

\$6

Issue #1 • Winter 1995

ZONE OF CONTROL

The Voice of American Wargaming

Essays In This Issue:

Wargamer's Almanac by John Kisner

An Essay Written On Impulse, Part One by John Walker

Focus: The Battle of Thapsus by John Walker

Hook, Line, and Sinker by John Kisner

The 7th Side by John Walker

Reviews In This Issue:

Bodyguard-Overlord by Terry Rooker ... Borodino by David Mignerey

Caesar in Gallia by John Walker ... Campaign For Guadalcanal by Chris Perleberg

Days of Decision II by Dave Conn ... Decision in France by Mark Hunter

Glory's End by Steve Keifer ... Guerilla by Rick Swan

Julius Caesar by John Walker ... Köln by John Kisner

Landships by Mark Walker ... No Better Place to Die by Larry Barrett

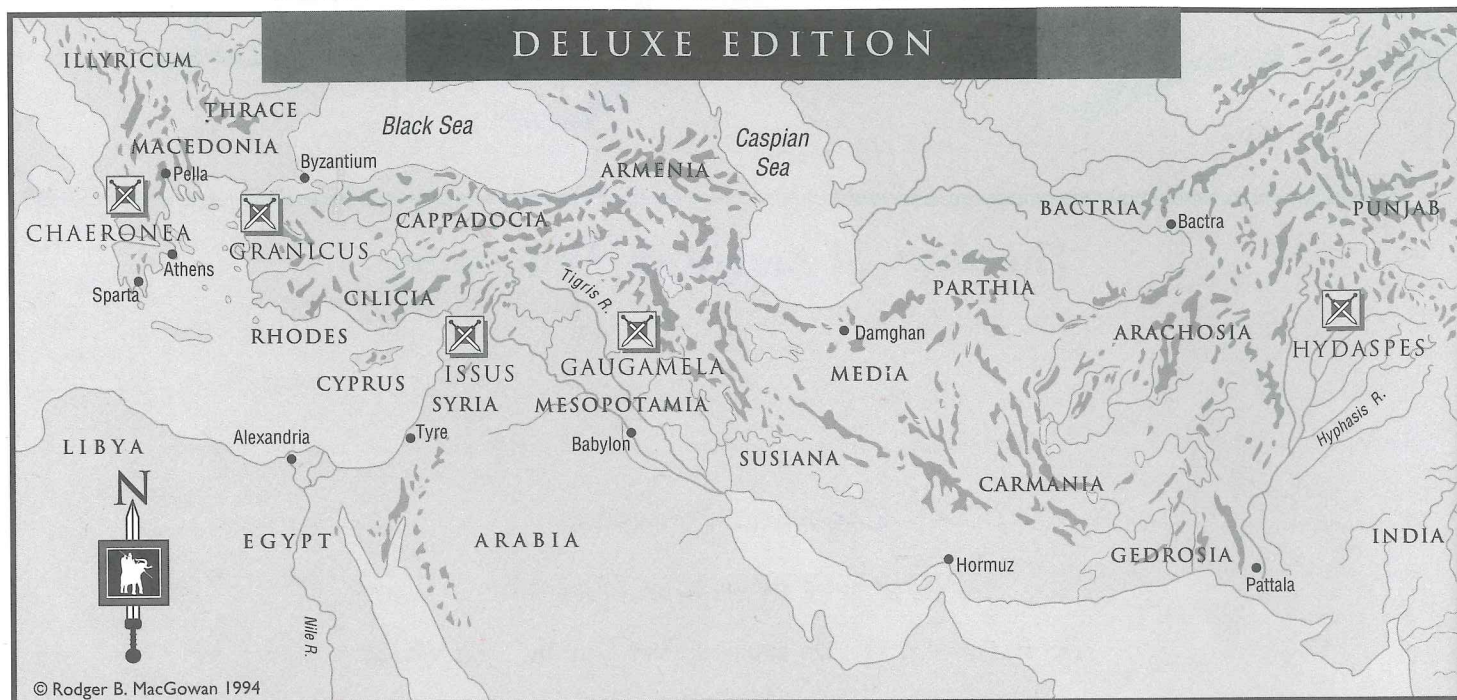
Ring of Fire by Henry Lowood ... VI Against Rome by Rick Stuart

Thaspos and Alexandria by Mark Walker ... Thunder at the Crossroads II by John Kisner

THE GREAT BATTLES OF ALEXANDER

THE MACEDONIAN ART OF WAR

DELUXE EDITION



© Rodger B. MacGowan 1994

Introducing the updated, expanded, full-color enhanced version of the best-selling, multi-Award winning game system that started the Great Battles of History Series. The Deluxe Edition includes new game maps, counters, packaging, battles, and scenarios which cover all the major battles from the original game and the **Juggernaut** Module, plus five additional battles, making ten in all! :

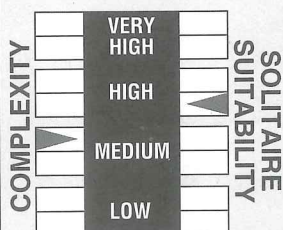
- ◆ The Battle of Chaeronea: 338 B.C.
- ◆ The Battle of the Granicus: 334 B.C.
- ◆ The Battle of Issus: 333 B.C.
- ◆ The Battle of Gaugamela: 331 B.C.
- ◆ The Battle of Hydaspes: 326 B.C.
- ◆ The Battle of the Lyginus: 336 B.C.
- ◆ The Battle of Pelium: 336 B.C.
- ◆ The Battle of the Jaxartes: 329 B.C.
- ◆ The Battle of Samarkand: 328 B.C.
- ◆ The Battle of Arigaeum: 327 B.C.

Call for a
FREE
GMT Games Catalog

Retail Price: \$50

Game Features

Number of Battles	Ten
Counters	720
Maps (double-side)	Three
Playing Time	2-8 hrs.
Solitaire Playability	Yes
Scenarios	Multiple
Special Rules	Yes



Game Designers:

Mark Herman

Richard Berg

Art Director:

Rodger B. MacGowan

Game Map Art:

Mark Simonitch

Look for this fine GMT Game at your local hobby store, or, if not available, order direct from GMT.

Mail to:

GMT Games
P.O. Box 1308
Hanford, CA
93232-1308 U.S.A.

Shipping is \$4 for first game, \$2 each additional; (International 15% Surface, 40% Air). There is 7.25% sale tax for CA residents.

GMT
GAMES

Or, use our (USA) Toll Free Order Line:

1-800-523-6111

ZONE OF CONTROL

The Voice of American Wargaming

EDITOR & PUBLISHER
John W. Kisner

ASSOCIATE EDITORS
John P. Bowen, David R. Conn, Dave Mignerey, and John A. Walker

PRE-GUNPOWDER DESK
Rick D. Stuart and John A. Walker

GUNPOWDER DESK
Larry K. Barrett, John W. Kisner, Dave Mignerey,
Steve Poitingier, and Bob Welbaum

WORLD WARS DESK
William Armstrong, John P. Bowen, John D. Burt, Mark Hunter, Eric & Jane
Lawson, Henry Lowood, Chris Perleberg, Mark Pitcavage, and Mark Veerman

CONTEMPORARY DESK
David R. Conn, Terry Rooker, and Mark H. Walker

GENERAL CONTRIBUTORS
Jeff Behan, Dusty Brown, Mike Collier, Ed Ericson, Monte Gray,
Kevin Johnson, Steve Keifer, Mark Moore, Siegfried Nelson,
Gar Olwsted, John Setear, and Rick Swan

PRINTING
Universal Printing Services, Inc. (Des Moines, Iowa)

Correspondence

ZOC and John Kisner can usually be reached by phone mornings between eight & noon daily. Please refrain from calling at other times. Street, voice, & e-mail addresses are given below:

Zone of Control
1914 40th Place
Des Moines, IA 50310

Voice: 515-277-8920
GEnie: J.Kisner • Compuserve: 74721,727

Subscriptions

ZOC is published four times a year. A 4-issue subscription for U.S. customers costs \$18. Canadian subscribers please add \$3 per year; other non-U.S. customers please add \$6 per year.

Advertising

ZOC is read by thousands of active wargamers. For advertising rates and other specifications, please contact John Kisner.

Copyright Notice

ZOC (ISSN-1079-7556) is a product of Zone of Control, Inc., all rights reserved. We expressly allow readers to photocopy contents of the magazine for personal use. Otherwise, nothing may be reproduced from it in whole or in part without prior approval.

Trademark Notice

ZOC's use of trademarked names for games and game systems should not be taken as an endorsement. Likewise, the failure to use an accompanying trademark symbol (™) within these pages should not be taken as a challenge to the trademark.

Submissions

ZOC currently pays 3¢ a word for published articles. If not submitted in a usable electronic format, 1¢ a word is deducted. We reserve the right to edit all manuscripts. Unsolicited articles are discouraged, so if you have an idea for an essay, or would like to review games, please contact the editor before beginning to write.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Issue #1 • Winter 1995

FEATURES

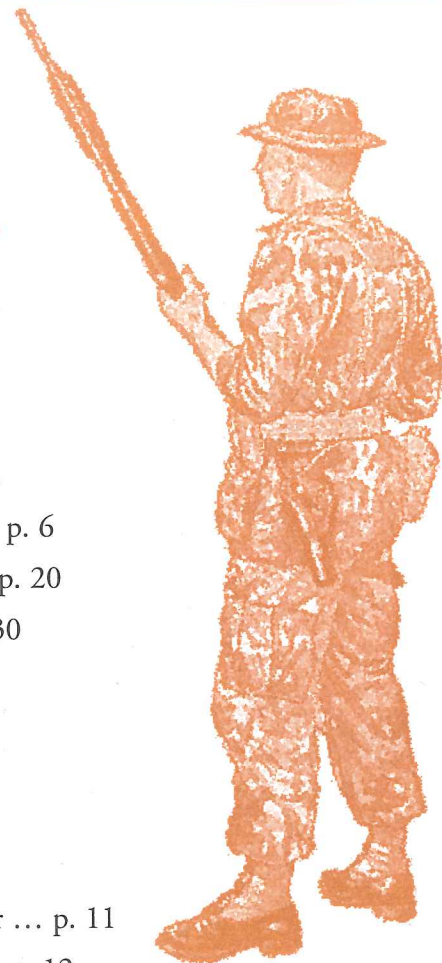
- Wargamer's Almanac by John W. Kisner ... p. 4
An Essay Written On Impulse by John A. Walker ... p. 6
Focus: The Battle of Thapsus by John A. Walker ... p. 20
Hook, Line, and Sinker by John W. Kisner ... p. 30
Replacements: New Games Received ... p. 50
The 7th Side by John A. Walker ... p. 52

REVIEWS

- Thapsos and Alexandria by Mark H. Walker ... p. 11
VI Against Rome by Rick D. Stuart ... p. 12
Caesar in Gallia by John A. Walker ... p. 14
Julius Caesar by John A. Walker ... p. 18
Kölín by John W. Kisner ... p. 22
Borodino by Dave Mignerey ... p. 24
Thunder at the Crossroads II by John W. Kisner ... p. 26
No Better Place To Die by Larry K. Barrett ... p. 29
Glory's End by Steve Keifer ... p. 32
Landships by Mark H. Walker ... p. 34
Days of Decision II by David R. Conn ... p. 36
Campaign for Guadalcanal by Chris Perleberg ... p. 39
Ring of Fire by Henry Lowood ... p. 42
Bodyguard-Overlord by Terry Rooker ... p. 44
Decision in France by Mark Hunter ... p. 46
Guerilla by Rick Swan ... p. 48

On The Cover:

Action near Herr Tavern in THUNDER AT THE CROSSROADS (The Gamers © 1993)



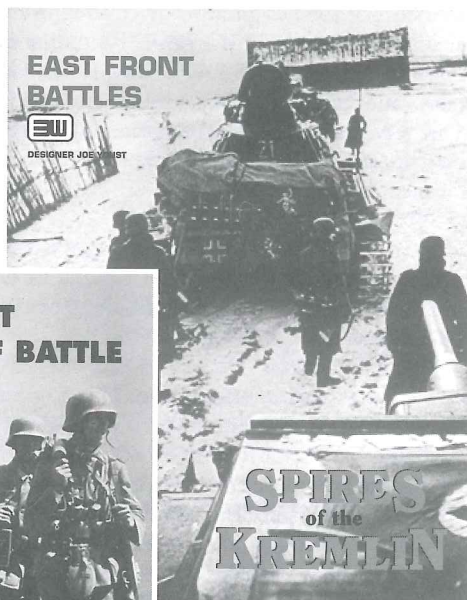
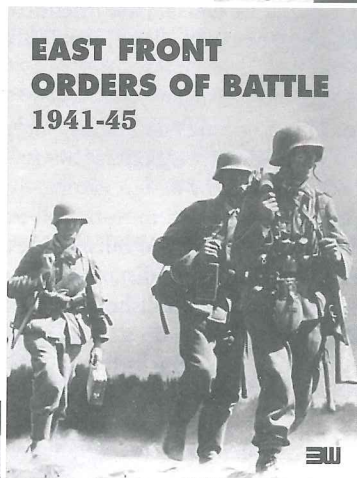
EAST FRONT BATTLES

THE DEFINITIVE SERIES OF GAMES covering the war on the eastern front 1941-45, East Front Battles has a map scale of 5 miles to the hex, and unit scale of battalion to divisions for the Axis and brigades to corps for the Soviets. The series will consist of 11 or 12 games, plus a number of expansion kits, and an Order of Battle book. The latter will list the unit ID and location, monthly, for all units on both sides throughout the war. There will be over 100 published scenarios included with the series. With the OB book players will literally be able to devise additional scenarios for any 2 day period (and on up) of the war, on any part of the eastern front.

ORDERS OF BATTLE BOOK.

Unit ID's and locations throughout the war, cross-referenced for ease of reference. \$19.95 (1997)

EAST FRONT ORDERS OF BATTLE 1941-45



"I've been looking for something like this series for ten years."

—Tim Fierst, Evans City, PA

SPIRES OF THE KREMLIN. Operation Typhoon (North and South) and the Soviet counteroffensive of January 1942. 3 maps, 1,000 counters. Design by Joe Youst. \$39.95 Available Now

BALTIC STORM. Army Group North's campaign from the frontier to Leningrad. 3 maps. 800 counters. Scenarios by Mark Stille. \$39.95 (1995)

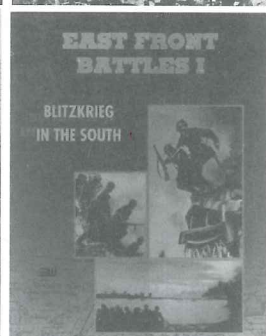
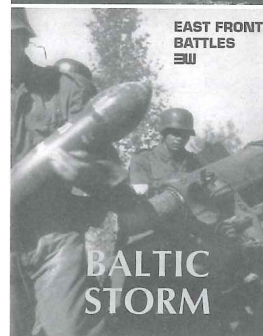
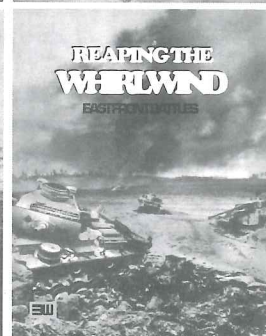
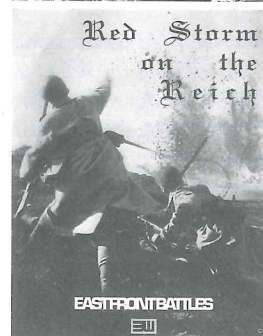
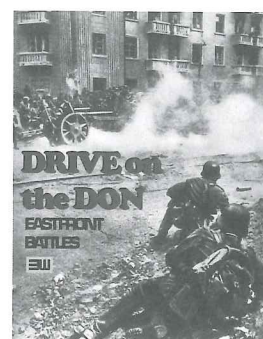
FIELDS OF FATE. The pursuit from Stalingrad, Feb-Mar 43, the Kursk offensive Jun-July 43, the last battle for Kharkov, Aug-Sep 43. 2 maps, 1,000 counters. Scenarios by Mark Simonitch. \$39.95 (1995)

RED STORM ON THE REICH. The Soviet onslaught on East Prussia, Jan-Feb 1945. 3 maps, 1600 counters. Scenarios by Joe Youst. \$49.95 (1996)

EDGE OF DESTRUCTION. The struggle for Stalingrad. 2 maps, 700 counters. Scenarios by Jim Arnold. \$29.95 (1995)

GOTTERDAMERÜNG: THE FALL OF BERLIN. The last act. 2 maps, 800 counters. Scenarios by Joe Youst \$34.95 (1996)

DRIVE ON THE DON. 1941-42. The drive on Rostov, and the battles for the Crimea. 3 maps, 800 counters. Scenarios by Mark Perry. \$39.95 (1996)



Utilizing captured German wartime documents, newly released information from the Russian archives, and contemporary maps, *East Front Battles* is the most detailed and accurate simulation of the war in the east ever. Yet it is also eminently playable. Series designer and coordinator (apart from *Blitzkrieg in the South*) is Joe Youst. Scenarios for each game are being worked on by a group of east front specialists; by organizing the design process in this way, we aim to complete the series by the end of 1997.

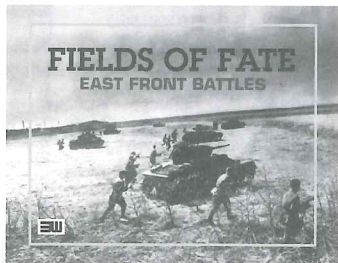
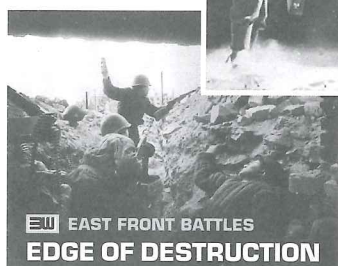
REAPING THE WHIRLWIND. Battles for the Dnepr, Fall 43-Spring 44. 4 maps, 1,200 counters. Scenarios by Jack Radey. \$49.95 (1996)

PANZER LEGIONS. The German armored forces at their peak ... Army Group Center's drive on Minsk and Smolensk. 2 maps, 800 counters. Scenarios by Joe Youst. \$34.95 (1995)

BLITZKRIEG IN THE SOUTH. The Army Group South/Romanian onslaught, July 1941. Battles to Kiev. 3 maps, 600 counters. Design Vance von Borries. \$34.95 Available now

For further details or orders contact:

3045 MAIN ST, CAMBRIA, CA 93428
PHONE (805) 927-0379 • FAX (805) 927-1852



Welcome to the premier issue of *zq*. The groundwork for the magazine you're holding was laid a year ago in an exchange of phone calls and letters between myself and John Walker. He had enjoyed my work at *Fire & Movement* and was interested in joining forces to start a newsletter. After months of debating issues of content and format, I decided to invoke the in-for-a-penny-in-for-a-pound dictum, and publish a magazine covering the entire paper wargaming hobby.

In an effort to keep subscription prices low and quality high, my editors and I thought it best to adopt a fairly rigid review format. Our length restrictions will allow us to review a dozen or more new games every issue and still leave room for other features. Inside is a pretty typical mix. We hope you enjoy what you read, tell all your friends to subscribe, and ask your local game shop to display us prominently.

The reviews in this magazine are organized around a pyramid-like structure. The foundation is what we call the *annotated sequence of play*. More than just a listing of phases, this is intended to provide a staccato overview of a game's architecture. Building on this base is the core of the review, a main body that fast-forwards through the mundane elements of the design (already covered in the annotated sequence of play) to instead concentrate on what is most interesting about the game. Rounding out our coverage are *game design abstract ratings* assigned by the reviewer — scores for Look, Utility, Rules, Game, Simulation, Innovation, and Complexity. These ratings stand atop our review structure, and are intended as a summary of the game's strengths and weaknesses that might serve as a useful buying guide for consumers. We're trying to move beyond a simple thumb up or down approach, and think of the review process as an attempt to match a game with the gamers who might find it most enjoyable.

If reviews are *zq*'s meat, its essays are a gravy that enriches these pages with an eclectic mix of opinions and ideas. Some of these, such as those accompanying the review of *CAESAR IN GALLIA*, are intended as adjuncts to the discussion of a specific game. Others will be longer, stand-alone pieces, such as John Walker's contribution to the sequence of play debate.

We mean it when we call *zq* the voice of American wargaming. The magazine's aim is very simple: to be a non-partisan forum for the exchange of information and ideas, a zone where wargamers themselves are in control. There will be no hidden agendas: we're not looking to sell, publish, or design games, so don't worry about content being influenced by any backroom politics. Skeptics may be quick to notice all the advertising in *zq* and wonder whether the integrity of this publication may soon fall victim to outside pressures. Time will tell — ultimately you'll be the judge — but I've taken steps to keep a certain distance from game manufacturers. Chief among them is my policy of giving advertising credit to publishers for the pair of review copies that they typically provide of each new title. So, even though I'm picking up a lot of games (and perhaps making a few important friends), I'm obviously not depending on big bucks from Madison Avenue to keep in business. *zq* can only succeed with *your* support.

Years ago *SC&T*'s traditional feedback motto *vox populi, vox dei* was dropped without explanation. This probably had as much to do with the fact that few read Latin anymore than with any sinister shift away from our hobby's populist roots, but I still feel the change was significant. As our hobby has matured, the people have been disfranchised, and it is high time they are heard from again. This magazine intends to serve as their voice, a role it does not take lightly. But even as we speak our minds to designers and publishers in these pages, we must at the same time listen closely to what our peers — our readers — have to say. *zq* can only become better as more of you stand up to be heard. A letters section will be added in order to provide readers with an informal soapbox on which they can stand to make their opinions known. Similarly important, but with a different purpose, subscribers will be sent a special feedback packet once a year. The data processed from returned forms will be used to present a modified G.D.A. rating chart in our summer issue. We hope you will use these opportunities to shape the future content of a magazine that is not afraid of change.

zq will do its part to keep you on top of the hobby — all of it — which in turn will allow you to select from a broader — and better — spectrum of games. In addition to serving as a conduit for the exchange of product information, this publication will endeavor to enrich the hobby's intellectual landscape. Much as prior reading of military history lends depth to the enjoyment of military boardgames, *zq* will serve as an on-going reference for tracking exciting developments in game design. Being written and published by game players ensures that our coverage of these trends remains objective, our enthusiasms genuine.

The words of Tom Paine, this issue's back-cover *vox Americana*, serve well as concluding remarks: "Why do we hesitate? It is time to declare independence without further ado." The common ground we've staked out is designed to unite the hobby. Also by design, our integrity and dedication ensure that reading *zq* not only makes sense, it makes *Common Sense*. Our belief is that the best is yet to come, and our goal is to make each issue better than the last.

ZoC Rating & Format Notes

Game Rating Systems

Each game review in ZoC contains scores for complexity and the general quality of the design. Here's an explanation of our methodology:

Complexity

Rather than use a subjective rating, we have opted to simply "count" the components in two areas and equate the sum of their square roots with the game's rough complexity. The Size score will usually be lower than that for System, and this is intended as an expression of our belief that the "physical size" is usually much easier for players to deal with than "intellectual size" of a design.

"System" complexity is figured by counting the number of letter-sized pages of rulebook, charts, and tables. Obviously, this inappropriately compares games with different styles of rules presentation, but overall we think any such problems are outweighed by the method's simplicity. Examples and notes for players and by designer are counted, but historical articles are not. The reviewer can add or subtract

10%-25% before figuring the square root if he feels the game strays from the norm for commentary and/or scenario information.

"Size" complexity is figured in much the same way. Each 22" x 17" section of map counts as one point. (Charts printed on the map are counted in this category, not the one above.) To this add 1 point for every hundred counters (or 25 "cards") included. If a multi-game package divide the total by the number of distinct games in the package before figuring the square root.

Graphic & Game Design Abstracts

Note that in all G.D.A. categories below a subjective ascending scale of "Pr" (Poor), "Fr" (Fair), "Av" (Average), "Gd" (Good), and "Ex" (Excellent) is used.

"Look" is rated on aesthetic grounds: how the components look and feel.

"Utility" is the rating given for clarity of components other than the rules: how easy it is to use the components during play.

"Rules" are rated for completeness and organization. We aren't judging the quality

of the thinking behind the systems here, just how well they are explained and presented.

"Game" rates the design in terms of excitement, fun, and replay value. (Unclear rules can impact a reviewer's opinion, but every attempt will be made to evaluate the game as intended by the designer.)

"Simulation" is the assessment of the game's realism and detail. Where tedium and excessive playing time may hurt the Game score above, it is often welcome as a by-product of accuracy here. Note that we are mainly concerned with the perception of realism, given the difficulty of assessing the fidelity of any simulation.

"Innovation" is an indication of the design's inventiveness. Here novelty is rewarded, as are new combinations of old ideas.

Format

Note that in this magazine game titles are displayed in SMALL CAPS; titles of game series in *ITALICIZED SMALL CAPS*. This formatting should help you find important information when re-reading an article.

The Gamers

Quality Wargames since 1988

Wargame quality you can trust...
Service you can depend on...

What's Available:

Civil War Brigade Series

Thunder at the Crossroads,

Embrace an Angry Wind, April's Harvest (Mar, 95)
No Better Place to Die, In Their Quiet Fields II (Jan, 95)

Tactical Combat Series

Force Eagle's War,

GD'40, Matanikau

Hunters from the Sky (Nov, 94)

Operational Combat Series

Guderian's Blitzkrieg,

Enemy at the Gates, Tunisia (Origins, 95)

Standard Combat Series

Afrika (CSR Winner, Best WW2 Wargame 1994),
The Ardennes, Yom Kippur (May, 95)

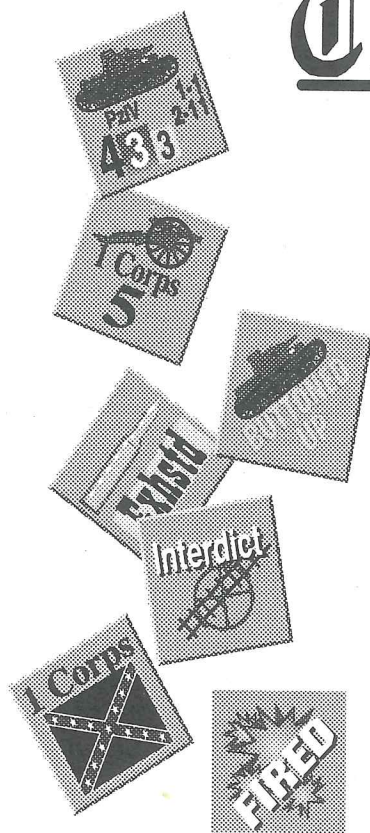
Napoleonic Brigade Series

Austerlitz, Marengo (Sept, 95)

THE GAMERS INC.

500 W. 4th Street
Homer, IL 61849

Free Catalog
phone (217) 896-2145 • fax (217) 896-2880



REAL WARGAMING
LIVES
ON!

An Essay Written On Impulse:

The Sequence of Play Debate, Part 1

by John A. Walker

We wargamers are a contentious lot. When we're not arguing points historical, we're second-guessing the decisions that go into the games we play. A new-style sequence of play was bound to cause discussion, and even controversy.

Back in the 1970s, SPI touched off a furor with games like *DESERT WAR* that introduced wargamers to command control. Whether you were pro or con with respect to traditional prerogatives over units was a matter of principle. For some, command control was a fact of military life whose hour for simulation had arrived. But for others, refractory units were an unwanted historical lesson, and sinned against the law that the customer is always right.

I don't share the latter view, for historical games are not like other games. They certainly resemble them in comprising a set of logical and arithmetical relationships. But a wargame cannot be 'just a game'; the instant a wargame ceases to be a simulation, it ceases to be a wargame. As anyone familiar with commercial wargames well knows, when elements important to a military campaign are excluded it's to enhance playability. The motivation is not denial of fact but avoidance of tedium.

Because they purport to deal with real events, simulations have a moral aspect missing from non-simulation games. This dimension is present in any game, even a comparatively simple one, that purports to be based on fact. We wargamers are to be commended for recognizing this. The key word in the alternative history genre is *alternative*. Such games are diverting, and make us think about large issues. Comparatively rare, at least in the print wargaming world, is pseudo-history, that is, games which consciously distort real events to pander to the desires of their audience. The high ethical character of even simple paper-based wargames seems to be a result of our two-player paradigm, which tends to keep everyone honest.

The moral dimension of wargaming has consequences both for sequence of play, which I'll be discussing in detail, and for other design issues. We've heard much lately about design "for cause" and "for effect," and convincing arguments have been advanced on behalf of both approaches. However, this otherwise healthy debate has polarized taste to an unhealthy degree.

Instead of cause and effect, we might do better to think in terms of yield. Any wargame worthy of the name comprises both a set of insights (a reading of history) and ways of presenting them (the game mechanics proper). The design for yield mindset looks to the heart of the issue: truth (history) versus pleasure (game). Since the time of Socrates there has been a perceived tension between these two things. An advantage of design for yield is that it doesn't straitjacket the designer in any way: the better designs aren't those with more causes

or more effects, but those that offer the highest levels of historical insight and player interest for the effort it takes to play them.

A sequence of play is a key feature of most wargames. Usually more than any other single element, it comprises the interpretative base and is the spine to which other elements are attached. It governs the handling of time and the relation of events to each other, and establishes what and how much information the players receive, and when.

Because so much depends on it, the sequence of play raises issues with implications for the larger debate about the nature of wargaming. As was the case with command control rules, marketplace concerns probably lend an element of contentiousness to arguments over play sequence. The two main types of sequence of play differ because the assumptions underlying them are different. This suggests that maybe this is a zero-sum issue, that one type may be provably superior to the other. One of my aims will be to examine this question.

In what follows, some common terms are used in specific ways. Two in particular, initiative and impulse, are employed by designers and wargamers rather interchangeably. For consistency I'll use *impulse* to refer to decisions taken after someone or something — the players or a randomization mechanism — decides who must perform an action, reserving *initiative* for who must act, not which action is selected.

The key to impulses is that neither player knows in advance the ordering of actions. Logic and the play-state — the location and posture of both sides' units as of a given time — sometimes temper discretion as to what units will do. But absent a fair amount of such discretion, impulses have little purpose. Their value, in short, both in terms of simulation and enjoyment, relates to orchestrating different actions.

A good general tenet of game design is, whenever possible, to set the players goals that allow victory to take significantly differing forms. Impulses make this especially valuable. The more sequence-logics there are (flowing from different forms of victory), the harder it is for the opponent to predict what the actual sequence will be.

As do impulses, initiative represents a sequence built up over time. Although designs commonly feature both, it's possible for a design to contain impulses without initiative, and vice versa. An example of the former is combat that takes place during movement. This mechanic was introduced by Jim Dunnigan in *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* (SPI, 1976), where it was called *overrun attack*. It can have many forms, but generally it permits the player to elect to perform combat during his movement phase and (combat result permitting) to continue

movement after combat.

ACROSS FIVE APRILS from Avalon Hill contains initiatives without impulses. The reason the impulse concept is here attenuated to the vanishing point is that, once a unit activates, there is no element of choice with respect what it will do: the sole choice is movement. I might say that, although it is certainly intriguing, I look somewhat askance at the impulseless initiative notion. When players are prevented from orchestrating actions, there may be so little left for them to contribute that both game and simulation are affected adversely.

Initiative is perhaps of more recent emergence than impulse. The earliest game that comes to mind is SPI's *BATTLE FOR STALINGRAD*, which dates from 1980. The game features a full-fledged initiative mechanic in which the Russian player can interrupt German actions by rolling a '6'. Thus, from the very beginning, initiative was viewed as a way of modeling relative command efficiency, the ability to do something timely.

Initiative and impulse used in combination burst on the wargaming world in the late 1980s, in several designs by Richard Berg that received wide exposure in *Strategy & Tactics*: *MANCHU*, *13: THE COLONIES IN REVOLT*, *HORSE SOLDIERS*, and *BATON ROUGE*. The potential of these twin concepts was most fully exploited in his *GREAT BATTLES OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR* series. In its present form, that system reverses the usual expectation that distinct game functions will be put in separate phases. The reversal is total: Even the administrative actions that, as we'll see, traditionally bring up the rear of the game-turn, are performed in this omnibus phase.

The traditional sequences of play are founded on an immutable phase order — for example, movement always precedes combat and one side's player-turn always precedes the other's. This may seem to suggest the cause and effect found in natural occurrences. Seldom, however, is the designer's rationale one of cause and effect. Movement certainly does not cause ensuing combat, nor are the decisions of one player caused by those of the player who went first.

Phase placement often determines the timing of release of information to the players. Weather is an example.

Weather determination phases are commonly placed at the beginning of the turn because in real life the state of the weather is obvious. By placing weather determination at the start, the designer puts both players "in the know" about that element.

Just as weather changes commonly occur at the beginning of the game turn, certain types of administrative functions are usually placed at the end. Here again, one rationale is informational. End-placed functions typically occur after important discretionary actions of the players, and after key randomization events, such as combat results. Both of these constitute

information available to players, to be used by them in making decisions in later phases.

For many such functions there is also a logical reason for end-placement. Some, such as rallying routed units and resupply of ammunition, essentially involve fixing something; and a unit can only be fixed after it breaks. Hence these functions can only occur after the game events to which they relate.

The rationale just described applies to loose structures founded on initiative and impulses just as much as to rigid player turns. Where the former differ is in confining this essentially intra-unit logic to a single unit. Player turns apply it to inter-unit relationships even though the real-life logic does not so require: in reality, it is perfectly possible to give Unit A the ammunition it needs before Unit B runs out of ammunition. Impulses reflect this; player turns do not.

Whether an initiative mechanism determines which player must act, or which player can act, is often of minor significance, generically. Both contain the crucial element of indeterminacy, often by employing a randomization procedure of some kind. Randomization, of course, connotes die rolling — and dice are indeed employed in many polysequential designs. But the striking thing at this juncture is the wide variety of approaches taken by designers. It's safe to say that the range of implementation is fully as great as for combat resolution. Among the devices we've seen are

CRT-like tables replete with die-roll modifiers (e.g., the Turn Continuation Table of *GREAT BATTLES OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR*), cards (e.g., *TANK LEADER* series), die rolls sans modifiers (e.g., *GREAT CAMPAIGNS OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR* series), die rolls with modifiers (e.g., *Clash of Arms' KÖLIN*), chit-draws (e.g., *Victory's PANZER COMMAND*), and the preset hierarchy and "trumping" of *GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY*.

What presently sets initiative and impulses apart is the player's ability to strategize. We've seen that strategy, or orchestration, lies at the heart of impulses. The state of the art with respect to initiative is nowhere near as developed. You often see initiative weighted in favor of a particular side, and this does permit a certain amount of passive or indirect strategizing; essentially, players are invited to create

situations where the fall of initiative will advantage them. But designers rarely give players the ability to actively strategize, that is, to exert creative leverage over initiative. The reasons die roll modifiers per se don't give rise to this is that they're almost always preset. Typically they either apply to a side as a whole or are specific to individual leaders. In either case, they work as an immutable given, as opposed to arising from creative manipulation of the assets at a player's disposal.

An interesting development in regard to leveragable initiative is XTR's recent *FATEFUL LIGHTNING*. In brief, its monosequen-

GREAT BATTLES OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR series games by SPI/TSR/3W/SDI include *TERRIBLE SWIFT SWORD*, *GLEAM OF BAYONETS*, *BATON ROUGE*, & *FIRST BLOOD* (just to name a few).

GREAT CAMPAIGNS OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR series games by Avalon Hill include *STONEWALL JACKSON'S WAY*, *HERE COME THE REBELS*, and *ROADS TO GETTYSBURG*.

GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY series games by GMT include *ALEXANDER*, *SPQR*, *LION OF THE NORTH*, and *JULIUS CAESAR*.

TANK LEADER series games by West End include *Desert Steel*, *East Front Tank Leader* & *West Front Tank Leader*.

tial turn structure contains a limited version of initiative in the form of an occasional switch in the order of player turns — essentially, it's the initiative concept applied army-wide. What's relevant for present purposes is that combat units can act to manipulate initiative because advances after combat — something the players achieve through their own creative efforts — have a direct effect on whether and when the player-turns switch.

Impulses per se and declinable initiative (which means a player decides who will go next) both involve prioritization. With impulses we prioritize regarding actions. With declinable initiative we decide whether performing an impulse is more or less beneficial than seeing what the opponent will do (a power of election that in the game of CHESS is called a "tempo"). It is declinability of initiative that makes "Igo-Yugo" an awkward way to describe rigid player turns. I've chosen not to use it, because to me it suggests, confusingly, the "who goes" choice of declinable initiative.

So far we've been putting designs into two broad classes: monosequential ones featuring rigid player turns that control the order of game actions, and polysequential ones featuring various combinations of impulse and initiative. These two categories can overlap. An example is the fixed-sequence turn that allows reaction by the non-phasing player. One of the most common forms of this is critical distance reaction, in which the reaction right exists only in special situations, when a unit of the phasing player moves within a specified distance of an enemy unit (e.g., THE CONQUERORS by SPI). Structures like this serve to warn of the hazards of pigeonholing. Certainly no individual game, game designer, or game publisher can fairly be judged categorically. Even if there are two broad categories of turns, the specific implementation will be distinctive. In other words, no two game systems are alike, nor should they be.

An enjoyable part of studying game design is noting the ways decisions concerning the sequence of play relate to other aspects of a design. Involuntary turn-closing mechanisms — essentially random events that unexpectedly end the string of impulses for one or both players — are a case in point. As with most other types of random events, turn closure has an obvious play value. Besides the element of uncertainty, it increases the pressure on players with regard to prioritization. In some games the pressure is a constant; in others, the closure probability goes up as the turn progresses.

Such mechanisms help control certain side-effects that crop up when actions are repeatable, that is, able to be performed more than once within a turn. This usually works in tandem with changes of state for units that perform such actions. The fatigue rules of Joseph Balkoski's GREAT CAMPAIGNS OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR system are a good example. The effect aimed at is simple: the more units do, the less effective they become. The result is to lessen the marginal utility of non-first actions by some units, compared to first actions by other

units. Turn closure strengthens this effect by raising the risk of non-activation. By reining in its juggernaut potential, the two "hidden hands" of fatigue and turn closure keep polysequential systems on the primrose path of plausibility.

A generic brother of the two devices just mentioned is the consecutivity limit. Like them, it constitutes a control, this time a direct one, on serial actions. This can be quite useful, because a lengthy series of consecutive actions can imperil play balance.

Monosequential designs feature rigid player turns that control the order of game actions.

Polysequential designs feature various combinations of impulse and initiative, and allow players to control the order of game actions.

Consecutivity limits are not imposed because orchestratability is a bad thing in itself. On the contrary, it's the main point of impulses. As a rule, limits on consecutivity should be fixed on the high side so as not to discourage the player from orchestrating to the fullest. The problem comes in giving too much of an advantage. It's exacerbated when players lack leverage, or have only weak leverage, over who receives initiative. In such cases the advantage in question is largely independent of player skill. The setting of an appropri-

ate consecutivity limit calls for the most considered judgment on the part of the designer, because some potential for a blowout should exist. With combat, to take a parallel case, there is ordinarily no limit on the number of worst-case results (e.g., '1's) a player can roll in succession. The tenet of play balance requires only that blowouts be the exception rather than the rule. In many if not most cases, it is sufficient to rely on the laws of probability.

The absence of a consecutivity limit can be an equally powerful design tool. A memorable example of some years back is MANCHU (Strategy & Tactics #116), where the initiative at the start is quite heavily weighted in favor of one side. The ability of the Taiping player to gain a big headstart was clearly intended by the designer. That is to say, the Manchu side is supposed to be thrown off-balance. The initiative and impulse mechanics were well-crafted to convey an historical judgment about the weakness of the Manchu dynasty.

A wargame can and should be judged by how interesting it is. The next section, and Part II of this article, will look at things that help or hinder the effort to generate and sustain player interest. Some of them are what I like to call *simulistic*; they relate to the interest that comes from feeling a game is as accurate as possible relative to the effort it takes to play it. These factors will be discussed in Part II. What follows has more to do with non-simulistic elements: game *qua* game, a pure process, not viewed in relation to an historical event.

Relative Demands On The Player

The complexity of a game system can be a function of three things: its size, its cumulative conceptual difficulty, and the number of alternatives open to the players in making decisions. The first is generally of little account so far as sequences of play are concerned. In other words, there is no evident correlation between rules length and the type of

game turn. For either type of turn one can cite games with hefty rule books, and games without. For monosequential turns, SPI's BLUE & GRAY and CAMPAIGN FOR NORTH AFRICA stand at opposite ends of the complexity spectrum; for polysequential, VICTORY AT NORMANDY (XTR) and SPQR (GMT) do likewise. This shouldn't surprise anyone, for rules size is determined by depth of simulation, not the turn type used.

A question that begs to be answered is whether, given two types of actions, any added complexity results from a simple requirement that one precede the other. It would seem not. On the other hand, most would agree that, as a game acquires different phases, complexity does increase. The question, then, is when two systems are equally heuristic, does one that uses player turns tend to require more discrete phases than one using initiative and impulse. I believe it does, that initiatives and impulses may produce effects player turns can duplicate only through subspeciation of actions.

By way of demonstration, consider a common situation in battle-level games: units arrayed against each other in continuous lines. When the sequence is the classic move-then-fight, units' movement allowances effectively cease to exist after the movement phase. This means that, even if combat creates a hole in the opposing line, units cannot exploit it in the current turn. With impulses coupled with initiative, units have the option to engage in combat before movement. If a hole opens up, the same units or their fellows can exploit it.

With function-specific phases, an obvious way of achieving a similar effect is to insert a second movement phase after the combat phase. Space-time parameters, however, may dictate that such movement be subject to special limitations. The result is a subspecies of movement that exists because of the structure of the turn. That structure has resulted in an increase in the conceptual load.

With the polysequential turn, design decisions concerning actions are driven more by what the action is than by a need to overcome the limitations of the turn structure. It is an axiom of commercial game design that player tolerance for conceptual load is a limited resource. Impose too great a load and interest in the process falls off. A big offsetting factor, however, can be the procedure governing the award of initiative. Sometimes these impose their own conceptual load. By far the most complex system I have ever encountered is the hierarchy-cum-trumping found in *GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY*. The difficulty is not in the actual mechanics (which are almost effortless), but in the concepts.

Our third measure of complexity, the number of possible moves open to the player at any one decision point, forms the fundamental objection to initiatives and impulses in the minds of some. This, more than the oft-cited die rolling, appears to be the turnoff. It is common experience that, the more alternatives one has to choose from, the more difficult it is to make a choice. This is quite different from conceptual complexity. It has more to do with anxiety and risk than with analysis as such. Myriad possibilities appear to compound the likelihood that any individual guess will be wrong, and few of us enjoy guessing wrong.

An offsetting factor here is the greater replay potential initiatives and impulses afford. For two playthroughs to closely resemble each other requires recurrence of randomization outcomes and player decisions. Such recurrence is less likely with more alternatives.

The two types of turn differ markedly with respect to risk. Besides choosing among competing opportunities, a polysequential structure increases the level of threat the player must deal with. The added threat comes from options open to the opposing side should it activate next, and the risk of turn closure (which affects whether a unit will be unable to perform an action at all). In monosequential turns there is no parallel to these kinds of intra-turn risk.

Wargames, like physical exercise, involve work in a generic sense. We only object to this playwork when the rewards seem unequal to the benefits. If complexity goes up when elements proliferate (because more variables means more possible combinations of variables), playwork is more a matter of how recurrent is each single task. A hallmark of player turns is that a player performs actions of a given class *en masse*, whereas with the other type of turn the playwork is apt to change from moment to moment and to be interleaved with the opponent's playwork.

Playwork is subjective. We can say, though, that if the general design parameters are similar, the two types of turn ought to generate roughly the same amount of playwork. And if playwork decreases with the number of rest breaks, monosequential turns have more of it. But if playwork decreases with the length of rest breaks, polysequential turns have more.

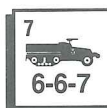
We typically distribute the playwork of large wargames by playing in teams. The optimal mode of team play differs for each type of turn. When player turns are employed, each one will typically be much longer than any single initiative. In playing such a game in teams, there can be an advantage in splitting the front into sectors and assigning one to each team member. This minimizes wait-time and maximizes playing ability by allowing each team member to concentrate on his own sector.

If the sequence of play uses initiatives and impulses, team play is more problematic. It's often preferable to keep each side an integral whole and give one team member sole responsibility for a connected series of impulses. Large amounts of time may otherwise be taken up discussing each individual initiative or impulse. After the active team member's allotted string of impulses ends, his partner can take responsibility for the next string. This, however, generates little or no economy of effort, increases wait-time for any single player, and demands a great deal of cohesion from the members of the team.

To my way of thinking, the additional playwork imposed by initiative — a die roll, chit draw, or some other such device — is only worthwhile if it simulates something. The view has been expressed, however, that these devices are at war with the purpose of a wargame, and therefore the polysequential turn is flawed in essence. Whether and how a turn structure can itself be a simulation will be covered in the next issue of ZOC.



SPI Classics at Bargain Prices...



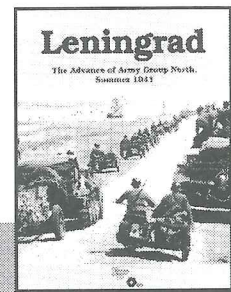
World War One. Strategic WW1 game from *Strategy & Tactics* #50 with extra map and counters to cover the Caucasus. **\$13.95**

Battle for Germany. WW2 game from *Strategy & Tactics* #51. Unique two-player game in which each player is the attacker on one front and the defender on the other. **\$13.95**

Leningrad. Great introductory WW2 Eastfront game with hidden combat values for the Soviet forces. **\$12.95**

Battles for the Ardennes. Danny Parker updated the counters and maps and added new rules to this quad and campaign game. **\$31.95**

All four have updated artwork from earlier editions.



Coming Soon—Rebels & Redcoats

Rebels & Redcoats I:

American Revolutionary Battles of Bunker Hill, Brandywine, Germantown and Monmouth. **\$29.95**

Rebels & Redcoats II:

Battles of Bennington, Freeman's Farm, Bemis Heights, Camden, Cowpens, Guilford Court House, Hobkirk's Hill and Eutaw Springs. **\$29.95**



"Turning Point at Guilford" by Dale Gallon.

Four Battles of the Ancient World includes four decisive battles (Cannae, Pharsalus, Arbela and Teutoburger Wald) of the classical era in easy, quick playing wargames. Game includes 400 die-cut counters, 4 17" by 22" maps, Standard and Battles Rules Booklets. Playing time 1-2 hours. **\$25.00**

Napoleon's First Battles covers four of Napoleon Bonaparte's earliest victories—Montenotte, Arcola, The Pyramids, and Marengo. Game includes 400 die-cut counters, 1 rules booklet and 4 17" by 22" maps. Playing time 1-2 hours. **\$28.00**

The Seven Days Battles includes four battles of the American Civil War, plus a campaign game that combines all four maps into one game. The battles are: Seven Pines, Gaines Mill, Frayser's Farm, and Malvern Hill. Game includes 400 die-cut counters, 1 rules booklet and 2 34" by 22" maps. Playing time 1-2 hours. **\$28.00**

Empires at War

Empires at War simulates four of the battles of the 19th century. The battles include: Inkerman, Königgratz, Gravelotte and Solferino. Rules include provisions for command control, morale, fog of war, and *mitrailleuse* (early machine guns).

Components: 16 page Rules Booklet, 400 die-cut counters, 4 Maps on Two 22" x 34" mapsheets, 1 Six sided die. **\$29.95**

War of the Rebellion

War of the Rebellion uses the original **South Mountain** system with the addition of a unique division/corps/army activation system. The battles include: South Mountain, Chickamauga, Gettysburg, and Shiloh.

Components: 80 page illustrated rules booklet, four player-aid cards and two folders for rules referencing, 880 die-cut counters, 4 Full size mapsheets, six-sided and ten-sided die. **\$49.95**

Many more games are available. Call or write for free brochure.

Mail To: Decision Games • P.O. Box 4049 • Lancaster, CA 93539-4049
OR Call: (805)723-2088

Game	Quantity	Price	Total
Shipping Charges		subtotal	
U.S.A.: (\$4.00-first item, \$1.00-each additional item)		S&H	
CANADA: (\$7.00-first item, \$1.00-each additional item)		CA tax	
OVERSEAS: (\$10.00-first item, \$5.00-each additional item)		(7.25% or app.)	
		TOTAL	

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____
Phone # () _____
Check One:
☐ Check Enclosed (payable to Decision Games) ☐ Money Order
☐ Charge to my: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard
Account # _____ Expiration Date: _____
Signature _____

There's a new wargaming magazine that offers a variation on a familiar theme. A monthly, each 32-page issue of *GameFix* contains a simple game (or two), along with an historical article (or two) to set the mood. If this issue is any indication, the remaining third of the content will be devoted to wargame-oriented features — in this case a *What-I-Did-At-Origins* essay and the first chapter of an *I'm-Mad-As-Hell-And-Not-Going-To-Take-It-Anymore* screed on what's wrong with the hobby today. — JWK

GameFix Magazine #1

Reviewed by Mark H. Walker

Thapsos

Tight, simple, refreshing. THAPSOS, the first of *GameFix*'s premier edition's two minigames by Bill Banks (based on his earlier ANCIENTS games), is everything the magazine promises. If you're looking for a quick game fix look no further.

THAPSOS is a tactical ancients game depicting Caesar's mop-up of Pompey's armies in Africa. The game uses 36 backprinted counters, one 8 1/2" x 11" map, one chart, and four pages of lavishly-illustrated rules. Legions, cavalry, spearmen, and elephants are represented by detailed multicolored counter art. The critical information (movement, combat factor, and special abilities) is boldly printed on the counters. No squinting. The map is attractive and uncomplicated.

The rules are a joy. Took me 15 minutes to read and comprehend. And I'm spacey; sharp folks will do it in less. I played the game four times and couldn't find a single loophole.

The game is entertaining. There are seven phases per turn, which include allocation of leaders, movement, opponent's missile fire, combat, and rally. Movement is straight-forward, and facing counts. The hoplite infantry is slowest, cavalry fastest, elephants and missile troops between. There is no stacking, and movement through a friendly unit causes the unit to become disordered. Nice touch.

Combat comes in two flavors, regular and missile. Regular combat is odds-based. Combat factors are affected by leadership, terrain, flanking attacks, etc. A unit may be eliminated or disordered (flipped to its reduced side). Missile combat is ranged and serves to disorder the target if successful. At the turn's end, disordered units stacked with leaders are flipped to their full-strength side. If a side loses a certain number of strength points it breaks.

There are some excellent "feel" rules: advance after combat is mandatory, ZOCs and missile fire may only be directed into the unit's front, and abrupt facing changes cost

movement points. The system produces a believable, if somewhat simple, depiction of ancient combat.

There is a subtle ebb and flow to the game. If a player pushes hard he will accumulate disordered units which slow the assault. The attack will grind down, requiring his leaders to rally troops. Turns take about ten minutes — the entire scenario can be played while your kids watch a couple of *Barney* episodes.

Nothing new in the system, but condensing the rules to four logical error-free pages is innovation itself. There aren't many strategy options and only a couple of ways to win — making the replay value fairly low — but if you're tired of 60-page rulebooks & 600 counters, THAPSOS could be for you.

Alexandria

Not bad. But not THAPSOS. The concept is there — keep it simple and fun. But where THAPSOS is 95 mph strike, ALEXANDRIA is a curve off the outside corner.

The game is a quasi-tactical representation of one of the major engagements in the battle and siege of Alexandria. ALEXANDRIA includes rules for land and sea combat. Regrettably, the system is not compatible with THAPSOS. A larger game, ALEXANDRIA utilizes 61 counters and takes 2-3 hours to play. Marines, ships, fortifications, rams, siege towers, and a ballista are represented.

The rules, though a quick read, are at times confusing. No show stoppers, but enough instructional fuzziness to make me wonder if I had it right. Errata is available and will be published in an upcoming *GameFix*.

During each turn the phasing player moves ships and conducts ram attacks, moves the marines, conducts land and boarding combat, followed by ballista attacks and attempts to repair ships. A ship's movement allowance is determined by a die roll plus the crew quality, a simple rule which models the wind's variation. The effectiveness of naval combat is determined by the type of attack (oar-rake, rudder attack, broadside ram) a die

roll, and the crew's morale. Marines can capture ships, kill enemy marines afloat, and conduct amphibious operations.

Combat ashore is boring. No facing, no odds, and just one type of unit (rams & siege towers excepted). Roll the die — if you hit, the unit is flipped and a previously flipped unit is destroyed. The units line up in their start positions and beat the heck out of each other till someone breaks the opponent's line — usually around turn seven or eight. Amphibious operations against the Lighthouse causeway or the palace can open the game up. Nevertheless, play is tedious.

ALEXANDRIA falls short of the standard set by its sister game, lacking the spark, rules clarity, and quick play time. Nonetheless, *GameFix* overall is a welcome addition to the hobby.

GameFix Magazine #1

PUBLISHER

Games Publication Group, Inc.
8795 La Riviera Dr. No. 182
Sacramento, CA 95826

DESIGN

Bill Banks

GRAPHICS

Jon Compton & Beth Queman

COMPONENTS

One 8 1/2" x 11" double-sided map,
100 double-sided counters, eight pages
of rules & charts.

PRICE.

\$6.95

COMPLEXITY

Thapsos — System 2.2 • Size 0.8
Look "Gd" • Utility "Gd" • Rules "Ex" •
Game "Gd" • Sim. "Av" • Innovation "Gd"

Alexandria — System 2.2 • Size 0.9
Look "Gd" • Utility "Gd" • Rules "Av" •
Game "Av" • Sim. "Av" • Innovation "Av"



gritty. Grinding. Frustrating. Not for the first time the words came, unbidden, to Alexander as he watched his phalanxes wheel into position. Such words, he mused, aptly described the collection of ambushes, counter-clashes and nearly-won affairs that had characterized this long Italian campaign. Finally, however, Saulus' maniples were pinned against the sea. There would be no last minute escape this time! Today, the fate of all Italia would be decided ...

VI Against Rome

Reviewed by Rick D. Stuart



The same words — gritty, grinding, frustrating — describe the feel of play in VI AGAINST ROME. This strategic level game offers a variety of scenarios pitting would-be conquerors of Rome against the best the Tibermen can offer. With yearly turns, and counters representing individual legions (or their equivalents), players maneuver large masses of troops from one end of the Italian peninsula to the other. Ever wonder what it takes to get your name engraved on a stone column? The game offers a modest insight to the process.

VI AGAINST ROME is an area-based strategic game of ancient war on the Italian mainland. The back-printed map divides the peninsula into major city and rural regions, each with different terrain types. Each regional area is large enough to accommodate opposing stacks of units and information markers without difficulty. On the map shades of green and brown predominate, with red communication lines connecting vital areas. Map A has some 28 city centers, compared with only six on the reverse side, Map B. This accurately reflects the general depopulation of the Italian countryside for use in scenarios covering the later Roman period. Combat charts and tactical combat grids are also displayed on the map. The 400 back-printed counters (70% of which are actual combat units and leaders) are modest tans and greens for the Romans and their opponents, respectively.

Back-printing the counters allows for combat step reduction. The more cohesive Roman legions generally have up to four steps, reflecting battlefield discipline a cut above their opponents. Troop types are divided into heavy infantry (pike/spear/sword), cavalry (including elephants), and light infantry. Troop counters are graded for morale (A-D) and the counter face shows the number of strength steps remaining. Leaders are rated for strategic and tactical command abilities. The former is needed to bring your army to grips with the enemy, and the latter to generate battlefield advantages. Tactical ratings also reflect the number of units a leader can personally command. Here again, Roman advantages are factored in, with each Roman tactical point allowing for the control of two units to the invader's one. Inspirational leaders like Hannibal are given additional bonuses.

In ten pages the game's movement and combat systems are set down in clear detail. Individual scenarios are also outlined, and an important Player's Notes section provides specific examples of VI AGAINST ROME's tactical combat system. These well-organized examples illustrate a variety of mechanics — such as unit facings, morale checks, combat advance and retreat, terrain factors, and even elephant frenzies — all in a straight-forward, uncomplicated manner. With optional rules kept to a minimum, the player can easily digest the system mechanics in one reading.

Graphically, the complaints I have with VI AGAINST ROME are few. First, the initial confusion arising from phalanx and light infantry counters both using spears as symbol representations. This can lead to misinterpreting actual force compositions in the first few games. Second, because common unit types are shared in different scenarios, the resulting "generic" troop counters are uninspired. Players used to seeing the wealth of graphical information displayed in other grand tactical systems covering the same periods will find these counters somewhat lacking in substance. While in no way affecting play, this "graphical minimalism" detracts from the overall flavor of the game. Third, the designer was not able to include Sicily on the map. Such an addition would have been useful, particularly in regard to the Alexandrian and Pyrrhic campaigns.

Look "Av" • Utility "Gd" • Rules "Ex"



In many ways, VI AGAINST ROME is a traditional wedding of things old, things new, things borrowed, and things (not so) blue. The invading player moves units, subject to interception by the non-phasing player, attempting to bring the defender's of Rome to decisive field combat whenever possible. Barring this possibility, the game becomes a determined series of posts and sieges, as city after city is invested and the defender attempts to relieve the pressure by means direct and indirect.

GAME
VI Against Rome

PUBLISHER
3W Inc.
3045 Main Street
Cambria, CA 93428

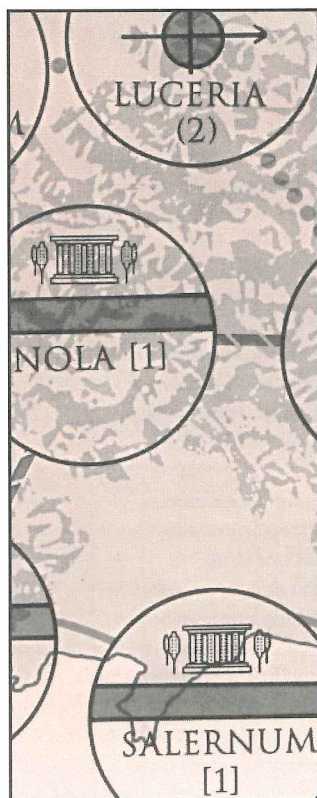
DESIGN
John Sutcliffe

GRAPHICS
Joe Youst, Beth Queman
& Jon Compton

COMPONENTS
One 36" x 22" backprinted
mapsheet, 400 counters, one
20-page rulebook.

PRICE
\$33

COMPLEXITY
Size 2.4 • System 4.4



More than once during the review process players remarked on similarities between the campaigns depicted here and the 1812 advance on Moscow. Unlike Napoleon's campaign, however, which would offer a single set of victory criteria, VI AGAINST ROME gives players six different scenarios, ranging chronologically from 390 B.C. to 553 A.D. In addition to the obligatory Hannibal versus Rome situation, players can attempt to sack Rome as Brennus with his Gauls, or reclaim a lost empire as Belissarius fresh from Constantinople. In addition, two situations ignored in most ancient Roman simulations allow the Republic to try its luck in the Samnite Wars, or face Pyrrhus' elephants in battle for the first time. Perhaps the most arresting scenario is the alternative history confrontation between Rome and Alexander the Great.

In each scenario relatively small counter mixes allow players to concentrate on larger strategic issues at hand. This in turn makes for fairly rapid play. With the exception of the Pyrrhus scenario, play was completed in each of the games in a single evening. Each situation is well balanced and offers attack opportunities for both sides. While purists may quibble about the lack of specific scenario rules — the need for rules governing first-time Pyrrhic advantages using elephants comes to mind — the situations presented are tense give-and-take, with continually shifting strategic and tactical advantages.


The movement and combat mechanics are variations of familiar themes. The concept of movement and march interceptions, for example, is similar to those of Victory's PELOPONNESIAN WAR. The added wrinkle here, however, lies in using the tactical ability of one's leaders to influence the level of combat that may occur, once an intercepting force succeeds in blocking one's path. After the level of combat intensity has been established, players have the option to use either a strategic or tactical format for resolution.

The tactical map combat system is the centerpiece of VI AGAINST ROME. The player with the tactical advantage arranges any terrain counters on the grid display and sets up after his opponent. On the tactical display infantry and cavalry movement rates vary, cavalry units can exit the battle board to re-enter at another point along a critical flank, morale checks are frequent, and fortified positions can be taken by storm.

While principally a combat-oriented game, economics and politics are also primary factors in VI AGAINST ROME. Here again, similarities to existing systems come to mind. Romans and Macedonians, for example, can construct colonies in areas where sufficient friendly forces are present. This is not unlike procedures found in Decision Games' ANCIENT WARS series. Strategy Counters — such as Auspices, Forced March, and Foreign War — contribute added tension and excitement, rather like the same game series' Strategem Markers.

The main thing I find lacking is a naval sub-system. Roman invasion scenarios cannot be fully understood without some incorporation of naval warfare. Insufficient recognition of the problems of seaborne logistics mars, to some extent, an otherwise fine effort.

Game "Gd" • Simulation "Av" • Innovation "Gd"

 Viewed as a strategic game focusing a moderate level of complexity over an area of common ground, VI AGAINST ROME presents each side with an array of strategic options, the exploration of which illustrates just how gritty, grinding, and frustrating campaigning could become in ancient times. Because it lets opponents test each other's mettle, instead of their understanding of complex mechanics, time spent with this game is time well spent.

Annotated Sequence Of Play

Invader Turn (Spring, Summer, & Fall)

Movement: Invading (non-Roman) player moves any or all leaders (with subordinate units under their control). Non-phasing player may attempt march interception. Strategic movement (using reduced terrain costs) can be used if the leader does not move adjacent to an enemy force.

Field Combat: If the defender succeeds in making a blocking interception, the level of combat — ambush, skirmish, or regular field combat — is determined. A die roll is made to determine if one side has a tactical combat advantage. Depending on the actual combat situation encountered, players may use either the Strategic Table or the Tactical Map to resolve combat.

Strategic Table Combat Resolution: Each side selects combat units up to command control limits. Combat strengths are totaled

and adjusted for terrain and unit type. A die roll is made to determine hits on the other side. (Column shifts for minor or major tactical advantages are applied.) Each hit on a given unit requires a morale check (with multiple checks per unit possible). Morale failure results in a step loss.

Tactical Map Combat Resolution: Player with the tactical advantage deploys any terrain. Opponent deploys units on map grid. Units stack one per hex. Normal tactical battles last up to six turns (this may be affected by presence of a superior leader). Each turn players may "activate" for movement units up to their leader's tactical command rating. Combat is resolved between adjacent units. Hits occur when a die roll is \leq the current step strength of the attacker. Hits on opposing units require morale checks as above.

Sieges: After all leaders have moved, a force of 10+ steps, having forfeited movement for

the turn, may lay siege to units in a city in the same area. A die roll with appropriate modifiers is made, with any leader bonuses applied accordingly. All, some, or no garrison losses will result.

Colony Placement: In some scenarios players may construct colonies if sufficient forces are present in a given area.

Roman Turn (Spring, Summer, & Fall)
Repeat sequence of steps as above.

Winter Interphase

Invader resolves any attrition die rolls. Political events are determined using scenario event table. Replacements are raised and added to existing units, or brought on as new units. replacements may affect on-map events in play. Within stated limits, players may draw an additional strategy marker. Roman player repeats the procedure and the year marker is advanced accordingly.



The war in Gaul begs to be gamed, as it's full of nemesis. For a wargame, nemesis means one side sweeps over the map, to all appearances unstoppable; then something turns the tables and the hunter becomes the quarry. In WWII games on North Africa, nemesis is a largely a matter of supplies and reinforcements. Caesar's nemesis in Gaul wasn't supplies, but men: the Gallic leaders.

Caesar in Gallia

Reviewed by John A. Walker



Like many ancient games, CAESAR IN GALLIA has a plethora of unit-types. The counter symbology could hardly be improved upon; I hope we'll be seeing lots more of it in coming issues of *Strategy & Tactics*. My only negative comment on the counters is that the tan of the Roman client tribes is rather close to the yellow used for the Germans. Although very well done, the counters are somewhat incomplete. The In-City markers needed under the siege rules are missing, nor are there any markers for the display that keeps track of who controls which tribe. Neither marker type bears hard information needed to play the game, so the omission is only an irritant.

CAESAR IN GALLIA's weaknesses relate mainly to certain aspects of the rules. It isn't that they are badly written or badly organized, but that there are two versions that share the rulebook with each other and the two earlier *ANCIENT WARS* series games, ROMAN CIVIL WAR and TRAJAN. Although this makes CAESAR IN GALLIA a bit difficult to learn, it has the advantage of lessening the need for errata as such. Even so, it would seem some errata, such as that relating to specific charts or tables, might have to be consulted to play the related designs.

It is worth noting that the basic game rules are not presented in their own portion of the rulebook, separate from the advanced version. Given the overall modularity of the rules, they would be slightly easier to learn if the basic rules sections could be read together in a group. However, the advanced game is clearly the essential CAESAR IN GALLIA, including as it does the stratagem marker system, forced march, interception, battle tactics, and colonies. These are the main course, the basic version only the soup.

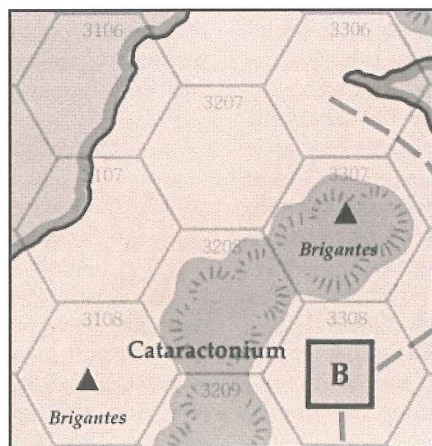
The scenarios are one of the game's strengths. There are four in all, three brief ones and a campaign game that lasts 63 turns. With reasonable time limits on moves, each of the shorter scenarios can be finished in one sitting. Each covers an important phase of the whole war, and each presents the two sides with a diverse set of challenges.

Look "Gd" • Utility "Av" • Rules "Fr"



CAESAR IN GALLIA uses a turn sequence consisting of an historical event die roll followed by two player turns. Multi-purpose "stratagems" lie at the heart of the game system. There are two basic kinds of stratagems, and each enhances the side's capabilities in respect of certain game functions.

In the way they dynamize movement, combat, limited intelligence, and recruitment, the stratagems are a far cry from random event chits. Among other things, they reflect the importance of leadership without resorting to a "great man" model of military history. Yes, the contributions of individuals are reflected in the stratagem ratings, but transpersonal strengths and limitations (*i.e.*, social and cultural factors) also receive their due in the mix of available stratagems. No leader, not even a Caesar or Vercingetorix, can overcome these limitations. The system suggests a great leader affects history not by bending a group to his will, but by helping it realize its potential.



CAESAR IN GALLIA respects history by refusing to paint any of the non-Roman leaders, even the renowned Vercingetorix, as Caesar's military equal. Vercingetorix' stratagem and quality ratings are the same as Caesar's, but the mix contains four Roman military stratagems to the Gauls' two. Also, the Roman legions are more than a match for equal numbers of tribal heavy infantry. In consequence, Gallic leadership has an inspirational cast to it, as the Supreme Chief tends to concentrate more on unit-raising than does Caesar. That's as it should be; Vercingetorix, Ambiorix, and Ariovistus were more Jeanne d'Arcs than DeGaulles.

The structure of the two political tables (which are rolled on by a player before his movement and combat) encourages the Gallic player to concentrate on keeping units in the field. The Tribal Council Table awards an asset to the Gallic player almost 5/6ths of the time. Mostly it's military units, usually several at a time. The SPQR Table is about as generous in terms of the frequency of awards, but the award is usually just one military unit. Also, the Roman player often does not get choice of unit (but the Gallic player usually does).

If one classifies recruitment as military, political effects as such are not very prominent in *ANCIENT WARS*. The salient feature of its system is military inclusiveness. If one counts the significant subsystems within the design, ignoring those classifiable as movement and combat, by a conservative count there are nine: Recruiting, Tribal Council and SPQR, Supply (including Pillaging), Random Events, Special Stratagems, Cities and Civis Units, Tribal Mobilization (including Client Forces), Discipline Checks, and Colonization. In most games, a list this long might militate toward team play. This system is uncanny in letting one player understand and execute all the functions with ease.

Combining depth of simulation with ease of play is a difficult trick. CAESAR IN GALLIA's designer and developer pull it off by

departing from the standard strategy of keeping most elements simple and lavishing detail on a select few; Joe Miranda and Kirk Schlesinger have kept *all* the procedures simple. This point is borne out by the tables, the most frequently consulted of which are 1d6. I believe no use whatever is made of DRMs and column-shifts; if any are present, they're harder to spot than Waldo and his dog Woof.

As a result, the *ANCIENT WARS* system contains very little gradation of effect. Miranda clearly wished to present the players with choices between different things, as opposed to varying intensities of the same thing. In each major area — movement, combat, and sieges — the design is marked by deftness and tact. For example, most simulations use lots of markers to record unit status, yet *ANCIENT WARS* manages with a marker count of zero.

Virtues of simplicity notwithstanding, two aspects of the system raise concern. One is the extreme riskiness of naval movement and the fact the risk isn't proportional to the distance moved. A 20-hex pelagic move carries the same risk as a cross-strait ferrying operation: both moves destroy half the fleets involved 1/6th of the time. In this instance, it seems doubtful that retaining the unmodified readout was worth the realism cost.


Something similar can be said of combat. The rules for discipline checks leave open the possibility of armies being eliminated by forces greatly inferior to them in size and quality. That such occurrences are very rare is little consolation to the player who loses, say, six legions to a missile-armed auxiliary.

City-pillage and surprise attacks are more important to the play of *CAESAR IN GALLIA* than to other *ANCIENT WARS* games. Yet this is by no means a guerrilla warfare game. Arguably the

Gauls would have benefited from adopting guerrilla tactics. But, as the designer's accompanying *Strategy & Tactics* article bears out, such tactics were beyond the Gauls' capabilities and foreign to their mindset. One aspect of guerrilla fighting certainly *not* present during most of the war is avoidance of battle. The article lists, for the seven full years of the war, eight large land battles in Gaul and Germany, plus several sieges. Nor were the Romans always the attacker. The article describes the Gauls as attackers at the Sambre and Aduatuca. Further, from the narrative it's clear that, even though they didn't open them, in the battles of Bibracte and Vesontio the Gauls and Germans, respectively, were primed to hit back full-force.

Though some may disagree, I consider *CAESAR IN GALLIA* well-suited to solitaire play. If one takes "play" to refer strictly to competitive activity, the two-player systems that play best solitaire appear to be those that keep no information secret. When a game has limited knowledge mechanics, like stratagem markers, "knowing too much" is commonly thought to argue against one-player gaming. But in my experience, solitaire "play" is actually an exercise in continuous problem solving. If so, mechanics like the stratagems add an extra layer of possibilities, making the system all the more attractive from the solitaire standpoint.

Game "Gd" • Simulation "Gd" • Innovation "Ex"

 I found *CAESAR IN GALLIA* extremely rich and rewarding. The series isn't called *GREAT WARS OF ANCIENT HISTORY*, simply *ANCIENT WARS*. But the war in Gaul was one of the epic struggles of classical Europe, and the same adjective can be applied to this system, series, and simulation.

Annotated Sequence of Play

The game turn consists of a random event phase followed by two player-turns, Roman first, consisting of six segments:

Strategem: The player selects the stratagems he wants and is entitled to, based on plans and expectations for the upcoming turn. The exact mix of stratagems selected is kept secret.

Political: The player rolls on his side's political table (SPQR for the Romans, Tribal Council for the Gauls). By expending political stratagems, the player can roll more than once.

Recruiting: New units enter from the expenditure of stratagems.

Movement: Units move individually or in stacks. Each variety of movement (road, non-road, river, and sea) requires a roll on the March Table. Some adverse results can be nullified with stratagems.

Combat: Land, sea and siege combat are all performed in this one phase. Combat occurs in-hex, and forces take losses in whole units (there is no step reduction). Available military stratagems, and the stratagem rating of the force's leader, can be as important as raw numbers. If a victory is substantial, stratagems are gained and lost by winner and loser, respectively.

Supply/Pillage: Forces that roll for supply could lose up to half their strength. Small forces and other types of stacks (such as those with supply units) need not roll. After supply is rolled for, hexes can be pillaged, which makes it very difficult to supply units in the hex. At end of segment, expended stratagems become available for selection next turn.

End Phase: Advance the game-turn marker. At the end of each campaign year, remove pillage markers also.

GAME
Caesar in Gallia

PUBLISHER
Decision Games
PO Box 4049
Lancaster, CA 93539-4049

DESIGN
Joseph Miranda & Keith
Schlesinger

GRAPHICS
Mark Simonitch & Rick
Pavek

COMPONENTS
One 22" x 34" map, 215
counters, 27 pages of rules
and charts.

PRICE
\$15.95

COMPLEXITY
Size 2.0 • System 4.9

Render unto Ptolemy...

CAESAR IN GALLIA features maps loosely based on those of Ptolemy — loosely, because the Greek geographer lived almost two centuries after the events portrayed. The approach taken is unusual and deserves a closer look. The main point made by the maps is that Roman knowledge of geography was sketchy at the peripheries. In no *ANCIENT WARS* game is this more apparent than in *CAESAR IN GALLIA*. South of Spain, the coast of Africa curves south-southeast instead of southwest. The Brittany peninsula is shortened and stubby-looking, and the Bay of Biscay gets only a hex or two. Scotland does a dogleg in the direction of Jutland (not depicted on the map), and western Ireland is straight coastline.

It is curious how little the distortion detracts from the historical validity of the game. It appears that, at this scale (about fifteen miles to the hex), the warping of certain coastlines doesn't make much difference militarily. Shrinking the Bay of Biscay to a couple of hexes might have been important were the Gauls more of a naval power to be reckoned with. The only

ANCIENT WARS game in which fleet combat figures prominently is *ROMAN CIVIL WAR*, and there it occurs in the Mediterranean, about which Ptolemy knew a great deal.

I don't so much object to Scotland doubling over as to the way it's characterized. The claim made by the designer is that the maps enable players to see things as the Romans did. One objection that comes readily to mind has to do with the alteration of physical reality to fit psychology; that is, the implication that mind is more important than matter. If we accept this in principle, it's hard to see why we should limit it to maps. For example, it is a custom with many warrior tribes to paint signs on the body; the signs are believed to confer magical protection in battle. Most designers would ignore such beliefs, because they have no factual basis. If they're taken notice of, it's in terms of their real, not their imagined effect; in other words, through doctrinal limitations — the sort of thing that, when related to individuals' mental states or psychology, we less politely call idiocy rules.

There's no denying the *ANCIENT WARS* maps lend much visual interest, and that's

certainly to the good. But if such a thing interferes with the simulation — which it doesn't in *CAESAR IN GALLIA* — or if it's claimed to constitute simulation, my skepticism is aroused.

Another noteworthy aspect of *CAESAR IN GALLIA*'s map is the inclusion of the entire British Isles. This is but another instance of the designer's willingness to surpass expectations and take risks. It would have been sufficient to include just southern England. However, roadless and city-less Ireland and Scotland can easily be part of the play-space if the Briton leader Cassivellaunus becomes Supreme Chief. In that event, he can flee to those remote areas if need arises.

Linked together, the *ANCIENT WARS* maps span about a seventh of the earth's circumference, from Ireland to Iran. When supplemented by the eagerly awaited *GERMANIA*, gamers will have a detailed, fairly accurate and highly playable view of the entire Roman world, spanning several hundred years, using a common game system. Caesar would be impressed.

Render unto Caesar...

CAESAR IN GALLIA gives the Roman general's energy and abilities their due. In pure military terms, the Gallic side is outgunned and outleadered by the Romans. Hence, a thorough understanding of the mechanics is needed if the Gallic player is to avoid a *sur-render* unto Caesar.

Two things one notices straight off are the rather compact field of play — the main play-space, Gaul itself, spans only 12 to 15 hexes — and the fact that a great many of those hexes contain tribal centers. The tribal centers trigger mobilization checks, as a result of which tribes can become friendly to either side without having been attacked.

Overt attempts to win over tribes don't win games. In fact, they're mostly counterproductive. As a rule, one cannot affect neutral tribes without marching adjacent to their tribal centers. The tribal persuasion mechanic tends to throw such tribes into the enemy's camp. The pronounced territoriality and xenophobia of these tribes is side-neutral: it applies whether or not the intruder is Roman or Gallic.

The Gallic player has a way out of this dilemma, for he has the advantage of not having to enter non-friendly territory to affect tribes. Unlike the Roman player, he can converse with neutral tribes and make them join his cause, by means of his Tribal Council table.

The Roman situation is very different. A key Roman victory condition is controlling 10 cities on the map. Although the game can technically be won without doing this, the deep structure of *CAESAR IN GALLIA* militates toward city-control. For one thing, each of the nine Gallic cities is located on or next to a trade route (which for most purposes are the equivalent of a road) or a river. This makes them key points militarily: unless they control these cities, Roman forces may find their lines of communication cut at critical moments. City control also makes it much easier to settle veterans securely in colony sites (one of the other two Roman victory conditions), and helps one's forces survive the rigors of winter.

Because of the way tribal mobilization works, city conquest appears self-defeating with reference to the third Roman victory

condition, five or fewer Gallic-controlled tribes. The truth, however, is the Romans have scant hope of accomplishing the latter condition unless they take and hold most of Gaul. That, in turn, means holding cities.

Crafting a Gallic victory requires patience and an appreciation of certain basics, such as the uprising stratagem. If played by one of the better Gallic leaders (Ariovistus or Vercingetorix), an average of 10.5 Gallic tribes (including pro-Roman tribes) will pass to the Gallic player's control.

The possibility of uprisings is usually enough to divert the Roman player from city conquest to hunting down the Supreme Chief. The uprising should be timed for maximum effect, such as when Roman strength in Gaul dips due to a historical event, or when the Romans have divided themselves into several forces more than a march apart.

The game presents both sides with myriad options. To its lasting credit, successful play of *CAESAR IN GALLIA* requires more than a simple "I came, I saw, I conquered" approach.

Available in December!

Moments in History proudly presents:

Richard Berg's

A FAMOUS VICTORY

The Battles of Blenheim (August 13, 1704) and Ramillies (May 23, 1706)

John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough, was the greatest soldier produced by the British Isles in modern history. MiH's **A Famous Victory** features his first two stunning victories fought during the War of the Spanish Succession simulated at a level of detail never seen before.

The Battles:

— Blenheim, August 13, 1704: In the first of his brilliant maneuver campaigns, the Duke of Marlborough has moved his army swiftly south, to the Danube, to prevent the juncture of two of Louis XIV's large armies. After surprising and smashing the Bavarians at Donauworth he turns west, along the river, where, at Blindheim, the armies of Marshal Tallard and Elector Max sit in a marvelous defensive position. Surely the English won't be so stupid as to attack; that's simply not what one does! But that's exactly what the Duke and his compatriot, Prince Eugene, do. Can the Anglo-Allies survive the superior French artillery? Can they fight their way across the streams and the marshes? Or will French command lethargy, tactical blindness, and an unfortunate horse disease give the Allies the victory?

— Ramillies, May 23, 1706: Louis XIV, smarting from the disaster at Blenheim, sends Marshal Villeroi into the Low Countries to campaign against the pesky Duke. But Marlborough is just as eager to crush the French as ever, and he has no

intention of following the usual procedure of avoiding battle until late in the season ... so that the battle has no lasting effect. Villeroi moves his spanking new army, led by the venerable and elite Maison de Roi cavalry, into place in around the village of Ramilles. The Duke takes the bait and, even though it's still Spring, moves to the attack. Will Villeroi's elite cavalry enable him to hold his village-oriented position. Or will the Duke use, once again, his flank fakes and then center attack to smash the Sun King's forces?

The Game:

For the first time ever, a close look is taken at these musket and bayonet battles. Although the complexity is only moderate, **A Famous Victory** delivers the full period flavor necessary to recreate bloody early 18th century combat successfully.

A Famous Victory uses an innovative interactive sequence of play, portraying the importance of command control and the brutality of mass melee. Designed by Hall of Famer Richard Berg, **A Famous Victory** is Vol. 1 in MiH's Great Leaders, Great Battles series.

Price: **A Famous Victory** is \$39 or \$41 if you would like to receive the Talking Version audio cassette. Please add \$3 per game for shipping; International 10% Surface, 25% Air. California residents add 7.25% sales tax.

*"They say it was a shocking sight
After the field was won;
For many thousand bodies were
Lay rotting in the sun;
But things like that, you know, must be
After a famous victory."*

(Robert Southey, "The Battle of Blenheim", 1798, first verse)

Game Features

- two full color 22" x 24" maps (backprinted on a single sheet)
- 720 backprinted full color counters
- a 40 page rulesbook with historical commentary
- 4 Player Aid Cards
- 1 ten- and 1 six- sided die.

Complexity: Medium

Solitaire Suitability: High

Unit Scale: Battalion/Regiment

Time Scale: Single Turn: 30 minutes

Map Scale: 175 yards per hex (Blenheim);
150 yards per hex (Ramillies)

Scenarios: Two

Playing Time: 4 to 7 hours

Players: One to Four

Special Offers

for direct mail customers:

1. Get **A Famous Victory** and either **Ring of Fire** or **Triumphant Fox** for \$62 (a savings of \$7!).
2. Get all three games for \$77 (a savings of \$22!).

Ordering Instructions

To order Moments in History's products, check with your local game store, or order direct from Admiralty House Publications at:

Admiralty House Publications

Attn: Moments in History

P O Box 6253

Los Osos, CA 93412

Please be sure to make your check out to Moments in History.

Phone order (VISA or Mastercard at (805) 534-9723 or Fax (805) 534-9127.



Please add \$3 per game for shipping; International 10% Surface, 25% Air. California residents add 7.25% sales tax.

Also available:

Triumphant Fox: Rommel's Finest Hour, the Gazala Battles, May/June 1942, an exciting operational level simulation which allows the players to explore one of the most daring offensives undertaken by the Desert Fox, one map, 240 counters, boxed, high complexity and lots of detail! \$30/\$32 includes tape.

"Triumphant Fox stands as an impressive initial release from Moments in History", Gamers Alliance Report, Summer 1994.

"Triumphant Fox is a well-crafted game with an original system full of creative flourishes, all backed by solid research and developmental work". — "Excellent Solitaire" — "A remarkable first effort for MiH, certainly one of this year's best...", David Fox in Berg's Review of Games#14.

Ring of Fire: The Fourth Battle for Kharkov, August 1943. Ring of Fire is an operational study of the southern part of the Red Army's counteroffensive following Operation Zitadelle. It is of low-to-moderate complexity, boxed, and features one full color map and 360 full color counters. The fourth and final Battle for Kharkov has never before been simulated in such detail. Now you can do it with Ring of Fire! Price \$30/\$32.00 includes tape.

© 1994, Ulrich Blennemann and Moments in History. All Rights Reserved. Moments in history — "Where the Golden Age of Gaming Has Just Begun."™

Who are the three most studied figures in all of military history? Three names that would place high on any such list are Robert E. Lee, Napoleon, and Caesar. Although most would allow Lee deserves such attention, there's also no denying that American wargamers take special interest in him because he was a native son. Not so for Napoleon and Caesar. Asking which of the latter two men was the greater general is like asking who was the wisest person or the most beautiful woman. The question is subjective at the core. The curious thing is that, while there have been several detailed and engrossing simulations on the Emperor's battles, there have been no similar ones on those of the Emperor. Not, that is, until the release of JULIUS CAESAR.

The Great Battles of Julius Caesar

Reviewed by John A. Walker

The first thing we tend to notice about any game is the artwork by which it's presented. In my experience the kitsch quotient of military art is sometimes uncomfortably high. Whether the sentiments in question are romantic or macho-patriotic hardly matters: kitsch is kitsch. One of the things that makes Rodger MacGowan's artwork singularly appealing is that, for all its attractiveness, it's never overdrawn.

The box cover for JULIUS CAESAR makes clever use of receding panes cloaked in Lucanesque black — an apt color choice for a game on civil war. Caesar and a legion standard are framed in the central inset, and balance the pair of Roman soldiers in the foreground. The soldier on the right, holding the baton, seems to be a centurion, a man of rank. The one on the left seems to belong to the ranks, and the contrast subtly suggests optimate-popularis class hostility.

A highlight of this game is a very detailed order of battle, which the counter mix — a diecut rainbow — reflects using all

eight primary colors in at least two shades, all well discriminated, as well as gray. For the Caesarian legions the counter information is set within framing borders of a primary color, making it easy, even in the welter of battle, to tell each legion's cohorts from those of its neighbor.

The counters are a good index of the complexity of the system. Besides the unit's proper name and a class rating for cohort units, units have four or five distinct ratings or identifiers. For cohorts, most of these are the same legion-wide, although the troop quality rating can differ slightly from cohort to cohort. The three cohort classes are veterans, recruits, and conscripts. All cohorts of a given legion are of the same class, except that the first cohort is sometimes of a better class than the rest.

Skillful employment of color contrasts lets each counter accommodate a detailed graphic image of a fighting man. The images are so detailed they could have been used for the box front — one is, in fact. Attractive as these are, it would be a

Annotated Sequence of Play

Note: See "Cast of Characters & Terms" on page 20 before reading on!

Auxiliares Phase

An OC can use this phase to give orders to any and all SK units. There is no trumping or momentum in this phase, and for purposes of momentum during his regular orders phase the OC will be considered to have already activated once.

When a SK unit has carried out its order, it's flipped to its moved side. (As a result, it can't be part of a subsequent line command, just individual orders.)

Elite Orders Phase

Essentially, this phase enables an elite leader to gain a headstart on activations, Caesar is the only elite leader, and can use this phase on a limited basis. There's no momentum in this phase.

A subordinate leader may be used to trace command range for Caesar, regardless of his proximity to the Emperor. If this phase is used, Caesar has undergone one orders

phase for momentum purposes when performing regular activations.

Regular Orders Phase

Leaders normally activate in order of initiative rating, with the lowest-rated activating first (trumping can change this order). The initiative rating also equals the number of orders to individual units the active leader may issue. Some leaders are also given the option to issue more efficient line commands (to groups of units) instead. Units activated by leaders may move, fire missiles, rally, change stacking, etc.

After movement is completed, shock combat is resolved. "Heavy" units that just moved into contact must attack; other units within the activated leader's command range have the option to attack. The CRT used is unusual in that superiority is determined by matching unit types and facing relationships instead of traditional combat strengths. Modifiers for unit size and leadership combine with a die roll to produce a "cohesion loss" result on one or both sides. Hits on a unit's cohesion, if unrepaired, eventually cause it to rout.

After issuing orders, the player has the option to either try for momentum (which has some risks), or allow the next leader in the initiative sequence to activate. This process is repeated until all leaders have activated.

Camp Movement Phase

Units in camps that are out of command may now move.

Rout and Reload Phase

Various maintenance and recovery tasks are performed, including the 3-R's of rally, reload, and rout movement.

With the turn now over, players check to see if an army's losses force it from the field, effectively ending the contest. Note that battles are not otherwise restricted in length to a fixed number of turns.

ground of complaint if one had to glean information from them. Because such small images can rarely be read with the certainty necessary for satisfying play, it's a relief to report that JULIUS CAESAR's counter images are aesthetic in purpose; each unit is typed clearly and unmistakably via a two-letter code.

Alas, the rules are not quite as immaculate. My chief chafe concerns a lack of clarity in the wall, tower, and rampart rules. The rules also overuse emphasis, resulting in a certain straining for effect. A flowchart or table explaining the sequence of play would have made the game more readily accessible; however, the rulebook does contain many helpful examples of play.

Look "Ex" • Utility "Fr" • Rules "Gd"

An advisory is in order for the casual player: JULIUS CAESAR, though it plays rather smoothly, has a complex logic at its core. It will probably strike you as unlike any system you've ever played before, and the game knowledge you already have won't stand you in particularly good stead.

To win consistently in the *GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY* system requires generalship, not just gamesmanship. This is partially a result of the complicated sequence of play. Some may initially feel that the turn structure introduces an undesirable luck factor. Its real lesson, however, is not the importance of luck but the inescapability of risk. The army commander's road, the system seems to say, is bumpy. The player cannot ride smoothly through these battles simply by avoiding risky trump attempts. In each battle there are moments when the gamble associated with trumping is worth it — if not to you, then to your oppo-

nent. The only way to truly minimize risk is to remain prepared, come what may. See "Focus: The Battle of Thapsus" for a more extended discussion of this important game mechanic.

The combat system is just as challenging as the play sequence, but rather more accessible. It is a shock-based system in which the intensity of combat is player-determined. In other words, shock is sometimes discretionary, sometimes not. The effects of shock are quantified in terms of cohesion hits. The rate at which hits accrue isn't hectic, but is fast enough to lend decisiveness to the changing tempos of trumping and momentum.

Shock combat is commonly viewed as an elephantine butting of heads. JULIUS CAESAR's system does everything possible to make it interesting and varied. For openers are the detailed rules for attacker's orientation to defender, terrain, leadership, and relative armament. The latter is essentially tactical match-ups of various types of units. Suffice it to say there are many such match-ups, all vivid and convincing. The result is a tactical model that rivals the best gunpowder-era systems in respect of drama, variety, and the skill needed to win.

The elements mentioned are just the basics. Among JULIUS CAESAR's other tactical fillips are special formations — *testudo* and *antesignani* — and pre-arranged withdrawal. The latter rule is of gemlike simplicity. The player can, by placing a withdrawal counter under a legion's tribune, give that legion the right to withdraw when advanced upon. Deceiving the opponent by placing a blank counter is expressly permitted.

In JULIUS CAESAR, *GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY* continues to accord considerable importance to cavalry. The barbarian cavalry, a new unit type, are rated as attack-superior to every type of cavalry but lancers, which makes them a force to reckon with. They can even pose a credible threat to non-veteran infantry whose flanks and rear are well protected (previously only lancers were that puissant).

The developments in cavalry notwithstanding, heavy infantry is still the arm of decision. It is much nimbler than in SPQR, for cohortal legions need not be in a straight line to receive legion commands. This tends to make the cohort, not the line of which it is a part, the unit of measure tactically.

Game "Gd" • Simulation "Ex" • Innovation "Ex"

Very few game systems take as serious and comprehensive a look at their subject matter as *THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY* — and of those that do, few generate as much enjoyment. To sum up, this JULIUS CAESAR is as ambitious and successful as the great popularis himself. It will appeal to anyone who wants a stylish, fresh, playable, and accurate game on the fateful encounters of the Roman Civil War.

GAME
Julius Caesar

PUBLISHER
GMT Games
PO Box 1308
Hanford, CA 93232

DESIGN
Mark Herman & Richard
Berg

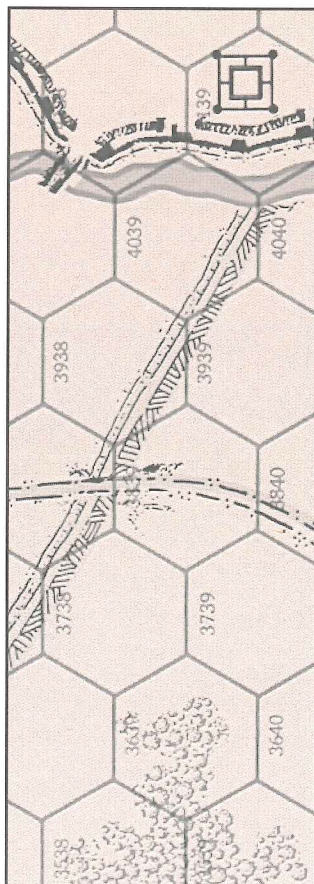
GRAPHICS
Rodger B. MacGowan

COMPONENTS
Two back-printed full-sized
maps and one back-printed
half-sized map, 960 counters,
32 page rulebook, 24-page
scenario book, and two sheets
of charts, etc.

PRICE
\$45

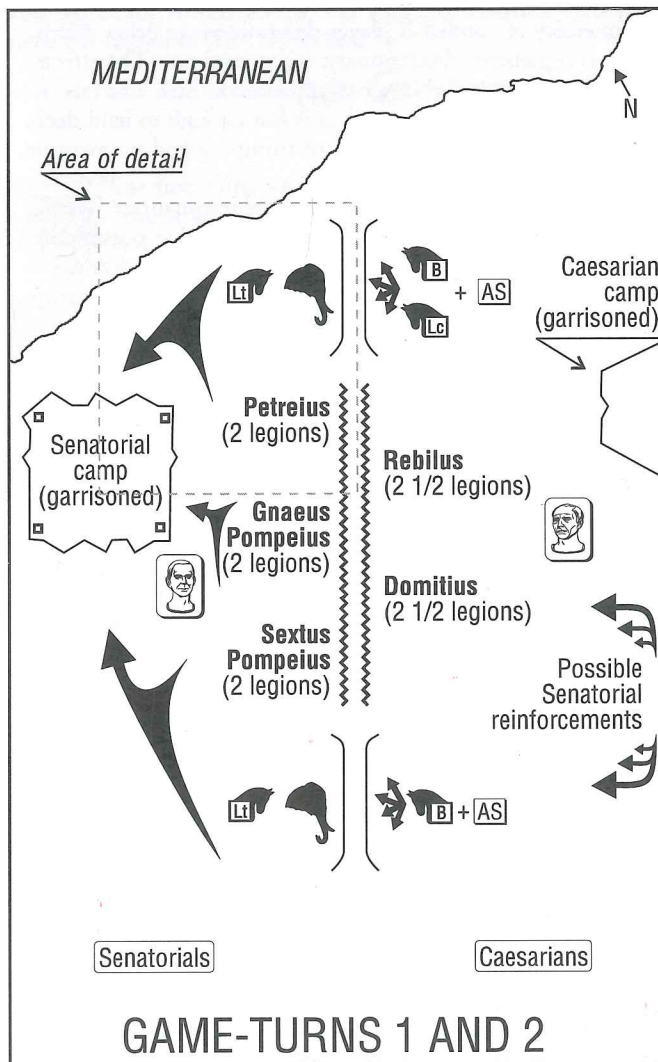
COMPLEXITY

System: 7.5 • Size: 2.0



FOCUS

Great Battles of Julius Caesar The Battle of Thapsus



(Focus artwork by Donna Walker.)

This is the match-up of forces at Thapsus in JULIUS CAESAR. The positions are shown in very general terms, focusing on infantry commanders (each side also has a cavalry praefect on either flank). The optional Senatorial reinforcement rule is in use. Essentially, this means that at any time after the first turn, thousands of light cavalry and infantry could arrive and head straight for Caesar's rear.

The battle's initial phase is a test of survival for the Senatorials. They've six legions to the Caesarians' five, but their legions are all conscripts, while Caesar's are picked veterans; and the Caesarian auxiliaries are similarly powerful. In brief, Caesar's army, although not large, is one of the best he ever commanded. In defending against it, Scipio's elephant corps will be of little avail, since the beasts are untrained and just as apt to run into their own lines as into those of the Caesarians.

Two things may help blunt the Caesarian attack long enough for the Numidians to arrive. Many Caesarian cohorts are fatigued (or in game terms, "depleted"). Also, the Senatorials have a well-constructed camp.

There's no telling when the Numidians will show up, so Scipio and his fellow commanders will execute a fighting retreat toward their camp. If necessary they'll retreat into the camp, rallying their troops and beating off the Caesarians.

All the optimate leaders know it will be a near-run thing at best. However, if things go as planned, Thapsus will be Caesar's Waterloo.

KEY

Scipio	Caesar
Light cavalry	Barbarian cavalry
Elephants	Lancers
	Antesignani
	Archers and Slingers

Great Battles of Julius Caesar

Cast of Characters & Terms

What is Momentum?

An additional regular activation. A leader can perform up to three such activations per turn. To achieve momentum, the activated leader must both:

- Be outside an EZOC, not previously trumped, and not activated out of sequence; and
- Make a favorable die roll against his initiative rating. (In rare instances, the roll can trigger re-activation of leaders or end the turn.)

What is Trumping?

A risky, die roll-based attempt to "cut into the line" of normal activation order. If it succeeds, the skipped-over leaders activate normally, but are ineligible for momentum. Space limits prevent an attempt to address every nicety associated with trumping. Suffice it that a trumper can be trumped in turn (see the Focus above).

Categories of Units

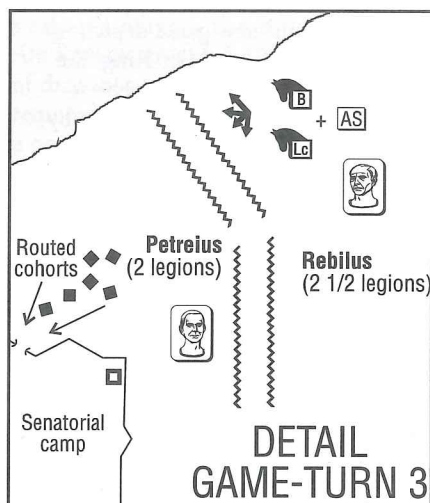
Cohort = legion combat unit, one of 10
Auxiliares = any non-cohort unit
SK = a missile unit

Types of Leaders

OC = overall commander (of entire army)
SC = section commander (several legions)
Tribune = (commands a single legion)
Praefect = (commands cavalry units only)

Types of Commands

Individual order = affects one unit only
Legion command = affects 1 legion
or 1 group of auxiliaries
Section command = affects 2+ legions



This is the situation on Game Turn 3 at the extreme northeastern end of the line. So far the Caesarians are winning the battle handily. They suffered little from the elephants, some of whom rampaged into the Senate's own lines. Their superior cavalry made short work of the Senatorial cavalry, which was sacrificed to cover the withdrawal of the optimate left wing. Some routed cohorts from Petreius' two legions are streaming back toward the Senatorial camp. The attacks on the Senatorial center and right also went well, and the Caesarians are within measurable distance of pushing the Senatorial army over its rout threshold.

The balance of this discussion focuses on JULIUS CAESAR's trump and momentum

mechanics. A die roll gives the Caesarian player the first chance to perform regular activations. He decides to activate one of Rebilus' two legion tribunes. The routed Senatorial cohorts will be delayed passing through the camp gate. The Caesarians want to destroy them outside the camp, but must first get at them.

The Caesarian legion tribune performs his regular activation, then rolls successfully for momentum. The Senatorial player is concerned the tribune may open a hole in his line that he can't fill. If that happens, his routed cohorts will be easy pickings for Caesar's cavalry.

The Senatorial player decides not to let events take their course, but instead try trumping. The attempt will be made by Petreius, commander of the Senatorial left. The player could have used one of his Petreius' tribunes for the trump, but tribunes have a 70% chance of failing; because Petreius' initiative is "4", he has a 50% chance of succeeding. The Senatorial player decides not to use Scipio, his army commander, even though his initiative would give a 60% chance of success. The difference is not that great, and if Scipio were used Petreius (and all other bypassed commanders) would be ineligible for momentum. The die roll is '3'; Petreius activates and Rebilus' tribune is finished for the turn.

This hits the ball back into the Caesarian player's court. One good trump deserves another — or does it? If the just-activated Petreius gets a couple of momentums (50%

chance each), he might shore up his legions' line, and maybe even begin rallying the routed cohorts. The Caesarian player therefore considers trumping Petreius. Since this is a trump-of-trump, he can make the attempt immediately, rather than waiting until Petreius rolls for momentum. The Caesarian player can't use his right wing cavalry praefect to trump Petreius, because the praefect's initiative rating is too low. He needs a more enterprising leader, someone with an initiative rating of at least "4". Since Domitius has already activated (and is on the other wing), that leaves only Rebilus, the commander of the Caesarian right (50% chance), and Caesar himself (70% chance). In addition to a better probability for the trump itself, Caesar is also more likely to achieve momentum, albeit he can only activate twice (he used his elite orders phase, remember). If on the other hand Caesar fails, he won't activate at all this turn.

The Caesarian player decides Caesar will attempt to trump Petreius. The roll is an '8'. The attempt fails. Petreius gets his normal complement of activations and Caesar is finished for the turn.

Each side has gambled, and only one of them has won. But battle (and even the game turn) are far from over. There's still a chance that Rebilus and the cavalry praefect can push the Senatorials over their limit.

The battle goes on.

The Great Battles

JULIUS CAESAR differs from its series brethren in several respects, most obviously in the fact the Balkan campaign, fought among improved positions, and a somewhat obscure North African meeting engagement get equal attention with large, set-piece battles. The big battles are those of Thapsus, Pharsalus, and Munda.

Dyrrhachium and Lesnikia share a single map and show in detail exactly how Pompey broke Caesar's lines of circumvallation. The maze-like terrain that's so important in Dyrrhachium gives that battle ample solitaire potential. It also possesses many elements that make for a good contest, for it is a daylight surprise attack, preceded by maneuver and followed by an all-out counterattack. Lesnikia was a surprise night attack, and the attendant confusion is faithfully simulated in rules for detection, alarm, night-fighting and Caesarian rout. Linking

these closely related battles through orders of battle and victory conditions could have yielded even more play value, and should perhaps have been attempted in the design.

Ruspina, the cavalry-infantry engagement, has little replay value. Victory for the Caesarian army consists of retracing its steps and exiting the map. If the player tries to achieve something more significant, he runs the risk of Carrhae-like disaster. It makes sense to try, however, since to explore alternatives is the whole point behind this battle's inclusion.

At both Pharsalus and Munda the Senatorial army consists of a relative handful of high quality Roman legions and, side by side with them, provincial legions of low quality. At Thapsus, the Senatorial heavy infantry consists of such inferior troops one has to assume a certain proportion were slaves. Caesar's legions, in contrast, are almost exclusively Roman-Italian, and are almost all

recruits or veterans. In these battles one is struck by how fast conscript cohorts rout when attacked by veterans. The feelings this engenders are curiously mixed, as one tends to feel a certain pity for the hapless conscripts. They're often hopelessly outclassed, so when they run you can hardly blame them.

Play imbalance is present to some degree in Thapsus, but is considerably mitigated by optional rules. My sense is that both Pharsalus and Munda are balanced, but that in each case the Senatorial player must bring more tactical finesse to the table in order to win.

In playing any of the set-piece battles it's common for both players, at different places in the line, to face the threat of enemy breakthroughs. The need to think in offensive and defensive terms simultaneously is just part of what makes these games so exhilarating.

Oblique. Although the word has several meanings, most can be used to describe Clash of Arms' new game depicting one of Frederick the Great's lesser-known battles. For example, it describes the battle plan of the Soldier-King: the classic attempt to turn the Austrian line with a rapid Prussian march around the right. The indirect approach — which history records as having been less than successful in the battle of Kōlin — seems also to have been taken by the game's designer, and his game of KÖLIN is not wholly successful as a result.

Kōlin

Reviewed by John W. Kiser

Fought as it was 58 years to the day before Waterloo, it seems quite appropriate that KÖLIN is very similar in both look and mechanics to Clash of Arms' famed series of Napoleonic battle games.

LA BATAILLE veterans will agree that Rick Barber's work has usually been a visual delight, and here he has arguably surpassed his own high standard. The three full-sized maps (scaled at 100 yards per hex) are presented in a period style: gothic type is used to name villages and other geographical landmarks, walled churches are rendered in great detail, and the trees and sunken roads look like those drawn on actual battle maps. There is only one blemish: the highly-stylized font may be pretty, but at the same time it is almost illegible.

Although the maps are colorful, the overall effect is rather muted — mostly, earth tones are used — a good thing, since the counters themselves come at you with a veritable cacophony of color. Color is used to encapsulate the actual uniform worn by men of each battalion. Words cannot do justice to these artful renderings. Values for size and movement are clearly presented on the counter faces; the flip sides give the really important numbers — those for rating effectiveness, close combat, etc. Clumsy though it may be to have to flip the units

to reveal these values, a manageable level of limited intelligence is thereby layered onto the design.

Dressed as if for parade ground drills, the bright colors worn by these two armies suggests that these are but soldiers of fashion, unprepared for hard fighting — or so I thought when I began running short of morale markers even when playing the introductory mini-game. But, after many hours contending with a rule book that does a very poor job of explaining some of the basics — such as fields of fire and changing formation — I happily report this game can indeed be played. You'll have to make a fistful of your own *shaken* and *disorder* markers, though.

Look "Ex" • Utility "Pr" • Rules "Fr"

My knowledge of battlefield tactics during the Age of Reason was woefully inadequate when I began to look at KÖLIN. As such, the pages of rules and diagrams detailing formation changes between line, skirmish, attack column, etc., were perhaps harder to decipher than might otherwise have been the case. Regardless, in these pages harbor enough detail to send the hearts of complexity

Annotated Sequence of Play

Army Morale Check

Checks are made to see if excessive casualties have degraded unit morale.

Initiative Determination

Each player rolls a die. High modified roller activates one (and possibly more than one) leader. These rolls are also used to slowly move the turn to its end.

Command Activation

After designating which leader will be activated, the following steps are performed:

Command Control: The leader must roll for "initiative" to activate provided he's not near the army commander. If activated, all of the leader's units within command range now take their turn.

Disorder Recovery: Units marching through rugged terrain or failing combat effectiveness checks become disordered. Disorder makes a unit slower, less effective, and prone to breaking morale. During this

step, a player rolls to return activated units to good order.

Fire Combat: Units fire by multiplying their current strength (but never more than four points from a hex) by a factor that varies by range and unit type. A percentile dice roll generates step losses and/or disorder checks and/or morale checks. Morale checks are made against the unit's effectiveness rating, and it is this number that accounts for the lion's share of quality differences. Failure leaves a unit shaken and then routed.

Movement: Units move most easily straight ahead, with each change of facing costing extra movement points. Column allows for rapid moves, but also limits return fire and presents a juicier target. Opportunity fire is given when units move, alter facing, or change formation within enemy fire zones; non-phasing cavalry can conduct charges when these conditions apply.

Close Combat: After designating attacks, the player must make morale checks to carry them out. Charging cavalry moves next, a

step which may in turn trigger enemy counter-charges. Having readied all sabers, lances, and bayonets, it is now the defender's turn to check morale (and/or possibly retreat before combat). Troops that stand now discharge muskets, and then resolve matters once and for all on the Close Combat CRT. Results include disorder, rout, and loss of strength. Unless one side routs, odds are recalculated and dice rerolled. The carnage continues until one side runs away. Cavalry pursues a routed enemy, and if lucky will capture the remnants (and if unlucky will advance beyond friendly support troops).

Activation Completion: Return to Initiative Determination.

Rally

When the activation cycles have been completed, unit morale can be improved. Both players roll first to see if shaken units recover; then to see if routed units improve to shaken. Routed units that fail run further away from the fight.

freaks pounding with a fury unheard since the halcyon days of AIR SUPERIORITY and AIR WAR. Changing a 16-point battalion of dragoons (in a two-hex line) into road column (of the required 4 hexes of length) requires several mental calculations, a notional switch first to march column, and the use of a non-intuitive diagram in which the cost to change to a column moving "left" is different from the cost of moving "right." The transition from caterpillar to butterfly seems pretty tame in comparison.

The initial shock sent me reeling back to my library (always a good thing in my book). I read what I could find about the period in Delbrück's study of warfare, came up with my own "designer's notes" to explain unusual mechanics, and then worked through the rules one more time. Having now gained a bit more fluency in the game's handling of formations and facing, I started to find the tactical evolutions as interesting as the resulting firefights and close combats themselves. Now I believe that KÖLN could not have conveyed as true an understanding of the period's tactics without these rules.

Much as in the aforementioned air games, position was revealed to be everything. Frederick's left is heavily weighted for the attack, and it is here that his pre-game oblique approach is played out. If the attack can quickly defeat the Austrian cavalry and drive the skirmishers from the walled church, fieldworks, and village of Krechor, the Prussian army will find itself behind and perpendicular to the Austrian flank. Should the advance be slowed, Austrian reserves will have time to construct a strong new line on the hill behind the village.

GAME
Köln

PUBLISHER
Clash of Arms
The Byrne Building #205
Lincoln & Morgan Sts.
Phoenixville, PA 19460

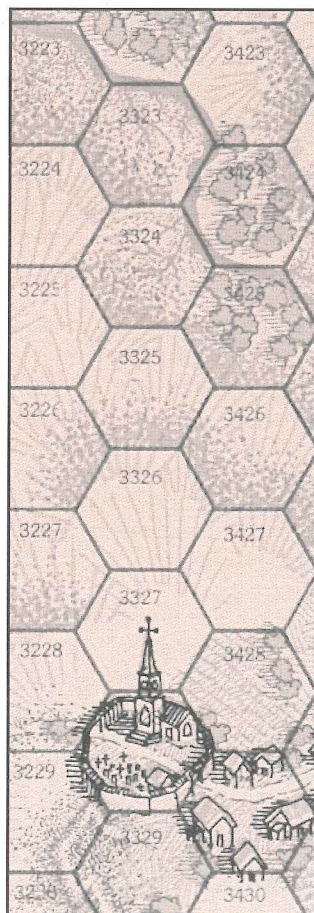
DESIGN
Paul Dangel & Phil
Boinske

GRAPHICS
Paul Dangel, Rick Barber,
& Wayne Robinson

COMPONENTS
Three 22" x 34" maps, 420
counters, 24 pages of series
rules, one turn record card,
and 28 pages of special
rules, scenarios, historical
notes, and charts.

PRICE
\$40

COMPLEXITY
Size 5.5 • System 7.2



If the Prussians fail to turn the flank rapidly — a likely outcome — the remaining choice is the bad one of trying a frontal assault on prepared defenders. Although KÖLN is still interesting after this point, expect neither side to achieve anything decisive. Austrian numbers are large enough to offset their inferior effectiveness ratings. As Voltaire was to put it a few years later, God is on the side of the heaviest battalions.

Other Prussian battleplans are possible. An unusual and interactive sequence of play does its best to encourage activity across the entire battlefield (not only the echeloned attack I have described). The game's initiative/turn end system can be Frederick's — and less often Field-Marshal v. Daun of Austria's — random trump card. The Prussian King will win the majority of initiative rolls, which means that he will get to move a higher percentage of troops before each 20-minute turn ends. Therefore, Frederick is wise to confront Daun with simultaneous threats and force the Austrian to make hard choices in response. Even if the battle degenerates into a series of frontal assaults, potential for drama remains in the turn structure.

Tactically, once the formation rules have been worked out and the battle is joined, KÖLN is dominated by muskets and morale. Small-arms have a two-hex range, and may "opportunity fire" on any unit which leaves a hex or changes facing/formation in this zone. Initially, the concern is engaging the enemy line with minimal disorder from this fire. Often easier said than done, the mechanic creates a healthy sense of danger while rushing forward. More importantly, these fire zones make disengaging a tactical nightmare, so after pinning the enemy line you can move rear echelons obliquely around an unanchored flank — recreating in microcosm Frederick's favorite grand tactic. Unlike most battle games, in which a reserve is rarely needed, here the precept of Napoleon takes on meaning: Providence is always on the side of the last reserve.

While not nearly as lethal as the rifled muskets that would come to dominate 19th Century warfare, fire is deadly enough to give rise to a familiar tradeoff. By spreading the ranks thin a line can maximize firepower and minimize its own vulnerability to projectiles. For example, 16 strength points can stack in line formation in most terrain, but only four of these may actually shoot. Furthermore, when together they present a mighty fat target, fire against them increasing in lethality by four column shifts. Spread your line too thin, though, and it falls prey to the first densely-packed battalion that roars up for close combat. The subtle interactions are intriguing.

Game "Fr" • Simulation "Ex" • Innovation "Av"

This is a monster game crammed into just 24 pages of series rules (and a few more pages of "special rules"). Devoid of any designer's notes — and with important concepts obliquely depicted only on the dozen pages of charts and diagrams — KÖLN is in undoubted need of a rules rewrite and elaboration. In its present form the work it requires takes something away from the fun: too many ambiguities, too many charts, too hard to march from Point A to B. Despite these serious reservations, I can think of few games which more richly reward time spent. The learning curve may be steep, but for those with the fortitude to scale the peak awaits a veritable j-curve of intellectual delights.



Being a veteran *LA BATAILLE* player and a Napoleonic war buff, I have learned to define grand tactics, as it is reflected in wargaming, as those games that deal with a single battle at the *regimental* or *battalion* level. Such venerable classics as *LA BATAILLE DE MOSCOWA*, *TERRIBLE SWIFT SWORD*, or the detailed miniature rules, *EMPIRE*. Therefore, as we shall soon find, it was with skepticism that I removed the shrink wrap from a colorful game box depicting Napoleon, Murat, Davout, and Ney in scowling poses, looking suspiciously like accountants or bureaucrats, which, in a sense, they were.

Borodino

Reviewed by Dave Mignerey



BORODINO is the initial offering of a fledgling company, Games U.S.A. It is also, evidently, the first game in a series of grand tactical simulations of Napoleonic warfare set at the *divisional* scale.

EAGLES OF THE EMPIRE will recreate battles fought during the second half of the Age of Napoleon, 1805 to 1815.

The mapsheet, which features area movement, beautifully represents the dominant terrain features that influenced Kutusov to select it as the place to give battle to the insolent French invaders. This map will gradually grow on you. It is packed with colorful depictions of such natural terrain features as sloping rises, hills, marshes, streams, brooks and dried beds, ravines, woods, and cultivated fields. The man-made obstacles and locations are towns, villages, hamlets, stone and wooden bridges, defensive positions and redoubts, and communication roads. Well positioned and informative charts adorn both the French and Russian sides of the mapsheet. A divisional order of battle, which aids in play, completes a mapsheet which, along with the player aid chart and exclusive rule and scenario book, could almost serve as a brief historical analysis of the determining variables of the battle. The mapsheet and charts are the primary strengths of this game.

Look "Gd" • Utility "Gd" • Rules "Gd"

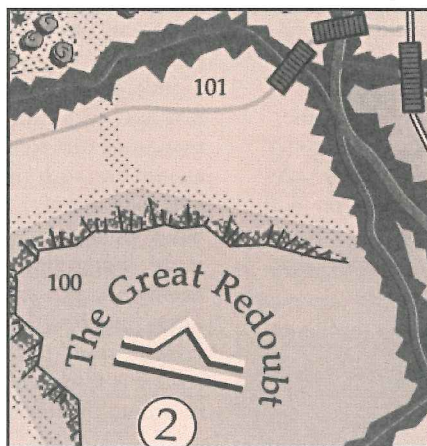


Four well-selected scenarios, with concisely-written and well-researched commentary, colorfully cover the critical events of the battle.

- Designed as an introduction to the system, Scenario 1 treats the five-hour struggle for the pentagon-shaped Schevardino Redoubt. Sitting astride French communications, this artillery-studded fortification had to be taken out before the French could develop their attack on the primary Russian positions.
- Scenario 2 simulates the historical battle of penetration that became one of the bloodiest days in history — perhaps only the initial day of Somme and Cannae were worse.
- Doubtless, the most entertaining of the four presentations is Scenario 3: Davout's Borodino. Here, the Emperor comes to his senses and unleashes two corps on the Russian left. My opponent tried in vain to avoid another Friedland.
- Integrating the action of all these scenarios is the fourth, which plays out the maneuver and test of arms of 5 to 7

September. Unfortunately, the full battle game is the most tedious of the four and takes many long hours to complete.

Many traditional wargamers with a "hexagon complex" find area movement not to their liking. I must admit that an attempt to marry area movement to a grand tactical system did seem like a reach. However, I have enjoyed games in the *CIVIL WAR SERIES* by Clash of Arms, as well as Avalon Hill's *BREAKOUT: NORMANDY*. The use of area movement in no way reduced the historical validity of those games nor detracted from their playability. However, they were not attempting to simulate grand tactics.



BORODINO's counters represent multi-step infantry divisions, four types of cavalry (heavy, light, lancers, and cossacks), artillery, and leaders. This is a major departure from the wargaming norm for this scale. Yes, every grand tactical system I have been exposed to presents the same specialized unit types. However, they are presented as regiments or battalions — not as full divisions.

Each infantry unit has its parent corps printed on the counter, along with its combat strength and morale. Successive steps are represented by a distinct counter

on which the area above the command bar depicts fewer lines and columns. As attrition takes its toll, each replacement counter reflects lower combat strength and morale. Even the Guard suffers this omnipresent phenomenon of war.

Cavalry units have no steps, and possess values for their parent corps, strength, lancer value, and morale. Artillery units have a corps indicator, unit number, and strength value. Leader counters depict the historical command, the commander's name, a command radius, quantified tactical leadership, and command initiative. There are five types of leaders: Army leaders (*Napoleon I*), HQ commanders (*Berthier*), corps leaders (*Davout*), replacement officers, and special leaders. Leaders are able to utilize their tactical leadership rating in combat.

B.H. Liddell Hart once stated that "in war the chief incalculable is the human will," and much of that uncertainty is recreated here. The leadership rules have a clever optional die roll prior to each scenario that can raise or lower leadership values. Napoleon's values can reflect the often dramatic effect his deteriorating health had on his ability to orchestrate and control events. Leaders can become casualties as the result of each form of combat represented.

The system utilizes an activation system à la GMT's *JULIUS*

CAESAR and Clash of Arms' KÖLN. This methodology simulates the way battles are actually run. A commander releases units in one section of line, perhaps frontally, to distract his opponent. Meanwhile, he prepares a crushing blow to fall on the enemy flank. Further, it spices up a game turn, as first one player and then the other watches an inviting gap in the opposing line close up because initiative could not be won. Unfortunately, the scale and the density of units on the map swallows up the potentially exciting effects of a good rule.

Command rules in BORODINO are an attempt to represent two critical aspects of modern military command: the role of the headquarters and the maintenance of lines of communications. Command paths are traced from the army leader to corps leaders, and, finally, to the individual combat formation. Command is established and evaluated for corps, wings, and combat formations. The command structure of the battle does seem to be in place, and reflects the problems inherent especially in the Russian Army during the 1812 campaign. As such, this game would serve as a solid introduction to novice gamers on the dynamics of command and control on the pre-electronic battlefield.

Movement and combat occur within the context of the activation phase. Movement is standard and contains no innovative aspect. Terrain effects are based on the dominant terrain in an area or on a boundary. The presence of rain creates muddy conditions in cultivated fields. BORODINO's rules for stacking and facing units within map areas are unusual in boardgaming, with the double-length infantry counters being used to literally represent their location, much as a stand of figures might be used in a miniatures game.

Combat is much more interesting and reflective of the realities and dynamics of grand tactical battle. There are three types of fighting. Assault combat is conducted by infantry, cavalry, and artillery. Cavalry engagement is marked by charge, opportunity charge, and counter charge. This occurs during the movement phase. Artillery engages in bombardment.

Historically, it was musketry that was the big killer during the

Age of Napoleon. Artillery fire tended to disrupt. This is what occurs in this system through the "pin" result. If attacks are launched from different areas the defender's strength is dissipated. Combat bonuses are awarded for leaders, flank attacks, heavy cavalry, and lancers. Bonuses are also awarded for rear attacks, artillery superiority, guards, and pinned defenders. The combat rules present all required grand tactical elements.

The system rewards an understanding of the proper coordination of the Napoleonic triad of infantry, cavalry, and artillery. Indeed, this game serves as a good introductory primer for Napoleonic tactics. I can also credit the game for no important historical errors or rules glitches. But BORODINO is just not much fun to play if you are used to managing battalions and conducting shattering cavalry charges in the more detailed games named previously. In short, it represents a poor man's grand tactics, or a game for those who want to know something about the battle but lack the playing space or time for a behemoth such as LA BATAILLE DE LA MOSCOWA.

Game "Fr" • Simulation "Av" • Innovation "Gd"



laying BORODINO reminds me of eating in one of those fancy continental gourmet restaurants. It looks beautiful inside and out, but given the prices on the menu, I'm disappointed when the waiter delivers a carrot, an asparagus sprig, and a small slice of veal. Just as I know that there is a Wendy's down the street, I realize that a design by Wimble, Berg, or Essig is on the shelf waiting. At the same time there is truth in the old adage that one man's hamburger is another man's steak, and I am certain that others will find BORODINO better-suited to their gaming tastes.

Annotated Sequence of Play

Weather Determination Phase

Roll a 6-sided die to determine if there are any changes in the weather.

Reinforcement Phase

Place reinforcements on the appropriate mapedge.

Command Phase

Players determine which of their units are in command. The command radius is the number of areas that the next lower level unit can be away from its leader and still be in command. The next lower-level leader in the chain must be able to reach a subordinate unit with his command range. Those forces out of command have their leader roll for initiative to be placed in command.

Activation Phase

Players alternate rolling on the Activation Table. The cycle is repeated until all the units on the game map have been activated or both players have passed.

Determine Special Stacking Segment: Stack or unstack specially stacked infantry and Artillery.

Movement Segment: Moving units may be opportunity charged.

Combat Segment: Opposing units may be bombarded by the phasing player. Non-specially stacked artillery bombards. Specially stacked artillery participates in assaults.

Game Turn End Phase

GAME

Borodino

PUBLISHER

*Games U.S.A.
9836 Carousel Drive
Syracuse, NY 13290*

DESIGN

Brien J. Miller & Mark E. Searle

GRAPHICS

Brien J. Miller

COMPONENTS

A 17" x 25" map, 340 counters, 12 pages of standard rules, 12 pages of exclusive rules, one sheet of charts.

PRICE

\$34.95

COMPLEXITY

Size 2.1 • System 4.7



Loud. If I were forced to pick just one word to describe THUNDER AT THE CROSSROADS, this would be the one. It's a noisy game, full of cheering and cursing as the ebb & flow of battle — and luck — takes its toll on players' emotions. Part of The Gamers' *CIVIL WAR BRIGADE* series, the scale of this Gettysburg mini-monster is 30-minute turns and 200 yards per hex. If you're unfamiliar with the game and system, do yourself a favor and read on.

Thunder at the Crossroads II

Reviewed by John W. Kisner



Counters are very well done. Colors are typical for American Civil War: shades of gray and butternut for the Rebels; hues of blue for the Yanks. The markers are more adventuresome, with various shades of red and yellow supplementing a handful of old-style black on white.

The two-sided counters bring a bit of limited intelligence into the game. Each brigade has its organizational info on front, with the back containing size and morale ratings. Of course, certain units are gradually remembered for their quality (such as the Iron Brigade), but a few surprises will await even the most serious players when they rush an enemy line. Brigades can "extend line" and thereby spread into up to three hexes (markers are used to show this); artillery battalions can detach guns and so create independent small batteries.

The two mapsheets are vibrant, with nine different colors used to show elevation levels. Although some of the rich details are inconsequential in terms of play — such as the farm houses, college, and seminary — they do add richness to the gaming experience.

The rules and charts I'd rate a notch below the fine maps and counters. Now in their "2nd revised edition," the rules are still found occasionally wanting in organization and clarity. Most of the charts are bound inside the rule book, which makes them seem a bit flimsy when detached. Finally, one important chart, that for terrain effects, is printed only on the map, and often is a bit awkward to reference as a result.

Players use loss sheets to track casualties and stragglers. This arrangement is always a bit cumbersome, but at least obviates the need for strength markers that would add a few stories to stacks that can already be pretty tall — what with markers for morale, low ammo, and the like piled on top of brigades of cavalry and infantry, leaders and artillery units.

The only thing I'd fault in the graphic design is the choice to use "small" 16mm hexes. A combination of factors seem to cry out for a hex size that is larger than the counters: facing must be toward a frontal hexside, friendly lines tend to be continuous, and enemy lines will often charge into a string of hexes adjacent to that friendly line, creating a very dense counter population. All this makes it tough to turn one stack 60 degrees off from any of its neighbors. Given that this is a "series" game, it seems unlikely that this aspect will ever be changed in future releases, so I've learned to live with it.

Look "Gd" • Utility "Fr" • Rules "Av"



The durable *CIVIL WAR BRIGADE* system features a set of interwoven player turns of the move/defensive fire/offensive fire variety. In it veteran gamers will

find little that is new, but most will learn to admire the novel ways in which familiar elements are blended.

In many ways THUNDER AT THE CROSSROADS is an amalgam of TERRIBLE SWIFT SWORD and LA BATAILLE DE LA MOSCOWA. As in its predecessors, the attacking line will rush forward and be met by a hail of defensive fire. That fire will often trigger morale checks, and the success or failure of those checks is largely dependent on the quality rating of the unit taking fire. A failed check will leave the brigade in various stages of disarray, progressing in severity from shaken to disordered to routed. Success may even leave the unit blood-lusted, in which case there will be no chance to fail the next morale check, making the unit (temporarily) a tiger.

The system of combat resolution may be slow, but it does treat players to a heroic look at battle. Separate dice rolls are used to inflict casualties, check for stragglers, wound leaders, and test morale. Furthermore, blood-lusted units, especially, are prone to using a special form of attack called "close combat" during the movement phase. These attacks can, when successful, be used to rupture a line and allow other moving units the chance to maneuver into the flank and rear to play havoc with enemy unit cohesion. There is enough drama in a few exciting player turns to sustain the action in many other wargames from start to finish.

THUNDER AT THE CROSSROADS presents both sides with a variety of interesting tactical situations. In the full battle game — which can easily take 100 hours to complete — the South must strike quickly and decisively before the full weight of Union numbers arrives on the field. At the same time, the North has a few chances to strike out aggressively on the First Day, so it need not play a purely defensive game (which so many of us find dull). The smaller scenarios, which number nine, present various slices of the historical battle. Want to lead Pickett's Charge after watching the recent GETTYSBURG movie? How about testing the mettle of the 20th Maine by playing out the attack on Little Round Top? Although these "small" scenarios still take quite a bit of time, they do allow players to look at the critical episodes of the battle in under 20 hours (and some in less than five). For those who crave a bit more spice — or a bit less desperate C.S.A. situation — several minor options alter the time and place, and quantity and quality, of each side's reinforcements.

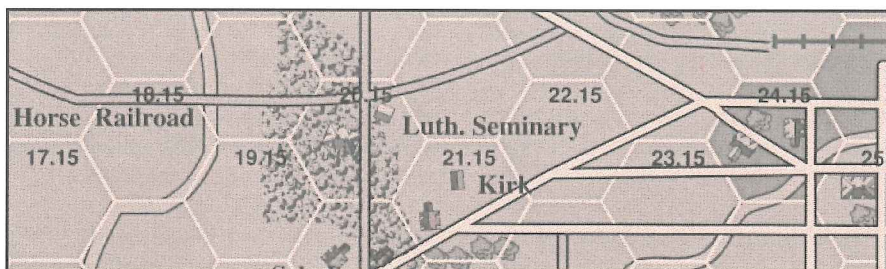
Much has been written for and against this system's unique command mechanic. Briefly, players are asked to play multiple roles. During the Command Phase, they view the battle as Lee or Meade might, and write down general instructions to subordinate corps leaders. The rest of the time, they are asked to adopt the role of each corps commander in succession, executing in good faith orders that have often been delayed several turns in arriving. Solitaire gamers, especially, will find the sys-

tem very enjoyable, and head-to-head players will find there is just enough fog of war to keep things interesting, but not so much that they get lost in the mist.

Although as simple as it is innovative, the command system often falls short in practice, and as a result is in many ways the weakest part of the design. Written orders are open to many interpretations — the “good faith” required is the antithesis of a competitive spirit — and as a result this is a difficult game to play with many opponents. The command rules expect players to move their troops gladly where angels might fear to tread, and as a result some contests end in recrimination as first one side and then the other accepts counsel from devils that whisper the advantages of dishonor.

Game “A” • Simulation “Gd” • Innovation “Gd”

Those of you in the market for a fresh look at the Battle of Gettysburg should buy this one before it goes out of print (again). The game is far from comprehensive for those seeking the ultimate in realism, detail, and complexity — the scale, for example, makes terrain effects on combat almost non-existent — but what THUNDER AT THE CROSSROADS does cover it portrays exceedingly well... albeit a bit noisily.



GAME
Thunder At The Crossroads

PUBLISHER
The Gamers, Inc.
500 W. 4th Street
Homer, IL 61849

DESIGN
David Powell, Dean Essig, Rod Miller

GRAPHICS
Dean N. Essig

COMPONENTS
Two 22" x 34" maps, 560 (1/2") counters, 32 pages of series rules, 20 pages of game rules, various charts and tables, and 2d6. Loss sheets must be photocopied. Not enough of some game markers for full battle scenarios. Two sets of most charts provided.

PRICE
\$32

COMPLEXITY
Size 3.1 • System 7.5

Annotated Sequence Of Play

First Player Turn

Command

Order Issue: Orders are jotted down. They detail unit actions at a general level, and are usually written for corps-sized formations. The commanding general is limited in the number of orders he may write each turn, and “complex” orders are harder to write (and to get accepted) than “simple” ones.

Corps Attack Stoppage: As divisions are “wrecked” by losses an attack will lose steam, increasing the chance of that the attacking corps must withdraw.

Initiative Order Determination: Corps and division leaders may attempt to “write their own orders” by rolling for initiative. There is a small chance that a failed roll (“snake eyes”) will actually allow opponent to write a “loose cannon” order for the formation, so use initiative judiciously!

Delay Reduction: Most orders take several turns to be accepted, the controlling factor being a roll of the die. This time factor is linked to the quality of leadership and

complexity of the order sent.

New Order Acceptance: Attempt to implement any orders received this turn.

Movement & Close Combat

Straggler Recovery Marker Placement: Brigades which intend to rest during the player turn may be marked for straggler recovery.

Movement & Close Combat: Fairly standard stuff, with the exception that “close combat” (a.k.a. “melee”) is conducted during movement. Close combat begins with an exchange of fire at increased lethality. Losses and stragglers are removed, then the attacker makes a morale check. If passed, the defender must likewise check morale. If neither unit has broken morale, odds are figured, a die is rolled, and the victor is determined. The attacking unit may then keep moving if its morale is still good.

Ammo Resupply: Brigades marked “low ammo” recover if within two hexes of their supply wagon.

Fire Combat

Non-phasing Player Fire Combat: Units

combine fire at the same target. Fire results in morale checks or casualties + morale check. Casualties may also result in stragglers and leader death (separate rolls are made for each).

Phasing Player Fire Combat: Combat sequencing gives “defensive fire” an initial edge, but note that this turn’s “phasing player” also gets first shot during the next turn, for two fire phases in a row.

Rally

Straggler Recovery: Brigades marked for straggler recovery earlier in the turn now may roll to get back 0-2 stragglers (which are then erased from loss sheet).

Rally: Remove shaken markers and upgrade disorganized units to shaken. Die rolls are made to determine if blood-lusted units revert to normal status and routed units become disorganized.

Second Player Turn

The other player repeats the above sequence.

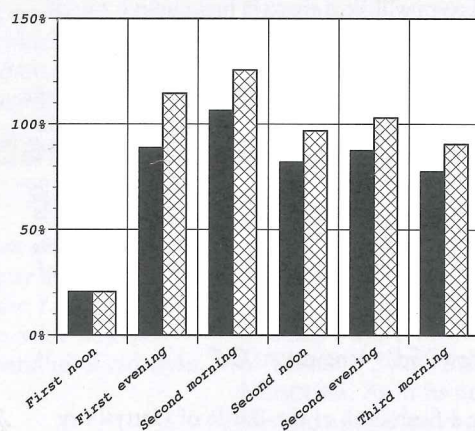
A Time & Space Continuum

As with most wargames, close inspection of THUNDER AT THE CROSSROADS reveals considerable room for beating the system — as well as your opponent — through careful analysis and play. There are the usual CRT breaks to be explored, tactical nuances to be worked out, and, most importantly, certain gaps in the command rules that can be exploited ... but it is none of these that concern me on this day. Instead I will focus on the motivation for our every table-top action — the victory conditions — and discuss grand strategy.

THUNDER AT THE CROSSROADS is won largely through the control of geographical objectives. Certainly, large numbers of victory points are also given for “wrecking” enemy formations, etc., but these awards are unpredictable and will rarely drive strategy — nor will they ultimately win or lose this game. The Federal army, beginning with tacit control of the battle’s familiar landmarks — Gettysburg, Cemetery Hill, Culp’s Hill, and Little Round Top — is cast in its historical role of defender. Given its retention of the three hills — and the likelihood that neither army will lose control of friendly entry hexes — a purely defensive approach will net +5 VPs that must be made up for by the enemy through casualty points. This means, for example, that if the C.S.A. player loses 20,000 soldiers in the battle, he will have to eliminate roughly 33,000 Union men to make up the points — not, to say the least, an easy thing to do when assuming the offensive. Clearly, the initial position of advantage belongs to the North, which can win a minor victory by doing almost nothing at all.

There are four “brass rings” in this contest, and all strategies revolve around their capture and control. It will take a majority of these objectives for either side to have any realistic chance of playing to anything better than a draw. Therefore, each player must view the battlefield struggle in simple zero-sum terms, and act accordingly. There is very little reason to attack unless you need to capture another brass ring, and the army possessing a majority of rings at the same time forces the other to attack — and hopefully on unfavorable terms.

Whereas both players are obsessed with space, for the Confederate the burden of time weighs almost as heavy. The Rebels are



The formula used to determine the final Score is: (size + guns) * avg. morale * $\sqrt{\text{avg. divisional leadership} + \text{avg. corps \& army leadership}}$. The second bar column represents the impact of using revised C.S.A. leadership ratings.

fighting a meeting engagement whose strategic balance usually favors the North. Using a weighted system rewarding quality as well as sheer numbers of troops, I have analyzed the historical arrival schedules and come up with the adjoining graph to depict the game’s ebb and flow of combat power.

Viewing the graph from the Confederate perspective, the first instinct may well be to play a different game. Commanded by the victory conditions to take the offensive, Lee’s proxy must somehow find a way to attack and win with an army just under 75% of the strength of Meade’s.

Forced by a discouraging bottom line to clutch for whatever straws avail themselves, the optimists among you will notice the South does have an apparent window of opportunity late on the First Day and very early on the Second. This presents Lee with a classic chance to defeat a larger army in detail as it arrives on the field. The prescription for success, such that it is, consists of using the afternoon and evening of 1 July to position your army for a decisive blow to be struck early the next day.

The time & space continuum factored into THUNDER AT THE CROSSROADS forces the South to act with a sense of desperation that foreshadows the historical sense of urgency that would come almost a year later at The Wilderness. “Those people,” as Lee himself might have put it, “must be driven from the hills by noon on 2 July.” Not that even this is a guarantee of victory — reinforcing Union corps will come in waves against the depleted islands of Secession — but certain defeat awaits the player who is unwilling to push his Rebel army to the breaking point.

Given how determined — as well as how clever — the Rebels must be to win this battle, it is demoralizing to contemplate the

leadership disparity at army level: Lee’s “bad day” — he’s rated just a ‘1’ — is structured into the game as rigidly as taxes into a paycheck. Insult to Southern pride is heaped upon injury with Meade’s one “good day” likewise wired into the game: he’s rated a ‘4’, the best allowed by the system.

What all this adds up to is a game that usually cannot be won by the South unless variants are used — and, as we all know, any victory won under what the rules describe as “ahistorical conditions” is tainted. I suggest players adopt the following remedy:

Give Lee and his new corps commanders, Hill & Ewell, their optional (improved) command ratings with no VP penalty attached.

Is this modification reasonable? I think so. It gives the Southern player a tremendous psychological boost. And, it should also serve to help balance a contest that remains, in its essence, an historical encounter. The burden of attack stays squarely on Southern shoulders, but now the head on those shoulders is that of the “real” Bobby Lee.

The change removes much of the futility from Confederate action on this field. The South now has a better chance to grab a majority of the “brass rings” early in the fight, and as a result pass the burden of attack. It also serves to force a much more active style of Union play, creating, as it does, something akin to the historical impression that this THUNDER AT THE CROSSROADS might signal the decisive moment of the war: the beginning of an anxious three days of battle in which victory is within the grasp of either army. Without the change, good as this design is, I fear players are left merely with the sound and fury of this great ordeal, and not its true significance.



Sanguinary types enjoy nothing quite so much as action punctuated by blood. Whether this describes your wargaming tastes, or you're just looking for a good introduction to The Gamers' long-running *CIVIL WAR BRIGADE* series, *NO BETTER PLACE TO DIE* may be the perfect way to warm a few winter gaming sessions. It depicts the battle of Murfreesboro during a cold, wet Tennessee winter at the end of 1862 — but the weather's the only thing that isn't hot in this action-packed design by Dave Powell.

No Better Place to Die

Reviewed by Larry K. Barrett



The counters in *NO BETTER PLACE TO DIE* are the best I've seen from The Gamers. Union brigades are more distinguishable than in their previous games, with lighter shades of blue ranging from medium to powder. Confederates are more colorful, with mixes of gray, butternut, and mustard yellow. Overall, the counters are much easier to differentiate than in the past. The only mistake I could find is in the Union cavalry brigades, which do not have their "plus" weapons denoted.

The map is fairly barren. Elevation changes on this field were very gradual, so there aren't many elevation colors to jazz things up. The color used for forest — the dominant "interesting" terrain on the map — does not contrast well with the background elevation colors, adding further to the dull visual impression. By restricting the playing field to one map, the key landmark was left off: the town of Murfreesboro. As a result, players don't fight over any obvious objectives, making their purposes seem more "game-driven" than the usual case. Space restraints also banished from the map the usual terrain effects chart and artillery ammunition track. The latter will hardly be missed, because it seems both sides run out of "fightin' men" long before they run out of shot and canister.

The quality of the print in the rulebooks seems a notch above the norm. There aren't many special rules for this game, but the variants offered are very interesting and make replayability much greater. Conspicuously absent from the rules is the historical summary that has been such a nice feature of previous *CIVIL WAR BRIGADE* releases.

Look "Gd" • Utility "Av" • Rules "Av"



Victory in *NO BETTER PLACE TO DIE* is determined by a combination of casualties and geographic locations like Hell's Half Acre, Wayne's Hill, and various bridges and ford. Two small scenarios are playable in a couple of hours. These are good for solitaire play and will satisfy the most bloodthirsty pair of gamers for competitive play. Two longer scenarios end after one day's battle (either 30 or 31 December). In the historical Dec. 31st start the combatants are close enough to see condensation from the enemies' breath, and both sides have attack orders already in place so you can go at it immediately.

Oddly enough, the main scenario starts a day early, which is ahistorical but probably makes for a better game. The early start gives Bragg a chance to crush the enemy piecemeal before the bluebellies are entirely in place. Even though the enemy camps are just a few hexes apart at the game's start, most units wake up with no orders for the day's battle. This makes for a very exciting first few turns, as the generals on both sides pray that their orders are accepted first. The first wave of Union

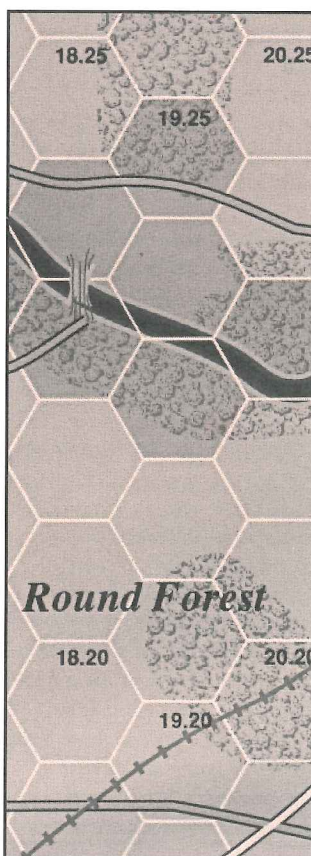
reinforcements has a variable arrival time, which adds further tension to the opening moves. Although the battle can continue for a second or third day, you'll find that a full day's battle is about all either army can handle.

Good planning is imperative in this game because the road net is limiting and both armies have good staying power. Once an attack is launched your divisions will press on until they are near decimation. For instance, Pat Cleburne's division must have all four brigades wrecked before the division itself is wrecked. The terrain allows for deadly fields of fire, adding to the massive bloodshed. As was the historical case, the combination of open ground and courage give ample opportunity for many a brave soldier to earn his "little red badge."

Game "Ex" • Simulation "Av" • Innovation "Gd"



Before the release of *NO BETTER PLACE TO DIE* I preferred *PERRYVILLE* as an introductory game to the series. Now, with the amount of combat involved, the simplicity of the special rules, and the chance for both sides to get a taste of total victory and humiliating defeat, I can think of no better place to roll the die for the first time than right here.



GAME
No Better Place To Die

PUBLISHER
The Gamers, Inc.
500 W. 4th Street
Homer, IL 61849

DESIGN
David Powell & Dean Essig

GRAPHICS
Dean N. Essig

COMPONENTS
One 22" x 34" maps, 280
(1/2") counters, 32 pages of
series rules, 12 pages of
game rules, two sets of
various charts and tables,
and 2d6.

PRICE
\$28

COMPLEXITY
Size 2.2 • System 6.9

Hook, Line, and Sinker

by John W. Kisner

There is a carnival game I remember playing as a kid. You were given a magic fishing pole and tossed your hook over a low curtain. Soon you felt a tug on your line and reeled in the prize — usually a bag containing a cheap toy or candy. Not as good as many games I've played since, but still one I hope my little girls will get to play one day. And, while not a realistic depiction of the sport of fishing, at least you always come back with something on your hook.

A similar magic fishing pole is used in wargaming to always make our excursions onto tactical fields of battle successful. This realization struck me like the tail fin of an angry carp when, after having played THUNDER AT THE CROSSROADS for roughly thirty hours, my Union opponents abruptly decided to retreat from the field well before noon on the Second Day. What is especially fascinating is that they chose to end the battle not because they were being crushed — this I would have understood as a wargamer — but rather because the infamous “fishhook” line at Gettysburg was now seriously compromised at both Culp's and Cemetery Hills. As such, they saw no reason to continue the fight on bad ground, and did what Meade would have done: started withdrawing toward the Pipe Creek line well off the map to the southeast.

In this case the magic had failed: the fish had slipped off the hook designed to keep them fighting for three days on these Pennsylvania fields. Upon reflection, it is not the failure of the sorcery that intrigues me ... it is that it works so often and so well that now mystifies. How could so many of us be so willingly reeled in by VP awards for “Hill 101” and the like?

Perhaps it is best to approach the question from a slightly different angle. Rather than see it in negative terms, I'd prefer to look at what it was about THUNDER AT THE CROSSROADS that led my opponents to act in the fashion described. What is the nature of this new force, stronger even than desire to win?

Mike Collieran observed the force at work when writing in his *Swabbers* newsletter back in 1977:

There's a joke buried in the designer's notes for SQUAD LEADER — the game was originally going to be a return to “beer & pretzel” wargaming, in other words, a “fun” game. Alas, “war, like the thunderbolt, follows its own laws and turns not aside even if the beautiful, the virtuous and the charitable stand in its path,” as General Sherman said. About the only people to whom the adjective “fun” might occur in describing SQUAD LEADER would be those SS hacks who thought a high casualty rate proved more than professional incompetence. “If you think I'm going across that street,” I heard one highly-experienced gamer flatly tell another, “you're crazy.” The two represented Russian company commanders

and, although possession of the building across the street represented victory or defeat in game terms and time was running out, it would have taken the NKVD to get the speaker to send his men across a street down which two light machine guns could fire. He had expended too much time and effort keeping his company alive to “waste” it rushing a couple of lousy German squads, regardless of the victory conditions.

Most tactical games are won by seizing and holding key ground. And, like so many brass rings clutched at during other carnival games, in the end these prizes — a building, a hill, or a crossroads — in a larger sense seem ultimately worthless. Interestingly enough, although the magic hook is omnipresent at this level of combat, it is paradoxically only in the best of these games that formal expressions of victory and defeat are so often found wanting.

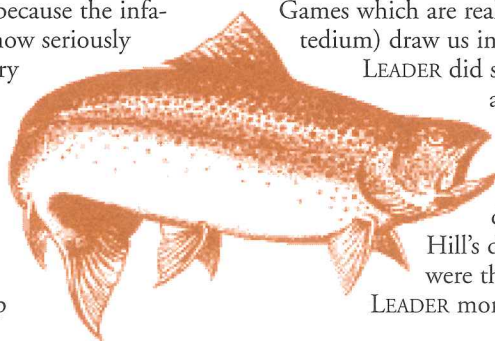
Games which are realistic (while at the same time avoiding tedium) draw us into the action at a visceral level. SQUAD

LEADER did so with its multitude of morale checks and personalized leaders. The connection to the role-playing wing of the hobby that was then booming is obvious. There is another apparent paradox here: the very elements in John Hill's design that made it seem comic-bookish were the ones that arguably made SQUAD LEADER more realistic than any game of its time.

THUNDER AT THE CROSSROADS achieves a comparable form of realism through a similar combination of morale checks and personalized leaders. The former leads players to “care” about their units: who among us can later think the same way of a brigade that has “blood-lusted” (a morale status that is the equivalent of SQUAD LEADER's “berserk”) at a decisive moment to take a key position with fixed bayonets?

Less similar is the *CIVIL WAR BRIGADE* series' use of leadership to draw players into the action. Dean Essig's Civil War generals are individually rated, much as were John Hill's sergeants and lieutenants. Both rating systems afford a broad spectrum of quality that allows clear distinctions between the good, the bad, and the ugly — you know how it works, Longstreet's a ‘4’ and Bragg's a ‘0’. In this sense leaders are treated much like any other “unit” in the game, with some being stronger than others in the degree to which they influence the performance of subordinates.

Beyond this, however, players of THUNDER AT THE CROSSROADS receive a unique opportunity to role-play the generals commanding their armies. As most of you know, in this game players write orders for each of their corps, and the built-in time delay between writing and accepting an order creates a gaming milieu that is like no other. Inexorably, the process that forces players to carry out orders that have



become "stupid" produces a mindset in which winning grows secondary to watching events unfold. Players soon are consumed by events that seem largely out of their control. Some players resist what seem to be unnatural forces: like fish struggling on a hook, they attempt to slip free of the orders system and swim back to familiar waters. In others, the system gives rise to a zen-like tranquility: these players use their imaginations to understand and interpret strange episodes in ways that lead to a richer gaming experience.

Several divisions among wargamers have been observed, including the one that I have described above. For the many who emphasize the competitive side of wargaming, the magic fishing pole is central to their motivation to play. Their game is that of the fisherman, not of the fish. For others, those who seek to connect at an emotional level with events portrayed on the gaming table, it is often the same conditions of victory — the magic fishing pole, if you will — that often spoil an otherwise enjoyable experience. It goes without saying that these gamers have trouble fathoming the obsessions of the Captain Ahab among us.

A different paradigm governs the outlook of each school, and neither finds much that is magical about the other. I've found the line that connects the pole and the hook to be all but uncrossable. There is no tragedy in this; no remedy need be sought. No matter how big or small the pond that is our hobby may be or become, there will always be room for both types of magic; for both fish and fishermen.

Gamers of the fishhook school may fondly recall Jack Radey's KORSUN POCKET, whose rules provided VP awards for killin' and capturin' — but no real method for using these to assign levels of victory. Radey left it to the players themselves to decide, figuring they'd be in the best position to judge who had won and lost. Whether intentional or not, by consciously de-emphasizing the competitive side of the gaming experience, Radey created a role-playing experience even while keeping the design as "serious" as any I could name. There are no gimmicks — no morale checks or "following orders" — just a solid historical package. Players were trusted to create their own magic.

In the absence of formal victory conditions, I began to play KORSUN POCKET for the joy of the experience. I actually found myself looking forward to being pocketed by the Soviet onslaught, if only to find out whether SS Viking could break out. Radey was able to draw me hook, line, and sinker into a hopeless gaming situation by emphasizing playing over winning and losing. The choice was sink or swim, and I soon found these strange waters to my liking. Even as my panzer troops were drowning in a Red tide, I felt myself breathing a rarified air.

A handful of designers — chiefly Hill, Radey, and now Essig — have managed to successfully draw me into the tabletop action in the manner described above. They have helped created a new magic, unleashed a force in our hobby that is all too rare.

New Games from Avalanche Press Ltd.

design by Brian L. Knipple ... development by Mike Bennighof
map art by Mark Simonitch ... counter art by Brien J. Miller

MacArthur's Return: Leyte, 1944. The invasion of the Philippines in October, 1944. Of moderate complexity, the game uses an innovative impulse system, allowing each player the opportunity to attack. Units are battalions, with some companies. Japanese paratroopers, US warships, aircraft and Philippine guerillas all play key roles. Moderate complexity, suitable for solitaire play. Multiple scenarios. Components include one bookcase-sized box, one 22x34" map, 720 counters, 16-page rulebook.

Avalanche: The Invasion of Italy. The September, 1943, Salerno landings and subsequent bitter campaign. Of average complexity, the game emphasizes morale, armor quality and artillery ammunition. Units are battalions, with some companies. German glider bombs, Allied warships, Tiger tanks, formation commanders and crack US and German parachute infantry all play key roles. Moderate complexity. Components include one bookcase-sized box, one 22x34" map, 720 counters, 16-page rulebook.

\$38 each, shipping within North America included. Overseas orders add \$9 per game for airmail, \$4 per game for surface. VISA/MC accepted. Virginia residents please add 4.5% sales tax.

Avalanche Press Ltd. • PO Box 4775 • Virginia Beach, VA 23454
1-804-481-3655



here were a number of heavily publicized anniversaries last summer: D-Day, Woodstock, and the moon landing. An anniversary missed by almost everyone was the start of The Big War — World War First. Everyone except XTR Corporation, which published 1914:GLORY'S END in issue 29 of *Command Magazine*. The game allowed me to be on the receiving end of the "Schlieffen Plan" exactly eighty years after the original event.

1914: Glory's End

Reviewed by Steve Keifer



GLORY'S END covers the first three months of action on the Western Front in 1914. There are thirty 3-day turns. Play area stretches from the French channel ports of La Havre and Calais to the Swiss-German border. Most of Belgium and all of the Ardennes are included.

The standard full-sized map is colorful and the terrain includes clear, hills, forests, mountains, and marshes in 9.5 mile hexes. In addition to the Victory/Replacement Point Track and Turn Record Track, the map has two Combat Results Tables (one for each player) and a chart showing all movement and combat terrain effects. The charts are nicely laid out and easily accessible to both players. I really couldn't ask for a more professionally produced map.

GLORY'S END continues *Command's* trend of giving you lots of components in their magazine games. There are 352 counters. Most combat units represent full-strength corps and their step-reduction counterparts. (Probably only one hundred or so combat units will appear on the map at one time.) Many counters are markers for dummies, hex-control, and entrenchments. The combat units have different graphic styles which,

together with the colors, give a distinctive "feel" to each army involved. The Germans are black, the color of the Evil Empire, with thick Gothic numbers. The French are horizon bleu and pantalon rouge, just like their uniforms, with the values printed in a stylish script. The BEF is red (of course) with a print style somewhere between the other two. All counters are marked with setup hex, turn of entry, or parent army formation.

I've come to expect a high level of quality in *Command* game counters. I was not disappointed here. My only mixed feelings relate to the counter size. They are the large 5/8-inch style which I like for visibility, but some players had trouble moving them around and flipping them in congested areas. I'm not sure how to resolve this without making the hexes even bigger or going with the old-fashioned 1/2-inch counters.

The seventeen-page rule book is in easy-to-follow *Command* style, with lots of boxed-in design notes inserted. I couldn't find any errors or glaring omissions, but I was initially confused by how many victory points the French start with. It's clear they start with minus seven (to encourage "cult of the offensive" Plan 17 attacks into Germany) but what about the victory point hexes in Belgium and Luxembourg? We figured that if the German player sets up violating Belgian and Lux neutrality, any Belgian or Lux victory point cities not occupied by Germans are immediately awarded to the French as well. No other problems with the rules.

Look "Gd" • Utility "Gd" • Rules "Ex"



Movement and combat rules are similar to those in designer Ted Raicer's previous World War I corps-level games, *STORM IN THE WEST: 1918* and *WHEN EAGLES FIGHT*. The movement rules "feel" different, though, since the turn scale is a lot shorter. Corps seem slower, having just three or four movement points per turn. No blitzkriegs here, lots of infantry trudging along on foot. Stacks are able to make *march assaults* on the move against weak delaying forces, but a *prepared assault* coordinated with other friendly stacks can only be performed by a non-moving unit. This gives a convincing Great War feeling of big pushes which require several days of build-up and preparation. Your opponent can usually foretell where the offensives will come and either reinforce or vacate the threatened position. Combat is affected by terrain, supply, concentric attacks, and various levels of fortresses and fortified zones.

The most valuable French real estate (like Verdun) is protected by a series of tough fortresses which can cause the German problems. Taking them requires proper use of 420 and 305 millimeter siege guns, but if Big Bertha misses, the bells will start ringing "for those who die like cattle" in a hurry.

GAME
1914: *Glory's End*

PUBLISHER
XTR Corporation
PO Box 4017
San Luis Obispo, CA
93403

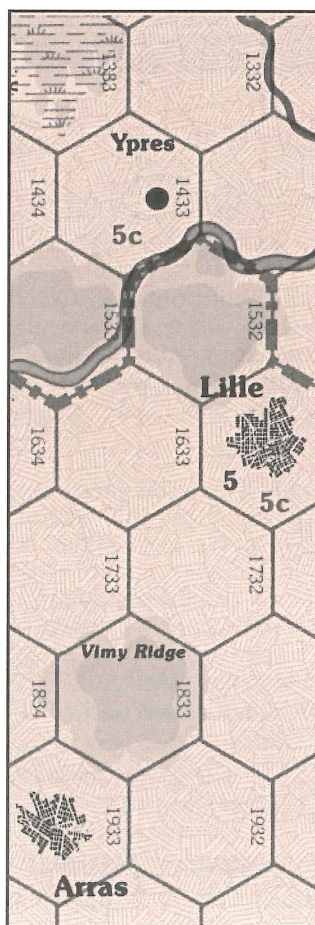
DESIGN
Ted Raicer, Ty Bomba, &
Chris Perello

GRAPHICS
Mark Simonitch & Beth
Queman

COMPONENTS
One 22" x 24" map, 352
(5/8") counters, 18 pages of
rules and player notes, one
player card that must be
photocopied.

PRICE
\$13.50 (game only)

COMPLEXITY
Size 2.4 • System 4.5



There are no zones of control — this is a *Command* game, remember! As army commander this means you can't rely on some invisible force to hold terrain. You need men, guns, and horses. You don't need to maintain a continuous line of units, however. Because of the low movement allowances and the supply line requirements that impede rapid advances, the French don't have to plug every hole. The battle tends to split into groups of armies struggling over important hexes, with gaps between the groups. A lot like the situation maps you see in books about this campaign.

The historical scenario starts on 14 August with the German armies deployed in violation of Luxembourg and Belgium. Each corps is placed within three hexes of its army mobilization counter (which has a hex location on it). This gives each side a limited chance to mislead the enemy with his initial setup. The rules require your opponent to avert his gaze while you deploy, and you may slip a few dummies into the stacks to further confuse him. The historical scenario starts with the mass of German power poised to advance through central Belgium and the Ardennes. The French are out of position, with their best armies ready to attack into Alsace-Lorraine.

A special rule limits French ability to shift forces to the north until it becomes obvious that the Germans intend to cross the Meuse River. Other special rules encourage the Germans to eliminate the supply bottleneck at Liege and force march their right wing across the Meuse. Still more flavor is added by command control rules: During any turn a bad roll can interfere with a player's plans, allowing his opponent to prevent three stacks from attacking and limit their movement.

The victory conditions are central to one of the important historical points the game makes. They're structured in terms of control of victory point hexes scattered around the map. Some VP's are conditional and only count at the end of the game. Others are awarded immediately after the hex is controlled — and can result in sudden victory for either side if the required VP level is thereby reached. The German player can attempt to capture the north channel ports and threaten Paris for victory or batter his way through the central French fortified line. The

French can steal a Plan 17 victory from an unwary German player.

Want to design your own plan to win the campaign? The free deployment option allows you to do just that. Both sides secretly plot the initial army setup on the player cards before the match. Freedom to deviate from historical deployment restrictions gives each game an entirely different flavor. This greatly adds to the replay value of *GLORY'S END* and I recommend you try it.

Playing time is about two evening-long sittings (6 to 10 hours total). For people playing by mail or with the AIDE DE CAMP computer program this game is perfect: not many counters and a non-interactive sequence of play. Played face-to-face, it is an exciting game that you'll want to return to many times.

Game "Ex" • Simulation "Gd" • Innovation "Av"



I had a good time playing *GLORY'S END* and will definitely continue my subscription to *Command* based on its quality. I found that when playing the French it was a real challenge to avoid sudden death — but the Germans don't have an easy time of it, either. There aren't many good games on this subject (unless you have a copy of Avalon Hill's old 1914 game circa 1968) so I welcome this addition to my collection all the more.

The majority of anniversaries, public as well as private, come and go unmarked by celebration. *Command* has now finished its 5th year, and while the occasion admittedly ranks a notch below the moon landing, it is still worthy of comment. Let me take a moment to congratulate Ty Bomba, Chris Perello, and Larry Hoffman (among others at XTR) for the enjoyment they have brought to my gaming table over the years. The hobby thanks you for your hard work, and looks forward to years of enjoyment ahead.

Annotated Sequence of Play

Allied Player Turn

Reinforcement & Replacement Phase:

Replenish depleted units that are in supply with replacement steps. New reinforcements enter play.

Entrenching Phase: After September 9, one or two units may begin constructing entrenchments. Units adjacent to enemy entrenched units may entrench without limit.

Command Control Phase: Roll a six and your opponent can pick three stacks that will not attack and will have their movement limited.

Strategic Movement Phase: Eight steps of units starting in city/town hexes may be transported by rail to other city/town hexes.

Operational Movement & March Combat

Phase: Standard unit movement, with march assaults (a.k.a. "overruns") possible during the phase.

Prepared Combat Phase: Voluntary combat allowed for units that have not moved this turn. The combat is pretty much step-loss attrition for both sides except at the extreme ends of the CRT. Units have quite a bit of staying power — a full-strength corps can't be blown away in a single battle. The defender can't satisfy losses by retreating a hex (unlike some earlier games by Raicer).

Attrition Phase: Units unable to trace a supply line five hexes to a friendly city/town hex that is in supply lose one step to attrition.

Allied Victory Check Phase: If the player has amassed the required number of victory points at this time the game ends.

German Player Turn

The German player performs the same phase sequence listed above. If the game runs to Turn 30, a mutual check of victory points after the last German player turn determines the winner.



Tough. Not the game. The review. The game? I had a word picked out. Felt I could categorize the feeling. I read the rules, thought I understood and liked the design philosophy. Steve Rawlings and Perry Moore had opted for art over science, simplicity before complexity. The word was *comfortable*. But I'm sorry, the more I played, the less, well ... comfortable I was with the game's abstractions. LANDSHIPS, is beautiful, well-developed, fun, and even occasionally an exciting game. But there are some debits on the ledger, as well. The approach is somewhat confused; at times even distracting. LANDSHIPS succeeds despite these limitations ... but it's a close call.

Landships

Reviewed by Mark H. Walker



Graphical representation is leading edge. The individual vehicles and airplanes counters are a delight. Each is a multi-colored overhead rendition. Foot soldiers are represented by two- or three-man drawings depicting infantry, machine gun, or cavalry platoons. The pieces are uncluttered, easy to read, and helpful. With the exception of vehicle firing arcs, all play-data is on the counters.

The maps and counters are the same high quality found in the company's *LA BATAILLE* series. Simply put, they're beautiful. A colorful advertisement for pride in workmanship. Nevertheless there are drawbacks. All counters are 1/2". Yet the tanks and planes seem to scream out for 5/8" counters at this scale. Frequently, it would be helpful to mark units which have fired, or are spotted. No such markers are provided. The maps, though stunning, can be difficult to read. Grid locations tend to blend with the shell holes. Why not use bold type? Maybe next time.

The rules, and this is a major plus, are clear. Furthermore, the four pages of fast start instructions work well, don't contradict the main body of work, and get you playing in about 45 minutes. Also included are six pages of historical documentary. On the down side, the designer notes are weak. Perry Moore fails to address how he derived weapon ranges, firepower, combat tables, scale, why AT rifles don't use the same modifiers as AT guns, why close assault combat ignores morale and firepower, or provide any tips on play. They provide little insight into anything other than artillery doctrine and movement values.

Charts are O.K. Nothing great. One player's aid card is provided; two would have been nice. The tank firing arc diagram, buried in the rule book, should be on separate card stock.

Look "Gd" • Utility "Gd" • Rules "Gd"



As Jim Carrey would say — *Awright!* Out with the bad vibes. The game is entertaining. Each turn is comprised of several interactive phases. Scale is 100 meters per hex, five minutes per turn. We're talking infantry platoons and individual vehicles/guns. All the good WWI paraphernalia is here: rifle platoons, machine gun platoons, cavalry (yes, there are rules for charging), AT rifles, AT guns, artillery (on- and off-board), flame-throwers, gas attacks, and tanks. Tons of tanks. There are Whippets, Renault FT17s, Char2Cs, Schneiders, A7V, Vollmers, M1A2 Abrams (oops wrong game), various armored cars, trucks, and more.

Movement is movement. Infantry is in motion twice per turn, cavalry and vehicles once (but obviously moving much further). Between, the enemy shoots at you. There is no difference between rifle and machine gun platoon movement. That seems odd and the disparity is not addressed in the designer notes.

Combat is what you would expect. The target must be spotted — a function of target type, range, and terrain — before it can be engaged. Infantry is rated for firepower and utilizes standardized ranges for machine gun and rifle platoons. The Small Arms Combat Results Table (SACRT) determines whether you hit or miss. A hit effects all units in the target hex. Each checks against its morale. You pass you're pinned (typical hug-the-ground stuff); you fail you die. Lots of folks die. Machine guns get favorable DRMs when firing. Mounted cavalry, as one might expect, gets negative modifiers when catching lead.

Bang you're dead. That's the gist of anti-tank combat. Hit percentages are familiar for anyone with previous tactical game experience. The probability of hitting is a function of range, target size and terrain occupied, number of shots fired, etc. A hit tank is a knocked out tank (a brief design note says crews bagged it once hit, even if the tank still worked). Basic, but it works fine. Anti-tank rifles, flame-throwers, and, to some extent, machine guns may also destroy the armored mega-turtles.

Aircraft fight each other, bomb, and observe for artillery. But who cares? It's a pleasure just having those beautiful counters on the board. Fighters fight by rolling on the SACRT. Bombers/close support aircraft bomb on a separate table. Close support aircraft must designate whether they will perform bombing or observation duties prior to the scenario's beginning. Distinct aircraft are among the improvements made over the original semi-pro Perry Moore release.

Artillery, forward observers, and chemical munitions are present and accounted for. Standard practice — spot a hex, call in the fire. However, unlike most of LANDSHIPS, the artillery rules are somewhat complex, perhaps needlessly so. There are two different types of barrages (drumfire and hurricane) and four types of ammo. Additionally, LANDSHIPS introduces a unique step in the indirect fire resolution procedure — the Fire Order Table (FOT). Here's how it works. After an observer establishes communications with artillery the player must roll to determine if the rear area commander agrees with his request. Who



is calling the fire and the length of time the hex has been the target of unsuccessful direct fire influences the FOT outcome.

The idea is to reflect the inflexible artillery tactics of the period. Support was normally given when the infantry ran up against particularly tough resistance. Good idea, poor implementation. The rule rewards tactics which have no historical basis. Want artillery support? Attack the hex you wish to bombard with the weakest unit in your inventory and hope for a bad roll. After a couple of turns of this futility the rear area commander should grant your request. A model of reality? I don't think so.


Close assault combat is another one of the game's weak links. The procedure is straightforward, yet seems to ignore the realities of combat. The number of attacking platoons is compared to the number defending. The number of surplus attackers determines the column used. For example, three attacking platoons versus two defending would be resolved on the +1 column. The columns and die rolls are modified for terrain, tanks, and machine guns. That's fine. Here's the problem. An attacker with low firepower and morale will have as much chance for success as better-quality troops, given equal numbers. Reality? Not!

Despite these shortcomings the game plays well. Turns in most of the mid-sized scenarios can be completed in 20-30 minutes. The scenarios (there are 22 in all) are diversified. I played five, all of which were fairly well balanced. One problem: "The First Tank Versus Tank Battle" scenario has victory require-

ments which are impossible to satisfy given the time restrictions. Must be a typo — these guys playtested these scenarios, right?

I'm not a detail kind of guy, I believe in concepts, I believe in design art and usually refrain from picking at a design. However, the simulation aspect of LANDSHIPS falls short of Clash of Arms' high standards. Simplicity is good. If that is the goal — fine. Yet this game seems unsure of its goal. Is the intent an uncomplicated game? Then why have some tanks roll up to three times during movement to determine breakdown or loss of control? Why have the complex main and machine gun fire arc diagrams, or the over-detailed artillery rules. Is the intent a detailed simulation? Why the simple tank vs-tank-vs-infantry combat? Why the tremendously simplified close assault combat? Pieces of the game are simple, fluid, effortless. Other subsets are choppy and halting.

Game "Gd" • Simulation "Fr" • Innovation "Fr"

 **T**ie goes to the runner. Bottom line, the game is worth the money. I enjoyed playing despite the aforementioned distractions. The breathtaking graphics, concise rules, plethora of scenarios, and novel topic overshadow the somewhat confused design philosophy. In short, the game succeeds despite itself.

Annotated Sequence of Play

First Player Turn

Barrage Phase: Phasing player spots, checks communications, and rolls on the Forward Observer Table. If the mission is approved he rolls for scatter and resolves the attack.

Vehicle and Cavalry Movement Phase: Phasing player determines if the horsemen trot or charge (must be determined for each group of three), moves them, and checks to see if the targets of any charge attack freak out. Move vehicles. Tanks check for breakdown, loss of control, etc.

Defensive Anti-Tank Phase: Non-phasing player shoots at vehicles. Anti-tank guns/rifles and artillery pieces may shoot up to three times.

First Troop Movement Phase: Phasing player moves his machine gun and rifle platoons. Troop movement is one hex except when following a contiguous road or trench line.

Small Arms Fire Phase: Ouch! The bad guy shoots at everything besides vehicles. Artillery pieces which did not fire in the AT phase may direct fire on spotted infantry now. Units are pinned or eliminated. Pinned units may not move or fire.

Pin Removal Phase: The non-phasing player removes pin markers from his units.

Joint Aircraft Phase: Phasing player places his planes on the map. Aircraft movement is unlimited. The non-phaser moves his fighters to intercept. Air combat ensues, followed by anti-aircraft fire. Survivors bomb, strafe, or spot for artillery.

Close Assault Combat Phase: Phasing player's infantry (machine gun and rifle platoons) adjacent to enemy infantry may advance into their hex and engage in close combat.

Offensive Fire Phase: Finally! The phasing player gets to fire his tanks and infantry at any available target.

Second Troop Movement Phase: Same as First. Again, phasing player only.

Pin Removal Phase: This is the phasing player's turn to remove needles and other sharp pointy objects from his troops. Additionally, he rolls to repair temporarily broken-down tanks.

Second Player Turn

Return to Go, collect 200 dollars, and start again.

GAME
Landships

PUBLISHER
*Clash of Arms Games
The Byrne Building #205
Lincoln and Morgan Sts.
Phoenixville PA, 19460*

DESIGN
Perry Moore & Steve Rawlings

GRAPHICS
Rick Barber, Paul Dangel

COMPONENTS
*Four double sided 10"x16"
maps, 420 counters, 40 pages of
rules, charts and scenarios. One
separate chart with various
tables needed for play.*

PRICE
\$32

COMPLEXITY
Size 2.8 • System 4.4

Interesting. The new DAYS OF DECISION can draw players deeply into its grasp. Although certainly not without flaws, Harry Rowland's innovative design provides such a multitude of options and possible outcomes that extensive replay is not only invited, it is probably required to grasp the intricacies of the system. The game covers global political and military relations, beginning in 1936 and ending in 1946. Impressive as its scope is, however, the game will probably find more lasting value as a political system for WORLD IN FLAMES than as a stand-alone design.

Days of Decision II

Reviewed by David R. Conn

Game functions are carried out on two maps. The first is a Political Map showing the entire world, divided into land and sea areas for movement and combat purposes. Europe is shown at a larger scale than the rest of the globe, in an apparent (and largely unsuccessful) attempt to take into account the larger number of counters that will be present in the European theater. On this map, land and air power are denominated by generic Army Points; navies are shown by generic Naval Points. One set of colorful markers is available for each major power, with "change" among units freely available. Also shown are victory objectives, availability of naval basing, resources and factories, and how many points can attack across each land border.

The second map, a Political Display, is the forum for most political interactions. Half of this display contains tracks for initiative, political effectiveness, money, and the charts for International Political Options. On the other half is a large hexagon-shaped area, overlaid with a standard hex pattern. This hex field is comprised of four parts: three diamond-shaped "ideology" areas representing democracy, fascism, and communism, and a large "neutral zone" covering the areas between ideologies. Eight of the nine major powers (all except Mao's China) and 28 of the 43 minor countries have political markers to show the position of the country on the display.

Control of a minor occurs when a minor country's political marker enters an ideology zone. Control is given to the closest major power; different benefits accrue during peace and war, but always allow some combination of control of League of Nations voting (yes, this game does have it all!), use of the minor's resources and factories, the ability to move forces through the minor, or have it join your side in the war.

Look "Gd" • Utility "Fr" • Rules "Av"

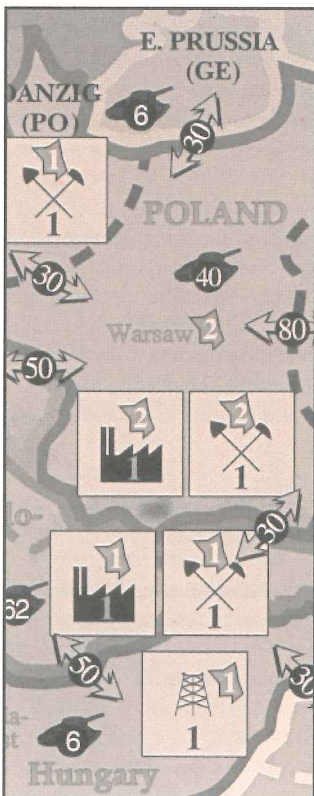
Any wargamer who has ever played a game covering all of WWII knows that most attempts to deal with "what if" possibilities leave an underlying sense of disappointment. Some options are simply unavailable; others are presented in isolation, without a sense of how they might affect the other "players" on the world scene. DAYS OF DECISION represents a valiant effort to remedy concerns such as these. Each decision by each major power may impact the relationships between itself and other minor countries; other major powers and minor countries; the ability of the United States to declare war; and the availability of resources and factories. All these effects occur within the framework of, and influence, the general world military situation. It would be hard for a gamer to ask for a greater scope.

Each player in the game represents one or more major powers. In a full-blown 7-player game, players represent U.S. and Nationalist China (one player), the Commonwealth, and France (the democratic powers); Germany, Italy, and Japan (the fascist powers); and Russia and Communist China (one player — the communist powers). Although Communist China is denominated as a major power, it does not function as one for most game purposes, and is presented more as a sidelight shining certain opportunities toward the Russians.

What makes DAYS OF DECISION more pointedly different from other WW II games is its portrayal of the war as a struggle between conflicting ideologies (democracy, fascism, and communism), rather than between conflicting nationalities. As fewer players are available, the control of countries is consolidated along the lines of historical alliances. Suggested divisions segregate fascists from communists from democrats — and this can impose quite a burden on the democratic player, who may end up performing for up to four major powers.

The heart of DAYS OF DECISION is the Political Affairs phase. Major powers secretly allocate "bid points" to determine the order in which political affairs will occur. This is important, because after each major executes a die is rolled to determine whether the phase will end. Thus, major powers low in the initiative order will often not even get a chance to play an option.

Each major can choose political options from either its own

<p>GAME Days of Decision II</p> <p>PUBLISHER Australian Design Group 25 Quandong Street ACT 2601 Australia</p> <p>DESIGN Harry Rowland</p> <p>GRAPHICS Harry Rowland, Chris Denton, Michael Fisher, Greg Pinder, & Rodger MacGowan</p> <p>COMPONENTS Two 23" x 33" maps, 800 counters, eight "major power" option cards, two war and treaty charts, eight "major power" charts, and 28 pages of rules.</p> <p>PRICE \$50</p> <p>COMPLEXITY Size 3.5 • System 6.7</p>	
---	---

major power card or from the 20 generic options available. Political options include changing production levels, alliances, declarations of war or surrender, and items unique to a major power (e.g., Italy can occupy Albania). They can result in economic agreements or alliances, coups and civil wars, elections, spies, trade and embargoes, and a wide range of League of Nations activity. Player's notes declare these options give "some hundred trillion possible outcomes." Rest assured that you will never feel that you don't have enough choices to make.

When an option is played, markers are placed on the Political Map to show the minor country effects. For example, a German treaty with Argentina results in a '+3' marker for Germany in Argentina, and '-2' markers in Brazil and Chile. After a major power plays an option, it may activate one minor country, by removing all political markers in the minor and applying them to move that minor's marker on the display. This provides one of the most interesting elements of the game, since a move "away" from Germany could be toward either the communists or the democrats. Thus, exactly who activates a minor with "negative" markers will determine the ideology toward which that minor moves.

For better or worse, this detailed political system is married to a very simple combat system. For both land and naval combat, each side chooses how many points from those available will be allocated to the combat. Whoever commits more points wins the battle. For land combats, the winner gains "offensive points" into the loser's territory equal to the odds of the battle (e.g., the winner would gain two offensive points in a 2:1 battle). Control of victory objectives, resources, factories, and territories themselves is determined by these offensives.

This method of resolving combat contains some elegant components. For example, a defender can effectively trade territory for time by lowering its commitment. On the other hand, it also introduces a "rocks, scissors, paper" element, as each side tries to outguess the other so as to minimize losses and optimize offensive points by hitting the odds breaks. While sometimes enjoyable, the exercise of determining commitment levels is time consuming and eventually tiresome.

DAYS OF DECISION is a good stand-alone game. But the detail of the political system is so inviting that I imagine that most gamers will rebel against the broad-strokes used to resolve combat. One of the strengths of the game is the ability to graft its political system on to the military operations portrayed in ADG's WORLD IN FLAMES. Some parts were obviously designed with this in mind. For example, the production system is a direct counterpart. This is one of the reasons that so many army points populate the map: each one, being a single build point, represents approximately one division. While this greatly simplifies linking the games, it clearly imposes burdens on the play value of DAYS OF DECISION. Also disheartening is the lack of full rules to combine the two.

Game "Av" • Simulation "Gd" • Innovation "Ex"



Those who buy DAYS OF DECISION for play as a stand-alone game will not be disappointed. The game does an excellent job of presenting the political options that were, or might potentially have been, available to major powers during the period covered. Those who expect an easy and quick way to play through the political and military affairs between 1936 and 1946 will not find it here; what they will find, is intriguing.

Annotated Sequence of Play

Initiative

Each player secretly allocates bid points for each major power under the player's control. Bid points are produced, gained through political option play, or earned as "bonus bid points" per the step below. Initiative markers of major powers are placed on the initiative track in descending order of bids.

Political Affairs

In initiative order (highest bids first), each major power conducts the following steps:

Play a political option. The option may be either one of the International Political Options or one of the political options specifically available to the major power.

Resolve the chosen option. Roll (if necessary) to see if the option play was successful. If successful, pay the appropriate cost, mark the minor country effects, note U.S. entry effects, and apply any other special effects.

Activate one minor country. The player may

move one minor country's marker on the political display a distance based on the political effects accumulated by option play.

Roll to see if the political affairs phase ends. If it does, or if this was the last active major power, go on to the next phase. If not, the next major power in initiative order goes through the same steps.

Bonus Bid Points

Major powers which did not get to choose an option this turn now earn bid points equal to their current political effectiveness.

Weather

Determine the weather for the turn. Unlike WORLD IN FLAMES, the same weather pattern is applied to the entire world.

Military Affairs

The following steps are conducted by major powers in *reverse* initiative order.

Move naval points. Naval units may move from their base to any sea area or coastal territory up to two areas away.

Resolve naval combat. Battles are fought in each sea area containing enemy naval points.

Move army points. Army points may move an unlimited distance through friendly territory (which can include treaty partners).

Conduct land attacks.

Production

Calculate your income (based on the number of resources and factories you control), then use that income to buy bid points, army points, and naval points for your major power. Production may be saved, and some deficit spending is allowed.

Conquest

Determine if enough "offensive points" exist into a territory to result in conquest.

End of Turn

Check to see if the game has ended (from control of victory cities or at the end of 1946). If the game is not over, return all naval points to a base. Start the next turn.

Coming Soon!

Bloodiest Day—Bloodiest Battle

17 September 1862, Sharpsburg, Maryland: The bloodiest single day of combat the North American continent would ever witness draws to a close. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, outmanned but not outfought by McClellan's Army of the Potomac, barely averts disaster along the banks of the Antietam Creek. Heavy but uncoordinated Federal attacks had stretched the gray-clad lines to the breaking point. Only the nick-of-time arrival of A.P. Hill's Light Division blunts the final Union assault. McClellan refuses to commit his reserves to grasp the war-ending victory that lies within his reach. Lee's first invasion of the North ends that day — but the war drags on.

1 July 1863, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania: Lee's second invasion produces the bloodiest battle ever fought in America. It begins as a skirmish between Confederate infantry spoiling for a fight and a bunch of stubborn Yankee cavalymen willing to give it to them. It ends only after three days of violent battle — a battle Lee does not want but will not back away from. George Meade proves the one commander of the Army of the Potomac Lee cannot get rid of. The High Tide of the Confederacy breaks on the rocks of Cemetery Ridge. And on the bayonets of blue-coated infantry.

Bloodiest Day—Bloodiest Battle, the upcoming release from Spearhead Games, captures the essence of these crucial engagements. Peter Perla's unique approach to simulating Civil War battles uses alternating-impulses and area maps to capture the ebb and flow of Civil War combat. Units represent infantry and cavalry brigades and half-brigades and supporting artillery. Like real-life army commanders, players must think in terms of getting corps commanders to commit their brigades and

divisions at the right place and time, not to dressing regimental battlelines.

Bloodiest Day—Bloodiest Battle will come boxed with two full-sized maps — one for each battle — nearly 400 unit counters, and separate system and exclusive rulebooks. Retail price will be \$38.00. Please do not order until release has been announced.

Still Available!

Bodyguard—Overlord

6 June, 1944, Normandy, France: The first waves hit the beach in Operation Overlord, the largest amphibious invasion in history. For many months beforehand, armies of support troops worked day and night planning, positioning forces, collecting intelligence and creating deceptions, all of a scale undreamed of before or since. These deceptions, which were crucial to the Allied successes, were codenamed Plan Bodyguard.



PO Box 523263
Springfield, VA 22152

Spearhead Games is proud to present veteran designer John Prados' ground-breaking simulation of these critical events of World War II. Using a novel and simplified combat mechanism,

Bodyguard—Overlord allows players to focus on the aspects that gave the Allies victory — intelligence, counter-intelligence and deception. *Bodyguard—Overlord* achieves this using an extensive system of random events to simulate the intelligence and deception efforts employed by both sides in the "Shadow Wars" that

determined the fate of Europe. Using mostly corps-sized units, monthly turns and area movement, *Bodyguard—Overlord* puts the player in the positions of both supreme commander and spymaster. The game features a simple and elegant rules system that captures the essence of the campaign, yet is easy enough to use as an introductory game for new wargamers.

Order Form

YES! Send ___ copies of *Bodyguard—Overlord* to the following address. I enclose \$35.00 per copy.

Ship to:

name

address

city/state/zip

VA residents add 4.5% (\$1.58) state sales tax. Check or money order only. Foreign please add 20% shipping charge.

ZC

Guadalcanal was titans fighting on, and over, a molehill: A six-month struggle for a small patch of a small island in an obscure chain far from home. It is also a very tough battle to simulate, which is probably why there aren't a lot of Guadalcanal games out there. What makes it so difficult is the complexity of the fighting. The land war is linked to the naval war, which is linked to the air war, which is linked to ground control of Henderson Field. None of the individual parts is fully comprehensible when considered in isolation.

Campaign For Guadalcanal

Reviewed by Chris Perleberg

In CAMPAIGN FOR GUADALCANAL, 3W has produced a set of games covering two elements of the struggle, the land war (HENDERSON FIELD) and the surface naval actions in Ironbottom Sound (LONG LANCE). The two games can be loosely linked into a Campaign Game. Of the two, HENDERSON FIELD is the most successful, but both games succeed in their somewhat limited objectives.

Henderson Field: The War on the Ground

HENDERSON FIELD contains a full-sized mapsheet, 182 counters, 12 pages of rules and scenarios, and a game chart. Each turn represents three days, and each hex is about 1000 yards.

The units are mostly battalions, and include units for "transportation regiments" and "ship's engineers" (which are what sailors become after their ships sink). Each unit is rated for movement, combat strength, proficiency, and (for artillery) range.

The counters are first-rate, and the map is very good. Since the battle was dictated by geography more than any other factor, the detailed map is a real plus. The area around Henderson Field is not shown as all jungle; there are many grassy hills and ridges cut with numerous "rivers." Bloody Ridge, Mt. Austen, the Matanikau ... all the familiar landmarks are there.

Look "Gd" • Utility "Gd" • Rules "Gd"

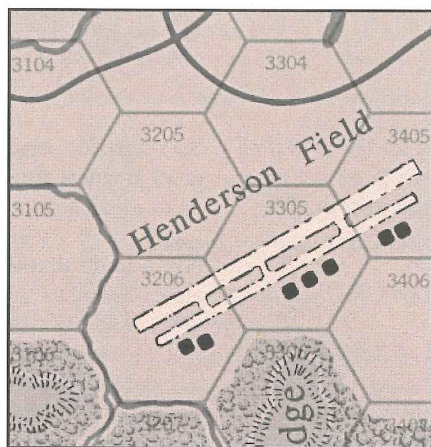
The rules are short and easy to read, with no major problems. The system itself is a descendant of the venerable NAPOLEON AT WATERLOO. You know the routine: one side moves and fights, and then the other side does the same. Units must stop when entering a ZOC (except the Japanese can move from one ZOC to another if they start adjacent). Combat is not mandatory. Stacking is usually two units per hex.

Combat is also familiar. Both sides add up their combat strength, add in any eligible artillery, figure the odds, and roll the die. Combat is affected by terrain, unit proficiency, air power, and entrenchments. Combat results are taken as steps lost or hexes retreated (owner's choice). Victorious units may advance more than one hex after combat.

The game has its share of innovations, too. Units may only use their full movement allowance at the risk of fatigue, neatly simulating the problems with large-scale movements through

the jungle. Artillery can bombard units, possibly disrupting them before combat. Three times during the game, the Japanese can also bombard with naval units, which can leave a lot of American units disrupted. U.S. forces have a limited ability to perform sea movement to land behind Japanese lines. The Japanese are normally concealed, so the enemy player doesn't know exactly what's where (and, when using the optional rules, some of the "what" may turn out to be dummy units) or where the big attack is going to come.

Victory is mostly a matter of holding key terrain hexes, with Henderson Field by far the most important. The Japanese can also gain victory points by bombarding Henderson Field. This requires two artillery units within range and possession of Mount Austen.



These parts of HENDERSON FIELD work pretty well. The game is fairly balanced, and both sides have a different set of problems to resolve. The U.S. player must protect Henderson Field, which means he must spread his units out in a perimeter. It also means he has to be very careful about massing units for an attack. The Japanese player has to seek out weak points, moving around the Marine perimeter to strike where the Marines are spread thinly. He must avoid small, uncoordinated attacks (such as the one offered by the first scenario!).

Not all works well, though. The game tends to be dominated by artillery. The U.S. player can mass up to three artillery units in defense of a hex, while the Japanese can include only two units in the attack. Since the Japanese will normally muster only three or four "decent" attacks per turn, and have fewer artillery units, artillery tends to shift all Japanese attacks to low odds. Although the CRT does have attacker-favorable results at low odds, some players will find this very frustrating (I did). Most other games at this scale have more limits on defending artillery, and I think rightly so. Chrome is also lacking. There are no rules for night combat. Supply is minimal, represented by a preset attrition roll at the end of a turn (although attrition does affect surrounded units first).

The biggest problem is that so many events — those occurring outside the ground war — are beyond the players' control. Japanese naval bombardment always occurs on the same turns, reinforcements always arrive on their historical date, etc. I realize the limited goals of the game, but certainly some of these events could have been "randomized" so that, say, the Japanese player could plan a naval bombardment on a given turn, with a die roll determining whether the bombardment actually

ZONE OF CONTROL

The Voice of American Wargaming



ZOC is a new magazine that views paper wargaming strictly from the player's critical perspective ... a refreshing outlook that gives rise to a lively mix of review and analysis articles in each 52-page issue.

ZOC is published by John Kisner, whom many of you know as a former editor of *F&M*. His able contributors integrate gaming experience and historical knowledge to help readers stay in touch with exciting new developments in simulation design. Together, they are committed to creating a new standard for quality, integrity, and impartiality.

ZOC is dedicated to putting players back in control of the hobby press. Between its covers you will find a neutral zone where ideas are exchanged freely and clearly. Listen closely and you'll hear the voice of American wargaming.

ZOC is an essential and comprehensive guide to the current historical boardgaming scene. With a full year of this quarterly publication just \$18*, how can you afford not to subscribe?

Zone of Control • 1914 40th Place • Des Moines, IA 50310

* Send check or money order — sorry, no credit cards.

Canadian subscriptions are \$21 per year.

Other non-US subscriptions are \$24 per year.



occurs. (A rule something like this is included for the arrival of the Japanese 38th division.) Even events occurring on the map have no strategic ramifications — the Japanese attrition table doesn't change even if they take Henderson!

Game "Gd" • Simulation "Av" • Innovation "Av"

HENDERSON FIELD is fun, if limited, and I like parts of it better than GMT's award-winning OPERATION SHOESTRING — certainly the map is better and combat is a little less cumbersome. All in all, the game is worth playing. It accomplishes fairly well what it sets out to do, and presents players with an interesting situation.

Long Lance: The War at Sea

LONG LANCE contains one 22" x 34" map, 12 pages of rules and scenarios, one double-sided chart, and 318 counters, most of which are markers. Each turn represents about five minutes and each hex is 1000 yards. Ships are represented by silhouettes. The counters are very good, and the map, well, is as good as a naval game map can be (it's mostly blue). There are six scenarios; they cover all the significant naval battles in the waters of Ironbottom Sound. The rules are easy to read and clear.

Look "Gd" • Utility "Av" • Rules "Gd"

The system is similar to 3W's SALVO, which in turn is derived from SPI's old DREADNOUGHT game. Ships are rated for speed, defense, and gunnery. Two tables are used to generate combat results, one to decide the number of hit points, and the second to determine the result of each hit. Hits cause ships to lose combat strength or speed in progressive thirds. Separate procedures

cover torpedo attacks which, as is to be expected, make even small Japanese ships dangerous opponents. Ships have the ability to repair some damage during play.

Play is fairly simple. Both players shoot at each other and then move. Visibility conditions (like night) are determined by die roll and scenario instructions. Special rules cover U.S. radar, visual spotting at night, torpedo reloads, secondary batteries, star shells — it's all there. Optional rules cover special hits, such as rudder or bridge damage.

For all its simplicity, the game is not without interesting interactions. The Japanese can see six hexes further than the enemy, but most U.S. ships have radar (probably too many — radar was not a factor at Savo Island and didn't work particularly well at Cape Esperance). Radar allows a ship to fire at targets it can't see. The enemy's radar causes the Japanese player to try and close to a "magic six" range envelope, where his ships can see the enemy but cannot be seen in return.

But it's not as easy as all that. Japanese torpedoes work best at a range of nine hexes or less, so even the "magic 6" represents a tradeoff. Furthermore, you have to move before visibility is determined, so you can't be absolutely sure what you'll be able to see. Finally, either side can fire star shells to illuminate any ship within 10 hexes (but how you can shoot star shells against a ship you can't see is a minor mystery), which throws another variable into the equation.

You get the idea. It is even fun, assuming you're not asking for a complicated analysis. I'm not sure, though, how many of these interactions represent actual battle decisions.

Game "Gd" • Simulation "Fr" • Innovation "Av"



As a game, LONG LANCE is fine. There's lots of smash and bash, especially since units usually start in range of each other. It might be especially attractive to beginners as an entry-level naval war game. But as a simulation, LONG LANCE falls short and doesn't give enough of a sense of what naval combat was like. Not because of the little things, like armor belt thickness or gun diameters, about which you can quibble forever, but because an engagement rapidly turns into a free-for-all, as ships scatter all over the map. There is no reason given to keep ships together, and a couple of good reasons to split them up. What's missing is a rule for command control — nothing complicated, something as in DREADNOUGHT would suffice. Command control (or lack of it) was the key factor in some of the naval battles covered, and ignoring the issue reduces the value of this game.

The Campaign Game: Combining the Two

There are rules to loosely combine the two games. Basically, you play the naval scenarios at their historically appointed times and apply the results to the ongoing ground game. Alas, the results are minimal: In half the scenarios the naval combat affects only the victory point totals; in three scenarios the results affect attrition for one side or the

other; in two the U.S. airpower may be lost for a turn; only in one scenario are ground reinforcements affected.

The campaign game makes the ground game a little more interesting, but doesn't go far enough. Certainly the combined game is better than nothing, but it suffers from some of the same predictability noted in my earlier discussion of the ground game. The same ships always meet at the same dates — even if a ship is sunk in one scenario, it can still reappear later! Finally, if Japanese land forces control Henderson Field at the time specified for a naval scenario, the sea engagement is still fought. The final result is not altogether satisfying.

As a simulation, CAMPAIGN FOR GUADALCANAL fails to convey more than a minimal sense of the complexities of the cause-and-effect struggle for the island. The unique nature of this campaign makes this rather common design failing more obvious (and annoying) than the usual case. As a game, however, CAMPAIGN FOR GUADALCANAL must be considered an overall success. Both HENDERSON FIELD and LONG LANCE are easy to play, provide interesting problems to be solved, and set the table for a fun evening of good gaming.

Annotated Sequence of Play

Henderson Field

U.S. Reinforcement Phase: U.S. reinforcements enter. The units land and move during the movement phase.

U.S. Movement Phase: U.S. units move. Units that move more than 1/2 their MA are fatigued.

U.S. Combat Phase: U.S. player conducts combat and bombardment in any order desired. Units advance or retreat.

U.S. Disruption Removal: Remove "Disrupted" markers from U.S. units.

Japanese Reinforcement Phase: Japanese reinforcements enter. The units land and move during the movement phase. They may land in any coastal hex not in a zone of control.

Japanese Movement Phase: Units move.

Japanese Combat Phase: Japanese player conducts combat and bombardment in any order desired.

Japanese Disruption Removal: Remove "Disrupted" markers from Japanese units.

Attrition Phase: Each player rolls a die and refers to the Attrition chart. Depending on the roll, a single combat unit may lose a step.

Game Turn Record Phase: Advance the game turn marker.

GAME

Campaign for Guadalcanal

PUBLISHER

3W Inc.
3045 Main Street
Cambria, CA 93428

DESIGN

Michael Smith

GRAPHICS

Joe Youst, Beth Queman,
Joyce Gusner

COMPONENTS

One 22" x 34" map
(each), 500 counters (both),
12 pages of rules and scenarios
(each), one game aid
card for each game.

PRICE

\$35

HENDERSON FIELD

System 3.7 • Size 2.0

LONG LANCE

System 3.7 • Size 2.3

Annotated Sequence of Play

Long Lance

Initiative Determination Phase: Each player rolls a die to determine who will be the first player this turn.

Visibility Determination Phase: One die is rolled to determine visibility for the turn. Both players may fire star shells.

First Target Designation Phase: The first player designates gunfire targets.

Second Target Designation Phase: The second player designates gunfire targets.

Gunfire Execution Phase: Gunfire combat is resolved simultaneously. Damage takes effect after all units have fired.

Torpedo Combat Phase: Both players simultaneously resolve torpedo attacks. Torpedoes launched in previous turns attack if there is now a ship in the designated hex.

First Movement Phase: First player moves.

Second Movement Phase: Second player moves

Damage Control Phase: Both players attempt to repair damage. A die is rolled for each step to be removed.



Despite its title, this publication has nothing to do with Johnny Cash and the fires of passion. Instead, RING OF FIRE is a highly playable game from Moments in History about the Soviet offensive that finally liberated Kharkov from German occupation in August of 1943. The Red Army moved through obstacles both natural (water) and manmade (fire) to close a ring of infernal redemption around the city, a clash simulated here with economy and clarity.

Ring of Fire

Reviewed by Henry Lowood



RING OF FIRE has a personality; it is the friend who earns approval by overcoming one superficially negative impression after another until you realize it would have saved time and energy to like him in the first place. First impressions are often deceptive, and in this case the lesson is especially important, because this game's weakest elements are those noticed at first glance. The poorly reproduced photograph on the box cover and, more significantly, the game map are especially disappointing, and they are probably the two things one sees first. The single mapsheet is marred by an assumed computer glitch that caused continuous elements such as roads and fortifications to cut wide swaths through the blotchy green forests. In areas where these terrain features themselves intersect, topography other than clear terrain is sliced and diced in a manner that hardly pleases the eye. Aesthetics aside, the maps are functional and highlight what one needs to see during play.

The two-sided counters have the bright, shiny look to which wargamers have grown accustomed in the last few years. The primary combat and movement values are easily read, but a larger typeface should have been used for the crucial tank combat effectiveness ratings, if only to make it more obvious that the Soviet player has a couple of tank units with slightly higher ratings than the rest at his disposal. The typographic design on the markers is not as legible as it could be, but the distinctive symbology helps a great deal. One noticeable aspect of the counters, the vehicle silhouettes, points to a separate segment of the combat phase devoted to tank combat (discussed below). Its effect on the counters is to create a logical reason for the silhouettes, which are nicely rendered and accomplish their purpose of visually distinguishing units that are potentially active during this special combat segment.

Despite some of the problems with the graphical presentation, there can be little doubt that RING OF FIRE has been carefully designed, developed, and playtested. This is not a large game nor a difficult one, so play moves along efficiently after the rules, graphic conventions, and unit capabilities are learned. To say the learning process does not take long is an understatement. The well-organized and cleanly-written rules achieve something which has become fairly uncommon in wargames: they make it possible to play RING OF FIRE with only the rare need to subsequently reference the rules booklet. One double-sided player-aid card on stiff cardstock (one copy for each player) provides basic information, should your memory need jogging, as well as carrying the reference charts needed for movement and combat. The errata could almost fit on a postage stamp, consisting of two actual corrections and three

rather obvious rules clarifications.

Learning how to play RING OF FIRE is not difficult, but even so Moments in History has delved into multimedia, loosely speaking, to provide a "talking version" of the game to guide new players through a few turns of play. This optional add-on will be overkill for most players in terms of actually learning the game, but everyone can still profit from the discussion of strategy and tactics on the flipside of the cassette. True novices should find the talking version useful for learning rules and working with a wargame system's fundamentals.

Look "Av" • Utility "Gd" • Rules "Ex"



The designer of RING OF FIRE, John Desch, accomplished two praiseworthy goals. First, he wove together a straightforward set of basic rules into a sequence of phases and mechanics that immediately makes sense. Second, he isolated a small set of essential elements of the fourth battle of Kharkov and developed special rules to simulate them. The combined effect of these two achievements is to introduce unusual game mechanics — such as Desch's interpretation of tank combat — that fit within an overall system that feels familiar and manageable.

The basic framework follows a venerable tradition in East Front battle games. Combat units are characterized by basic movement and combat values, and players use these values to move and fight their forces in segregated sequences using rules that, with slight variations, perhaps dozens of other games have used. Even in light of this design constancy, it is surprising that so few games are able to deliver rules as cleanly-written as those in RING OF FIRE.

The important set of rules describing the movement and combat of units designated as reserves is a good example of Desch's ability to express clearly a design element that is hardly new, but has often worked poorly in other games. This is a good thing, too, because if you do not understand how to use reserves in this game, you will not penetrate the enemy line after combat as the Soviet player, and you will not be able to thwart the Soviet offensive as the German player. Another example is the close to verbatim borrowing of CAMPAIGN TO STALINGRAD's notion of the "zone of control bond," here called Zoc Links. This was not a case of plagiarism, as the provenance of the rule is noted clearly, but does confirm that the designer knows a good rule when he sees it. The same can be said for the abstract air support markers, whose use and effects go back to games designed by Jim Dunnigan twenty years ago.




So much for the solid foundation formed from a mixture of largely old and borrowed materials. The tradition of East Front design has also given us a series of innovations designed to represent the quintessential elements of this campaign at its various stages, principally by underlining the importance of armored warfare and the relative tactical and operational evolution of the Soviet and German armies. The primary design twist of RING OF FIRE comes into play here, namely tank combat. Ground combat units are divided basically into two groups, those that can participate in tank combat and those that cannot. The former are identified by the vehicle silhouettes and by a special rating on the counter, while the latter lack these visual cues (their counters receive familiar NATO-style unit type boxes). The rating simply represents a kill rate against a single die roll in tank combat, and German units have a much higher rating.

There are subtle distinctions here in comparison to previous game designs. Separating tank from regular combat simulates the superiority of German forces in certain situations (high kill rates in tank combat) while preventing German panzer units from becoming all-powerful obstacles on the frontline, where they are wasted unless it is absolutely necessary to use them. With abundant airpower and artillery support, the Soviet player can still steamroll virtually any static position, particularly in open terrain.

Technically, RING OF FIRE offers two scenarios. The shorter is nothing more than a truncated version of the full game (which consists of 14 daily turns, August 3-16, 1943). Victory points determine the winner, and in effect the Soviet player wins either scenario by taking objectives (towns and cities) or exiting units off the southern or western map edges. A wide range of outcomes are plausible, depending on the skill levels of the players. The estimated playing time on the box is accurate for players who have learned the game: roughly two hours for the short scenario and eight hours for the full game.

Game "Ex" • Simulation "Gd" • Innovation "Gd"

 In the end, RING OF FIRE is a thoroughly enjoyable throwback to an earlier era of wargaming, when the market was not deluged with products and winning designs were played repeatedly. The game is marked by a clear design strategy, a well constructed set of fundamental rules, and a leavening of novel design elements. Taken together, these aspects encourage the give-and-take of repeated play, with the consequent development of new tactics and strategies. If your first impression of the components or a quick glance at the rules leaves you skeptical, hang in there and give RING OF FIRE a chance; it may well become one of your favorites... and perhaps even set you ablaze.

Annotated Sequence of Play

Soviet Player Turn

Replacement Phase

Use replacement steps available on this turn to build up units on the map or to bring units from the dead pile back into play.

Regular Movement Phase

After checking supply status of units at the start of this phase, move them or place them into reserve. Know where attacks will occur and be sure to have reserves nearby to exploit successful combat results. Be careful not to move Soviet tank units adjacent to German tank units unless absolutely necessary, and then only in force. Remember to place air interdiction markers now, which are particularly useful when placed atop units about to be attacked in order to foil German defensive reserves.

Combat Phase

Tank Combat Segment: Adjacent tank units fire at each other. German armor is overwhelmingly superior in this phase of the game: Soviet step losses average between three and four times German losses.

Air Strike Segment: Place air units to strike German ground units and possibly cause step losses, though this is probably the least effective

way to use air units in this game.

Regular Combat Segment: First declare *all* attacks; also assign barrage markers and air support to nullify German fortifications (barrage markers only) and to shift the attack to a more favorable odds column. German reserves may be moved to reinforce units under attack. Combat resolution occurs after these steps are completed for *all* units and is straightforward. (Note: combat supply is checked at moment of combat.)

Reserve Movement Phase

Soviet units with reserve markers on them get another movement phase now, with some restrictions, such as getting only one-half of their movement allowance. Note that retreats and advances generally do not occur in the combat phase (unless defenders are eliminated), so without reserves, the lines do not move much.

Reserve Combat Phase

Pretty much repeats the regular combat phase, but of course only Soviet reserves participate.

German Player Turn

Repeats Soviet sequence, with roles reversed.

Game Turn Indication Phase

Takes longer to say than do: Advance the game turn marker.

GAME
Ring of Fire

PUBLISHER
Moments in History
clo Admiralty House
Publications
1387 5th Street
Los Osos CA 93402

DESIGNER
John Desch

GRAPHICS
John Kranz

COMPONENTS
One 22" x 34" map, 360
(1/2") counters, one 24-page
rules booklet, two cardstock
player aid cards for each
side, and six-sided die.
There is an optional "talk-
ing version" audio cassette.

PRICE
\$30 ("talking version" \$32)

COMPLEXITY
Size: 2.4 • System: 5.3



This is not a “standard” wargame. A quick examination of the annotated sequence of play will tell you that. BODYGUARD—OVERLORD has some unusual mechanics, and more importantly has a decidedly unconventional focus. While most designers would begin a game of the Normandy invasion on D-Day, John Prados has made events leading to the drama on the beaches his primary concern. The novel premise has resulted in a simple, enjoyable game.

Bodyguard-Overlord

Reviewed by Terry Rooker



Novel premises, fortunately, don't always lead to novel-length rulebooks. Unfortunately, for such a simple system, the rules are fairly dense. A traditional “case” format is combined with narrative descriptions, and the two do not mix well. Fortunately, because the system is simple it is possible to quickly hunt down needed information, and soon the rulebook can be placed aside. More to Spearhead's credit, essential material is tabulated in the rules so that it stands out from the text.

In general all the game components are serviceable — but they are not flashy as is the current trend in the industry. The 3" x 5" cards are of particularly good quality, but are probably a needless extravagance. Their function could have been served equally well, and at less expense, by a random events table. I

am a big fan of card use in simulation games, but even I admit that if the cards only convey a few pieces of information — unless that information is very graphical — you really don't need them. Their inclusion on the component list is even a little misleading, implying they are part of some detailed mechanism to recreate intelligence operations — operations that still remain largely outside the players' control in this game.

Look “Fr” • Utility “Gd” • Rules “Fr”



BODYGUARD—OVERLORD simulates events leading to the Allied invasion of Europe in 1944. Beginning on the first monthly turn in December of 1943, players are involved in preparing for D-Day. Central to these preparations is the Allied attempt to deceive

Annotated Sequence of Play

Pre-game Activities

1.) The German player places the units made available on the German Set-up Table in areas of continental Europe.

2.) The Allied player plans his initial invasion by recording the following information: invasion date, invasion site, Partisan Trigger Signal (issued the turn before the invasion to activate one partisan unit), and the Invasion Warning Signal (which activates all partisan units).

3.) The Allied player puts Intelligence Chits into an opaque container. Two chits each are put into the container for the real invasion date and site. One chit is put into the container for each of the other possible dates and sites, for the Trigger Signal, and for the Warning Signal. Finally five “dummy” chits, called *Bodyguard Chits*, are put into the container.

4.) The Allied player places his units in Britain and North Africa, and can place partisan units in continental Europe.

Monthly Game Turns

Allied Player-Turn

Deployment Segment: The Allied Player places any reinforcements. If this is the invasion month he must announce it and place the Game Ends Marker in the second

succeeding month. He may then cancel the invasion if things look grim.

Movement Segment: The Allied Player may move up to 15 units. (If an invasion is scheduled there is no restriction on the number of units. In addition, he must mark the invasion site and decide if there will be a second invasion. If so, extra chits for that invasion are now put in the Eyes-Only cup.)

Combat Segment: The Allied Player may now resolve any combats he desires. Combat is between units in the same area, and is mandatory only if the friendly unit just moved. Combat resolution does not use a die roll. Rather, the total strength of the attacker is compared to the total strength of the defender. The winner is the player with more strength points. The ratio of points is used to determine the losses. For example, if the ratio is 3:1 the loser removes three units (and the winner none). After combats, the player determines supply status.

Intelligence and Sabotage Segment: The Allied Player draws an Intelligence Card and carries out its instructions. He may also draw chits from the Eyes-Only cup. He may then conduct reconnaissance using air units or partisans. Partisans may attempt sabotage.

Allied Broadcast Segment: The Allied Player may make any statements he wants about the progress of the war. He must announce

one of the 15 special phrases. Two of these phrases are the triggers to activate Partisans, the rest are dummies.

German Player Turn

Deployment Segment: The German Player can place reinforcements and may have to withdraw units.

Movement Segment: The German Player may move up to ten combat units or agents. He may also move one static unit using Strategic Redeployment. (On the turn of the first invasion he has no restriction on the number of units he may move.)

Combat Segment: This segment is the same as for the Allied Player.

Intelligence and Sabotage Segment: The German Player draws an Intelligence Card and carries out its actions. The German player may draw chits from the Eyes-Only cup. He may conduct reconnaissance using agents, and possibly aircraft.

German Broadcast Segment: The German Player, using his best “Lord Haw Haw” voice, may make any statements he wants about the progress of the war.

End Turn Phase

Advance the game turn marker one space. (If this is the first invasion turn, the marker is not advanced until the players repeat the turn sequence — effectively a double turn.)

the Germans as to the actual invasion plan. A heavy dose of limited intelligence rules makes the first few turns an interesting cat-and-mouse game as the Germans attempt to divine the invasion date, invasion site, partisan trigger signal, and invasion warning signal chosen by his opponent. Play ends after two months of "conventional" wargaming following the invasion.

The intelligence picture is provided by Intelligence Chits drawn from the "Eyes-Only" coffee cup. Duplicate chits are placed in the cup for the real invasion site and date. When the German Player draws both chits for a site or date, then he knows when or where the invasion will occur. In a similar fashion, there is a chit for each of the signals to activate the Partisans. Drawing either of these two chits will alert the Germans to proximity of the invasion when the phrase is "broadcast" on the BBC.

The German Player draws chits based upon the number of "agents" he has in play. The only real way for the German to increase his efficiency is to infiltrate these agents into Britain or North Africa. The German Player can then draw two chits per agent rather than just one. Attempting to infiltrate requires a roll on the Agent Table, and the agent might switch over to the Allies as a result. Each Allied-controlled agent allows him to draw one chit from the cup and remove it from play, representing deceptions that successfully conceal information. Obviously, if a lucky Allied player draws one of the "real" site or date chits, the Germans can never find out that information in advance of the invasion.

Limited intelligence elements pervade the design. Units are kept face down until combat or a successful reconnaissance. There are also dummy units and chits. The dummy chits in the cup may cause a wasted draw, and the dummy units can deceive your opponent about your dispositions. Since combat against dummy units is resolved *before* the unit is revealed, an elimination result may end up being wasted.

The last element of the intelligence game is also simple, the play of cards. Each player draws one Intelligence Card during each of his turns. These cards are basically random events, with a different event for the Allied and German Player on each card. By and large, these represent French resistance activities, intelligence bonuses, and special agent actions. They add a lot of spice and romance to the game.

There are strong historical lessons to be learned. The intelligence sub-game provides an abstract sense of why the Allies and Germans took the actions they did in preparation for the invasion. The German Player must cover the most likely locations until he gets a more specific indication. In one game, as the Allied Player, I chose to invade from the Bay of Biscay. This beach had the largest capacity; it could accommodate eight divisions in the assault. The landing overwhelmed the piecemeal German defenders. Then, when the Germans were strung out, the second invasion hit near Antwerp and raced for Berlin. Had the Germans drawn the correct chits, the result could have been devastating. In another game the Germans had five German Agents in Britain after they got very lucky on infiltration rolls. That meant he was drawing 10+ chits every turn! Fortunately, I drew one of the date chits, so he could never know when the invasion was coming, but he did discover the site was Normandy so he could really fortify the area. In that case the second front never developed and Eisenhower was sent packing in disgrace, lucky to keep his permanent rank of colonel and membership in the country club back home.

Game "Gd" • Simulation "Fr" • Innovation "Av"

If you get past the bland presentation and simple mechanics, you will find BODYGUARD-OVERLORD fun and possibly exciting. The excitement comes from trying to guess or infer your opponent's intentions, much as in a game of BATTLESHIP or STRATEGO. It can even provide some small insight into the intelligence thrust and parry that preceded the invasion. This game seems to have what gamers have been clamoring for: simple rules, exciting situation, functional (but not flashy) graphics, and a low effort set-up (there is one mapsheet and only about 100 counters in play). Now if there was only some way to play it solitaire...



GAME
Bodyguard/Overlord

PUBLISHER
Spearhead Games
PO Box 523263
Springfield, VA 22152

DESIGN
John Prados

GRAPHICS
Kevin Zucker

COMPONENTS
One 22" x 34" map, 300 (1/2")
counters, 12 page rulebook, 8 page
Study Folder, two identical sheets of
tables, 36 cards (3" x 5"), and 1d10.

PRICE
\$35

COMPLEXITY
Size 2.5 • System 3.7



Breakout... Please! **DECISION IN FRANCE** depicts the Allies' expanding occupation of Northern France in the Summer of 1944. Rhino Games presents the events of July and August as a dichotomy of first the slow blood-letting in the bocage country, followed by the wide-open drive across the Seine.

Decision in France

Reviewed by Mark Hunter



In an age of \$50 games, **DECISION IN FRANCE** is a \$25 zip-lock bargain. Four hundred multi-color back-printed counters, a 22"x 34" mapsheet, 4 heavy-stock player aid cards, and of course a rulebook are included. The counters are a carousel of colors: Americans Christmas green, Brits tan, Allied Minors red, German Wehrmacht olive green, German 15th Army light blue, Luftwaffe dark blue, and for the SS their usual black. The only criticism of the color scheme is the Canadians' light green, which is woefully close to the Wehrmacht's olive. All units without a zone of control are shown with a white stripe. In addition to the combat units, there are also numerous player aid markers to designate reserve status, movement, truck supply lines, or disruption. I always find Rhino's playing pieces, as well as the map work, tastefully done.

The map covers Northern France and parts of Belgium (although the borders are not shown) from Cherbourg in the north to Troyes in the south to Antwerp in the east. The map only goes as far as Rennes in the west, so control of Brittany's ports is abstractly depicted in game terms through the exit of combat factors off the west edge. The terrain and mapping style are similar to Rhino's **CAMPAIGN TO STALINGRAD**: major and minor cities, villages, woods and rough woods, major and minor rivers and marsh. There is also terrain unique to the French countryside, such as bocage and fortress cities. Absent from the map are the railnets which were so prominent on this game's East Front cousin, reflecting the Western Theater's logistical emphasis on trucks over trains. Another change is the enlargement of the map hex from 5/8" to 3/4" — with a corresponding scale change from 16 km per hex in **CAMPAIGN TO STALINGRAD** to 12 km per hex in **DECISION IN FRANCE**.

The game utilizes a step reduction system, with most units represented by two counters. Front-and-back printed combat units may be in play with anywhere from 1 to 4 steps in strength. I personally like this approach because of its ability to realistically reflect the incremental strength of divisions without extra strength chits on the map — or worse yet for my taste, off-board recordkeeping. Another advantage is the ability of the step reduction to affect the defense factor differ-

ently from the attack factor. In the game the German player will find himself starved for units, so breakdown of strong units into smaller task forces is quite useful. To keep all these extra units straight, organizational cards are included for the Allied and German players. Set-up is a little time consuming, but worth it once play begins.

The 19 pages of rules are well written and easily understood. For me, examples of play speak volumes for clarity, and designer/publisher Mark Simonitch has been generous in this regard. The rulebook is also well organized, so finding things is easy during play. I also found the heavy cardstock cover on the rules a nice touch. A separate player aid card is included for such tables as parachute drop, strafing, weather, terrain effect, river crossing, determined defense, and combat results. No game would be complete without an errata page, and one is included in the package. There are other minor problems to be discovered during your first games, but solutions will be figured easily.

Look "Gd" • Utility "Ex" • Rules "Gd"



A traditional wargame, **DECISION IN FRANCE** has enough innovation to keep the system fresh without resort to gimmickry. Take, for example, the combat procedure. As expected, combat involves ratios of attacker to defender, with the expected modifiers for terrain and armor superiority. More innovative are the combat options, which may be selected by the players in addition to the required modifiers. Should the attacker declare a *determined assault* in the hopes of a better advance (but with a corresponding risk of greater losses)? Should the defender attempt to slow the assault with a *determined defense* (trading troops for time)? When does the German declare his *heavy tank bonus*? These are all decisions that lie beyond the simple combat odds.

The movement rules are also successful in confronting the players with multiple options, each with their own advantages and disadvantages. *Operational movement* increases the amount of ground a unit may traverse, but leaves it disrupted in the

Annotated Sequence of Play

Allied Player Turn

Allied Initial Phase

Player aid markers (such as reserved status) are removed. Decisions will also be made concerning what units will be built-up from England, what units will receive petrol, and whether any new trucks will be purchased.

Allied Movement Phase

After rolling for weather, the player may move any non-disrupted unit. The Allied player may also designate units in reserve status to potentially move in mobile assault or to later reinforce another unit.

Allied Combat Phase

Combats are resolved, followed by mobile assaults. Units may become disrupted.

Allied Supply Phase

Check supply status of Allied units. Those not in general supply may be reduced through attrition. Disrupted markers are removed and replaced with a movement marker (preventing a prepared defense).

German Player Turn

The German turn is identical to the Allied turn, except there is no initial phase and weather is not rolled for.

process. The German player may even find his unit strafed by Allied airpower if he is so brazen as to try to move too far in good weather. *Tactical movement* shortens movement distance, but more successfully navigates terrain and zone of control hindrances. The decision to move at all is tempered by the "prepared defense" rule which doubles the defenders' combat factor if they have not moved. Should the German player pull back in a slower tactical withdrawal to keep the prepared defense bonus, or withdraw as fast as possible trading mobility for lost defense strength? Once again, the system successfully challenges the players with interesting and historically valid operational choices.

While the German player is confronting questions of withdrawal, the Allied player will be pondering those of supply. All Allied units need petrol each turn, in most cases delivered by truck points. Obviously, the further the advance, the more stress is put on the truck convoys to deliver fuel to the fanned-out units. Spearheads are at times slowed as much by supply limitations as by German resistance. Supply plays a definite role in determining the type of envelopment the Allied player will choose in chasing the Germans toward the Seine.

DECISION IN FRANCE has three scenarios: The Battle for the Bocage, Breakout, and the Campaign Game. To be blunt, the first is a real drag to play. Trench warfare circa 1916 looks fun compared to this slugfest. Historically, the bocage fighting was not a battle of movement, and the scale used in this game is not best for simulating the particularities of that fight. Mr. Simonitch admits in his designer notes that this scenario was included primarily for the frustration and euphoria created when the breakout finally occurs. That's an understatement! This is like smashing cans on your head because stopping feels so good.

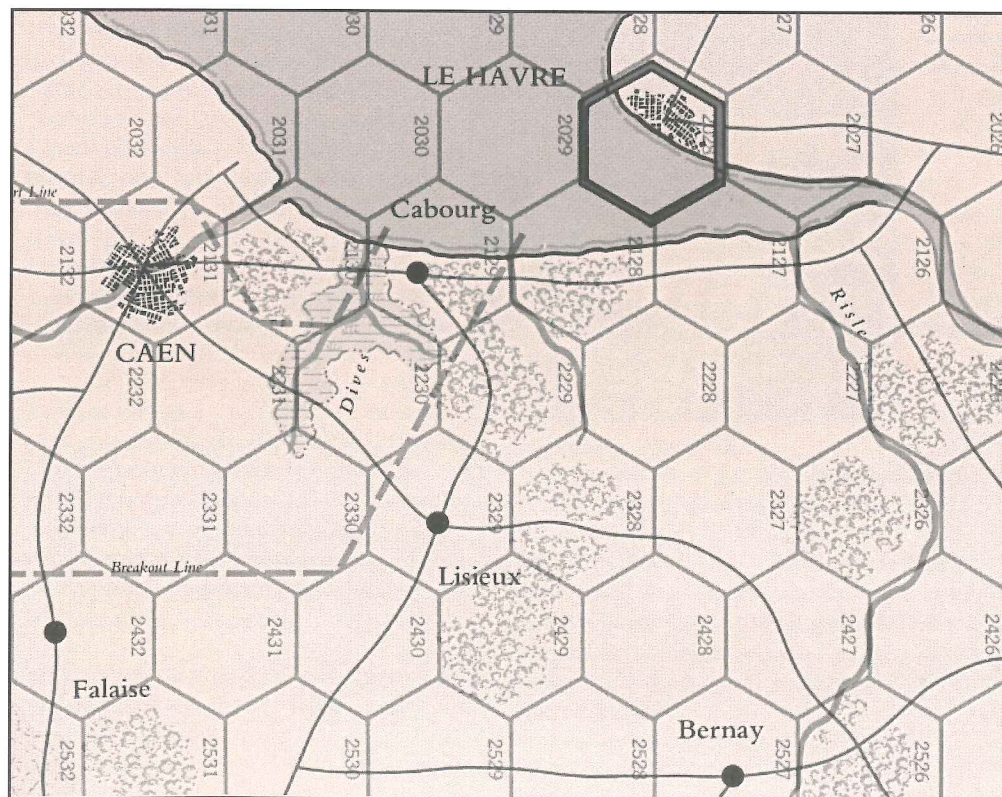
Breakout stands in marked contrast. This is where the system begins to shine and where Allied players get to make more strategic choices: Do you pursue a broad front or a narrow front? Do you divert units to take the Brittany ports? Do you airborne assault now or save them for a later Market-Garden campaign? And then there is the Paris dilemma.

I like DECISION IN FRANCE but at the same time can't help feeling a little disappointed. Being a great fan of Rhino's earlier CAMPAIGN TO STALINGRAD, I was expecting some things that aren't present in the system's latest incarnation. Take, for example, the "zone of control bonds" which worked wonderfully in the open steppes of Russia. These were (regrettably) not deemed necessary to simulate fighting in the more confined French Theater. Also, the earlier game's rules for major city battles, which divided each city hex into six zones, have been abandoned here — also to reflect the different nature of the campaign. These observations are not criticisms so much as an index of how much I liked the earlier game. Still, I emphasize there are lots of new elements in DECISION IN FRANCE which more than make up for the loss of the aforementioned rules.

Game "Gd" • Simulation "Av" • Innovation "Av"



The bottom line is Rhino didn't give us CAMPAIGN TO STALINGRAD with a new map — we would have been cheated if that were the case. North France was a different campaign; altogether smaller, and with different combatants using a battle philosophy not yet seen on the Eastern Front. That required some new thinking, and DECISION IN FRANCE contains just that.



GAME
Decision in France

PUBLISHER
Rhino Game Co.
P.O. Box 5660
Vallejo, CA 94591-0660

DESIGN
Mark Simonitch

GRAPHICS
Mark Simonitch

COMPONENTS
One 22"x34" mapsheet,
400 full-color counters, 4
player aid cards, and 19-
page bound rulebook.

PRICE
\$25

COMPLEXITY
Size 2.4 • System 4.6

After a hard day of dueling with the word processor and chasing a three-year-old kid around the house, I rarely have the energy for anything more demanding than television. I like my TV simple (no *Masterpiece Theater*, please), short (an hour-long drama? Maybe. A four-hour mini-series? Forget it.), and reasonably engaging (I draw the line at *Three's Company*). If nothing's on, I'll settle for a wargame, providing it meets the same criteria. GUERILLA, Avalon Hill's blissfully easy card game of man-to-man warfare, is the perfect panacea for the chronically exhausted.

Guerilla

Reviewed by Rick Swan

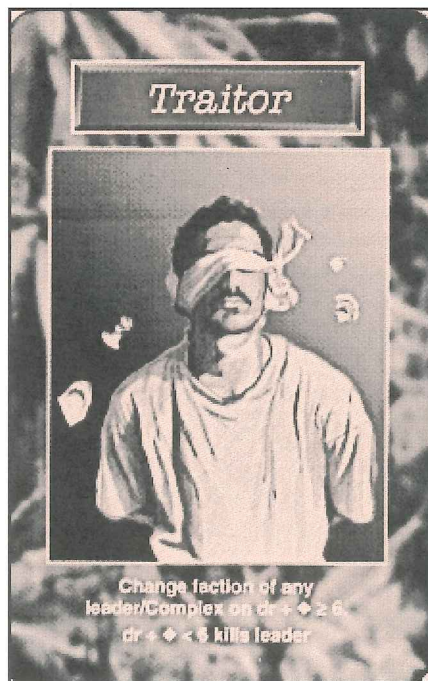
No complaints about the components. This is state-of-the-art stuff, from the attractive cover art to the pro-quality dice. The cards, as durable as a Vegas poker deck, feature vivid illustrations of combat-weary soldiers and key landmarks (the Presidential Palace, the Banco De Nationale). The detail is striking: you can count the steps on the lookout ladder on the Barracks card, and the image of a thunderstorm on the Bad Weather card looks real enough to be a photograph. The clever use of color and symbols provides a lot of information in a small amount of space. Color codes indicate when particular cards may be played (red cards are played when drawn, black cards only on the owner's turn, yellow cards on anyone's turn), the number of diamonds stands for a leader's die-roll modifier. More variety in the portraits would've been nice — all the Government soldiers look identical, as do the Rebels — but additional artwork would've probably bumped the budget; the game's pricey enough as is.

The heavy-duty counters, most of them used for bookkeeping, boast crisp graphics and sharp colors. Players will have no trouble distinguishing the turquoise Isolation markers from the mottled Ambush counters, nor will they have to squint to read the numbers on the Damage chits. Printing Sequence of Play Summaries and the Sudden Death Track on cardboard tiles instead of paper sheets may strike some as odd, but I prefer them. Not only are they easier to read than the paper counterparts, they stand up better to wear and tear.

The rulebook is a model of tight writing and sensible organization; a designer familiar with the English language is always a treat, as is an editor (uncredited — who is he?) who knows the difference between completeness and clutter. Thorough examples illuminate the murkier rules. Bold headings make it a snap to locate pertinent mechanics. There are no player's tips — they're unnecessary for a game this simple — but I missed the designer's notes. I'd like to know, for instance, where Schlaffer drew his inspiration (maybe from UP FRONT, the old SQUAD LEADER card game?). Schlaffer's musings could've easily fit in the box at the end of the rulebook, squandered on Avalon Hill's umpteenth plug for *The General*.

Look "Ex" • Utility "Ex" • Rules "Ex"

GUERILLA gallops along like a good game of BRIDGE. With no charts to check, no numbers to juggle, and no convoluted systems to interpret, players can concentrate on their cards. A turn involves the expenditure of Actions, most of them invested in rearranging deployed units into more advantageous groupings or conducting attacks. Resolving an attack consists of comparing the Attack Total (the strength of the units in the attacking group, plus the leader card's Command number, plus a die-roll) to the Defense Total (which uses the same formula as the Attack Total). The side with the losing score eliminates a number of units equal to the difference between the Totals. Eliminated units are removed, and Victory Points are awarded to the winning player. Damage markers are placed on successfully attacked Complexes. When the Damage marker total exceeds the Complex's Defense Factor, the Complex is destroyed.



What enlivens the otherwise tedious you-attack-then-I-attack routine are the yellow and black specialty cards, which function both as random events and die-roll modifiers. A player with a black Assassin card can attempt to knock off an enemy leader, unless the enemy player sabotages his efforts with a yellow Bodyguard card. A black Arms Cache card allows the same friendly group to attack twice. A yellow Press card doubles the point value of a battle, an Atrocities card cuts it in half. The red Complex cards also get into the act, with an Airfield Complex granting the ability to make air strikes, and the Port Complex allowing the owning player to hold an extra card in his hand.

Though GUERILLA has no aspirations as a realistic simulation, it does manage to emphasize the importance of command with well-drawn — though admittedly modest — leadership rules. If a player wants to assemble units into groups, he needs a leader; when the leader goes, the group essentially dissolves. A strong leader dramatically improves a group's chance of combat success; conversely, units without leaders are sitting ducks. And a leader may only be individually targeted if the enemy has an Assassin card, a clever way to demonstrate the leader's superiority to a run-of-the-mill soldier.

As if navigating random events and keeping their leaders alive weren't enough to keep players on their toes, the game makes sure they're never quite able to tell their friends from their foes. At the outset, players choose sides at random by secretly

drawing Loyalty markers. If you're representing the Government, the player on your right might be a Rebel or he might be another Government guy; there's no way to know. A running total of Government and Rebel points are kept throughout the game, regardless of the player who scores them (if Player A scores 20 Rebel points and Player B scores 15 Rebel points, the current Rebel total is 35). At the end of a game, the total number of Government points and Rebel points are compared to determine the winning faction. The players then reveal their allegiances. If a player belongs to the winning faction, he keeps all the points he earned. If he belongs to the losing faction, he keeps only half of his earned points. The players continue with these scores if they're playing a multi-game campaign. To further complicate matters, a player drawing a Revolution card may force any two opponents to switch Loyalty markers; thus, a player who's spent half the game running up the Government total may suddenly find himself a Rebel.

If the Loyalty rules seem arbitrary — well, they are. Players who resist the idea of having the rug pulled out from under them should probably pass on GUERILLA, or at the very least, banish the Revolution card from the deck. Luck, in fact, plays a crucial role in GUERILLA, too much, I'd guess, for those more attuned to CHESS than ROULETTE. Players are completely at the mercy of the draw, both in their card hands and Loyalty markers (the Government has a slight edge; in case of a tie, the Government wins). Acquiring an Assassin card at an opportune moment can have devastating effects on the opposition.

A player without the right Complex cards faces an uphill battle. And he'll also need some luck in recruiting opponents — GUERILLA is next to impossible without three players, five being the optimum number.

More troubling for veteran gamers is GUERILLA's lackadaisical approach to the topic it allegedly simulates. This is no more a realistic portrayal of guerilla warfare than *Father Knows Best* is a realistic portrayal of American family life. Units can't move, they don't carry weapons, and they have no personalities (a soldier is little more than a number). Except as die-roll modifiers, the Complexes have no strategic value, nor do they have any geographic significance (where are these ports, anyway?). There are no scenarios; GUERILLA battles take place in the *Twilight Zone*. And the Trading phase, where generals exchange soldiers like baseball teams swap third basemen, is patently absurd.

Game "Gd" • Simulation "Pr" • Innovation "Ex"

GUERILLA is hardly a triumph of the intellect, and it won't be mistaken for a history lesson. But only a curmudgeon could complain about the play value. The streamlined turn sequence moves the game along at a brisk pace, and the slick systems ensure that competitors spend more time slapping down cards than arguing over obscure rules. Best of all, the game demands only a modest investment of time. Requiring a half-hour to learn and maybe 20 minutes to play, GUERILLA's about as long as an episode of *Mission: Impossible*. And it's just as much fun.

Annotated Sequence of Play

Set-Up

The dealer, chosen by a high die-roll, distributes eight cards to each player. Players secretly draw Loyalty markers from an opaque container to determine if they'll be representing the Government or the Rebels. Anyone possessing a Complex card (a special military or political asset, such as a TV Station or a Barracks) must display it in front of him. Each player sorts his unit and leader cards into as many groups as he likes, providing no group contains more than one leader and three units (or one Complex, one unit, and/or one leader). Groups are displayed face-up. Players then draw enough cards from the deck to refill their hands.

First Player Turn

Withdrawal: Any displayed group (or portion of a group) may be returned to the hand by spending an Action.

Attack: Any displayed group may be activated to attack an enemy group. The same group may only attack once per turn. With a few exceptions, attacks cost one Action each.

Deploy: New units and leaders may be deployed from the hand; they may be added to existing groups or combined to form new groups. Each deployment costs one Action. Units may also be

deployed into an enemy player's group, with or without the enemy's consent; such units then become the property of the enemy player.

Trade: Any cards from the hand may be traded with other players. Each proposed trade costs one Action, regardless of whether the offer is accepted.

Discard/Repair: By expending an Action, as many as four cards may be discarded from the hand and replaced with draws from the deck. Damage to a Complex may be repaired by expending another Action and rolling a die; the damage is reduced by an amount equal to half the result.

Draw: As many cards as necessary to fill the hand may be drawn from the deck; this costs an Action.

Subsequent Player Turns

All other players, in clockwise order around the table, repeat the above sequence.

End Game

When the last card from the pile has been drawn, Sudden Death begins. Each player rolls a die at the end of his turn. When a roll is greater than or equal to the number indicated on the Sudden Death tile (9 on the first Sudden Death round, 8 on the second, and so on), the game ends and scores are tallied.

GAME
Guerilla

PUBLISHER
Avalon Hill Game Co.
4517 Harford Road
Baltimore, MD 21214

DESIGN
Neal Schlaffer

GRAPHICS
Steve Langmead

COMPONENTS
One 8-page rulebook, 128
playing cards, one sheet of
counters (ranging in size
from 1 1/2" to 2", about 120
in all), two 10-sided dice.

PRICE
\$25

COMPLEXITY
Size 2.5 • System 2.8

Replacements

ACROSS THE POTOMAC (*Command* #30). A double-blind game of the Gettysburg Campaign with 128 5/8" counters and a pair of 22" x 17" maps.

THE ATLANTA CAMPAIGN I (*Strategy & Tactics* #169). *BLUE & GRAY* applied to the battles of Jonesboro and Peachtree Creek. 120 counters and two 22" x 17" maps.

AVALANCHE (Avalanche). The invasion of Italy in 1943 at battalion and company level; two km. per hex. Detailed tank combat. One map, 720 counters.

BATTLE FOR GERMANY (Decision Games). The last six months of WWII in Europe. A new edition of the old SPI title. Fun for two or three. 120 counters, 22" x 17" map.

BATTLES FOR THE ARDENNES (Decision Games). 3rd edition of the SPI classic. Novel twist remains its inclusion of both '40 & '44 battles. 800 counters and two maps.

BATTLES FOR WATERLOO (GMT). Three full-sized maps depict Ligny/Quatre Bras on one side, Mont St. Jean/ Wavre on the back. Battles can be linked. 480 counters.

THE RISING SUN (Clash of Arms). First in a "HARPOON for WWII" series. Early Pacific naval combat with lots of rules & 400 counters of individual planes/ships.

CRIMEAN SHIELD (3W). Multiple scenarios for gaming portions Crimean fighting during WWII. Mostly divisions & regiments; 2 km. per hex. One map, 800 counters.

ENEMY AT THE GATES (The Gamers). Mammoth 4-map/2400 counter game of the Soviet counteroffensive during the 2nd phase of the Stalingrad battle. Part of the OCS series.

FATEFUL LIGHTNING (XTR). Innovative system makes even the familiar fighting at Gettysburg seem new again. Two maps and 940 counters.

HUNTERS FROM THE SKY (The Gamers). The first TCS look at airborne ops: Maleme Airfield in 1941. Version 3.1 series rules, two maps, 840 counters (platoons & vehicles).

LA BATAILLE DE WAVRE (Clash of Arms). This expansion for LIGNY continues the Prussian actions in Waterloo battles. Notes link *LA BATAILLE* games to *L' ARMÉE DU NORD*.

THE LAST BLITZKRIEG (3W). A regimental-level Bulge game with quite a bit of chrome, including random events, layered on a traditional structure. 300 counters, one map.

LENINGRAD (Decision Games). A new edition of the old SPI simulation of the German drive on Leningrad in 1941. One small map, 120 counters.

LOST VICTORY (GMT). The winter of '43 battle for Kharkov at regimental level. An interactive design scaled at 6 km. per hex, 3 days per turn. 480 counters, one map.

MACARTHUR'S RETURN (Avalanche). The ground battle for Leyte island in 1944. One map and 720 counters (some of which are camouflage patterned!).

MAHARAJA (TAHGC). Abstract multi-player game of the history of India to the establishment of the British Raj. Based on BRITANNIA system. A 22" x 24" map and 240 counters.

MEDFRONT (Columbia). Basically an expansion for WESTFRONT, but also a stand-alone game of the Spanish Civil War and North African campaign. 50 blocks, two maps.

OPERATION SHOCK TROOP (*Strategy & Tactics* #168). A fairly complex look at the Israeli drive on Damascus in 1973. 240 counters (companies & battalions) and one map.

SECOND FRONT (GRD). This *EUROPA* game of 1943-44 campaigns in Italy & France is probably the heaviest game ever. Four maps, 4,800 counters and mounds of rules, etc.

SHENANDOAH: VALLEY OF FIRE (Pacific Rim). Uses the LEE INVADERS THE NORTH system; features both 1862 and 1864 Valley campaigns in six scenarios. One map, 200 counters.

SWORD & SHIELD (3W). A simple Medieval quad consisting of the battles of Stamford Bridge, Kalaura, Lake Peipus, and Bannockburn. Four 17" x 22" maps, 400 counters.

VOLGAFRONT (Columbia). This expansion for EASTFRONT contains a map extension, 2nd-edition rules, and new scenarios — many premised on a German win at Stalingrad.

WORLD WAR I (Decision Games). New edition of SPI's simple strategic game, with the sideshow fight over the Caucasus added for good measure. 120 counters, 22" x 17" map.

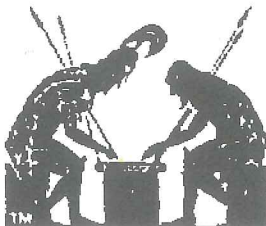
Subscribe Today!

I am so confident that the quality of writing in these pages will sell itself that I decided to mail the premier issue of *ZOC* to 3,000 fellow wargamers. If you're among this group, I hope you like what you've read so far. If so, I know you won't want to miss a single issue, so please take a few moments to subscribe today. On page 40 you'll find all the pertinent details; on this page you'll find only my sincere thanks in advance for giving us a trial.

John W. Kisner

\$22.25 ... Ring of Fire (MiH)
\$7.00 ... Dixie (Columbia)
\$22.00 ... Fateful Lightning (XTR)
\$10.40 ... World War One (SPI/DG)
\$28.75 ... Hunters from the Sky (Gamers)
\$36.90 ... Days of Decision II (ADG)
\$24.00 ... Cry Havoc (SG)
\$79.80 ... Sagunto (Sim Tac)
\$25.90 ... Bodyguard-Overlord (Spearhead)
\$33.60 ... Plague (B&B)
\$25.90 ... Borodino (GUS)
\$22.25 ... The Last Blitzkrieg (3W)
\$26.00 ... Longstreet's Assault (Xeno)
\$28.80 ... Ironclads (Excalibre)
\$26.30 ... Age of Exploration (TJ)
\$15.00 ... Cobra (SPI/TSR)
\$23.50 ... Battles for the Ardennes (SPI/DG)
\$18.75 ... Eastern Front Solitaire (Omega)
\$27.90 ... Leyte, 1944 (Avalanche)
\$23.50 ... Britain Stands Alone (GMT)
\$36.95 ... Command at Sea (CoA)

Send \$3 (refunded with first purchase) for our new catalog and Game Notes ... Most games 26% off ... Fast service ... Reduced shipping for ziplocks ... kickbacks on every purchase ... No sales tax (unless you live in Georgia) ... No dragons ...



BOULDER GAMES
4254 Holley Road
Lizella, GA 31052
USA

Info: 912-935-8777
Orders: 800-299-6565

Movement may result in the temporary loss of your *ZOC* —
Please keep us informed of any changes of address!

Unpunched Games

AH 1776	P30
AH 1830	26
AH Adv. Third Reich	50
AH Afrika Korps	16
AH Alpha Omega	30
AH Air Assault on Crete	P35
AH Airforce	30
AH Anzio	25
AH Attack Sub	25
AH Banzai (Up Front mod)	15
AH Battle of the Bulge (91)	21
AH Beyond Valor	40
AH Bismarck	45
AH Blackbeard	35
AH Breakout: Normandy	35
AH Britannia	25
AH Business Strategy	30
AH Candidate	35
AH Chancellorsville	60
AH Circus Maximus	14
AH Advanced Civilization	30
AH Civilization	38
AH Civilization Western Expan. Kit	8
AH Civilization Expan. Trade Cards	4
AH Code of Bushido	40
AH Cmptr-5th Fleet (IBM)	70
AH Cmptr-Op. Crusader (IBM)	70
AH Croix de Guerre	35
AH Cross of Iron	20
AH Dauntless	20
AH D-Day (91)	P21
AH Desert War (Up Front mod)	12
AH Dinosaurs of the Lost World	20
AH Deluxe Acquire	65
AH Deluxe Diplomacy	55
AH Diplomacy	25
AH Empires in Arms	35
AH Enemy in Sight	15
AH Fire Power	30
AH Flat Top	40
AH Flight Leader	28
AH Gettysburg (91)	20
AH Gettysburg (64)	40
AH G.I. Anvil of Victory	37
AH Guadalcanal (91)	35
AH Gung Ho	50
AH Hedgerow Hell	20
AH Here Come the Rebels	30
AH History of the World	35
AH Hitler's War	20
AH Hollow Legions	25
AH I.D.F.	38
AH Kampfgruppe Peiper I	35
AH Kingmaker	25
AH Knights of the Air	25
AH Kremlin	20
AH The Last Hurrah	18
AH Longest Day	85
AH Luftwaffe	P20
AH Main Battle Tank	P31
AH Magic Realm	30
AH Merchant of Venus	30
AH Midway	26
AH Mustangs	25
AH Napoleon (Wood Blocks)	P30
AH Napoleon's Battles	30
AH Napoleon's Battles Exp	15
AH Naval War	12
AH New World	25
AH Outdoor Survival	P25
AH Panzerblitz	P25
AH Panzerleader	30
AH Panzerleader Variant Kit	6
AH Paratroop	19
AH Partisans	19
AH Patton's Best	26
AH Platoon	20
AH Rail Baron	25
AH Raid on St. Nazaire	26
AH Red Barricades	25
AH Republic of Rome	38

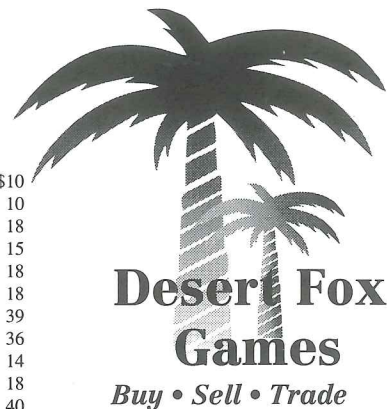
Unpunched Games

AH Richtofen's War	\$P25
AH Roads to Gettysburg	32
AH Russian Campaign	P22
AH Russian Campaign II (zip)	20
AH Russian Front	27
AH Shakespeare	20
AH Siege of Jerusalem	35
AH Advanced Squad Leader	50
AH Squad Leader	30
AH Storm Over Arnhem	P30
AH Stonewall Jackson's Way	35
AH Stonewall in the Valley	35
AH Streets of Fire	20
AH Stellar Conquest	25
AH Upfront	25
AH Tactics II	P15
AH TAC Air	26
AH Third Reich	P30
AH Thunder at Cassino	25
AH Titan (new)	25
AH Turning Point at Stalingrad	25
AH Turning Point Expansion	6
AH Tyrano Ex	35
AH Victory in the Pacific	22
AH War & Peace	P30
AH War at Sea	15
AH War at Sea II (kit)	10
AH Word Power	20
AH We the People	40
AH West of Alamein	49
AH Wizards Quest	22
AH Wooden Ships & Iron Men	25
AH Yellowstone	20
AH Yanks	36
ADG Africa Aflame	20
ADG Asia Aflame	20
ADG Days of Decision II	50
ADG Planes in Flames	25
ADG World in Flames	60
ADG World in Flame Annl	20
ADG WIF Exp Kit w/Map	35
ADG World Cup Football	45
ATX 8th Army	P60
AVP Avalanche: Salerno	38
AVP MacArthur's Return	38
COA Autumn of Glory	28
COA Camp of Robert E. Lee	40
COA Campaigns of Napoleon	35
COA Clash of Armor Rules (WWII)	19
COA Chancellorsville	40
COA Edelweiss	50
COA Kolin	40
COA Landships	36
COA La Arnee du Nord	40
COA La Bat. D'Auerstadt	50
COA La Bat. Quatra Bras	38
COA La Bat. de Wavre	30
COA Last Victory	30
COA Lee Takes Command	26
COA Mississippi Fortress	24
COA Over the Reich	40
COA PanzerKampfe (module)	16
COA Prelude to Disaster	34
COA Speed of Heat	44
COA War for the Union	38
CG Bobby Lee	45
CG EastFront	45
CG MedFront	40
CG Mid-East Peace	20
CG Napoleon	40
CG Rommel in the Desert	40
CG Starlord	30
CG Volga Front	25
CG WestFront (block)	50
EXCAL Caen (zip)	10

P Indicates that there is a punched copy available for 40% OFF of the regular price.
Z Indicates that there is a ziplock copy available for 10% off the regular price.

Unpunched Games

EXCAL Cassino (zip)	\$10
EXCAL Crimea (zip)	10
EXCAL Eagle Day (zip)	18
EXCAL Edgehill (zip)	15
EXCAL Inv France (zip)	18
EXCAL Italian Campaign (zip)	18
EXCAL Ironclads (2nd ed.)	39
EXCAL Ironclads Exp (2nd ed.)	36
EXCAL Iron Horse	14
EXCAL 1944 (zip)	18
EXCAL Panzer (2nd ed.)	40
EXCAL Sidi Rezegh (zip)	10
EXCAL Sovereign of Seas	22
EXCAL Total War (zip)	12
EXCAL TRAX	13
EXCAL Tunisia 1943 (zip)	10
EXCAL Wings (2nd ed.)	40
GDW A House Divided	24
GDW Asteroid	25
GDW Assault	25
GDW Air Strike	25
GDW Battlefield: Europe	26
GDW Blood and Thunder	36
GDW Bloody Kasserine	18
GDW Chieftain	30
GDW Command Decision (2nd ed)	35
GDW Harpoon	25
GDW Mayday	25
GDW Phase Line Smash	30
GDW Race for Tunis	18
GDW Red Empire	12
GDW Sands of War	P35
GDW Sands of War Expansion	18
GDW Team Yankee	25
GMR Afrika	25
GMR Ardennes	32
GMR Austerlitz	36
GMR Barren Victory	32



Unpunched Games

GMR Embrace an Angry Wind	\$28
GMR Enemy at Gates	59
GMR Force Eagle's War	34
GMR Guderian's Blitzkrieg	39
GMR GD 40	36
GMR In Their Quiet Fields (zip/1st)	50
GMR Matanikau	34
GMR No Better Place: Murfreesboro	29
GMR Objective: Schmidt	32
GMR Omaha	45
GMR Thunder/Crossroads (2nd ed)	32
GMT 1863	37
GMT Africanus (zip)	16
GMT Airbridge Victory	25
GMT Arctic Storm	23
GMT Battle of Waterloo	40
GMT Great Battles of Alexander	40
GMT Hornet Leader	35

And 100's more...

send SASE or call for the complete 6 pg. listing of in/out of print wargames.

TO ORDER:

Include shipping charges based on the chart below. **Some items are one of a kind, so please list alternates whenever possible.** Credit memos issued on items out of stock. We encourage you to call and place your order by phone (*Please note that Desert Fox Games is not open on Monday and has afternoon hours Tuesday through Friday and is open all day Saturday.*) Prices are subject to change without prior notice. All payments in check or money order must be in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank and payable to **Desert Fox Games**. Credit card orders accepted for VISA or MasterCard with a minimum charge order of \$40.00. California residents add 7.25% or applicable tax for their county. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. Send name, address and order to:

Desert Fox Games
42156 10th Street West, Unit M
Lancaster CA 93534
805/723-2088

HOURS—2-5pm (PST), Tuesday through Friday, 9:00am to 5pm Saturday for placing orders.

Closed on Mondays.

Shipping Charges

Magazines count as 2 for 1 for shipping

1st item	Adtl items	Type of Service
\$4	\$1	UPS Ground
7	1	UPS 2nd Day Air
4	1	US Mail Domestic Priority
4	1	AE, AP, (APO & FPO)
7(10)	1(5)	Canada, Mexico (Express)
10(15)	5(8)	Europe (Express)
15(20)	7(8)	Asia, Africa, Australia (Express)

Send your name, address and payment information along with the items you wish to order to the address above.

Whether you subscribe or pick us up from the rack of your local game shop, everyone at ZOC hopes to spend a lot of time with you in the years to come. That's, right: years. Among the several thousand of you who will read this, not all share our confidence about the future of the hobby. A few might even doubt our wisdom in embarking on such an enterprise. This magazine, after all, is proudly devoted exclusively to the world of print simulation. Even without an ear to the pavement you have to know what some people are saying. That the paper-based wargame's seen its best days. That the computer chip will throw it onto the scrap heap of historical-game history. The dirge-like note has recently been heard in one of our most esteemed journals, the Avalon Hill *General*. A letter in its current issue predicts: "By the end of the decade ... paper-based games (of the traditional sort) will be very much a niche market serviced for the most part by small publishers." There's no doubt it's what many of you are thinking to yourselves and saying to each other. We know because we're wargamers ourselves.

I don't subscribe to the decline-and-fall thesis, not from attachment to the status quo or a dislike of new technology. It's just that, duly examined, that thesis doesn't seem to hold water. Consider the following and see if you agree. Nowadays, other than a select handful of periodicals, very little publishing serves a mass-market. Especially is this true of wargame publishing. Whether print or disk is the medium, wargames now are and have always been classifiable as a niche.

The notion that paper-based wargames are moribund rests on some questionable assumptions. One is that advances in computer technology inure solely to the benefit of computer game designers. It looks obvious, doesn't it? Computer *games* rely on computer *technology*. Computer technology advances, while print technology supposedly stands still. Ergo, computer games possess an advantage by which they will prevail in the Darwinian struggle of the marketplace. Right? Wrong. The evidence points in the other direction. That computer technology has progressed in the last ten years is indubitable. But who's it really helped? Print wargame publishers using this silicon resource have gained more appealing imagery, shorter design and development times, and lower costs. Many of the fine games reviewed in this issue of ZOC are from companies that didn't exist — and couldn't have existed — until the advent of the powerful personal computer.

But for the sake of argument, let's assume the premise is correct. If so, any technology-based boost to print games will always be offset by much greater ones enjoyed by the computer game designer and publisher. But the exponential advances aren't a thing of the future. They're here now. I'm typing this editorial on a machine perhaps very similar to one you own or use. As little as fifteen years ago it would have taken a roomful of equipment and close to a six-figure investment to get the speed and processing power that sit on this small desktop — with room left over for a cup of coffee and a copy of CAESAR IN GALLIA. If the premise is right, with all this power at the disposal of computer wargame professionals, print wargames should have disappeared long ago. But they haven't. A certain sign of a healthy market sector is when suppliers enter it. Fifteen years ago the market for print wargames was dominated by three or four companies. Count the number of publishers whose games are reviewed in this issue. Now, can you name the same number of computer wargame publishers? Neither can I.

What the doomsayers have failed to allow for, I think, is the psychology of the historical gamer. Fact is, some of us aren't that thrilled at having our play punctuated by moving images that have nothing to do with strategy or tactics. Speaking for myself, when playing I want to *play*, not watch. On those occasions when I do want to watch (a movie, for example), I'd rather *just* watch. Perhaps this points up a basic marketplace obstacle to computer wargames. The gamer who likes to watch may not care all that much what he's watching. As well winged dragons as the fighting at Gettysburg. Now I've nothing against chimerical creatures generally, but I prefer history, especially military history. In particular, I like to know how processes work. That's why I chose simulations over alternative ways of passing time. At the heart of wargames are logic and space-time-power relationships. Print games are a window on those relationships. Compare that to a lot of computer games, where you sit behind the program wall and can only guess why things are happening.

I certainly don't mind admitting that I like to win. But win or lose, I prefer a human opponent to the logic embodied (or disembodied) in a computer chip. It has to do with the fact the games are about history. Despite predictions to the contrary, actual warfare has yet to become a mere matter of button-pushing. If it ever should, for simulations of that kind of war I could see trading in one's dice for mice. But for most military situations one craves the human dimension that only a live human opponent can provide.

I've written at some length because a few people in the industry sound as if they're about to leave the party. ZOC has just arrived. To understand why, just examine the essays and reviews in this issue. The level of creativity and diversity in print wargaming — of designers, developers, graphic artists and, yes, publishers — are at all-time highs. The creative flow, clearly, is *into* the hobby, not out. We've arrived at just the right time, for the party's just beginning.

Did You Like "Over The Reich"?

Then watch for this other great
Fighting Wings series game.

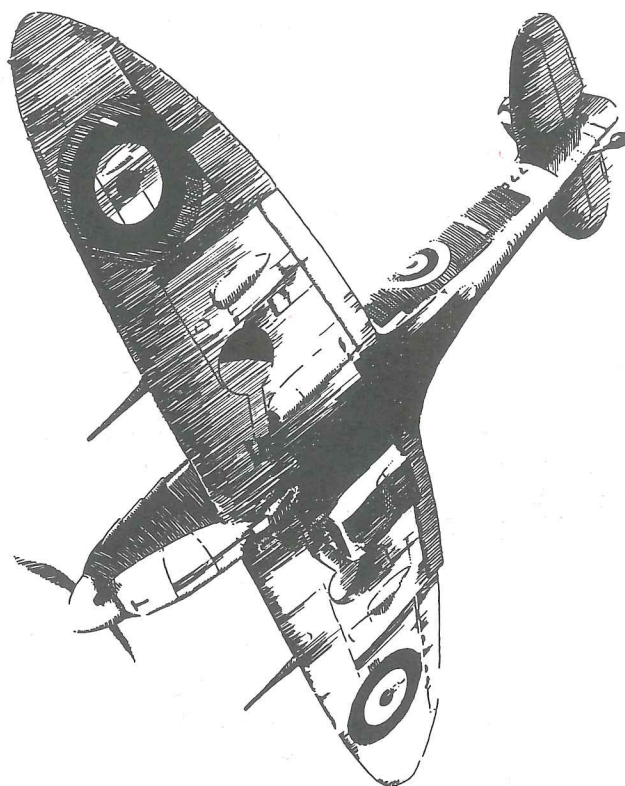
Achtung – Spitfire!

In the summer of 1940, a Reich meant to last a Thousand Years confronted an Empire upon which the Sun did not set. One magnificent weapon, first conceived as a private venture in 1934, proved decisive. In the skies over London, and in the years to follow, a hoarse scream of "Achtung - Spitfire!" was invariably followed by shattering losses.

Achtung - Spitfire! simulates tactical air to air, and air to ground combat over Europe from 1940 to 1943. More than just plane to plane combat, **Achtung - Spitfire!** allows players to recreate individual missions and even campaigns.

Designed by J. D. Webster, this second release in the Fighting Wings series of games brings the same flavor to the opening years of WWII aerial combat that its predecessor, **Over The Reich**, did to the final years.

Achtung - Spitfire! comes loaded and ready to fly with 280 counters, 24 aircraft data cards, one 34" x 22" double sided map, and a programmed instruction rulesbook to get you up and flying as soon as possible.



To Order Write To: Clash of Arms Games, The Byrne Building #205, Lincoln and Morgan Sts., Phoenixville; PA 19460
Or Call/Fax: (610) 935-7622

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Pay by Check/MO _____ VISA/MC _____ Card # _____ EXP Date _____

Qty	Price	Title
_____	\$40.00	Achtung-Spitfire!
_____	\$40.00	Over the Reich
_____	\$44.00	The Speed of Heat (jet combat)
_____		Subtotal
_____		Tax or Postage*
_____		Total

*PA residents add 6% sales tax, Canadians add 10% for postage, overseas add 20% for surface mail, 40% for air mail



Rumors of War

Looking ahead, in our Spring issue the emphasis will be on the Second World War as we bring to you another exciting mix of essays & reviews. Here follows a listing of what's being planned:

Essays

A Calculus of Two Sets by Mark Hunter ... An Essay Written on Impulse (Part II) by John Walker ... Counter Intelligence by Henry Lowood ... Backhand Blows: Defending Kharkov by John Bowen

Reviews

Across the Potomac by Steve Poitinger ... Avalanche by Chris Perleberg ... Crusades II by Mark Moore ... Enemy at the Gates by John Bowen ... Fateful Lightning by John Kisner ... Shenandoah: Valley of Fire by John Kisner ... The Last Blitzkrieg by Mark Hunter ... Lost Victory by John Bowen ... MacArthur's Return by John Burt ... Maharaja by John Kisner ... MedFront by Jeff Behan ... Operation Shock Troop by Dave Conn ... Proud Monster by William Armstrong ... Second Front by John Kisner ... Sword & Shield by Mark Moore ... Triumphant Fox by Mark Pitcavage

• Expect this issue in April 1995 •

1776: The American Crisis – Thomas Paine

These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he who stands it NOW deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.

What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly; 'tis dearness only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed, if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated...



I call not upon a few, but upon all: not *this* state or *that* state, but on every state; up and help us; lay your shoulders to the wheel; better have too much force than too little, when so great an object is at stake. Let it be told to the future world, that in the depth of winter, when nothing but hope and virtue could survive, that the city and the country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet and repulse it. Say not that thousands are gone, turn out your tens of thousands; throw not the burden of the day upon Providence, but "*show your faith by your works,*" that God may bless you. It matters not where you live, or what rank of life you hold, the evil or the blessing will reach you all. The far and the near, the rich and the poor, will suffer or rejoice alike.

Zone of Control
1914 40th Place
Des Moines, IA 50310

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
DES MOINES IA
PERMIT NO. 4443

Lawrence Caskey
418 S. Tennessee Ave.
Martinsburg, WV 25401