) in hex 1122 — Result 4 (morale check — passed)

Return Fire: Neely (b) (6 SP's) at 114 Ill. — Result 3 (1 hit, morale check — passed)

#### Union Action 3: Brigade Fire

TCT Roll: 4 (PASS)

#### Confederate Action 1: Brigade Fire

TCT Roll: 8 (CONTINUE)

Fire: Ghlsn (a,b), Neely (a,b) (22 SP's) at 93 Ind. in hex 1020 — Result 3 (2 hits, morale check — disordered)

Return Fire: None

Fire: Bltzhr (b) (6 SP's) at 72 Ohio in hex 1320 — Result 6 (72 Ohio disordered, Bltzhr ammo depleted)

Return Fire: None

in all but two of Winslow's troopers running out of ammo. For all their trouble they kill one of Chalmers' strength points and disorder several other units while losing one SP of their own. The nearest supply wagon is at the far end of the map, so there is no question of immediate resupply. The turn winds up with the Union player moving this supply wagon part way up the road to Harrisburg along with several units of Wilkin's brigade (2/1/16). Two consecutive *PASSES* on the TCT ends the second hour of the battle.

While Buford's division has made decent progress through the woods, it is still a march behind. Chalmers' division continues to be mired down on the high ground west of the church, blocked by a single cavalry brigade. Chalmers cannot really be blamed because the Confederate player has spent all his dicerolls getting Buford through the woods. If his dicerol-

ling does not improve in the next hour a change in plans may be necessary. The Union player chuckles gleefully at his opponent's frustration. He feels he has the situation well in hand and is sure of the Rebel intentions.

### **TURN 3 & 4 (9:00 - 10:00 AM): CSA Wins Initiative Both Turns**

These two turns develop into pure maneuver phases for both sides. Buford's division continues its northerly trek thru the woods and ends turn four poised on the edge of the clearing in front of Bouton's USCT brigade. The Union player has managed to move all of Moore's division of the 16th Corps to the south side of the stream east of the irrigation ditches. McMillen's and Wilkin's brigades of the 1/16 complete their shift from Mower's right flank to the left, occupying the ground previously held by Murray.

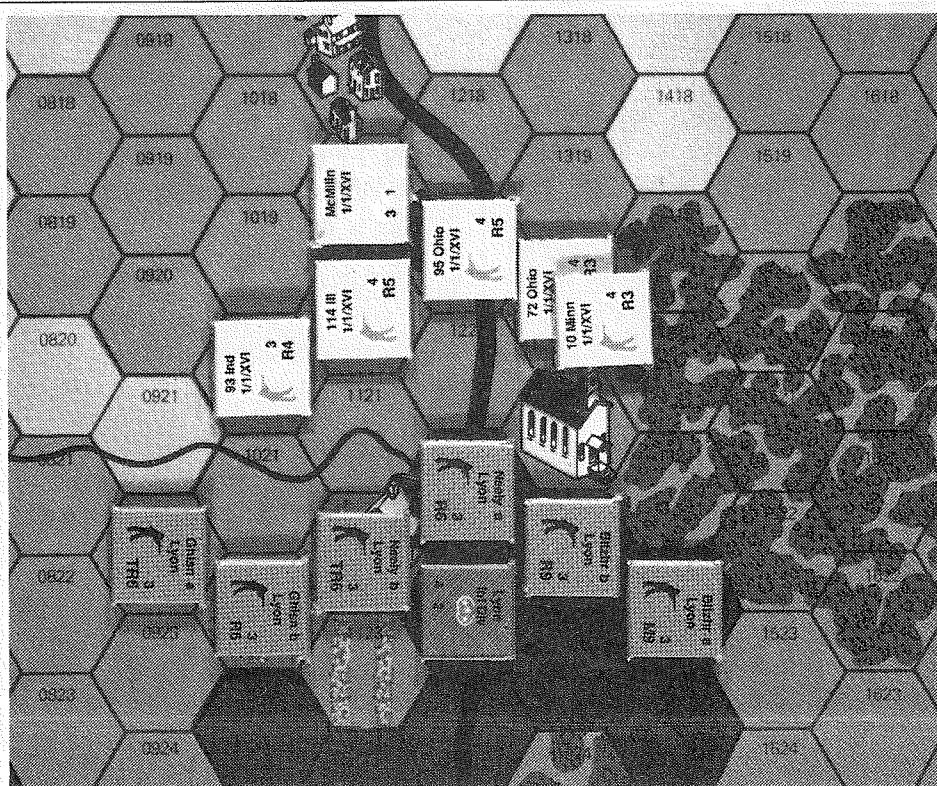
Winslow's cavalry continues to withdraw eastward south of Harrisburg and into the cornfield where they will be resupplied. The Confederate player prods McCulloch's brigade into and through the woods around the church and cemetery recently evacuated by Winslow's troopers. Neither Roddey's nor Lyon's regiments have arrived on the map as poor dicerolls continue to plague the Confederates. Instead of having his main blow fall on only Bouton's and Wolfe's brigades he is now faced with fully half of the 16th Corps!

### **TURN 5 (11:00): CSA Wins the Initiative (Once Again!)**

Considering how quickly the Federals are reinforcing their southern flank, the Confederate player decides the opportunity for a methodical dismounted attack against Bouton has been missed. He intends to set up Buford's division for a massed cavalry charge against the USCT brigade, hoping its relatively low morale will make it retreat and disrupt the reinforcements arriving behind it. With this in mind he is able to position two of Buford's brigades (Bell and Crossland) in mounted line formation in the clear ground just northeast of the woods. Instead of attempting to charge with just these two brigades he decides to throw in Mabry's brigade also, but to do so he must first change its formation from column to line. This attempt fails and play *PASSES* to the Union side.

Seeing what the Confederates are up to, the union player moves Gilbert's brigade (2/3/16) behind the USCT battery, and Murray's brigade (1/3/16) across the stream behind Wolfe (3/3/16). Bouton's brigade opens fire on some of Mabry's mounted units causing some units to disorder. The next attempt to do the same fails with a *PASS*.

Mabry rallies the disordered units and succeeds in getting his brigade in line formation. The time has arrived for the charge to begin. Buford is in command range of all his brigadiers. Mabry's brigade is on the left with its flank touching the end of the southern irrigation ditch. Bell's brigade is in the center astride the ridge. Crossland's Mounted Infantry covers the right, extended up to the 9 Ill on VP hex 3306. The division commander begins



#### **Confederate Action 2: Brigade Fire TCT Roll: 9 (CONTINUE)**

*Fire:* Ghlsn (a,b) (12 SP's) at 93 Ind., in hex 1020 — Result 7 (morale check — second disorder becomes a rout, unit retreats to 1017)

*Return Fire:* None

*Fire:* Neely (a,b) (10 SP's) at 114 Ill., in hex 1120 — Result 2 (2 hits — 114 Ill. disordered)

*Return Fire:* None

#### **Confederate Action 3: Brigade Fire TCT Roll: 5 (PASS)**

## CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS

### Once More Into The Breech

to lower his upraised sword signaling the commencement of the three brigade assaults when he hesitates... (the CSA player has just rolled a 4 — PASS).

Bouton's three regiments and artillery battery open a galling fire on the mounted Confederates across the field in front of the woods. Several rounds of this fire, which the Rebel cavalry cannot return because they are out of range, causes 12 SP losses plus several routed units. When Bouton's units have run out of targets and/or ammo, the artillery battery continues to bombard Crossland's brigade.

The Confederate player must now put his shattered division back together. The surviving units are rallied, dismounted and deployed along the edge of the woods. The chances of finessing the Union player are all but gone. The only hope of victory now is to take the VP hexes by storm. To do this will require all available troops. He succeeds in bringing both brigades of Roddey's division on the map and moving them into the area between the two ditches before rolling a FINISHED.

The Union player completes his turn by attempting to order Murray's brigade to come to Wolfe's support but two consecutive PASSes end the turn.

### URNS 6 & 7

#### (12:00 NOON — 1:00 PM): USA Wins Initiative Both Turns (For A Change)

After the fiasco with Buford's aborted cavalry charge, both sides spend the next 2 turns preparing for the inevitable Confederate assault. The Union player nervously shifts McMillen's and Wilkin's brigades in the center of his line. At one point he even contemplates going over to the offensive himself but quickly realizes that this is exactly what his opponent desires, i.e. to leave his carefully prepared positions.

The Confederate player spends his part of both turns moving up two artillery batteries (Morton and Rice) to the edge of the woods on Mabry's left. These guns are in a perfect position to enfilade Bouton's brigade while Buford attacks it from the front. Further north he moves Roddey's division closer to Wolfe's position between the two ditches. Lyon's brigade is still off the map and by the time it does come on it will no longer be fatigued.

### URNS 8 & 9 (2:00 — 3:00 PM)

#### USA Initiative Turn 8,

#### CSA Initiative Turn 9

Too anxious to wait for the Confederate player's attack, the Union PASSes after moving Winslow's cavalry to a reserve position behind his line. He does not have long to wait, since the Confederate player moves Patterson's and Johnson's brigade of Roddey's division up to contact with Wolfe, at which point he rolls a PASS. Wolfe attempts to get in the first volley but rolls a PASS instead. End of turn 8.

On turn 9 the Confederate player shifts the scene of the action by moving McCulloch's brigade from the church/cemetery area to Johnson's left, facing Wilkin's brigade (2/1/16). When he tries to do the same with Rucker's brigade he rolls a PASS.

Once again Wolfe is ordered to open fire on Roddey's division, which he succeeds in doing. Both sides trade fire and return fire for several actions before the Union player rolls a PASS. The firefight is continued by the Confederates until they PASS, Wolfe fires for a few actions and PASSes back. Casualties have been moderate in spite of the close proximity of the combatants. A Federal battery, G/III, has been doing most of the damage to the Rebels so the Confederate player decides it is time to take it by assault. Roddey is in position to conduct a divisional assault, which he opts to do despite the outcome of his last such attempt.

This time both the brigades succeed in meleeing and the battery along with most of Wolfe's position is carried. (See Insert 1). Roddey next deploys Pettus' Flying Battery and begins bombarding Wilkin's exposed left flank until a PASS result puts an end to it.

The Union player yields the wooded angle formed by the ditches and the stream, along with the captured battery. He rallies the remnants of Wolfe's brigade and forms them along the stream that leads into the northern ditch, and at this time he rolls a PASS. The Confederate player does the same trying to rally some of Patterson's units.

This turn has given the Confederate player new confidence. Although he has suffered more casualties than his opponent, he feels that a well coordinated attack

on the Federal line will force the Union player into some hasty, and hopefully costly, offensive actions.

### TURN 10 (4:00 PM):

#### USA Wins The Initiative

The fighting between Wolfe and Roddey extends north to Wilkin's and McCulloch's brigades. After a dozen exchanges of fire between them the Union player finally rolls a PASS. The Confederate player moves Rucker closer to the front line on McCulloch's left but PASSes before the brigade can join the action. The Union player renews the firefight for several rounds before he rolls a FINISH.

With Rucker's brigade in position to cover McCulloch's left flank the Confederate batteries, Thrall and Ferrell, begin to bombard the Union units in the cornfield (McMillen's and Winslow's brigades). This succeeds only in lowering their ammo levels without doing much damage to the enemy. One of the supply wagons is brought forward and after several resupply actions the turn ends.

### TURN 11 (5:00 PM):

#### CSA Wins The Initiative

This is the "do or die" turn for the Rebels. He must take VP hex 3306 and be in position to capture the other one at hex 2205 by turn 13. He cannot worry too greatly about casualties, and must try to inflict at least as many as he takes to achieve even the lowest level of victory. He begins the turn by moving Buford's two intact brigades, Bell and Crossland, to where he can execute an overwhelming divisional assault on the 9 III dismounted cavalry (hex 3306) and the USCT battery (hex 3008). Bell succeeds in making his assault die roll ('7') but Crossland fails on a '3' (normally a FINISHED result but for divisional assault attempts it becomes a PASS).

The Union player moves Gilbert's large brigade (2/3/16) into the gap between the 9 III and the USCT battery to counter the Rebel assault. When Gilbert attempts to fire on Bell he PASSes instead.

Crossland's brigade manages to assault the 9 III on its own, only to have the Federal troopers withdraw before combat leaving the VP hex to the Confederates. Bell's depleted brigade is too weak to tackle Gilbert head-on so Rice's and Morton's

batteries open a long-range bombardment on Gilbert's flank and rear, hoping to disorder or rout a few of its regiments. The CSA turn ends after only a couple of ineffective artillery fire actions.

Gilbert's brigade opens fire on Bell and annihilates half its units, causing the brigade to exceed its BCE level and rout into the woods to its south. The same treatment is dealt to Crossland who also retreats to the woods. The Union player recovers VP hex 3306. He spends the remainder of his turn positioning the brigades of Mower's division for an attack on the church area in hopes of taking VP hex 1221 and putting the Confederates away for good.

### **TURN 12 (6:00 PM): CSA Wins The Initiative**

With the last flicker of hope for any chance of victory extinguished in the last turn, the Confederate player decides to minimize any further losses and keep the Federal level of victory as low as possible. He uses the free initiative to bring Lyon's 'division' onto the map through area B. It was originally scheduled to arrive on turn 10 in a fatigued condition, but after the long delay it has returned to a normal status. The attempt to pull Chalmers' division back from the Union center results in the CSA player rolling a FINISHED. (The dice went right into the trash can on that one.)

The Union senses the time for the kill has arrived. He quickly smashes through Chalmers' units but with equal loss to Wilkin's attacking brigade. Pursuing Chalmers' routed survivors, McMillen's brigade runs into Lyon's fresh units defending VP hex 1221 near the church. The ensuing fire combat results in McMillen losing 8 SP's to Lyon's loss of 2 (Insert 2).

Fearing that capturing the remaining two enemy held VP hexes may cost more casualties than points gained, the Union player declares his turn over and that he will not contest the two VP hexes (1221, 2215). The Confederate player agrees to this informal truce since he lacks the strength to break through the Union line. The battle ends.

### **Aftermath**

The final tally of the Victory Points is an accurate measure of the performance of

both sides:

**Union**

**CSA Losses: 102 points** (50 Cav x 2 + 2 Inf)

**VP Hexes: 60 points** (0803, 2205, 3306, 0811)

**162 total points**

**Confederate**

**USA Losses: 44 points** (4 Cav x 2 + 34 Inf + 2 Guns)

**VP Hexes: 30 points** (2215, 1221)

**74 total points**

**Difference 88 points = USA Strategic Victory**

The most obvious reason for the level of victory achieved by the Union player stems from points awarded for CSA cavalry losses. Cavalry is given a higher point value because it represents a greater investment in training and equipment per man than was required to put an infantryman into the field. The game's challenge for the Confederate player is to reach geographic objectives without offsetting their value with his own casualties.

Given the circumstances presented by the scenario itself, could the CSA player have done better? Nothing could help his absolutely abysmal dicerolling, which is an uncontrollable factor in any game. But, all luck aside, what can the Confederates do tactically to exploit their advantages? One has only to point to the defeat of Wolfe's brigade on turn 9 to see an example of a perfectly executed dismounted attack, contrasted with Buford's costly cavalry charge attempt on turn 5. In the former case Roddey's division moved with the high mobility afforded to it by being mounted. When the proximity of the enemy made remaining mounted too risky (and costly), the troopers dismounted, performing their fire attacks and final assault on foot. Buford's "charge" shows what happens when cavalry is caught in the open within range of small-arms fire and artillery.

The lesson taught by these two instances is, when opposed by an enemy in defensive positions, cavalry must use its mobility to bring greater numbers to bear on a portion of the enemy line without at the same time exposing the vulnerable mounted units to hostile fire; i.e., approach mounted — assault dismounted. ("Fustest with the mostest.")

Would there have been a difference if

Forrest had been the overall commander? Forrest's Command Rating for Tupelo is a "B", the same as Smith's. Lee's Rating is a "C". The only difference between the "B" and "C" rating is on the PASS and FINISH columns. There is a slightly better chance of FINISHing (2 or 3 on the dice-roll) on the "C" column than on the "B" column (2 only). Both ratings have an equal chance to CONTINUE. In terms of winning the Initiative each turn the CSA player certainly did better than the Union, eight out of the twelve turns played, in spite of the fact that he had only a one in three chance of doing so.

Anyone who feels that the CSA chances of winning would be improved if Forrest commanded instead of Lee should go ahead and use Forrest as the overall commander. After all, Lee did give Forrest the choice before the battle began — perhaps the Confederate player should be given the same opportunity. (In the developer's notes for *Horse Soldiers*™ (The Wargamer V. 2, N. 5) I erroneously reported that Lee "superseded" Forrest as the Commander at Tupelo. Designer and historian Richard Berg enlightened me. Forrest gave up command to Lee voluntarily.)

The Union player correctly interpreted his opponent's opening moves and took advantage of the opportunities presented by the poor Rebel dicerolls to shift the facing of his army from northwest to the southwest. Such a move was not without considerable risks. For instance, had the CSA player been able to complete his intended moves, each reinforcing Union brigade might have been overwhelmed individually, as happened to Wolfe. Winslow's cavalry brigade while in its advanced position around the church would have undoubtedly suffered the same fate if Roddey's division had arrived earlier. But, as it was, luck was on the side of the North in this game, and "What is luck," mused Napoleon, "but the ability to exploit accidents."

### **IMPORTANT ERRATA**

Lee's initiative rating should be C, Forrest's should be B. The Computer ate this vital information during the production of the counters!

# A Hitchhiker's Guide

## Modern Generals, Bit by Bit

Reviewed by Mark McLaughlin with Chuck Moss, Naor Wallach and Robert Lindsay

Reviews of *Halls of Montezuma* and *To The Rhine*, and *Blitzkrieg at the Ardennes*

Traditional board war games rarely translate exactly to the computer. Some computer designers find them too dull, and try to attach bells and whistles, while others seem to suffocate in trying to find a workable solitaire strategy for the computer, without giving it enormous advantages to make up for its lack of reasoning. Computerized boardgames, however, do have several major advantages, mostly in that you do not have to take the time to set them up, or worry about where to leave them set up, as everything is stored to disk. The computer can also take care of a lot of the chores of playing a computer game, from fatigue and supply to movement points.

The three games reviewed in this installment of the column represent three vastly divergent styles of computer design as applied to traditional board war games.

The SSG style has become a system, each installment of which, from the original *Battlefront* through *Russia, Decisive Battles of the Civil War* and now, *Halls of Montezuma*, improves on the last, but remains essentially the same. If you like any one, you will probably like the rest, and the reverse is also true. Regardless of whether you like the system (I personally do not, but the reviewer does), the theories behind its design are well explained in the text. The designers also give you the means and documentation to cheat legally by going into the design and rearranging things, or creating your own scenarios.

## HALLS OF MONTEZUMA

From the Halls of Montezuma to the shores of...well. You may not invade Gaddafi-land, but Strategic Studies Group's new computer game takes you everywhere else. Called *The Halls of Montezuma* and subtitled "A Battle History of the United States Marine Corps", the game lets you command the fighting leather-necks from Mexico City to Hue.

Designed by a team led by SSG's stellar duo Roger Keating and Ian Trout, *Halls* expands and links with their previous *Battlefront* system. There are seven combat scenarios: Mexico City, Belleau Wood, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, Pusan, Inchon, and Hue. The games can be played between two humans or in solitaire mode, with or without an "enhanced" feature that ups the computer's power. In addition, a design program allows you to customize your own game scenarios with SSG's construction routine "Warplan" and to fool around with map and icons in the "Warpaint" mode.

The game is fast, simple, and, due to superb tutorial-rulebook documentation, can be quickly played. The packaging is outstanding, with a large separate map-sheet detailing the terrain. A 104-page handbook crams in game instructions, tactical advice, a history of the Marine Corps, scenario notes, detailed explanations of how to construct a scenario, xerox-ready charts and a bibliography. There is a save-game utility.

The on-screen display is colorful game-board-style hexagons, with each menu's pertinent information inserted on the bottom. Maps have 7 x 13 hexes on-screen, and can go up to 39 across and 28 down. Each hex represents approximately one kilometer from side to side. Victory of

varying degrees is awarded on the basis of points earned by capturing and holding designated objective hexes.

Like *Battlefront* and *Russia*, *Halls* uses Keating and Trout's menu-driven game system. Instead of a command list, the player cycles through a series of menus on his keyboard, selecting options, accessing units, choosing objectives, and allocating support. A player doesn't command individual units, but checks the menus to see the status of his army. He gives his divisions and regiments objectives to capture, then sits back and watches the units run around independently on the board. Every turn, he decides who gets varying levels of "support points" simulating air/artillery, and specialized units, like engineers.

*Halls* is strictly a land game, with all pieces and units either on the ground or arriving from off-screen. There is no amphibious or combined arms aspect. The player cannot vary where the troops hit the beaches nor is there, aside from the support points, any tactical use of Marine airpower.

Games run from Hue's 99 turns to Mexico City's eight. Each turn generally takes about ten minutes, the program running fast and easily. Each turn represents six hours, with every fourth turn in night-time (sleep preferred) mode. Weather factors will complicate. In addition, *Halls* is compatible with *Battlefront* or *Battles in Normandy*; previous scenarios can be run in the *Halls* program.

In short, this is an admirable attempt to provide maximum value for your dollar (or pound), and it succeeds on many levels. While no creative breakthrough in gaming, the scenarios give generalship a wringing workout, challenging the player in terrain from open to broken to urban. You confront a variety of foes, from a few hapless 1848 Mexicans to a lot of canny

North Vietnamese and suicidal Okinawa defenders. There are six difficulty levels which raise or lower required victory point totals. Plus, when you master or get tired of the given scenarios, you can make your own or boot up a different SSG game and play some more.

That's the good news: the bad may be peculiar to me. I've reviewed every Keating-Trout game to come down the pike since 1985, and I grow increasingly vexed with the command-control system. In a nutshell, the SSG folks have decided to base their games on the proposition that a commander shouldn't, and realistically can't, expect to control his army.

Thus the role of the player is to select objectives from a pre-set list (and it's a damn small list, too), and assign them. Once assigned, it's neither simple nor easy to alter objectives, and despite a fight-what-you-see option, the inflexibility and limited command system can drive you absolutely up the wall.

You cannot say "go there", and have your commands obeyed. The objectives are pre-set and freeze all campaigns into predetermined channels. True, they're good objectives, but isn't the idea of wargaming to let you take charge? I know it's realistic for a general to give commands, then sit and watch them get screwed up, but oy vey! If I want to be a spectator at a video game, I'll go watch my daughter play *Burger Time*.

Now I want to be fair: it may be that I've personally burned out on the SSG series. And don't get me wrong, I'm impressed with SSG's games, with their attention to detail, with the respect and concern for player/customers that they show. *Halls of Montezuma* is excellent value, a compendium of fast, deceptively simple, but very challenging computer wargames. Its documentation is excellent. Its replay value sets an industry standard.

If you like and can easily work within the game system, this meaty package is heaven. If not, not. Just starting out? This one is a good introduction to computer gaming. Even though you don't get to invade Libya, I give it high marks, if not the "A+".

*Halls of Montezuma* is available for the Apple II (64K) and C-64 computers for \$40.00.

— Chuck Moss

The second systemic approach to board war games for the computer comes from SimCanada, which made its name in board games over the last decade, but has now switched almost entirely to computer games. Steven Newberg and his designers did not want to put graphics in their games, and used to give you a mix of board game and computer game, with a map and counters to set up and move, and a computer disk to access for your opponent's moves. This system gave you the feel (literally) of playing a board game, with a computerized opponent.

Some gamers (like the one who reviewed *To The Rhine*, below) do not like this approach, as it leaves you with the old problems of setting up and storing a game, and forces you to translate the computer's decisions yourself. Some reviewers, however, think this is a fairly elegant system, not unlike a text-only adventure game. With that in mind, read on...

## TO THE RHINE

*To The Rhine* is a theater-level wargame that attempts to recreate the situation in Europe between August 29 and December 14, 1944. This is the second in a series of games whose subject is the western front during World War II.

The game comes packaged in a standard plastic tray that is normally seen in board games where you have the problem of storing your counters once you've torn them away from the die-cut sheet. In this instance, the only things stored in the tray are the eight page rule book, the floppy disk, two laminated maps, two grease pencils, and two issues of the Simulation Canada's newsletters.

The rule book covers the important facets of setting up a game, explanations of all the different menus and commands that you need to know and interact with, and a description of the different scenarios and objectives for each. There are several spelling mistakes and other gaffes in the manual which give the impression that this manual was rushed in its production.

The two laminated maps are double-sided and contain roughly the same infor-

mation. However, one side is printed in a set of colors that I believe are meant to show the relative height of the terrain while the other side tends to show the political boundaries. On either side, you will find the names of about 140 towns that are sprinkled throughout the map. For entering the city into the game, each city is identified by a number. The numbering scheme used is rather unusual. If you try to follow the numerals in ascending order, you will find your gaze travelling repeatedly up and down the height of the map while slowly panning from left to right. To confuse further, sometimes the numbering seems to be non-sequential, but if you look hard enough, you will find the next number somewhere on the map. The rivers are supposed to play a major role in this game. However, only one side of the map (the political one) shows the names of the rivers.

The two grease pencils are used to mark your progress on the maps. The idea is that you may stop a game and yet have everything ready for you when you pick it up again. And, because this can be played as a two player game, you ensure security by just turning your map over to the other side so that the other player cannot see what you plotted.

The two issues of Simulations Canada's newsletter were very instructive reading. In one of them, Simulations Canada promises that they will not become "...a graphics game company." Actually that's too bad, considering the direction that is being taken by computer games. The newsletter is sent only to those who have purchased a Simulations Canada game and sent back the registrations card, and those who purchased games directly from Simulations Canada by mail. It is purportedly not available in any other way. The newsletter is basically a marketing brochure promoting Simulations Canada's latest offerings and telling you of their future plans and releases. It also includes a small section of mini-reviews of other companies' products which can be very interesting if you have any of the competition's offerings.

The game is played by issuing a series of keyboard commands that allow you to travel through the menu system imposed on you by the game's designers. The

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"Game Turn Menu" is billed as the "...central zone..." of the game. It allows you to select which player gets to move at that particular instant, when combat and its resolution will commence, and gives you access to the menu that lets you save the game and exit from it.

The next level of menus is called the "Player Turn" menu. This is where you have access to the intelligence menu, the Supply Allotment function, the Air Power Allotment function, the Allotment of Replacements function, and the Issuing of Orders function. Within the intelligence menu you may check up on the general situation which includes the weather report and the status of your troops and the enemy's based on your last turn, your own units' status, and an abbreviated status of enemy units. In all cases, you may call up a more detailed report on each individual unit by going through another menu level.

Your activities as theater commander are to follow the menu orderings. You must first check on your units' status. Then you should allocate supplies and air power to them. And finally, you should issue replacements and orders to your units. Each turn represents one week of action and you may specify, within that week, when particular units should launch their attacks of moves with an accuracy of three movement points per day. After you have finished entering all the required commands, the combat resolution phase is entered, and you view the screen where messages about what is happening to your units are displayed. When the week's fighting is over, you are given the next turn and can go through the whole sequence again until the end of the scenario.

You may play this game as either the Germans or the Allies against the computer, watch it play itself, or play against another human opponent with the computer acting as the referee. There are five scenarios covering different aspects of the campaign and allowing for some "what if..." type of activities. Under each scenario, the force mix or strength of different units may be changed. Otherwise, there really is no difference between any or all of the scenarios.

Frankly, I found playing this game to be somewhat distasteful. With all the recent

advances in the computer wargame field that have yielded better and better games, this one seems like a throwback to earlier and more primitive times. For instance, the lack of any graphics. I can understand that this makes it a lot easier for Simulations Canada to move their games across to different lines of computers very easily. However I, as the consumer, suffer for it. I find no joy in having to constantly shift my gaze between a bunch of text characters on a screen and poorly drawn maps that I am marking up with a hard-to-erase grease pencil. To get involved in the game to any degree, I found that I had to keep notebooks full of notes and constantly refer to them. This is not the purpose of playing a game on a computer! The idea behind computers is that *they* perform all of the drudgery, not me!

What passes for a player interface is another bad example. The menu system requires you to look up a character on the screen, and then type it in. There is no way to use cursor keys or (heaven forbid!) a mouse or other more instinctive pointing device. The menus are very inconsistent, requiring at one time the pressing of a letter and at other times the pressing of a number. The menu system is also capricious in some of the ways that it handles your input. After playing the game for a while, you may get used to hitting certain sequences of keys quickly to denote certain units and the actions that you want them to perform. Don't do that! After some time, some new units may become available, at which point all assignments of menu keys to units are shifted around and all your key strokes will go towards commanding the wrong unit.

There are many bugs strewn throughout the program. I will mention only a few so as not to bore you too much. The game requires you to enter a password which it then verifies prior to letting you enter the game. Very nice. Unfortunately, it also does this when you are playing against the computer. Now I ask you, who is more likely to cheat? You, or the computer, which has access to all the info anyway? During replacement allocation, there is no indication of how many units and what types may be allocated to each sub unit. Consequently, you must try things out until the computer stops jeering at you and

telling you that you cannot do that. Additionally, once you have allocated all of one kind of unit, you are still expected to tell the computer that you want to allocate zero of zero units to that subunit while trying to allocate the other kind. That could have easily been fixed with a simple check within the program's code. The final bug that I will mention concerns the speed of the screen displays. When you are in the Combat Resolution Phase, all results of battles and movements are displayed briefly on the monitor. Briefly means just that; in most cases you will not have enough time to read the words, let alone understand their meaning prior to more and more displayed messages clearing your screen and replacing the previous ones. A slight delay or a request for player input prior to clearing the display would have resolved this issue.

*To The Rhine* is an attempt to portray the Allied advance to the river during the closing stages of World War II. Unfortunately, the many technical imperfections and the fundamentally unsound design philosophy of this game cannot allow me to recommend it to anyone. It is my opinion that in the age when Strategic Simulations, Inc. puts out a game like *Rebel Charge at Chickamauga* and other companies have fine products out there, that Simulations Canada will have a very hard time selling this throwback to the early days of computer wargaming.

*To The Rhine* is available for the Apple II and IBM computers for \$42.00.

— Naor Wallach

A third style that first appeared in the older SSI designs is to take a board game and translate it, piece by piece, to the computer screen. This, unfortunately, has often meant a laborious type of play with lots of scrolling maps, counting out of movement points and figuring of charts and tables without another player there to help you speed it along. Sometimes it works, sometimes it does not.

One game where it really does work is *Blitzkrieg at the Ardennes*, a new game by a new company for a new machine, the Amiga 500 (one of the 16-bit machines that are only now delving into real wargames).

## BLITZKRIEG AT THE ARDENNES

The Amiga has finally overcome its initial problems to become the premier graphics home computer. Now that the Amiga 500 has become a hit, wargames are finally being released for the Amiga. The first was the conversion of SSI's *Kampfgruppe* which was greatly improved by being rewritten in C to make it much faster. Still it is only a conversion of a game designed for the 8-bit machines of the past. The first wargame to be designed from the ground up for the Amiga has been released. Command Simulations' *Blitzkrieg at the Ardennes* is the best translation of a paper wargame created so far.

I wish to stress this at first — this game is not a breakthrough in terms of advances in the computer wargames field of limited intelligence or operational control of your units as in some Simulations Canada games. This is just the simplest system I have seen so far for land wargames.

The initial screen of BATA is embarrassingly crude, given what follows it — a scene of a poorly animated Hitler yelling at his generals. Following this you are given the main menu from which to choose which side the computer will play, what the weather will be like during the 1/2 day turns from 16 December to 31 December, what skill level the computer will play and finally any handicapping of strength for the forces of either side.

Now we see where the game really shines — the map and counters. The map is a 35 x 45 hex map showing all the standard terrain — rough, woods, cities, rivers, bridges and the Siegfried line. But it is done in 16 colors and is viewable at three levels: entire map which is used to select an area to examine closeup, a medium view of half the map used to show both side's units and ZOC, and the closeup map which gives a 6 x 8 hex view of the area and both side's stacks of units. You can view all the units in a hex without having to examine them individually because the counters are stagger stacked. The counters are equally impressive. Each country has its own background color, and each unit type has its own silhouette for armor, mech

infantry, infantry, rocket artillery, artillery, paratroops and infiltrator. Each unit has its strength and movement allowance displayed along with a bar indicating the remaining percent of the unit's current strength. The map and counters truly make great use of the Amiga graphics.

The game uses the standard move/fight sequence of play, but this is aided greatly by the use of the Amiga mouse for all game functions. To move units you collect them by clicking on them with the mouse. You then can have the computer indicate where the units can move and select the area in which you wish to place the units. Another mouse click places them there, along with a mark on the counter indicating that it has moved. For combat you click on the defending unit and then click on the attacking units. Terrain effects are calculated automatically. Artillery bombards before combat the same way. Advance after combat gives each unit an individual MA for advance after combat, which will allow infantry a greater movement through woods than armor, and the reverse on roads. Combat is odds based using a simple odds CRT. Most results are percentage losses for both sides, with a few exchanges at the middle odds and elimination at high and low odds. There are also supply dumps and supply rules with the effects automatically implemented. Units can blow bridges and supply dumps.

The combat resolution segment is loaded with sound — as it should be for the Amiga. During the combat resolution segment a small box appears in the corner where the die is "rolled". There are digitalized sound effects for combat, artillery, airstrikes, V2 attacks, advance after combat, bridge destruction, and the capture of German infiltrators.

The game can be saved to disk after each player turn, and it is possible to change a game from two-player to solitaire and vice-versa in the middle of the game. Victory is determined by the capture of Antwerp alone or Liege and several other towns from a list.

When playing the Germans, make sure to drive as quickly as possible up to Liege as a stepping stone for an assault on Antwerp. Don't have armor attack into woods, as they will not be able to advance as far after combat. Use infiltrators and leg

infantry to screen your flanks. Avoid ending a turn within three hexes of an Allied unit next to a bridge as this will give them a chance to destroy the bridge. Use your artillery units in mass to weaken units before you assault. You must not allow the Allies to channel your advance with a string of blown bridges, so when crossing a defended river line hit it with everything possible and remember that armor may never cross unbridged rivers.

The important thing to note about the Allies is that if they hold Liege and Antwerp they win, no matter how well the Germans have done everywhere else on the map. So don't get involved in a big Bastogne effort until you are sure Liege is safe. Liege is the key to this game. Do everything possible to slow the Germans up. Make sure you have units backing up your main defensive line along roads so the Germans cannot advance as far in advance after combat. This game makes blowing bridges very difficult, but if you get a chance go for it. Defend in woods to prevent the German armor from getting big breakthroughs. Set up your defensive artillery concentrated in one sector to attrit units coming through. Protect your artillery at all costs! Don't be afraid to give up ground anywhere except Liege and Antwerp. When the weather clears use your airstrikes on the lead armor or artillery.

There are problems with this game as in any first effort. There are no historical unit ID's anywhere in the rule book or in the game. The computer, even at its highest level, is a terrible defender. In my third game I took Antwerp in four days! And it can take the computer upwards of ten minutes to move its forces. But these problems can be forgiven on a first effort as remarkable as this is. Command Simulations deserves your full support in their endeavors. And Command Simulations is now working on a version of this game that uses one Megabyte of memory! This version will feature hidden movement and many other new features. My advice to Amiga owners is to get this. My advice to others is to buy an Amiga and get this game. You'll never regret it. If you have an Amiga, this is where the fun begins in wargames.

— Robert Lindsay ■

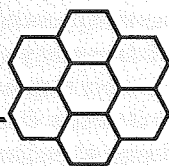
# MOVES

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## Developer's Notes



Developer Paul Dangel highlights *Nicaragua*, scheduled to appear in *S&T* #120.

### ■ *Nicaragua!* by Paul Dangel

*Nicaragua* is more than just a wargame, it is also a game about revolution. In addition to being a military simulation, *Nicaragua* opens up a different dimension by directly addressing the political and social aspects of a revolution. Usually, game designers treat these non-military areas either as irrelevant to a game's topic, or assume the game's players consider them to be unimportant. By doing this, they attempt to portray what is in reality a revolution as simply a war college exercise to be solved exclusively with standard conventional weaponry. *Nicaragua* cannot be won by using soldiers, tanks, and bombers alone. Fully half the game mechanics delve into the problems of controlling and winning the support of the people who inhabit the country.

The players do not represent foreign Chiefs of Staff sitting in their Pentagon or Kremlin offices seeking ways to extend their influence into Central America. Rather, the players fill the roles of Nicaraguan government (Somocista or Sandinista) and rebel (Sandinista or Contra) leaders struggling to win or maintain their control of the country by methods that will least damage their standing in the eyes of their own people and the world. Right now there are three scenarios for the game covering the Sandinista revolution, the Contra counter-revolution and an introduc-

tory game focusing on one of the earlier anti-Somoza insurgencies.

The game's mapsheet is divided into two main sections: the map of Nicaragua and the game tracks, of which there are quite a few. The Nicaragua map shows the country sectioned into 16 areas or, in game terminology, departments. (That's right folks, no hexes in this game.) Each department is rated for its population density; namely, urban, rural and remote types of departments. Within each department is listed the types of social classes who inhabit it. There are seven social classes in the game: Workers, Intellectuals, Middle Class, Indians, Somocistas, Peasants, and the Church. Not all social classes are found everywhere. For instance, the urban departments are mainly populated by the Middle Class, Workers, and Intellectuals, while the Indians are found only in the remote areas. Only the Church is found in every department. By the way, there are small portions of both Honduras and Costa Rica which are treated as semi-departments for game purposes.

The other section of the mapsheet contains numerous tracks which are used to measure such things as National Will, social class support, and the levels of assistance and intervention given by foreign countries. National Will is the game's main barometer of success and failure. The National Will track has boxes on it numbered from one to one hundred and the box containing the player's National Will marker indicates how well his cause is faring. The higher the number, the better he is doing. If the marker is forced to go off the scale at the low end, the player's cause has lost all will to live and dies out. National Will levels change throughout the game, constantly going up and down, reflecting each side's successes and failures.

The social class tracks play a similar role by showing the attitude of a particular class toward a player's cause. Whether a class is supportive, opposed, or neutral is indicated by its political marker on the track. The

movement of these markers is one of the main battlegrounds in the game since the social class backing is a good, if indirect, way of keeping the National Will level up. I say "indirect" because increases in National Will actually spring from the demonstrative actions taken by the players, such as recruiting, intelligence gathering, combat, etc. When a player has the backing of numerous social classes the chance of successfully executing those actions is greatly enhanced.

Very similar in nature to the social class tracks are the foreign country tracks. There are three of these; one each for the United States, the Soviet Union, and for the Latin American countries. Their support represents the degrees of assistance and possible levels of direct intervention depending on their marker's placement on the track. Assistance takes the form of supply (usually military) and the ability to improve the basic fighting quality of one's army. The intervention levels represent a more direct military effort by a foreign country on behalf of their favorite cause. In addition to the benefits of assistance, an intervening country gives the player the option to introduce actual combat units from that foreign country. These foreign reinforcements do not represent massive waves of U.S., Soviet, or Latin American soldiers, but rather small units no larger than battalion size and usually no more than a half dozen battalions, at most, depending on the level of intervention. These foreign forces represent the initial forces a country would place at the disposal of a side to provide a kind of military stiffening. Foreign intervention is a very attractive source of combat strength, but the presence of those foreign units can cause resentment and a loss of support on the "popular front."

At the extreme ends of the U.S. and Soviet tracks are the Invasion boxes. If a player pushes the intervention level of either of these two countries too high, its marker will end up in the Invasion box. This means

that the foreign country has decided to take the situation into its own hands and land massive combat forces in *Nicaragua* with the possibility of the conflict becoming global in scale. In other words, the game ends right there (with victory being determined at that point), since the conflict has completely changed form and scope.

Types of combat units include irregular, light and heavy infantry, plus armor and security units. The basic unit is a company; three companies of the same type of unit can combine to form a battalion. Combat unit counters have values for intelligence gathering, conventional combat and guerrilla combat. The size of the unit directly affects its combat abilities. The sum of the guerrilla combat values of three individual companies is greater than the same combat value of a battalion composed of the same types of units. The reverse is true for conventional combat values. So, the larger the unit the better it is in conventional combat but the worse it is in guerrilla warfare where smaller units have the advantage.

When opposing units within a department do battle the players secretly pick what type of combat they each wish to engage in, guerrilla or conventional. Besides determining which of the four combat results tables will be used, the type of combat chosen can affect combat strengths, social class reaction, the effects of air power and so forth.

A unit's intelligence value determines how easily it can discover hidden or covert units. All units are either in an overt or covert status. Covert units are immune from attack but at the same time cannot attack and are restricted from performing some game functions depending on the type of unit. The overt/covert status of units can be changed several times in the course of a turn.

Units do not have movement values. Since movement is by area and each turn is a three month season, units can pretty much travel the length and breadth of the country at will. The only impediment to total freedom of movement is the presence of enemy units who may decide to attack. The opposing player may interrupt movement to announce that he is going to challenge the passage of overt units. A player may also have his moving covert units stopped and searched in a similar way. Air transport allows a limited amount of direct movement between non-adjacent departments without fear of enemy interruption. Likewise, naval transport permits movement across lakes and between non-adjacent coastal departments.

There are several varieties of units beyond those one would expect to find in a modern-era game. For instance, there are political units which consist of Cadres and Political Fronts. The Political Fronts repre-

sent "grass roots" organizations of people, activists, local party workers and such. Cadres are the party "hard liners," responsible for the dirty work like political education, assassinations, strike organization, and terrorist attacks, among other pleasantries. Both Political Fronts and Cadres are essential for recruiting and conducting Psychological Warfare Operations (PWO's).

Psychological warfare takes several forms and is one of the essential weapons of the game. Foreign countries can be the target of a PWO which represents an effort to influence that country into providing support. A hostile PWO can be directed at an opponent's units to subvert them into giving up without a fight or even to defect. PWO's can take the form of propaganda campaigns targeting one's own or the enemy's National Will. Alternatively the propaganda can be directed at the social classes to convince them that they should support one cause and not another. The PWO's are the non-military weapons of the revolution and are wielded by the political units. The player who does not use psychological warfare to its maximum potential every turn will quickly wind up on the low end of the National Will track.

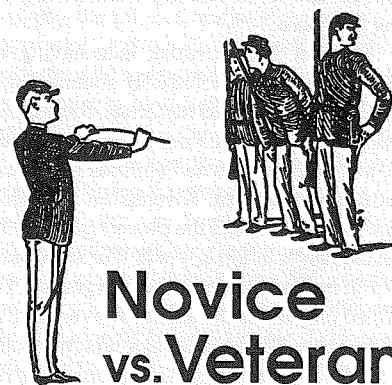
Besides his National Will level, the amount of support given by the social classes is a good measure of a player's performance. When a social class is in support the chances of successfully carrying out (or thwarting the enemy's) game functions like combat and intelligence gathering are enhanced. But support by a class does not mean they agree with your politics.

The Government and Rebel player each have a political program. The game provides a generalized selection of four (from Left to Right): Marxist-Leninism, Social Democracy, Liberal Democracy, and Oligarchy. The game begins with each side having a political program, which can only be changed during the course of the game at considerable risk. Each social class (and foreign country for that matter) has a predisposition toward the political programs; either "pro," "anti," or neutral. Being "anti" a political program does not mean that the social class is beyond giving a player its support; i.e., the class may differ philosophically with you but may be desperate enough to back you. A large part of the game is to woo those neutral and persuadable "anti" classes to support your cause, while at the same time not taking for granted those classes who naturally support you.

From this brief overview it should be clear that the game is both a political and military simulation. But it is not political in the way that diplomacy games are political. That is, the players do not interact in politics as they might in games like *Kingmaker* or *Viceroy*s. The game's political interaction is

between the social classes (and foreign countries) and players attempt to win support and assistance. The players can by mutual agreement form cease-fires which prohibit combat. In addition to the respite gained from a cease-fire, there are gains to be made in foreign support for agreeing to one and likewise there are penalties incurred for breaking it.

Comparisons between this game and Victory Games' *Central America* are inescapable but not necessarily apropos. Anyone who has played and been absorbed by *Central America*, as I have on occasion, cannot dispute that it is the most comprehensive treatment of the conflict available. However, 98% of its focus is on the military issues with the remainder left to the politics of the intervention game, if you can get that far. *Nicaragua* is much broader in scope and much more abstract by necessity. It is a game with a lesson to those, especially those of the Western military tradition, who feel that all battles are won simply by having bigger battalions than the other guy. Its challenge is to make the instruments of military force, politics, and subtle persuasion all work in harmony to win the battle for the "hearts and minds" of the people. It is thus a more multi-dimensional, and thus complete, study of revolutionary warfare in the modern world. ■



## Novice vs. Veteran

### ■ Who Am I?

#### The Players' Dilemma

by Bruce Farcau

Perhaps the most effective selling point and the one used most often by wargame companies down through the years has been that of "YOU are Napoleon" (or Rommel, or Guderian, or Lee) as we relive those thrilling days of yesteryear and see if we can outdo the masters. Certainly there are those wargamers who are primarily interested in the pure competition against their face-to-face opponent or those who merely use wargames as a means of studying military history in a graphic, intensive way, but let's be honest. I

## Novice vs. Veteran ...

doubt that any wargamer can slug his way through a game without letting his (or her) mind wander to the thought that, "If I had been there, this is the way I would have done it." Even the most sedate, mature gamer takes pride, in his heart of hearts, not in having defeated Uncle Ned or a fellow gamer from down the street, but in having overcome the odds and historical precedent to trounce Wellington or Montgomery.

Having said this, it has always struck me as odd how little most game designers seem to address themselves to the concept of giving the player a true "identity" in the game. A clear example of this is SPI's *A Glean of Bayonets* (Antietam), where the Union player is in command of all the Union forces and yet must deal with McClellan's incompetence and lethargy in releasing corps to the battle. If the Union player is not, in effect, replacing McClellan, who is he? If he is McClellan, why must he be obliged to lower his intelligence level arbitrarily? In some games "idiocy rules" fit quite well, i.e., in East Front World War II games where the player, the military commander, must work around politically motivated directives from Stalin or Hitler. In the Antietam situation, the purpose of the rule is for play balance, obviously to prevent the unobstructed Union Army from sweeping all before it, yet it still leaves me with an identity crisis when playing the game.

In other games, rather than having the player's character arbitrarily shackled with the limitations of his historical counterpart, the player becomes a nonexistent entity endowed with powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal men. What historical personage would have had the powers given to the Allied player in SPI's *World War II* game (or *World in Flames* or others of the genre)? The Allied player has the ability to overcome all of the inter-allied squabbling which so hampered the war effort and to ignore many political considerations which the actual participants found so important. Apart from a "cost" in resource points, there is no reason why the British and French in 1940 cannot simply invade Italy or Spain, for example, even though such an action would certainly have brought down both governments and probably eliminated any possibility of Lend Lease aid from the Americans. What leader would have been in a position to make that decision?

In some games it is necessary to give the player abilities that no one person would have in real life in order to compensate for the transition from reality to the game board. Take, for example, Avalon Hill's famous *Squad Leader* series and its offspring. In the game, the player is responsible for moving

and directing the fire of as many as several dozen infantry squads plus tanks, guns, and even aircraft. This is a simplification of real life, in which several layers of command are eliminated as a company commander would actually direct his platoon leaders and leave it to them to place their squads, and even individual soldiers would be involved in directing their own fire. This elegant system does make great efforts to keep the player from being too omnipotent, but the reason for this apparent anomaly is that, as the player does not have the multitude of real-life worries of the actual commander (staying warm, avoiding shell-fire, dealing with personnel problems, etc., etc.) which fill up his time, it is necessary to give him these extra responsibilities in order to maintain his interest. Some computer war-games have tried to avoid this paradox, simply letting the player give realistic-sounding orders to subordinate units which then move and fight on their own. Consequently, the player sits, bored silly, while his armies "beep" and "ping" their way to victory.

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Then there comes the question of *when* the player assumes his role. In SPI's *Wellington's Victory*, the French player takes over after Napoleon has already supposedly committed the gross strategic errors which made the campaign all but unwinnable, i.e., failing to destroy the Prussian Army at Ligny and then detaching far too large a force with vague orders to follow the Prussians, thus denying the French the use of one third of their army while permitting the surviving Prussians to join Wellington at Waterloo. If the player is to become Napoleon, why does he have to do so after his historical counterpart has already blundered so badly? Naturally, there has to be a cutoff point somewhere, but in this, as in many other games, the cut-offs seem to have more to do with counter-mix limits, game scale, and length of play than with any sense of the oneness of the campaign in question. The player has the sense of being dropped out of the sky onto the battlefield and being left to unscramble problems not of his own making.

This situation is even more pronounced in the many games, even the majority, which actually indicate where each player's units will begin the game set up. Although some games provide for an optional "free set-up"

rule, this is included more as an afterthought than as recognition of each player's right to have as much freedom of action as possible. Again, one is obliged to live with his "predecessor's" mistakes as if he suddenly took command following the untimely demise of the previous commander. Of course, this does happen historically on occasion as in the case of General Meade taking over the Army of the Potomac almost on the eve of Gettysburg, but this is obviously a rare occurrence.

It would certainly would be a service to all if game designers were to take the players' need for an identity in a game into consideration from the outset when designing the game rather than leaving it as a mere aside. However, as has been noted previously, the requirements of play balance, rule complexity, or the historical perspective of the game may make this impossible. What, then, can the players do to try to alleviate this problem? Here are a few suggestions which should make play more enjoyable in a significant percentage of games.

First, players should simply take a moment before beginning a game to contemplate just "whom" each side in the game actually represents. Is the player taking the place of an actual historical personage, a combined staff, head of state, military commander, or a more vague collective entity representing overall common interests of various groups or even nations?

Next, and this is obviously more easily done when playing solitaire than against a live opponent, a careful review of the game rules should be made, making note of any rules which reflect on the player's roles, i.e., "idiocy rules," restricted initial unit set-up, political directives, etc. Are these rules adequate and in keeping with both sides' identities or are they either too sketchy or too restrictive?

Naturally, one or both players would have to have some knowledge of the historical situation depicted by the game to make this judgement. They would also have to be familiar enough with the rules to be able to evaluate their likely impact on play. It should also be noted, especially for the novice gamer, that almost any change players choose to make in the rules will affect play balance one way or the other and should only be undertaken with the consent of both players. However, having said that, one of the best lessons newcomers to wargaming can learn is that the rules of a game are not necessarily set in concrete, as the pages full of errata and rules modifications which appear in *The Wargamer* plainly attest. There is nothing wrong in modifying a rule or two if the players are not comfortable with the way they sound, although one must remember that the designer has had the benefit of countless hours of playtesting, and he may have left out or included a rule for a good reason which

will not become evident to the players until after a number of play-throughs of the game.

As a rule of thumb, I like to make free set-up a standard, rather than an optional, rule. One must be careful that one doesn't do this too lightly, however. Restricted set-up in a strategic World War II game, for example, might represent peacetime deployments which could not have been changed for political reasons. On the other hand, in GDW's *Fire in the East*, for example, there is no reason why the German player could not redeploy his forces for an all-out drive on Leningrad rather than having most of his armor start the game in the center. One must be careful not to give one side the benefit of historical hindsight, redeploying to meet a threat that the actual commanders could not or did not foresee.

As another rule of thumb, I tend to take a hard look at "idiocy rules." Do they relate to the historical errors of the player's character or to those of his superiors? In the latter case they stay. In the former, I try to look for some way to compensate for their removal, possibly tightening up the victory conditions for the benefiting side.

In general, a little common sense, aided by a little knowledge about the subject matter of the game, can permit even the novice player to fine tune most any game to eliminate the players' "identity crisis." I feel that having a clear idea of who I "am" in a game greatly increases my enjoyment of the playing and my sense of accomplishment (assuming I win) after the game is over. Wargames, despite the impressive mass of historical data contained in even a simple one, are meant to be fun, and letting one's imagination go a little just adds to the pleasure. ■

## MOVE'S REVIEW of Games

Edited by  
Callie Cummins



**Moscow 1941**  
**Seventh Fleet**  
**Cannae 216 B.C.**

### ■ **Moscow 1941**

Reviewed by Rick Swan

*Design: David Cook. Components: One 24-page rules booklet, one 22" x 34" mapsheet, 600 counters, two player aid cards, two six-sided dice, tray, boxed. By: TSR, Inc., Lake Geneva, WI*

I pity the fool who tries to design another East Front game. Since a hundred or so titles

can be listed without trying too hard, it makes you wonder what's left to do.

The subject has an obvious appeal — vicious Nazis slugging it out with desperate Soviets on on a bleak Russian landscape — but designers have had a hard time making both sides equally interesting to play. With few exceptions, it's always been more fun to play the Nazis. They've got more provocative tactical decisions, more interesting hardware, and have to deal with the formidable challenge of slogging through the Russian mud in sub-zero temperatures. The Soviets are relegated to holding them off as long as they can — big deal.

The bias has seemed entrenched. In the classic *Panzergruppe Guderian*, Russian units began the game inverted, their strength revealed only when first engaged in combat. While acknowledging the inherent limitations of a Soviet defense, it all but made the game a solitaire exercise for the German player. To varying degrees, East Front designers haven't strayed too far from the *Panzergruppe Guderian* assumptions, especially in operational level games. The result is players who arm-wrestle to see who gets to be the Nazis.

David Cook presents *Moscow 1941* with a slightly different set of assumptions. For starters, he assumes that while the Soviets were perhaps better equipped than the Germans to handle the severity of a Russian winter, it was no picnic for them either. Since the Soviets suffer right along with the Nazis in terms of artillery and tank shortages and aren't always able to zip along the snowbanks in skis and fur parkas, the collapse of the Germans isn't quite so inevitable. Ditto for supplies; the Germans had a logistical nightmare maintaining supply lines, but the Russians had their hands full finding materials in the first place. And maybe taking Moscow wasn't really all that crucial to the surrender of the Soviets; the game assumes that the control of key cities could have turned the tide for the Germans, making an ideal Soviet defense less obvious. Given a choice, I'd still rather play the Germans, if only because it's invariably more interesting to attack than defend, but *Moscow 1941* is unmatched in giving both sides a fair shake.

The basic game systems stick to standard conventions. The German player controls the Wehrmacht and SS forces, the Soviets have the Soviet Supreme Command forces and partisans in the German rear. The primary unit is divisional, but units also come in regimental, brigade, and battalion sizes. The map is scaled at ten kilometers per hex and includes roads, tracks, railroads, and generous areas of swamps and forests. Each turn represents four days of operations; the October Blitz scenario, covering the preparation for Operation

Typhoon, takes ten turns, while the campaign game, covering the entire drive on Moscow, takes 31 turns but can still be completed in a single session by experienced players.

Following a weather check, players collect initiative points, then bring in replacements and reinforcements. The first player executes command checks, movement, combat, reaction movement, and reaction attacks, then the second player does the same. Activating combat units, committing defensive and offensive support, and removing fatigue require the expenditure of initiative points which are awarded at the beginning of each turn for the number of cities and towns each player controls. The number of initiative points is modified by the current ground condition and a bonus for each player as indicated on the turn track. There are generally enough initiative points available to carry out desired operations, but not enough to squander. Appropriately, the German has the edge in initiative in the first half of the game, while the Soviets pick up steam in the second half. (One quibble — since it's necessary to constantly refer to the Initiative Point Table and Chart, it would have been nice if they'd been included on the player aid cards instead of just on an edge of the map. It makes for a lot of neck-twisting for one of the players.)

Movement is the familiar check the terrain, pay the price. Combat is the good old odds-ratio, roll-the-dice, check-the-table. Units must be active and in supply to attack, and combat is modified by armor, combat support (purchased by spending initiative points), fatigue, fortifications, terrain, and weather. During the reaction phase, the defending player can activate combat units, assuming the units can trace a path of command. Losses are taken in steps, indicated by markers placed under each unit. Units can take three losses before they are eliminated, with the exception of the German breakdown regiments which can recombine into divisions.

There are simple but adequate rules for overruns, force marching, building fortifications, Soviet paratroops, and Soviet Guards divisions. The latter is an especially nice touch. Every time the Soviet player rolls an unmodified twelve on an attack or the German player rolls a two, the Soviet player can spend initiative points during his next reinforcement phase to raise a unit to Guards status, which gives it a bonus on subsequent attacks. Also notable are the weather rules, which are among the best I've seen in a wargame of any kind. Determining the weather takes two steps. The temperature is rolled first, modified by a number from the turn track, then the ground condition is

## Move's Review ...

rolled, modified by the temperature. This results in either clear skies or precipitation which is then compared to the current turn's temperature to finalize the ground condition. It sounds convoluted, but is actually pretty easy, producing realistic results ranging from drying ground to thawing snow to arctic blasts.

*Moscow 1941* fits nicely alongside TSR's *Onslaught* and *Sniper* series as easy-to-learn, highly playable wargames that are perfectly suitable for leery newcomers. This is by no means the definitive East Front simulation—I'm sure there are plenty more to come—and historians may disagree with some of Cook's assumptions, but I can think of a lot worse ways to spend an afternoon.

### Capsule Comments:

**Physical Quality:** Okay, but TSR has done better. The counters are bland, and the map's nothing special, but the rulebook is first rate—well organized and unambiguous with generous commentary.

**Playability:** Balanced, fun for both sides. The October Blitz scenario is a warm-up; the campaign game is the real thing.

**Historicity:** If you buy the premises, no complaints. I bought 'em.

**Comparisons:** Where shall we begin? It's as exciting as *Panzergruppe Guderian* while avoiding its one-sidedness. As playable as Avalon Hill's *Russian Front/Russian Campaign*, but more focused (and hence not as interesting for those wanting the bigger picture). Better in every respect than SPI's old *Typhoon* and *Battle of Moscow*.

**Overall:** Stands out in a crowded field, for sure. For balance and playability, among the best of the German-Soviet operational games.

## ■ *Seventh Fleet*

Reviewed by John Vanore

**Design:** Joe Balkoski. **Components:** 3 22" x 32" mapsheets, 740 counters and markers, 64-page rules/scenario booklet, multiple charts and play aids, one 10-sided die, plastic counter tray; boxed. **By:** Victory Games, New York, NY \$35.00

The dice from my copy of *Second Fleet* have barely had a chance to cool off, and Victory Games is at it again. This time, we have a change of venue from Mediterranean and Atlantic waters to the other side of the world. *Seventh Fleet*, the third and probably last game in the Fleet series, presents a potential U.S.-Soviet naval conflict in the Pacific Ocean and peripheral seas. The map, at the series standard 46 nautical miles per hex, covers an area from the Kamchatka Peninsula to Cam Ranh Bay in the SRV, and provides the framework for a variety of political-military alternate futures.

One of the key additions to the game is the political aspect, necessitated by the presence of Japan, Taiwan, the PRC, Vietnam and the Koreans. A quick glance at the three-section map makes the players' predicament painfully clear. What, for instance, if Japan no longer wants to be America's "unsinkable aircraft carrier?" On the other hand, if they do not choose to sit out the conflict, how will these various and sundry allies function, and to what extent? To that end, *Seventh Fleet* includes a representative counter mix to account for all conceivable permutations of these possible alliances. Unit counters represent individual frigate-sized and larger ships, flotillas of 3-4 corvettes/patrol craft, and squadrons of aircraft.

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... *Seventh Fleet* is easily identifiable as a Victory Games product. The rules, in spite of a bit of residual "Legalese," are clear and leave no perceptible gaps or loopholes.

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The sequence of play, almost identical to the earlier games in the series, uses eight-hour turns and hinges to a great extent on player interaction. Naval forces are "activated" in alternating U.S./ally and Soviet Action Segments, and the player may only choose one type of unit (surface, air, or submarine) with which to operate at any one time. Each turn contains three Action Segments, and forces need not be activated in any set sequence, so there is a high level of decision-making required here, along with a bit of trying to second-guess your opponent.

Those already familiar with the game system will recognize a lot. In fact, the rules appear to have been written specifically with former *Second Fleet* players in mind, as all rules changes have been summarized up front in the rules book and "flagged" with a star in the body of the rules. Thus, players who are proficient with *Second Fleet* need only read the "starred" rules and scan the sequence of play before jumping into *Seventh Fleet*.

Speaking of rules, *Seventh Fleet* is easily identifiable as a Victory Games product. The rules, in spite of a bit of residual "Legalese," are clear and leave no perceptible gaps or loopholes. As usual, they are complete with numerous examples of play to help novices to the system get into the mechanics of combat. The back of the rulebook contains designer's

notes and commentary, along with notes on the unit types presented in the counter mix.

The design here encompassed some evolutionary "cleaning up" and progression of the game system. New and additional chrome as shore-based SS-22 missiles and Type 65 torpedoes for the Soviets and fleshed-out cruise missile rules for both sides make their appearance here. Also, designer Balkoski has tweaked the detection rules to make submarines (more realistically) harder to detect. He has also introduced the concept of Close Defense hexes for Japan and the USSR, which reflect, in an abstraction, coastal ASW forces (such as helicopters) and coastal defense missile-artillery units.

In a major move away from its predecessors, *Seventh Fleet* has no provision for airborne, commando or marine units, and hence no Invasion Segment in the sequence of play. Nor are there any Soviet SSBN counters, which is surprising since the Pacific Fleet is one of the two Soviet fleets (the other is the Northern Fleet) with SSBNs in its OOB. These two omissions, in my mind, represent the only real failings of *Seventh Fleet*. I'd like to be able, as the Soviet player, to invade and seize northern Hokkaido, or to take command of the *Seventh Fleet* and sink some "boomers" in the Sea of Okhotsk. Oh well, I can always borrow some rules and counters from *Second Fleet* and improvise.

*Seventh Fleet* comes with a total of thirteen scenarios: nine short ones using basic rules and only one map section, and four campaign scenarios using the full gamut of advanced rules, all three map sections, and hundreds of counters. The short battle/encounter scenarios are well-balanced and present a wide variety of operations (anti-submarine, air-to-surface strikes, etc.). The scenario titles are quite descriptive: "Return of the Dreadnought," "Invasion of Hokkaido," and "Tsushima Again," to name but a few. They are terse, with challenging victory conditions, and are usually not decided until the very end. In Navy parlance, "It ain't over 'til the fat lady sings."

Campaign scenarios can also run down to the wire, although their long duration (up to 36 turns) can be a two-edged sword. A crushing blow early on, such as the devastation of a carrier battle group, can leave the U.S. player licking his wounds for a good part of the game while waiting for the reinforcing "surge" battle group to arrive and beef up the fleet. In the meantime, the Soviets can wreak havoc on the U.S. and allied forces without their usual air cover.

Obviously, I greatly enjoyed this game and others in the series. It's extremely well thought out and presented, and contains enough variety in its scenarios and rules system that it will be on the playing table long

after most other games are mere dust collectors.

#### **Capsule Comments:**

*Physical Quality:* Excellent.

*Playability:* High in the shorter scenarios. Campaign scenarios are very intensive and hence move slower, but still flow smoothly. Ideal for team play.

*Historicity:* Hard to say, although recent events in the Persian Gulf cast the relative unit values in a favorable light.

*Comparisons:* Improvement over its series predecessors. Head and shoulders above any other games in this class. *Overall:* Excellent simulation, well worth the steep price.

### ■ **Cannae 216 B.C.**

**Review by Edward F. Snarski II**

*Design:* M. Villa, M. Bertuzzi, R. Bruschi. *Components:* One 26 page rulebook, three 19 x 27 inch maps, 1200 counters, four charts and tables, two dice, three plastic counter-trays with labels. *By:* Italiana Editrice Simulazioni, Milano, Italy. \$70.00

*Cannae 216 B.C.* is a grand tactical game of Hannibal's greatest victory and the Roman Republic's worst defeat. The game is a quite serviceable recreation of one of history's greatest battles although the \$70 price tag will certainly limit sales of the game. The game is an Italian import and import duties and the limited appeal of the game probably account for the high price.

*Cannae* does not advance game design by any stretch of the imagination, but then warfare in Hannibal's time was a much simpler affair than it is nowadays. There are only so many ways one can portray sticks and stones and the designers have opted for a design that ancients wargamers have seen in one guise or another over the past few years.

The components are serviceable, and in some respects very good. The counter art is well done but the printing on the leader units is almost indiscernable. The cardstock maps are disappointing in ground features and coloration creating an almost sterile effect. Start positions are indicated on the map and greatly help set-up. Overall, the map is serviceable but adds no period flavor. One of the most novel components in the game are the three plastic "fishing lure" boxes for counter storage. Labels are supplied for the boxes, as well as diagrams showing the most efficient pattern for storage of the 1200 game counters.

The game comes with three scenarios: two introductory (cavalry battle, legion battle) and the historical battle. The introductory scenarios are used to acquaint the players with the rules. The battle game is 40 turns long and takes some time to play. Actual play time can vary considerably depending on how well (or poorly) one side does with the die.

The sequence of play is not complicated, but time consuming, consisting of a Roman movement phase, Roman combat phase (defensive missile fire, offensive missile fire, melee) and Roman rally phase followed by the Carthaginian player wading through the same phases.

Luckily, the Carthaginians only had to contend with the Romans and not the rules to this game, as they still would be in their starting positions. The rules adequately explain facing and vertices, but nowhere is it adequately explained in the movement rules that a unit can advance to its front only. The rules seem to indicate movement in any direction. However, prior game experience indicates to the front hexes only, but then who knows what lurks in the heads of Italian game designers. Overruns are possible during the movement phase as well as strategic movement for units who start outside of enemy ZOCs. Units may lose steps while performing strategic movement, indicating how difficult it was to control an ancient battle once it got started.

The stacking rules are straightforward and easily grasped. The combat procedure is well done but the idea of employing percentage losses takes some getting used to. Combat is basically throw your sticks and stones, then close for hack and slash. A nice touch in the combat rules are morale checks prior to melee to determine whether the attack goes in or the defender flees at the sight of your shining armor. These retreats as well as retreats due to combat results can cause havoc with other units in your lines, as these other units can be subject to losses as retreating units hit them.

Subordinate leaders add bonus factors to attacks and reduce melee losses of units they are stacked with, while Army commanders have these abilities for all units within their command range (five hexes). However, every time a leader uses these abilities he is subject to "counter battery" effects and may be wounded or eliminated by use of a special combat table.

Morale, as befitting a game on ancient warfare, is covered in some detail. Morale checks are mandated prior to melee, during strategic movement and attempting to rally retreating units. As a unit loses combat strength it also loses morale, and so on in a vicious circle. Leaders automatically rally units outside of enemy influence (five hexes) and within their command range. Rally results in unit strengths being restored, but in a convoluted procedure of a full strength unit replacing damaged units (or at least that's the way I understood it).

The line of sight rules are clear but too helpful, in that one has a clear view of the battlefield which was supposedly obscured by clouds of dust. Optional rules limit missile

units to a one hex range starting on turn 24 but this seems a poor compromise. Victory is based on the elimination of enemy units. Knocking off leaders is worth extra victory points but eliminating a leader is worth less than wounding one !!??

The game plays smoothly, although slowly due to the number of units involved, modifiers and morale checks. Strategy is pretty much preordained, but the Roman can change history if he doesn't get himself surrounded as in the actual battle. This is tough, as the Roman cavalry is deficient and is blown away almost every time. The possibility for a Roman victory is there, albeit small. Basically, the game is unbalanced and will interest only those die-hards interested in ancient warfare. Otherwise, the high price will limit impulse purchases.

#### **Capsule Comments:**

*Physical Quality:* Uneven, counters are well done.

*Playability:* Good, but a lot of tedious repetition.

*Historicity:* Quite good. Everything seems to be here.

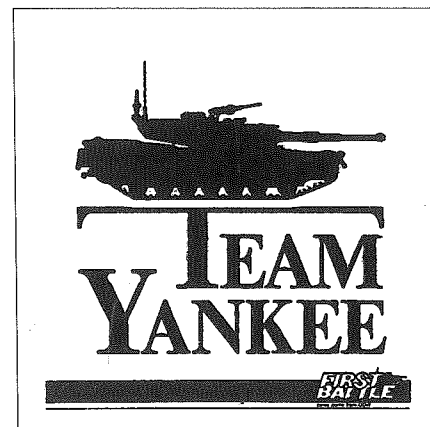
*Comparisons:* Pales in comparison to *Alexander the Great*, but still a good effort.

*Overall:* A must for ancients fans, but certainly not an impulse purchase.

### ■ **Team Yankee**

**Reviewed by Rick Swan**

*Design:* Marc W. Miller and Frank Chadwick. *Components:* Two 22"x16" geometric mapsheets; 240 die-cut counters; 32-page rules book; one six-sided die; tray; boxed. *By:* Game Designers' Workshop, Bloomington, IL \$24.00



There's no glaze like the one in the eyes of a 13-year-old who's been coined into playing *Central America*. This is a lesson I've learned the hard way based on years of trying in vain to recruit newcomers to the wonderful world of wargaming. I'm telling you, kids today have the attention span of a housecat — must be MTV. A mere 30 or 40

## Move's Review ...

pages of rules intimidates the hell out of 'em.

I've fought the good fight, but I'll be the first to admit that my battling average stinks. I'd say I'm about 3 for 10, recruitment-wise, and that's including kids who just want to play with the toys in *Axis and Allies* — I count that as a victory as that's more or less how I started, too. Therefore, needing all the help I can get, I welcome with open arms a game like *Team Yankee*. The subject matter (Yanks vs. Commies in hypothetical tank battles drawn from Harold Coyle's novel of the same name) is secondary to the fact that there's only about three pages of rules little Poindexter has to master to play it.

Make no mistake — this is no Milton Bradley toy box or *Top Gun* trifling. *Team Yankee* is the real thing, an honest-to-god wargame with movement factors and artillery tables and a surprising amount of detail. In addition to the usual infantry men and tanks, units include helicopters, APCs, grenade launchers, and AT missile teams. There are rules for mounting and dismounting vehicles, reaction fire, fire attacks at three different ranges, vehicle facing, and escaping from wrecks. That's in addition to explanations of basic game concepts such as movement (for seven terrain types), combat (including line-of-sight and missile attacks), and attack results (destroyed, immobilized, pinned). Not bad for three pages.

***Team Yankee* is the  
real thing, an honest-  
to-god wargame ...**

The basic scenario has the remnants of US recon company (six units including two tanks) fighting off a Soviet guard (nine units, including three tanks and three IFVs) advancing on a helpless village. The Soviets have eight turns to clear the US forces out of the village. Turns are comprised of interlocking phases to keep both players on their toes — the attacking player conducts first attacks, then moves while the defending player conducts reaction fire, after which the attacker can fire any friendly units which didn't conduct a first attack. Friendly units that don't move are flipped to their back sides to show they are eligible for reaction fire in the next enemy player turn.

Subsequent scenarios introduce rules for morale, forward observers, concealment, and other relatively sophisticated but succinctly presented concepts. The morale rules are especially nice. Scenarios provide a hesi-

tation point and break point for each side. As leaders become casualties, their morale points are tallied. When a side's morale tally reaches its hesitation point, it loses the initiative. When it reaches the break point, it withdraws and the opposing side automatically wins. It's an effective way of teaching the novice the essence of morale without a lot of unnecessary complications to muddy the waters.

*Team Yankee* also includes a lot of thoughtfully selected odds and ends. Artillery can fire high explosives, smoke, barrages, scattered mines, and the ever-popular chemical shells. Bridgelaying tanks, mine rollers, and air defense ZSU-23-4s are among the vehicles available in the advanced scenarios, along with rules for a laser-guided Copperhead projectile and Commander Bannor, the Rambo-esque hero of the book. There's also a generous helping of supplemental material, ranging from tactical hints and scenario variants to detailed equipment analyses and statistics for European vehicles not included in the game.

Problems: (1) It's a little pricey at \$24, and (2) there are a few production nits to pick. Examples of play are few and far between, a real handicap to newcomers trying to learn this on their own. Some of the needed charts and diagrams — such as the range effects chart and the patterns for smoke and scattered mines — should have been included on a summary sheet so players don't have to hunt through the rules for them. There's no turn track. Too much of the rulebook is awkwardly written (no editor is credited), certainly nothing new for wargames, but especially irritating in a product aimed at beginners.

Still, it's great fun and right on target for its intended audience. Anything here for the old timers? Let me put it this way. A couple of weeks ago, I got nostalgic over *Air War*. I blew the dust off the box, flipped through the zillion-page rulebook, and took a nap instead. *Team Yankee*, anyone?

### Capsule Comments:

**Physical Quality:** Nothing special, but good enough. The heavy-duty and spill-resistant maps are appreciated.

**Playability:** The US has an edge in just about all the scenarios, but the variants offer good suggestions to help out the Soviets. Playable in an hour or so.

**Historicity:** Amazing, considering its simplicity. Want to know how much a T-55 weighs? See page 29.

**Comparisons:** Can't think of any WW III game for novices except *Fortress America* — this is not only more fun, it's a lot easier to store. Add *Team Yankee* to TSR's *Onslaught* and Avalon Hill's *Platoon*, and you've got a dream recruitment package.

**Overall:** State-of-the-art beginner's game, fun for all. ■



## CHALLENGE

Reader Involvement

### ■ A Summer's Meeting by Clifford Eyler

The time is twelve noon, 10 June 1864. As Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest, your objective is to hold off or slow the Federal advance into Alabama, while preserving as much of your small force as possible. On this hot June day, you have met an advancing Federal force of two cavalry brigades at Brice's Crossroads, and discovered them to be widely separated and not properly deployed. Because of your superior generalship, your forces have an advantage in initiative and, despite a weakness in numbers, greater cohesion. Additionally, the dismounted pistol tactics of your cavalry make them extremely effective in melee. As of noon, the bulk of your forces are deployed and ready, with Bell's strong brigade due to arrive in an hour. How do you make the best offensive use of the position you presently hold?

In terms of victory point hexes, your forces control hex 4716 and hex 6133; the Federal forces control hexes 6118, 5327, and 4930. By observation, you know that more Federal forces are marching to join those already present on the battlefield, and they will be entering along the road from hex 4733.

Points will be awarded as follows:

- (1) For each regiment in position to melee: 3 pts. each.
- (2) 10 pts. if all units are in communication with their brigadier and 10 pts. if all brigadiers are in communication with Forrest.
- (3) For each unit attacking from enfilade or rear positions: 3 pts.
- (4) For each fatigue point on Confederate brigades: 1 pt. per fatigue pt.
- (5) For the correct name of the Confederate Department commander who was Forrest's superior: 10 pts.

Ties will be resolved by a random draw.

Please list the hexes on which each Confederate unit will end its final move and the

hexes they will be facing, as well as their mounted/dismounted status. Also, please include the name of the action you chose for each brigade, and the dice rolls you make for each action, to see if you perform the action or not. Deadline for entries is 31 July 1988 and the winner will receive a 6-issue subscription or extension.

#### Confederate Deployment:

Detachment, 7 Tenn 1SP hex 6133, Dmtd Supply Wagon, hex 4723.

Rucker's Bgde:

8 Miss, hex 4328, facing hex 4329, Mtd  
7 Tenn, hex 4327, facing hex 4328, Mtd  
18 Miss, hex 4326, facing hex 4327, Mtd  
Rucker, Ldr, hex 4328

Forrest:

Forrest, Ldr, hex 4725

Esc Cav, hex 4725, facing hex 4825, Dmtd

Garth, hex 4625, facing hex 4728, Dmtd  
Lyon's Bgde:

8 KyMI, hex 4826, facing hex 4927, Dmtd  
12 KyMI, hex 4926, facing hex 5026, Dmtd

7 KyMI, hex 5025, facing hex 5126, Dmtd  
3 KyMI, hex 5125, facing hex 5225, Dmtd  
Lyon, Ldr, hex 4925

Johnson's Bgde:

Mord, hex 5323, facing hex 5324, Dmtd  
4 Ala, hex 5222, facing hex 5223, Dmtd  
Wilms, hex 5122, facing hex 5123, Dmtd  
Warm, hex 5123, facing hex 5124, Dmtd  
Jhnsn, Ldr, hex 5122

All units are within Command Radius of their brigadiers; all brigadiers are within command radius of Forrest. All dismounted units are deployed in line; don't forget to reduce printed unit strength according to horseholder table.

#### Federal Deployment:

Waring's Bgde:

7 Ind(a), hex 6118, facing hex 6017, Mtd  
7 Ind(b), hex 6018, facing hex 5918, Mtd  
Grsm, Ldr, hex 6018

2 NJ(a), hex 5723, facing hex 5622, Dmtd  
2 NJ(b), hex 5724, facing hex 5623, Dmtd  
Warm, Ldr, hex 5724

3/9 Ill, hex 5624, facing hex 5524, Dmtd  
4 Mo Cav, hex 5625, facing hex 5525, Dmtd

14 Ind Art, hex 5327, facing hex 5526, Unlmb

4 Mo Art, hex 5227, facing hex 5127, Lmb  
Winslow's Bgde:

3 Iwa(b), hex 5127, facing hex 5026, Mtd  
10 Mo Cav, hex 5027, facing hex 4927, Mtd

4 Iwa(a), hex 4928, facing hex 4827, Mtd

#### (Federal Deployment cont.)

7 Wi Art, hex 4929, facing hex 4928, Lmb  
10 Mo Art, hex 4930, facing hex 4929, Lmb

4 Iwa(b), hex 4828, facing hex 4827, Mtd  
Wnslw, Ldr, hex 4828

7 Ill, hex 4729, facing hex 4628, Mtd

3 Iwa, hex 4629, facing hex 4628, Mtd

No losses; all units up except for Federal supply.

## ■ Brittle Bridgehead Solution

by Christopher Cummins

The essence of the *Kanev* problem was to realize that a guaranteed BK result was possible to secure the bridgehead for 100 points and gain 12 points through the reduction and retreat of the 4-10. This is best achieved by placing the artillery and security unit at 2212, blocking the 12-7's retreat and providing artillery support for the attack on the bridgehead, and placing the remaining available forces such that they are adjacent to both Russian units with one battalion at 2109. The attack force has 45 factors against the Russian defense of 4 (11-1 odds). Both sides have armor, so this cancels out. The die roll modifiers to the 7-1 attack were: +1 for Divisional Integrity, +1 for the Division HQ, +4 for the extra odds, and -3 for terrain, for a total DRM of +3, which guarantees a BK result.

The second part of the problem was to achieve the highest probability of reducing the 12-7. This is completed by advancing the unit at 2109 and the strongest units at 2110 into 2210 after the BK and marking them with a BK marker. Then, in the Exploitation Phase, all units attack the 12-7 (See *S&T #118 Kanev* Errata for the clarification on unmarked units participating in Exploitation attacks conducted adjacent to them) at 45-12 or 3-1. The die roll modifiers were: +1 for Divisional Integrity, +1 for the Division HQ, and -2 for terrain, for a total DRM of 0. The Germans have armor against Russian infantry, so they receive a one-column shift to the right, so the final odds are 4-1 with no DRM. With no chance to retreat, this gives a 3/6 chance for a DL which would reduce the 12-7 to a 1-7, a 1/6 chance for a D2 which would reduce the 12-7 to a 3-7, and a 2/6 chance for an EX which would reduce the 12-7 to a 6-7.

The best possible score was a 50% chance for a total of 182 (100 points for securing the bridgehead, 12 points for reducing the 4-10, 4 points for rating the issue, and 66 points for the 50% chance of reducing the 12-7 to a 1-7).

On June 20, we will get out the die and roll your attacks to see who ends up with the most points. Ties will be resolved and the winner announced next issue. ■

## Conventions

### Council of Five Nations 14

Oct. 7-9

To be held at the Center City Convention Center in Schenectady, NY. Will have role-playing, boardgaming, and miniatures events, an auction, a miniatures painting contest, and a costume contest. Open 24 hours a day, including some all-night events. Registration is \$10 for the weekend, before September 22, and \$15 after. Write to Council of Five Nations, c/o The Studio of Bridge & Games, 1639 Eastern Parkway, Schenectady, NY 12309.

### SUNCOAST SKIRMISHES '88

Sep. 30 thru Oct. 2

SKIRMISHES presents the eighth annual presentation of this most popular gaming extravaganza. This event will take place at the Holiday Inn-Ashley Plaza, 111 West Fortune St., Tampa, FL 33602. Room rates are \$50.00 for single or double occupancy. Events will include AD&D, Traveller, Star Fleet Battles, Car Wars, Napoleonics, Seakrieg, Boardgaming, Killer Tournament, Dealers, demonstrations by the SCA, and many other role playing and historical events. Hotel Reservations may be made by calling (813) 223-1351. Registration is \$18.00 for the entire weekend. Send your registration fee to receive program booklet. For further information: SKIRMISHES, P.O. Box 2097, Winter Haven, FL 33883, or call (813) 299-6784 or (813) 293-7983.

## Classifieds

Classified ads are 10¢ per word. Please submit to 3W, attn. Ana, P.O. Box F, Cambría, California 93428

**Wargames** — Over 130, private collection — a significant portion for sale, including *SPI War in the Pacific*, *Terrible Swift Sword*, and *Next War*, in excellent condition. Old *S&Ts*, all publishers — most out of print. Call 717-249-5858 or write K.M. Smith at 37 N. East St., Carlisle, PA 17013 w/inquiries. Must sell soon.

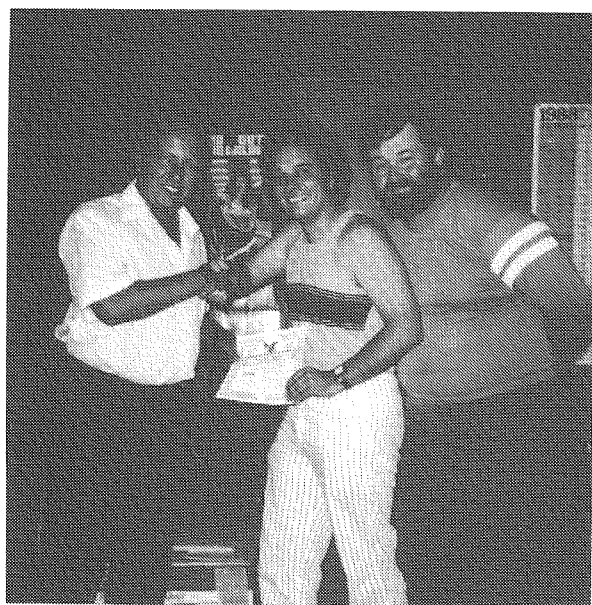
**Attention!** If you have an item to sell or trade, your ad in this spot will be seen by thousands of *Wargamer* readers.

## WEST COAST "SPI" EMERGES

by Keith Poulter

**I am in the slightly peculiar position of writing the Hobby News column this issue, while being a central figure in the main new story. Makes it kind of difficult to be objective! Ah well, at least you'll get the inside scoop.**

So what is this news? In a nutshell it is that 3W has acquired a majority interest in Diverse Talents Inc (DTI) of Longbeach, publisher of *Fire & Movement*, *Battleplan*, and *Space Gamer*, and organizer of some of the country's finest game conventions. This acquisition will lead within a



Keith Poulter, President of 3W (left) shakes on the DTI deal with Alan Emrich (center) and Jeff Albanese.

couple of months to a complete merger between the companies. 3W will thus be publishing a total of four magazines — the three "DTI" magazines, and *Strategy & Tactics*.

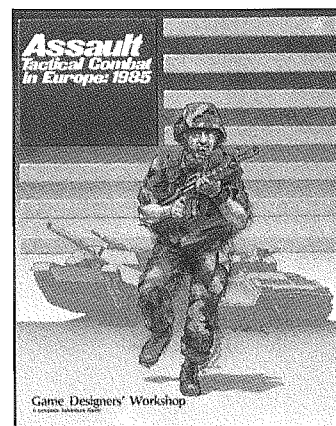
DTI's Alan Emrich and Jeff Albanese will become Vice-Presidents of 3W, Alan in charge of P.R. and Jeff of Conventions. Cheryl Clark will be breaking new ground for us on the sales side, as well as acting as office manager of 3W's Longbeach office (which will soon be open for playtest sessions). Perrin Tong joins the Longbeach staff on the production side.

In another major related move, 3W has hired Helena Rubinstein, former President of West End Games, as a consultant. Helena will be commuting regularly between New York and California, and working closely with the 3W Board on new products, directions, and procedures for the company. In her years at West End Games, Helena took the company from a one-game-a-year wargames company to its present substantial position in the adventure-gaming market.

The end of this year will see the appearance of a range of new products from 3W. Planned products include a major new line of boxed wargames, a line of challenging sports games, and several family games. A role-playing division is also to be established, and it is planned to publish modules under license for a number of existing role-playing systems. *Space Gamer* magazine will be used to support these products. Details of the new product lines will become available in the next couple of months. It is our intention that every aspect of the new lines — design, playtesting, development, production, graphics, advertising, and manufacturing

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# FIRE & MOVEMENT CHARLES S. ROBERTS Awards

This is the Official **Awards Ballot** for the **Fire & Movement + Charles S. Roberts Awards** for calendar year 1987. Please circle your final selections below and return your signed ballot as soon as possible. Five nominees appear in each category (except in categories where there was a tie vote). The nominees were selected by the readers of a number of fine hobby magazines (publications which graciously published our "open ballot" to the Hobby -- for their continued support and help, thank you.)

(Please circle **one** title per category.)

## Best Pre-WWII Board Wargame

Abensberg/Eckmuehl (3W)  
Britannia (TAHGC)  
La Bataille de Espagnol-Talavera  
(Clash of Arms)  
La Grande Armee (TSR/SPI)  
Shogun (MB)  
Shot & Shell (3W)

## Best WWII Board Wargame

Battle for Moscow (GDW)  
Kanev (3W)  
Patton Goes to War (3W)  
Raid on St. Nazaire (TAHGC)  
Scorched Earth (GDW)

## Best Post-WWII Board Wargame

Central America (VGC)  
Drive on Frankfurt (CA/PRP)  
Korea: The Mobile War (3W)  
7th Fleet (VGC)  
Team Yankee (GDW)

## Best Pre-20th Century Computer Wargame

Borodino: 1812 (KS)  
Pirates! (MPS)  
Rebel Charge at Chickamauga  
(SSI)  
Shiloh: Grant's Trial in the West  
(SSI)  
Sons of Liberty (SSI)

## Best 20th Century Computer Wargame

Airborne Ranger (MPS)  
Battle Cruiser (SSI)  
Halls of Montezuma (SSG)  
Long Lance (SimCan)  
PanzerStrike! (SSI)  
Project: Stealth Fighter (MPS)

## Best Professional Wargame Magazine

BattlePlan (DTI)  
CounterAttack (PRP)  
Fire & Movement (DTI)  
The General (TAHGC)  
Strategy & Tactics (3W)  
The Wargamer (3W)

## Best Amateur Wargame Magazine

The Broadside  
Canadian Wargamers Journal  
E.T.O. : Europa Newsletter  
On All Fronts  
The Strategist  
Volunteers

## Best Game Review/ Design Analysis/ Play Analysis

Central America (F&M)  
Raid on St. Nazaire (TW)  
Rebel Sabres (TW)  
Russia (F&M)  
Squad Leader Series:  
10 Years After (F&M)

## Best Historical/Opinion/Variant - Scenario/Interview Article

Aesthetics, Function & History in  
Wargame Graphics (TW)  
Axis & Allies (BP)  
Craig Taylor: Interview (F&M)  
Revolution Against the  
Revolution (TG)  
Role Simulators (F&M)

## Best Wargame Graphics

Kanev (3W)  
Moscow 1941 (TSR/SPI)  
Raid on St. Nazaire (TAHGC)  
RBM Graphics & Design Studio  
(Body of work in '88)  
Scorched Earth (GDW)

## FINAL BALLOT

### LEGEND:

BP -- BattlePlan Magazine  
CA -- CounterAttack Magazine  
DTI -- Diverse Talents Inc.  
F&M -- Fire & Movement Magazine  
KS -- Krentek Software  
GDW -- Game Designers' Workshop  
MB -- Milton Bradley Game Co.  
MPS -- MicroProse Software  
PRP -- Pacific Rim Publishing  
TAHGC -- The Avalon Hill Game Co.  
3W -- World Wide Wargames/Strategy &  
Tactics Magazine  
SimCan -- Simulations Canada  
SSG -- Strategic Studies Group  
SSI -- Strategic Simulations Inc.  
TG -- The General Magazine  
TW -- The Wargamer Magazine  
VGC -- Victory Game Co.

The **Fire & Movement + Charles S. Roberts Awards** are dedicated to recognizing the efforts and achievements of those involved in the historical, conflict simulation hobby and industry. Please sign and return your ballot to: **(PhotoCopy is acceptable)**

Rodger B. MacGowan, F&M+CSR Awards Chairman  
2210 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 239  
Santa Monica, CA 90403 USA

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

## G2 continues ...

will be first class. The coming together of 3W and DTI has produced a powerhouse of energy and a real sense of excitement.

It is our intention that all the magazines will now appear *on schedule*, and with timely material where appropriate. All four of our magazines are acquiring new editors: Alan Emrich will edit *Battleplan*, Ty Bomba *Strategy & Tactics*, John Vanore *Fire & Movement*, and Jeff Albanese *Space Gamer*. We had to renegotiate our non-competition agreement with *Wargamer* publisher Christopher Cummins, in order to publish *Fire & Movement* but this was swiftly accomplished in our usual friendly manner. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the out-going editors for their excellent work. The change over in large part reflects our wish to concentrate production of the magazines in-house. Up until now the three magazines published by DTI have gone outside the company for editing, typesetting, layout, subscription processing, the generation of advertising, etc. Virtually all of this will now be brought in-house, as part of the process of turning the magazines around financially. We are also setting goals for dramatically increasing circulation of all three magazines. Details of special subscription rates can be obtained from 3W, and will be advertised in all the magazines.

The *Wargamer* will continue to enjoy a close relationship with *Strategy & Tactics*. At 3W, a Publications Committee, headed by Wallace Poulter, who returns to the company as Vice President (Marketing), will determine the overall direction of each magazine. Within this overall framework, individual editors will have considerable autonomy. The appointment of John Vanore, the only editor from outside the company, as editor of *Fire & Movement*, is intended to underline our commitment to preserving *Fire & Movement's* traditional independence. John was formally assistant editor of the magazine.

In the months ahead we'll bring you further details, as 3W charts its new course.

## Other News

As reported above, Helena Rubinstein has left West End Games, and has been followed by Curtis Smith, formerly head of R & D. Meanwhile Task Force Games has been purchased by New World Computing of California. The new head of Task Force will be John Astell, formerly of GDW. ■



Keith Poulter in the 3W headquarters in Cambria, discusses possible role-playing products with D&D joint-designer Dave Arneson

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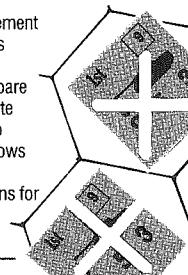
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