

PAPER WARS



Issue #14

\$3.50

Omega Games'
Desert Victory

Thunderhaven Games'
Alexander at Tyre

3W's
Seven Years War

XTR's
When Eagles Fight

Also in this issue: The Cossacks are Coming * Over the Reich
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March 1994

Issue #14

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Cover Illustration: Reproduced from the front cover of Omega Games' *Desert Victory*.

"I don't know what it is like to lose a battle; but certainly nothing can be as painful than to gain one with the loss of so many friends." - Wellington, after Waterloo

Omega Games'

Desert Victory

Published in 1991 • Designed by **Bill Gibbs**

reviewed by **Steve Eden**

Seeing the Omega Games logo on a box means only one thing: Inside is a nuts-and-bolts simulation of modern warfare, a game which can be played at a number of levels, from oversimplified to unplayable. This particular box, sand-colored and sporting a camel-and Abrahms illustration of the front, contains *Desert Victory*, a clone of Omega Games' popular *Main Battle Area*.

Desert Victory transplants *Main Battle Area*'s tactical game of hypothetical combat in Germany to the real world of the Gulf War. Iraqi armor brigades and American heavy task forces square off from a meeting engagement to an American deep attack, to the reduction of one of those famous Iraqi strong points. If you don't own *Main Battle Area*, and you enjoy armored warfare games of moderate to high complexity, then I can highly recommend *Desert Victory*. If you already own *Main Battle Area*, you may want to save your money: There is not enough new here to justify the expenditure.

Omega Games always provides sturdy, serviceable components of limited aesthetic value. *Desert Victory* is no exception. The rules and charts are attractively packaged and handily organized. One especially thoughtful touch is the inclusion of a photocopy of the planning charts, so that players can start a game without trotting down to the library to make copies of everything. The unit counters sport appropriate (albeit crude) silhouettes and organizational information, though I wish Omega Games would drop the glossy finish. I also think any designer using black on green (as Bill Gibbs does with the US pieces) should have his union card

revoked. (*Publisher's Note: Florida is a Right to Work state.*) The map is an unimaginative tan, with several contour lines and a road thrown in, along with one Iraqi strong point and associated minefield. The map is actually eight map sections which can be combined to form varying battlefields. They are not, despite the box blurb, geomorphic, since they do not all fit together every which way - I think

a better term might be parageomorphic. Finally, Omega Games has replaced the traditional hex grid with a grid of offset squares.

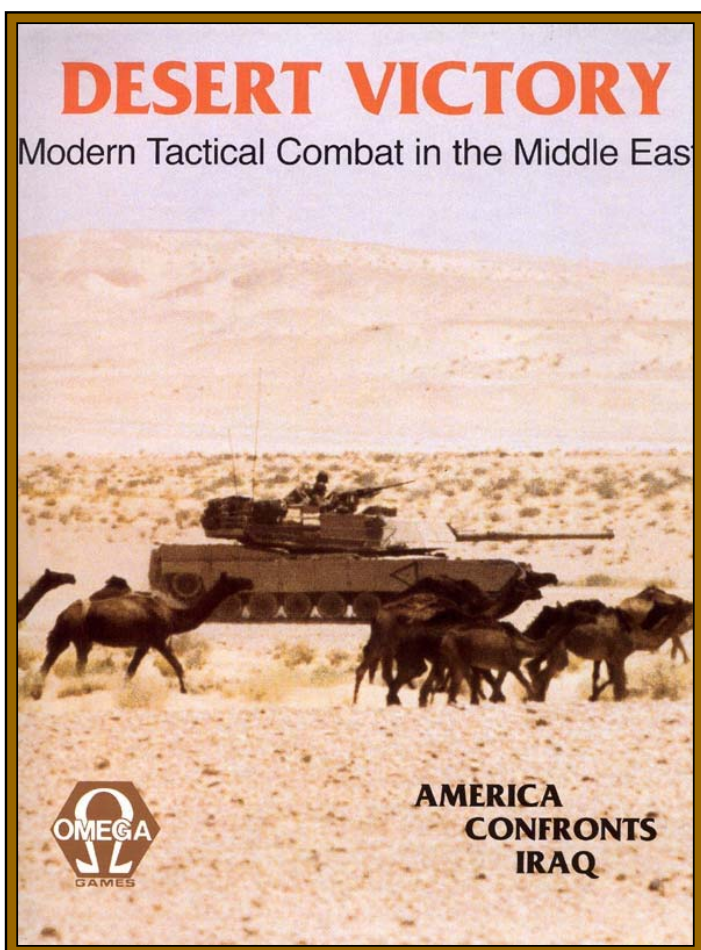
Desert Victory uses a semi-interactive, semi-simultaneous system to simulate modern tactical armored combat. Game turns represent ten minutes of actual time, and are divided into four fire and movement rounds. Each round proceeds with:

- Simultaneous indirect fire
- Iraqi movement
- Simultaneous direct fire
- American movement
- Simultaneous direct fire.

Line-of-sight and observation rules are straightforward. Combat is handled well, with extremely user-

friendly charts (though I did wince when I saw the designers had misspelled "abrahms" on the Direct Fire chart). The charts, in fact, compensate for the sometimes heavy-handed use of modifiers. Even using the most basic level of rules, direct and indirect fire results are modified by terrain, improved positions, target and/or firing unit losses, suppression, movement, forward observers, and the use of defilade.

The rules are layered in four levels which, like Rus-



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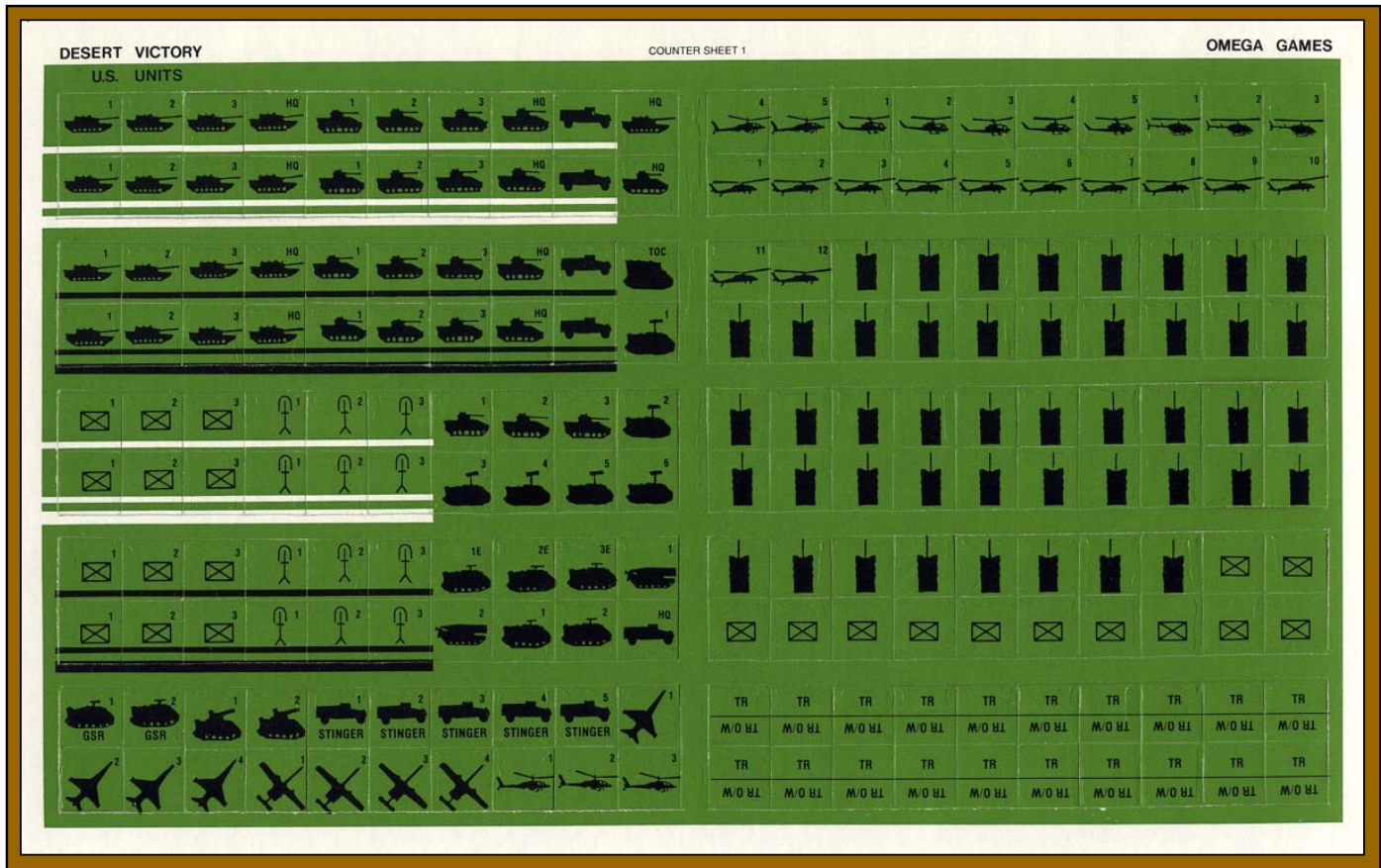
sian nesting dolls, expand the scope of the game while still fitting neatly together. The first level introduces the basic system as described above, a standard treatment of armored combat with little chrome and no attempt to model problems of command and control - sort of a *Panzerblitz* on steroids.

Level II, on the other hand, sets *Desert Victory/Main Battle Area* apart from all other simulations of modern warfare. A few of the rules, such as those covering electronic warfare and counter-battery fire, are nothing out of the ordinary. The planning/command and control rules, however, make this game system unique. Prior to the start of any scenario, players must explicitly plan the task organization, movement, and fires of their units. They must also determine the location and employment of their various attachments, such as air defense, engineer and scout units. Artillery units must be pre-plotted, along with the use of organic cannon or mortar units. Moreover, all of this planning must be in accord with the doctrine of the two armies. In effect,

the players must write operations orders very similar to those produced by units in the field.

Once the game begins, the player may deviate from the plan only if he can make contact with his subordinate units. For instance, if you want Alpha team to pull back a turn earlier than you originally planned, you must successfully contact that unit via radio, wire, signal or messenger. If you later change your mind, and decide Alpha should stay put, you have to re-contact the unit all over again. Obviously, the better you plan before the game, the fewer changes you will have to make during play. On the other hand, if you can force your opponent out of his game plan, he may be unable to respond effectively.

All of this may sound rather cumbersome, and it can be, depending on how detail-oriented you are, but the game's handy player-aids ease planning considerably. The payoff, of course, is that such planning forces the players to make the same kind of decisions their real-world counterparts have to make -



and that, after all, is what wargaming is all about.

Level III introduces a plethora of special rules covering night combat, dismounted infantry, engineers, obstacles, ground surveillance radar, air power and air defense. Adding these to the mix makes *Desert Victory* the best modern tactical game system I know of. Virtually every aspect of modern battle which the battalion/brigade commander could be expected to control is covered herein, and handled in a straightforward manner which blends smoothly with the basic game system.

The final level pushes the realism envelope a bit too far for my taste. Level IV covers the use of chemical weapons and the after effects of tactical nuclear weapons, plus rules which dramatically increase the paperwork load on the players without providing any corresponding rise in game value or realism.

Having sung the praises of the system, I must also warn the potential buyer that slogging through the rules will require a large investment of time and patience. It is amazing how a company can do everything else well, and still produce poorly edited rule books. The problems are legion: emissions (In what phase do aircraft attack? Is the anti-aircraft strength per vehicle or per counter? The list goes on...), contradictions (for instance, it is impossible for a unit to be in motion during the indirect fire step, but there is an indirect fire modifier for mov-

ing targets), and the assumption that players understand a great deal about modern warfare (make sure you study the attached glossary if you don't). The experienced player will have little trouble patching together fixes, and none of the glitches render the game dysfunctional, but it is unforgivable that the rule book has not been improved, considering *Desert Victory* uses a system which has been around for nearly a decade.

Desert Victory simulates the process of modern combat very well; as a simulation of the Gulf War it leaves something to be desired. This is partly due to its development before the actual ground war ever began. The team at Omega Games had no opportunity to validate their design judgments in light of what actually occurred. Thus, for instance, the combat tables make the M1's too vulnerable (their composite armor performed far better than expected), but it is hard to criticize Omega Games for not predicting the future when even the US Army was surprised by some of its own weapon systems. The overall effect of a number of such minor glitches is to make the Iraqi player a much tougher opponent than he proved to be in real life.

The game also suffers a few systemic blind spots which are curious in a simulation that for the most part is finely crafted. Missile units are far too powerful, largely because there is no restriction on their use of ammunition. M2/M3 Bradleys carry only

twelve anti-tank missile rounds, yet they can shoot all through a game and never run out. Artillery is too easy to use, particularly against moving targets; in my opinion, the hardest thing to do in combat is to hit a moving target with an artillery barrage. Moreover, the spotting and observation rules are a tad too simplistic - contrary to popular belief, you cannot see forever in the desert - and the American's ability to penetrate smoke, dust and haze with their thermal sights is exaggerated.

But these are all fairly minor nits which I feel compelled to pick in order to establish my credentials as the hard-bitten reviewer with a heart of gold. Overall, *Desert Victory* is an excellent simulation. The interplay between the various arms is reflected accurately, as are the unique problems which arise in open desert terrain. The tactical options and constraints which face modern-day commanders are presented with a high degree of realism, and very little in the way of units or equipment which might be found on the battlefield is left out. In fact, *Desert Victory* reminded me of some of the wargames used in Army schools to teach tactics. So, while the system is not perfect, it is, quite simply, the best simulation of modern armored combat on the commercial market today.

But you say you're a *Team Yankee* fan? More interested in good fellowship than the effect of armor angle on the penetration capabilities of depleted uranium kinetic energy rounds? Fear not, then, for *Desert Victory* can be played at many levels. I am a complexity freak and detail man, myself, so I enjoy employing all the bells and whistles which come with this game. Others may want to just play the basic game. Some groups may wish to forego the planning/command and control rules while still employing such Level III rules as dismounted armor ambushes, radar searches, and air-scatterable minefields. In other words, you can choose your own level of complexity.

There are some problems with *Desert Victory* as a game, though, regardless of the level at which you choose to play. The combat system, combined with relatively low movement allowances can cause some fairly tedious interludes. For instance, if a deployed Iraqi brigade is attacking a defending American task force, the action can go something like this: After indirect fire, the Iraqi player moves all sixty-odd units under his control two squares. Both sides now fire, a process which might require between thirty and forty rolls of the dice (and given the large number of modifiers, each roll must be calculated separately). The American moves his units, and both sides fire again. Repeat this process about eight times before the Iraqis are wiped out or overrun the American task force.

Another problem is that old nemesis of tactical games, administration counter overload. Each platoon might carry a counter to indicate its losses, another to show it is suppressed, another to verify that it fired in the immediately preceding phase, and perhaps a final one showing its formation. Consider that some stacks might be four unit counters high, and you can see why ten to twelve counter juggernauts often lurch across *Desert Victory's* maps.

Of course, counter overload, cuts down on the need for paperwork, and that is a blessing in *Desert Victory*, for the paperwork load can become heavy indeed. Among the things players must keep track of on proverbial scrap of paper are fire missions available, task organizations, routes of advance, assault positions, artillery targets, battle positions, progress of engineer work, changes in orders status of Fire Support Teams, loss of air defense capabilities, turns to replace leader losses... well, I could go on and on, but you get the idea. Omega Games provides some excellent charts to help with all this, but they cannot completely obviate the irritation of paperwork.

Finally, the scenarios are ludicrously unbalanced. A competent American commander, with a modicum of caution and common sense, will massacre the Iraqi player every time, while suffering only modest losses. While historically accurate, it does not make for a very interesting game. In fact, I highly recommend that players concoct their own scenarios after playing through the ones that come with the game.

If you own *Main Battle Area*, what do you get with *Desert Victory*? The system is untouched; only the names are changed in the rule book. No new rules appear, not even errata. You do see some new vehicles rated, such as the T-72, but otherwise, the counter mix is practically identical. Even the scenarios are virtually the same. The map is new, of course, but frankly you or I could gin up a similar map without much trouble. So, *Main Battle Area* owners, unless you are desperate to acquire an extra set of counters, do not buy this game. If Omega Games is really interested in serving their loyal customers, they will put together an update package in a ziplock bag.

If you do not own *Main Battle Area*, but enjoy modern tactical games, buy *Desert Victory*. Despite all of the caveats mentioned above, it is the best system on the market, and it can accommodate a wide range of home-brewed scenarios. Omega Games needs to rate more weapon systems and fix the rule book; by doing so they could make *Desert Victory* the basis for a series of games covering everything from the Arab-Israeli Wars to the Iran-Iraq conflict. I hope to see it in the future.

Editorial

by **Rich Erwin**

Two of our writers say adieu this issue: Juan Rosario and Boyd Schorzman. Juan wasn't able to finish his review of *L'Armee du Nord* due to the giant oil spill just off of Puerto Rico (he was part of the Coast Guard team controlling the spill and trying to clean it up), but Boyd came through with his last article - best of luck to you both.

One thing Paper Wars is in need of are more observers at the major game auctions that take place during the year. Our goal is to be able to cover Origins, Gencon, Genghis Kahn (in Denver), the major Los Angeles conventions, and any others you the readers suggest would be a good idea. I'll also start posting the larger internet auction results beginning with the next issue. All this should give us a clearer idea of market prices for collectible games.

One amazing thing is the recent explosion of small wargaming companies. Moments in History, Terran Games, Xeno Games, Overlord Games (now scheduled to produce products independently of Decision Games), Spearhead Games (led by John Vanore), Avalanche Press (led by Brian Knipple and Mike Bennighoff, of Pacific Rim Publishing fame), and at least three other companies about to come into being without being named as yet. One interesting note - three of the games to be produced by this group cover Salerno.

Next time (or so we hope)...

- **Hen's Tooth** - *Operation Crusader*
- **The Classics** - *Bloody Buna*
- **Cheap Thrills** - *Kaiser's Battle*
- **Third World** - *Bastogne or Bust!*
- **Across the Pond** - Alea's *Guadalajara 1937*
or Socomer Edition's *Hannau 1813*

Among the new stuff:

Down in Flames: The Rise of the Luftwaffe, GD '40, War of the Rebellion, Balkan Wars, Caesar in Gallia, We the People, a GMT Games title or two (if they ever come out) and whatever else we can stuff into twenty-four pages!!

Cast of Characters

Avalon Hill Game Co.
(Sold to Hasbro)

Clash of Arms Games
The Byrne Building #205
Lincoln and Morgan Streets
Phoenixville, PA 19460
(610) 935-7622
www.clashofarms.com

Columbia Games
P.O. Box 3457
Blaine, WA 98231
(360) 366-2228
www.columbiagames.com

Decision Games
P.O. Box 21598
Bakersfield, CA 93390
(661) 587-9633
www.decisiongames.com

GMT Games
P.O. Box 1308
Hanford, CA 93232
(800) 523-6111
www.gmtgames.com

Jagdpanther Publications
(No longer operating)

Omega Games
P.O. Box 2191
Valrico, FL 33595
(813) 661-3804
www.omegagames.com

Perry Moore
2404 Button Court
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
www.pweb.jps.net/~perrya

Strategy Gaming Society
c/o George D. J. Phillies
87-6 Park Avenue
Worcester, MA 01605

SPI
(No longer operating)

3W
(No longer operating)
Some titles available through: Decision Games

Thunderhaven Games
(No longer operating)

Task Force Games
(No longer operating)

The Gamers
(No longer operating)
Acquired by:
Multi-Man Publishing, LLC
403 Headquarters Drive
Suite 7
Millersville, MD 21108
(410) 729-3334
www.multimanpublishing.com

XTR
(No longer operating)

Spanish Wargames - Possible Buy

by **Rich Erwin**

I have an opportunity to put together a bulk order of some Spanish board wargames. These are put out by a magazine, Alea, that is somewhat like the French journal Casus Belli (a mixture of board wargaming, miniatures and role-playing games stuff), with one notable difference. The enclosed wargames in Alea are almost Strategy & Tactics/Command quality games in terms of both their components (die-cut counters, full-color maps) and rules. The issues I know are available are:

#10 *Operation Desert Storm*

#11 *Fontenoy 1745*

#12 *Morocco 1926* (The rebellion that led to the creation of what became Franco's core force when the Spanish Civil War started)

#13 *La Gran Armada* (Similar rules to Command's *Jutland*)

#14 *Guadalajara 1937*

#15 *Operation Green Inferno* (Vietnam 1967)

I believe Issues #16 and #17 are out, but know nothing about them as yet. Issues #13 and #14, acquired through a Spanish subscriber to Paper Wars, will be reviewed in the May and June issues of Paper Wars.

I cannot confirm a definite price per issue right now, but my intention is that the single issue price range be between \$12 and \$15, not including postage. English translations of the rules will be included.

All interested parties can contact Rich Erwin via Paper Wars.

THE CLASSICS

Peoples' War Games'

The Cossacks are Coming!

Published in 1982 • Designed by David Bolt

reviewed by **Scott McConnachie**

The Battle of Tannenberg has long been a part of the mythology of warfare in the Twentieth Century. It gave Germany a victory which helped her to ignore the implications of her failure at the Marne. To Solzhenitsyn, it was Imperial Russia's last chance to avoid the deluge of revolution. In a war of unprecedented attrition, it was one of the few successful battles of annihilation.

The Cossacks Are Coming! is an operational treatment of the campaign in East Prussia in August and September 1914.

During this campaign, the German Eighth Army used its interior lines of communications to standoff in succession three Russian armies (the Second, First, and Tenth). Originally intended to have been the first in a series of games covering the birth of Twentieth Century warfare, *The Cossacks Are Coming!* is a serious effort to portray these armies during a period of military transition. In many ways, it is

a successful effort; for an operational level game it is rich in detail and tactical feel.

The Cossacks Are Coming! comes in a flat box with a four color map, six hundred double-sided counters, and a thirty-eight page rules booklet (which contains the general series rules, exclusive rules for the campaign in East Prussia, and pullout charts and tables). The map covers East Prussia and vicinity from just north of Königsberg to the Vistula bend, and from just west of the Vistula to just east of the German border; each hex is five miles across. The map includes a detailed railroad network which identifies both single and double tracks, as well as the tangle of forests and lakes which cover much of

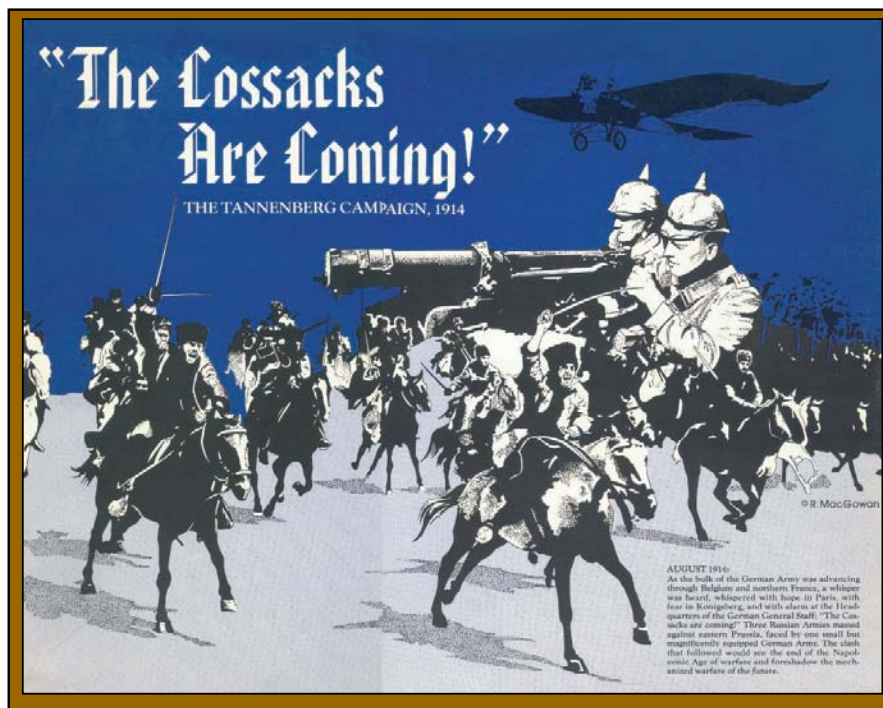
the area. The counters include a large variety of units ranging in size from battalions to double brigades. On the back of each unit is a generic symbol for its empire (the Romanov double eagles or the Iron Cross) with no unit information. For limited intelligence purposes units are deployed on the map with this generic side up. In addition, units are rated for strength point losses and ammunition supply by the use of markers. All combat units are a part of a larger group of units, called formations. Formation morale and their attachment to higher formations is indicated by a second counter for each

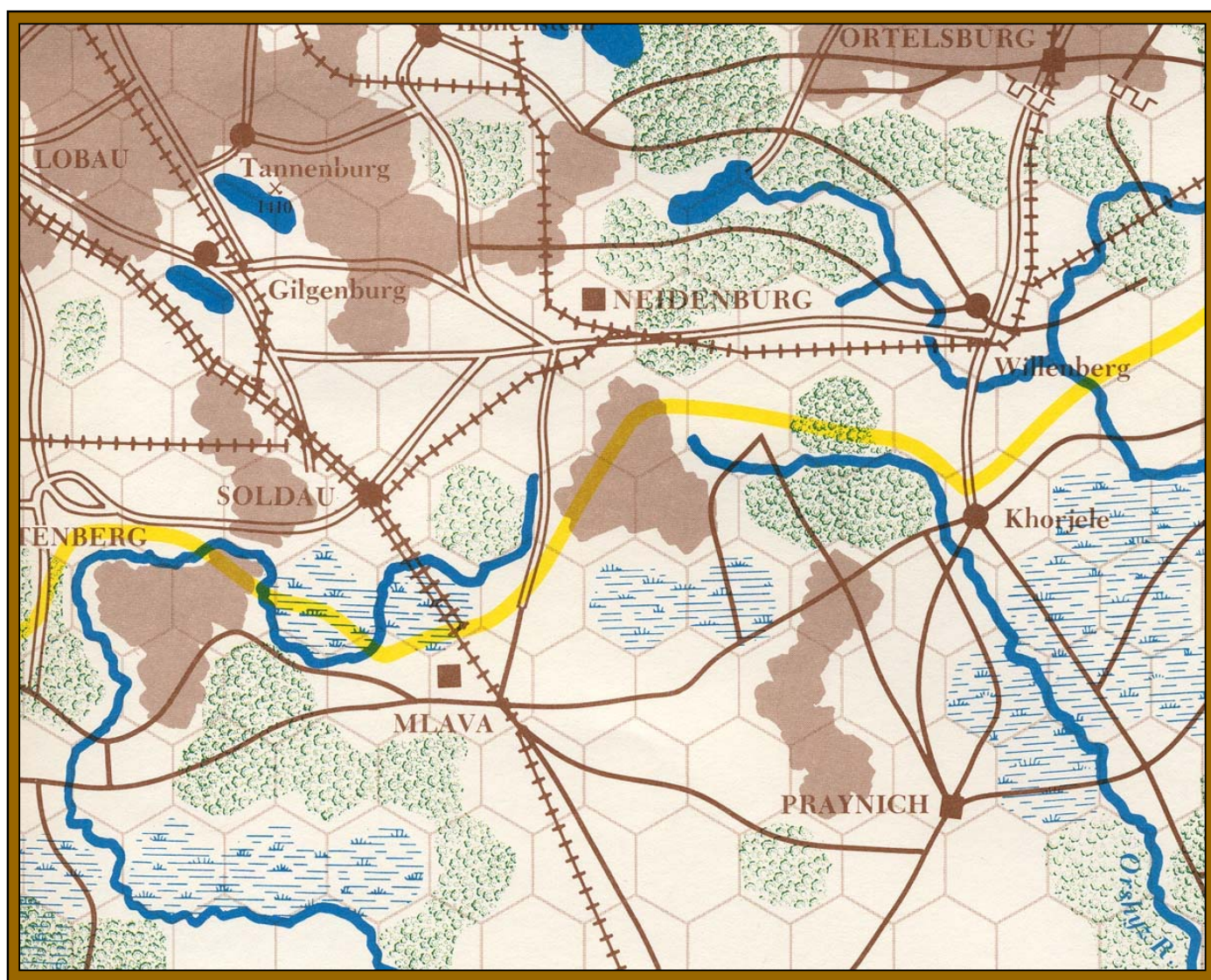
formation on army or strategic level attachment tracks; some brigades, and all divisions and corps, have these counters.

The Cossacks Are Coming! is not a conventional Twentieth Century operational wargame. While the typical unit is one regiment or two brigades, and units have zones of control, there are several major aspects of the design which make it unique: The sequence of play, the use of formations

and command control, the tactical interactions of combat, intelligence, and the game's treatment of logistics. In some ways it resembles a grand tactical wargame of the Nineteenth Century; in other ways, it is a depiction of how armies campaign.

This game is one of the earlier attempts in wargames to allow one side a degree of initiative as to the pace of operations. While technically each turn represents one week of time, about the only actions taken on a weekly basis are re-computing rail availability, entrenching, and determining reinforcements or withdrawals. The heart of the sequence of play is the impulse procedure.





At the beginning of each turn, both sides roll a die for the initiative (modified by the Russian capture of German towns and cities, or by the presence of then-General Hindenburg); the winner of the roll may determine how many impulses there will be during the turn and how long each impulse will be. There may be up to three impulses, with some impulses as small as a day in length. Within these constraints, the initiative player may create any permutations he desires. The length of an impulse determines how many movement points each unit will have for that impulse. Each impulse consists of a Russian Command Phase (where armies and some corps are given missions, and units are checked for supply and command and control), a Russian Movement Phase, a German Counter-Movement Phase, and a Russian Combat Phase which consists of two combat periods with barrage and fire combat by both sides. These phases are repeated in order by the other side (substitute German for Russian, and vice versa, in each phase). Unlike some games, the Russian player is always the first phasing player

during an impulse, regardless of which side has the initiative. For marching, units get two movement points for each day of an impulse; for counter-marching, units get one movement point for each day of an impulse.

Unlike some games, the fact a unit has marched places no limit on its ability to counter-march later during the same impulse, and vice versa; furthermore counter-marching units can also attack. Units are required to commit themselves to an attack during movement by paying a movement point cost and placing an attack marker on the unit. A higher cost allows a unit to attack during both periods of a Combat Phase. Replacing losses and raising the morale of units also occur as a function of movement. This sequence of play creates a very fluid situation in which a unit may march up to attack an enemy unit, only to have its opponent counter-march away, or launch an attack right back at it. However, the system doesn't have quite the degree of chaos that can be found in many of the wargame designs of recent years - *Stonewall Jackson's Way*,

for example.

Using the sequence of play to advantage is an important part of playing the game well, since the effect is to allow the side with the initiative to determine the general pace of operations during the turn. If the initiative player wants to maneuver, then he will generally choose impulses of longer duration. If he wants high intensity combat, then he will choose shorter impulses. If he wants to grind up some enemy units quickly then he will choose such a short impulse as to prevent them from effectively counter-marching away (or bringing reinforcements up). Finally, if he wants to have a combination, then he can combine shorter and longer impulses in any order. However, deciding on the right combination is not as easy it looks, nor alone is it likely to result in a decisive result. One reason is the ability to counter-march makes it less likely that the non-initiative player will fall into a trap. Secondly, having the initiative tends to benefit only one operational direction at a time; since both sides usually have two or more sectors, what benefits one sector may not be of benefit to the other. Having the initiative produces important but often subtle benefits. If the initiative player miscalculates in setting up the impulses, he may find that his opponent benefits from the impulse order more than he does.

Command and control is fairly straightforward once

one has digested the overly complex description of it. All units are part of a formation which is subordinated to a corps formation, an army formation, or the supreme command. To maintain command, units of a division or brigade formation are required to stay next to each other (unless there is a specific division headquarters), as well as remain within the command radii of the corps and army headquarters to which they are attached. Each corps and army headquarters has a limit to the number of formations which it may command. It is also possible to be attached directly to the army high command. The penalty for being out of command is severe: a unit loses one level or morale for each day that it is out of command. Fortunately, it is fairly easy to reattach formations between headquarters, provided the new headquarters are in range and have any surplus capacity.

An additional characteristic of command and control is the concept of a mission. There are four basic missions: Advance, retire, hold, and flexible.

- On an advance mission, units may spend their full movement allowance moving, but only in directions generally toward the enemy, and they are required to attack enemy units they move next to.
- A retire mission is basically the opposite of the attack mission.

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1 4-3 H	2 4-3 H	35 4-3 H	36 4-3 H	37 4-3 H	41 4-3 H	1r 2-3 H	36r 2-3 H	3r 2-3 H	k 2-3 D	1 gd c 4(1/4)C	1 gd c 4(1/4)C	2c 4(1/4)H	3c 4(1/4)H	25 2-3 D	27 2-3 D
1 1 C	2 1 C	35 1 C	36 1 C	37 1 C	41 1 C	1r 1 C	36r 1 C	3r 1 C	k 1 H	26 8(1/2)L	43 8(1/2)L	4 8(1/2)L	15 8(1/2)L	1 8(1/2)L	36 8(1/2)L
70 lwbd (1) H	6 lwbd (1/2) H	2 lwbd (1/2) H	1 gd r 1 C	3 gd 1 C	8c 2(1/4)C	8c 2(1/4)C	8c 2(1/4)C	8c 1-2 C	8c 1(1)M	8 8(1/2)L	6 8(1/2)L	2 8(1/2)L	3gd 8(1/2)L	26 2-3 D	43 2-3 D
70 lwbd 4(1)L	6 lwbd 4(1/4)L	2 lwbd 4(1/4)L	1 gd r 8(1/2)I	3 gd 8(1/2)I	lc 2(1/4)C	lc 2(1/4)C	lc 2(1/4)C	lc 1- C	p 6(1)L	26 2-3 D	43 2-3 D	4 2-3 D	15 2-3 D	1 2-3 D	36 2-3 D
70 lwbd 1-2 D	6 lwbd 1-2 D	2 lwbd 1-2 D	1 gd r 4-3 H	3 gd 4-3 H	lc 1(1)M	lc 1(1)M	lc 1(1)M	lc 1(1)M	p 1-2 D	24 8(1/2)L	22 8(1/2)L	7 gr 8(1/2)L	8 sr 8(1/2)L	1 trbd 4(1/2)L	2 trbd 4(1/2)L
22 8(1/2)I	38 8(1/2)I	loc bd 6(1/4)L	1 gd r 2(2)	I Van Francois Adv. +1	XVII Mack- ensen Flex. +1	t 8(1/2)L	g 8(2)L	ln bd 3(2)L	p 1-4 D	24 2-3 D	22 2-3 D	7 gr 2-3 D	8 sr 2-3 D	1 trbd 1-3 D	2 trbd 1-3 D
22 4-3 H	38 4-3 H	1 lw 8(1/4)L	1 lw (1) H	1 lw 1-2 D	t 4-4 D	t 2-2 D	g 1-3 D	ln bd 1-2 D	p (2)(4)L	56 8(1/2)L	53 8(1/2)L	54 8(1/2)L	72 8(1/2)L	73 8(1/2)L	76 8(1/2)L
10 M	4 4-5 H	3 4-5 H	2 2-5 H	2 3-5 H	2 2-5 H	2 2-5 H	3 M	1 c 2-4 D	1 c 3-5 D	1 fr bd 4(1/2)L	2 fr bd 4(1/2)L	3 fr bd 4(1/2)L	4 fr bd 4(1/2)L	56 4-3 D	53 2-3 D
3 M	1 M	1 2-5 D	1 2-5 D	1 3-5 D	det a 4(1/2)I	det b 4(1/2)I	det c 4(1/2)I	det d 4(1/2)I	det e (1) I	54 2-3 D	72 2-3 D	Dummy	76 2-3 D	57 8(1/2)L	First Main
										57 8(1/2)L	First Main	Second Main	Second Main	57 2-3 D	First Main
										57 2-3 D	First Main	Second Main	Second Main	57 2-3 D	First Main

- A hold mission allows units to move in any direction, but they have only half of their normal movement allowance.
- A flexible mission allows full movement in any direction, but does not allow army supply depots to be moved.

Missions are ordered from the army supreme command (Moltke or the Grand Duke Nicholas, if you will) and then sent down the chain of command to the front command (Russians only), to the army, and then to some lower formations which have separate leaders (the German First Corps under Von Francois, for example). At each level, a die is rolled for the commander sending the order and for the commander receiving the order, modified by the die roll modifier of the commander at each level.

- If the superior commander's modified die roll exceeds his subordinate commander's, then the mission order is accepted and sent down the chain.
- If the subordinate commander's modified die roll exceeds that his superior, then the subordinate commander will send his own default mission order which is listed on his counter.

Thus it is possible for Moltke to order Hindenburg's Eighth Army to be flexible while Hindenburg's sub-

ordinate, Von Francois, hot-headedly orders his 1st Corps to advance. As well as being entertaining, this procedure adds an element of realism to the game. It would have been nice to see a slightly more complex treatment, however. For example, while Von Francois was an aggressive, arrogant corps commander, he actually refused the initial order to attack Samsonov's Second Army while he waited for more of his corps to arrive by rail.

How a formation is attached has an important bearing on how its units can perform. Attaching a formation to a corps headquarters lengthens the supply lines the combat units may trace back to the army supply depots. Being attached ultimately to an army allows the unit to be given any mission. Attaching a formation to the supreme command allows a unit to trace supply from anywhere on the rail network, without being bound to an army's supply depots. The unit can only perform the hold mission, and it cannot replace its ammunition or personnel. Generally, it is best for a division or brigade formation to be attached to a corps, which is itself attached to an army. The problem with this is the command radii of the corps headquarters, and the number of units they can command, can put severe constraints upon where one can place units. Given the width of the operations zone and the dependence of subordinate units on headquarters, it is

I 8-3	1 8	2 8	XVII 8-3	36 8	35 8	XX 8-3	41 8	37 8	IR 6-2
1r 7	36r 6	XI 8-3	22 8	38 8	GDR 8-3	1 gd r 7	3 gd 9	IIIC 8-3	1c 8
KR 6-1	k 6	p 5	8c 8	t 5	ln bd 6	2 lwbd 5	6 lwbd 5	70 lwbd 5	3r 6
g 6	loc bd 5	1 lw 5	det f 2-3 H	det g 2-3 H	det h 2-5 H	det i 1 C	Dummy	8 rr bn (1) I	8 rr bn 8
Eighth Main	Eighth H	Dummy	Dummy	Dummy	Dummy	Dummy	Eighth 4 20	Eighth 4 20	g 4 20
Eighth H	Eighth H	Eighth H	I 4 20	XVII 4 20	XX 4 20	IR 4 20	XI 4 20	KR 4 20	ln bd 4 20
Z-5 * U	Z-4 * U	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Johannisburg
Konigsberg SW	Konigsberg S	Manenburg	Danzig	Graudenz	Pillau	Lotzen	Kulm	Nikolai-ken	Thorn
3 6-5 D	KR 3(1/2) L	KR 2(1/2) L	KR 2(1/2) L	KR 2(1/2) L	KR 2(1/2) L	KR (2) L	KR (2) L	Ammo Left 1	Ammo Left 1
KR 8-5 D	KR (1)(4) L	KR (1)(4) L	KR (1)(4) L	KR 1-3 D	KR (1/2) H	Dummy	Dummy	Dummy	Eighth Prittwitz Rire+2
6c 4(1/4) H	15c 4(1/4) H	4c 4(1/4) H	1r bd 4(1/2) L	79 8(1/2) L	2 rr bn (1) L	2 art bd 4-5 D	6 M	Tenth Main	Tenth D
6c 1-2 H	15c 1-2 H	4c 1-2 H	1r bd 1-3 D	79 2-3 D	5 rr bn (1) L	6 M	4 sc bd 2 H	Tenth D	Tenth D
2 1-4 D	2 1-4 D	2 1-4 D	2 1-4 D	2 1-4 D	2 1-4 D	2 1-4 D	2 1-4 D	2 1-4 D	2 1-4 D
1-4 D	1-4 D	1-4 D	1-4 D	1-4 D	1-4 D	1-4 D	1-4 D	1-4 D	1-4 D
Polutsk	Rozan	Ostral	Lomza	Novo. Geo.					
Olita	Grodno	Kovno	Osowiec	det a 4(1/2) L	det b 4(1/2) L	det c 2(1/2) L	det d 2(1/2) L	det e 2(1/2) L	det f 2(1/2) L
det g 1-4 D	det h (1) L	det i 1 H	det j 2 H	det k 2 H	Tenth 3 20	First 3 20	Second 3 20	I 5-3	22 5
24 5	II 5-3	26 5	43 5	III 5-3	25 5	27 5	IV 5-3	30 5	40 5
VI 5-3	4 5	15 5	XIII 5-3	1 6	36 5	XV 5-3	8 5	6 5	XV Martos Adv. +1
XX 5-3	28 5	29 5	XXII 5-3	1 fr bd 5	2 fr bd 5	3 fr bd 5	4 fr bd 5	IT 6-3	1 tr bd 6
2 tr bd 6	3 tr bd 6	II CN 6-3	cn. gr 6	2 cnrbd 6	51 5	III S 6-3	7sr 6	8sr 6	5 rr bn 5

also difficult to command effectively all of one's forces. Taking advantage of the weaknesses of an army's command structure is one key to Tannenberging one's opponent.

Combat in *The Cossacks Are Coming!* has a tactical feel to it. There are two general types of attacks: Barrage attacks and fire attacks. Units have facings which can produce very significant flank modifiers when being attacked, including when being attacked by artillery alone. Barrage attacks must be designated as attacking either personnel or artillery; in addition to causing losses on the Combat Results Table, successful barrage attacks may cause enemy attack orders to be canceled or suppress enemy artillery. The two periods of combat during a combat phase allow intensive attacks to consist of an artillery preparation followed by a fire attack. In addition, units on both sides of a combat have a number of options which they can exercise during an engagement:

- Abort the attack (defending reinforcements might have arrived via a counter-march, or the artillery preparation might have failed);
- Probe,
- Withdraw before combat (cavalry only),
- Pursue, or...
- Conduct a rear guard.

Exercising these options requires passing a morale check by rolling less than or equal to the unit's formation morale rating. (Note the game's use of the term morale was a semantic convenience by the designer. By this term he means something more like unit cohesion.) When a unit takes losses, both sides alternate deciding how they will take these losses:

- Taking a strength point hit,
- Reducing the morale of the unit's formation, or...
- Retreating the unit.

Every time when a unit takes losses, it is also subject to a morale check, which may result in further losses (again, both sides alternate choosing these losses). As one can see, for a given engagement there are many choices available to both sides.

Using the combat system well is the most important part of playing the game. The critical consideration of combat is knowing which losses to cause friendly or enemy units to take. While attrition results can be useful, it often takes too long to wear down an opposing unit. Similarly, retreats in and of themselves will not generate decisive results. Generally, the best target of an attack is the morale of the defending unit's formation. Not only is the attacked

unit affected by this loss, but all of the other attached units of the formation have their morale correspondingly reduced. By reducing the initial morale of a unit's formation, it is more likely to fail morale checks in the future. In addition, units with lower morale are more likely to take heavier losses when they fail subsequent morale checks. Therefore, attacking the morale of a unit is usually the best way to reduce it in the long run. However, the most efficient way to generate morale losses is for the attacker to force the defending units to retreat into an overstacking situation, or if possible, into an enemy zone of control (there must be no alternative retreat for this to occur). Such retreats will cause heavy morale losses or a new morale check with a very unfavorable modifier. When there is the possibility of having the attacker create a disastrous retreat, the defender is best advised to attempt to conduct the holding option or a preemptive counter-march away. Accordingly, the most effective attacks are those that hit units on multiple flanks, reduce their morale to build up losses, and allow the attacker to create unfavorable retreats. If a player wants to create a disaster for his opponent similar to that which befell Samsonov's Second Army, then this is what he is required to do.

Adding to the flavor of combat, *The Cossacks Are Coming!* has a large number of unit types including:

- Headquarters (army, corps, and some divisions),
- Infantry (the Germans have a few motorized units in their cavalry divisions),
- Cavalry (regular and dragoons),
- Artillery (divided into field, horse, and heavy types, with direct and indirect sub-types),
- Fortresses (which are rated for their ability to withstand artillery),
- Engineers (combat and railroad),
- Supply units,
- Machine gun units,
- Armored cars,
- Airplanes, and...
- Zeppelins(!)

Most infantry and other combat units have a machine gun factor which is added to their defense strength.

Cavalry units are very ineffective on the attack, but they have the ability to screen, and even charge.

Heavy artillery cannot be used in fire attacks and will be destroyed if defending alone against a fire attack. Using heavy artillery produces favorable

combat modifiers, while using indirect artillery reduces the defensive benefits of some types of terrain.

Armored car units are mobile and one of the few units which can use their machine gun factors offensively.

Airplanes can provide a favorable spotting modifier for artillery, but they are very finicky.

Zeppelins are more reliable and have great endurance, but they are vulnerable to artillery units (this writer will never forget losing a Zeppelin to a regiment of horse artillery).

There are counters for all of the army and some of the more colorful corps commanders (Von Francois, Martos, Mackensen) - there is even a Hoffman counter!

While these unit details do add a certain flavor, we found we often did not optimize our actions based on them; sheer mass, maneuver, and firepower often will overwhelm their effects.

Not surprisingly for the period, armies in *The Cossacks Are Coming!* are bound to railroads. The loss of supply is as devastating to units as the loss of command and control. When attached to an army, units trace supply to their corps headquarters or to a supply depot, and then up a chain of supply depots to the army's main supply depot. This main depot is required to be on a railroad hex. The main depot

then traces a line of uninterrupted railroad hexes, known as the army's line of communications, to a friendly map edge. The nature of the line of communications depends upon the type of railroad tracks along which it is traced.

- Double track rail lines are the best as they allow having a line of communications which can do all of the following: Rail movement of units, replacing ammunition, and replacing lost strength points for units.
- A line of communications traced on less than double tracks will require the army to choose among one or more, but not all, of these functions for a given impulse.

These rules force each army into depending on a separate rail network for its support, with a limited divergence from these paths. There are never enough supply dumps to go around, thereby forcing the army's main supply depot to be unpleasantly near the front. In one game I played, the Germans succeeded in rendering the Russian Second Army ineffective by pushing it off its line of communications and leaving its troops to mill around in the swamps of northern Poland.

The use of hidden intelligence for the Tannenberg campaign is not a unique idea. SPI's *Tannenberg* allowed the Germans to hide their movement using hidden force markers. *The Cossacks Are Coming!* uses a more liberal and detailed approach to hidden

Counter Sheet 2 Front														
8th Army Mission Advance	Max. Repaired MD Status	German Rail Points X1	Russian Rail Points X1	↑	↑	↑	↑	Rail Mode	XXIII 5-3	2 5	3gd 7	XXVI 4-2	53 4	56 4
Rail Mode	8th Army Mission Flexible	Minimum MD Status	German Rail Points X10	Russian Rail Points X10	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	1gdc 6	2gdc 6	2c 5	3c 5	C Khan Nach Hold +2	4c 5
Game Turn	Days Used	Current Phase	Final Combat Period	Prisoners x 100	Prisoners x 10	Prisoners x 1	Prisoners x 100	Prisoners x 10	1 rbd 5	5 rbd 5	2 art bd 5	1 art bd 5	54 4	79 4
☀	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀	Dummy	Dummy	Dummy	Dummy	Dummy	Dummy
↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	☀	☀	Maximum MD Status	Maximum MD Status	Maximum MD Advance	First Army Mission Advance
↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	☀	☀	Maximum MD Status	Maximum MD Status	Maximum MD Status	Second Army Mission Advance
Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Out of Ammo	Out of Ammo	Out of Ammo	Ammo Left 1	Ammo Left 1	Ammo Left 1
Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Out of Ammo	Out of Ammo	Out of Ammo	Ammo Left 1	Ammo Left 1	Ammo Left 1
Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Arty. Sup.	Arty. Sup.	Arty. Sup.	Arty. Sup.	Arty. Sup.	Arty. Sup.
Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9
Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9	Cadre 7 9

intelligence. In the general game system, all units remain flipped to their hidden side until they engage in combat. In addition, one can use cavalry to perform a reconnaissance or determine that an attack is a probe. Airplanes are generally attached to corps (German) and army (German and Russian) headquarters. Along with Zeppelins, they may fly reconnaissance over troop concentrations and obtain general information about the type of troops in a hex, but not specific strengths or unit identities. Magnifying the importance of intelligence is the use of corps holding boxes, which allow a player to use one counter to represent an entire corps, and the presence of dummy counters for each side. However, in the exclusive rules for *The Cossacks Are Coming!* the intelligence advantage shifts to the Germans: Any time a Russian unit begins a phase by expending movement points on German territory, it is revealed. (Russian radio security was extremely poor during the campaign.) The effect of this is to give a considerable intelligence advantage to the Germans, except along the frontier (where unknown Russian forces can reinforce a defensive position or assist in an attack; don't underestimate this ability) or in Russian territory itself. Given that the movement system allows large units to rail considerable distances and then attack during a turn, it is easy to have one or more corps unexpectedly appear on a new front.

Unfortunately, the rules for *The Cossacks Are Coming!* are densely written. With most wargames, the rules can be understood quickly by veteran wargamers by asking a fairly standard series of questions. That is not the case with this game. While the rules are presented in a fairly hard case system format, this writer found that getting the answers to some fairly common questions required considerable hunting. While there are summaries of the combat modifiers and morale checks, a number of the mechanics are obscurely presented. The reader is encouraged to pay particular attention to the line of communications, formations, and some of the specific rules for particular types of combat units. Particularly frustrating are the formation and scenario deployment rules. The formation rules use the concept of formation in three senses but fail to make clear the distinction between them:

- A division or large brigade with specific combat units (brigades, regiments, or battalions) is a formation,
- Corps and armies are also a formations, even though only subordinate formations are attached to them.

The scenario deployment instructions were irritating, requiring the reader to cross reference across several pages, and complicated by the fact the sub-

units of divisions and brigade formations are not identified by name on their counters. On the plus side, the rules do contain interesting historical and designer's notes.

Aside from the rules booklet, I have only two major complaints about the game. Occasionally the system seems to be too complicated for the scale that it is trying to depict. For example, given that the command and control rules require an infantry division's component units (typically a double brigade of infantry, an artillery regiment, and sometimes a regiment of cavalry) stay next to each other, it would appear to make sense to reduce counter density by treating divisions as single units possessing the characteristics of their components. My second complaint is that the combat system may overrate the usefulness of artillery in fire combat versus using it in barrage combat. On a number of occasions, my opponent and I were tempted to dispense with barrages altogether in favor of simply adding our artillery strength to the fire combat. This seems odd given that the Combat Phase has two periods of combat, ostensibly so that the first combat period can be used for artillery bombardment. This problem appears to be more a matter of tweaking the barrage-fire combat relationship than anything fundamental. In general, most of the problems with the game appear to indicate that the game deserved more development.

The sequence of play, the combat system, hidden intelligence, the logistics system, and the interactions between the command and control and army missions give life to the act of pushing around the counters. Indeed, playing this game gave this writer the feeling that he was inspecting the very mechanisms of the German and Russian armies of the period. In *The Cossacks Are Coming!*, to succeed operationally requires not only understanding how to defeat a given sector of front, but how to defeat an opposing army, which is virtually an organism in itself. While firepower predominates, using it alone will not succeed. Most units can take a lot of punishment, and replacements are unlimited. The command radii and benefits of stacking tend to cause armies to operate on fronts of ten to fifteen hexes, sometimes with considerable gaps between corps, and, of course, each army is rail-bound. While an individual unit can be tough, an army which is not properly deployed can be a very brittle thing.

In the main campaign of this game, covered in several scenarios (covering Stallupönen, Gumbinnen, Tannenberg, and the Masurian Lakes) which can be inter-linked, the Russians are attempting to conquer East Prussia and break out into the rest of Germany using Rennenkampf's First Army from the east and Samsonov's Second Army from the south. The

Russians are given many curses, but have some strengths. In addition to inferior intelligence in East Prussia, the Russians' problems include generally lower morale in their formations, army and corps headquarters with smaller command capabilities, and a bad line of communications for the Second Army. To complicate matters, the two armies are entering from divergent directions with the Masurian Lakes bottleneck between them, and a very extensive German rail network exists between both fronts.

While each of the Russian armies is smaller than the German Eighth Army, combined they do outnumber the Germans. Furthermore, the Russian Tenth Army under Pflug is on its way. In East Prussia, there are two east-west double track railroads. If the Russians can get their Second Army to disrupt enough of the southern system, then a link-up with their First Army will become possible. Combined, the two armies can put a real grind on the Germans. If this is not possible, then the trick is to keep both armies alive and functioning as armies in being. While the German Eighth Army is a more flexible, resilient instrument, the Germans are cursed with having only one army, whose headquarters cannot span the entire front (unless you think withdrawing to the Vistula is an acceptable strategy; the Eighth Army's original commander was sacked just for contemplating this). Where the Eighth Army isn't, there will be units attached to the supreme command: Units which can only be assigned the hold mission and which cannot replace their losses. In short, the Russians probably are best off cautiously advancing with both armies toward a link-up, while trying to keep the Germans off balance between the fronts. Of course, if the Germans open up their rail network to a deep penetration, then it may be appropriate to gamble without going for a link-up. Avoid facing the concentration of the Eighth Army with a convex front; all of the tactical advantages of a German flanking move are multiplied by such a deployment.

The German situation is a classic problem of operating on interior lines. If the Russians are on the general offensive, the Germans are almost required to attack locally. The Germans have a mixture of very good troops, ample artillery, and local reserves which are about equivalent to most of the Russian troops. If at all possible, the objective of these local attacks is to render Russian armies ineffective for combat. Strike hard and decisively. If the Germans can remove one army as a threat, usually it will be possible to use rail movement to turn and defeat the other army. At all costs, defend the southern east-west double track railroad which passes through Deutsch-Eylau, Allenstein, and Lötzen. Without it, it will be very hard to flank either Russian army.

The Cossacks Are Coming! is a well researched, creative treatment of its subject. While it is not as well developed as it could have been, the underlying design is a carefully thought out study of the interrelated factors of command and control, tactics, and logistics. Once this writer understood what he was doing, he was pleasantly surprised to find the game played much faster than expected. The game does a good job of depicting a dynamic series of operations, and it does so with much historical flavor. To use the system to its full potential, play the campaign. While it is not for casual players, this writer recommends it to anyone who wants to know more about the period.

The author thanks Russ Bauder for his assistance in reviewing the game.

FUTURE GEM

XTR's

When Eagles Fight

Published in Command #25 in 1993 • Designed by Ted Racier

reviewed by **Rich Erwin**

When Eagles Fight covers the primary area of fighting in the Eastern Theater of World War I, centered around what is now present-day Poland. Units are typically infantry corps, with a few cavalry units and infantry divisions thrown into the counter mix.

Both sides can win an absolute victory by capturing the other side's capital city - for the Russians, they can choose between Berlin, Vienna and Budapest, while for the Germans, Petrograd is the target. Selected turns are victory check turns, when the Russian player must determine whether they have taken three German or, depending on the given victory check turn, between two and four Austro-Hungarian victory point hexes. The Central Powers player must force the Russian Monarchy to fall in order to normally achieve victory. This is done by meeting or exceeding the die roll required during a given victory check turn - a good roll means the start of the Russian Revolution. The required value is usually either eight or eleven, so taking cities in Russia and Russian Poland is a requirement for a Central Powers victory. Many of these are garrisoned and will require the arrival of siege artillery later in the game to beat into submission, but a few easy pickings are available - Lodz is the most tempting target.

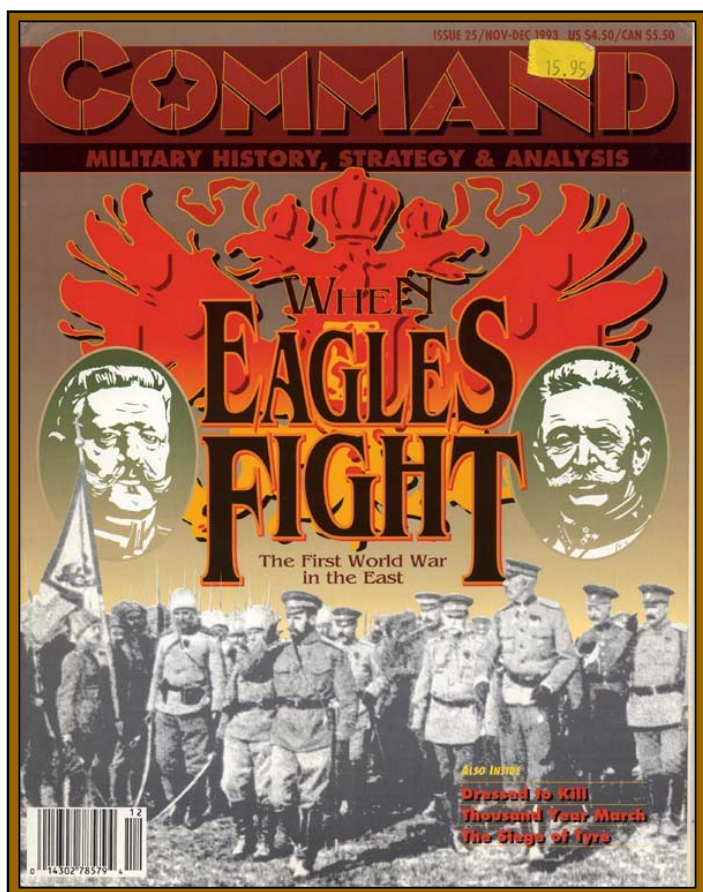
The game system is relatively simple, but with a few unique wrinkles. Both sides first receive their reinforcement, and replacements, then remove their units required for other fronts. Strategic movement then follows - to emphasize how important mobility via rail was to the strategy of most European generals, units can move from one town or city under

their control to another, then be able to move their normal allotment in the same turn. The Russian player, with less emphasis on maintenance and replacement in his nation, is allowed to move fewer corps with each passing year. This is followed by regular movement, combat, and then, for the Central Powers, the OberOst Combat Phase.

To reflect the better training of both soldiers and staff officers, German attacks have available an OberOst marker. When placed on a German unit, that unit and all German units within two hexes of the OberOst counter may attack during the OberOst Combat Phase. This gives the Germans a great advantage in being able to conduct concentric attacks (a Command staple). This, when used with German active corps (which add a plus one die roll modifier to a given battle when participating), can really rattle the Russians.

The Russian player has available something similar - a Stavka counter. When placed on any Russian unit or stack of units, that unit or stack and any friendly units adjacent to the hex with the Stavka unit may attack during the regular Combat Phase with a favorable die roll modifier of plus one.

The final phase of a turn is the Attrition Supply Check Phase. Any units not able to trace supply to a friendly source are considered eliminated. Given there are no zones of control in the game, and supply is traced through towns or cities to the respective edges of the board, one would think this rule doesn't get used much. Don't bet on it. If nothing else, this rule tends to be a very powerful brake on a player that may decide to make a mad dash for Prague or Petrograd.



WHEN EAGLES FIGHT

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2425 XXX 6-7-4*	2525 XXX 6-7-4*	2325 XXX 5-6-4*	2730 XXX 5-6-4*	2830 XXX 5-6-4*	2929 XXX 5-6-4*	2926 XXX 5-6-4*	2926 XXX 5-6-4*
3027 XXX 5-6-4*	2626 XXX 6-7-4*	2725 XXX 5-6-4*	2826 XXX 5-6-4*	2126 XXX 5-6-4*	3229 XXX 6-7-4*	3127 XXX 1-2-4*	3128 XXX 1-2-4*

Austro-Hungarians

1822 Ober-Ost 4-5-4	2314 Ger. Repl. 6-7-4	2614 1-1-6	2514 5-6-4	2615 2-2-4*	2615 6-7-4	2416 6-7-4	2314 A-H Repl. 1-3-2
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Germans

2 1-1-6	2 6-7-4	2 5-6-4	2 4-5-4	2 4-5-4	2-1619 0-1-0*	2-2117 0-1-0*	4 2-2-6
4 2-2-6	4 5-6-4	4 5-6-4	4 4-5-4	4-1622 0-1-0*	5 6-7-4	5 5-6-4	5 6-7-4

5 5-6-4	6 6-7-4	6 5-6-4	6 5-6-4	6 5-6-4	7 6-7-4	7 0-0-3*	7 5-6-4
7 5-6-4	7 6-7-4	8 5-6-4	8 5-6-4	8 0-0-3*	8 5-6-4	B+1 1-2-4	B+1 1-2-4

B+1 1-2-4	B+1 1-2-4	B+2 3-4-3*	B+3 1-2-4	B+3 1-2-4	1619 0-3-0*	1622 0-3-0*	2117 0-3-0*
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2314 0-3-0*	2616 0-2-0*	A Czar Takes Command	B Czar Reforms	C Allied Offensive	D Major Allied Offensive	E Isorozo Offensive	F Russian Defeat in Caucasus
G Russian Victory in Caucasus	H Allied Victory at Gallipoli	I Italy Neutral	J Austrian Offensive in Italy	K Verdun	L Peace, Bread, Land	GAME TURN	

This is a supplement to Issue 25

Russians

2419 Rus. Repl. 0-3-0*	2422 0-2-0*	2617 0-1-0*
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2816 0-2-0*	2820 0-2-0*	2908 0-3-0*	2913 0-1-0*	3015 0-1-0*	3017 0-2-0*	3123 0-1-0*	3225 0-1-0*
3602 0-3-0*	4233 0-3-0*	2714 5-6-4	2713 5-6-4	2714 5-6-4	2713 5-6-4	2913 5-6-4	2317 5-6-4

2516 5-6-4	2417 5-6-4	2417 5-6-4	2417 5-6-4	3123 5-6-4	3224 5-6-4	3224 5-6-4	3225 5-6-4
2423 6-7-4	2523 5-6-4	2623 5-6-4	2423 6-7-4	2723 5-6-4	2823 5-6-4	2923 5-6-4	3023 5-6-4

3226 5-6-4	3227 6-7-4	3327 6-7-4	3328 5-6-4	2 SLAWA 6-7-4	2 6-7-4	2 6-7-4	2 6-7-4
2 5-6-4	2 6-7-4	2 2-3-6	2 2-3-6	3 6-7-4	3 3-4-3	3 6-7-4	3 6-7-4

3 6-7-4	3 5-6-4	5 6-7-4	5 3-4-3	5 3-4-3	7 5-6-4	7 3-4-3	8 3-4-3
10 3-4-3	10 3-4-3	13 6-7-4	13 3-4-3	14 7-7-4*	14 7-7-4*	14 2-2-6*	15 4-5-4

REG 4-5-4	REG 4-5-4	Shut Brusilov Offensive	12-7	8-7	6-7	4-7	2-7
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Back to Iraq

Both sides receive reinforcements and replacements. Be sure to get the reinforcements on the board as soon as they arrive, even if you aren't sure what you'll use them for immediately - they disappear if you try to stash them for future use. You can save some of your replacement points, however, and you should whenever feasible. Bringing a depleted unit back to full strength at a critical juncture can make a big difference. Note, however, that some units, including the vaunted Russian Guards and most Austro-Hungarian units, can never be returned to their initial strength levels or returned to the board if completely destroyed.

Starting with turn five, random events come into play via drawn chits. These can range from Allied offensives in the West (which reduce by half the number of replacements and reinforcements available to the Germans) to the declaration of the Bolshevik agenda, which can increase the chances for a successful Russian Revolution die roll.

To make life that much more interesting for the Russian player, he must also contend with ammunition shortages and determine the worth of attempt-

ing the Brusilov Offensive. From turn two onward, a die is rolled to see how many units will have their combat factors halved due to ammunition shortages. This will be at its most painful during turns seven through ten, but no matter how you slice it, it is guaranteed to prevent Russian mass from being completely successful against the Central Powers.

Between turns fifteen and eight, the Russians can land devastating blows on the Austro-Hungarian forces by initiating the Brusilov Offensive. The offensive lasts three turns, and you should note that it is not required. You may want to ponder this when you consider the price for being able to blow away a few Austro-Hungarian corps without much effort. Every turn thereafter, one is added to the die roll on the Ammunition Shortage Table. This could make a telling difference in the Central Powers' ability to take those key cities and achieve a successful Russian Revolution die roll.

The game is very interesting because of the different agendas of each side. The Russian player must do everything in his power to either overstretch the Germans or the Austro-Hungarians to the breaking

point, and do so within the first six turns. The obvious choice is the Austro-Hungarians, because their units are of equal quality to the Russian force, and because lost forces return to the game in a much weaker state than at the start. Keep an eye on an a Central Powers player that is too over-confident in his Germans, though. After turn seven, consolidate and use your larger number of units to keep the Central Powers from winning. Using the Brusilov Offensive option comes down to how desperate or daring you want to be. On the one hand, you need only survive the game to win, while on the other hand, you'll face a much weaker Austro-Hungarian force by turn fifteen.

The Central Powers player had best get used to knowing when to beat up the Russians in the north, and when to send forces south to support the Austro-Hungarians. Realize you can only send so many German corps south per given year (one in 1914, three from 1915 onward), and rely on the mountains and shift your Austro-Hungarian forces west to protect Prague and Vienna early on. When the Russians start racking up large numbers of ammunition-depleted units, you'll eventually get Lemberg and Czernowicz back, but watch out for Brusilov.

Most of all, watch out for battles of attrition - the Russian player has lots more mediocre units than you have excellent ones, and with effort, he can grind you down. Worse, even when he's running hell-bent for leather away from you in a weakened state, he'll still be able to give you a great deal of pain by a combination of nasty sieges and sheer numbers. Never, ever be complacent just because OberOst is available.

In short, *When Eagles Fight* is a tightly packaged game which is well-suited to Command's penchant for focusing on land-based warfare with minimum frills. The chrome in this game, while typically minimal of later Command issues, is excellently done. Both sides have ample opportunity for aggression, and neither side has it in the bag, no matter how bad things look for one side or the other at first glance. Both players may be crying in their beer and chips alternately during a typical game, but the emotional roller coaster ride will be worth it.



Columbia Games'

Napoleon - Part II

Published in 1979 • Designed by Thomas Dalglish

reviewed by **Jonathan T. Price**

"Go, sir, gallop, and don't forget that the world was made in six days. You can ask me for anything you like, except time."

- Napoleon to one of his aides (1803)

The Corsican by R. M. Johnson

"Napoleon has humbugged me, by God!! He has gained twenty-four hours' march on me."

- Wellington, Duke of Richmond (1815)

Wellington: The Years of the Sword
by Elizabeth Longford

The third edition of *Napoleon*, revised and re-released by Columbia Games, builds upon the two previous versions. The first edition was published by Gamma II, a precursor of Columbia Games, in 1974. The second edition was published by Avalon Hill in 1977. (See Issue #13 of Paper Wars for a review, play analysis and general game description, with focus on the second edition.)

The map board depicts the exact area of southern Belgium and northern France as does its predecessor. This playing field is infinitely more colorful and graphically appealing than in the two previous editions, supporting a greater period flavor.

The counter - or should I say wooden block? - mix has been increased from forty-eight to eighty-two units (thirty-three French, nineteen Anglo-Dutch and twenty-five Prussian). The reason is anchored in attempting to establish actual unit identifiers; divisions for the French and Anglo-Dutch, brigades for the Prussians. As with all of Columbia Games' latest editions of wooden-block games, colorful stick-on labels are used to identify units on each of the blocks.

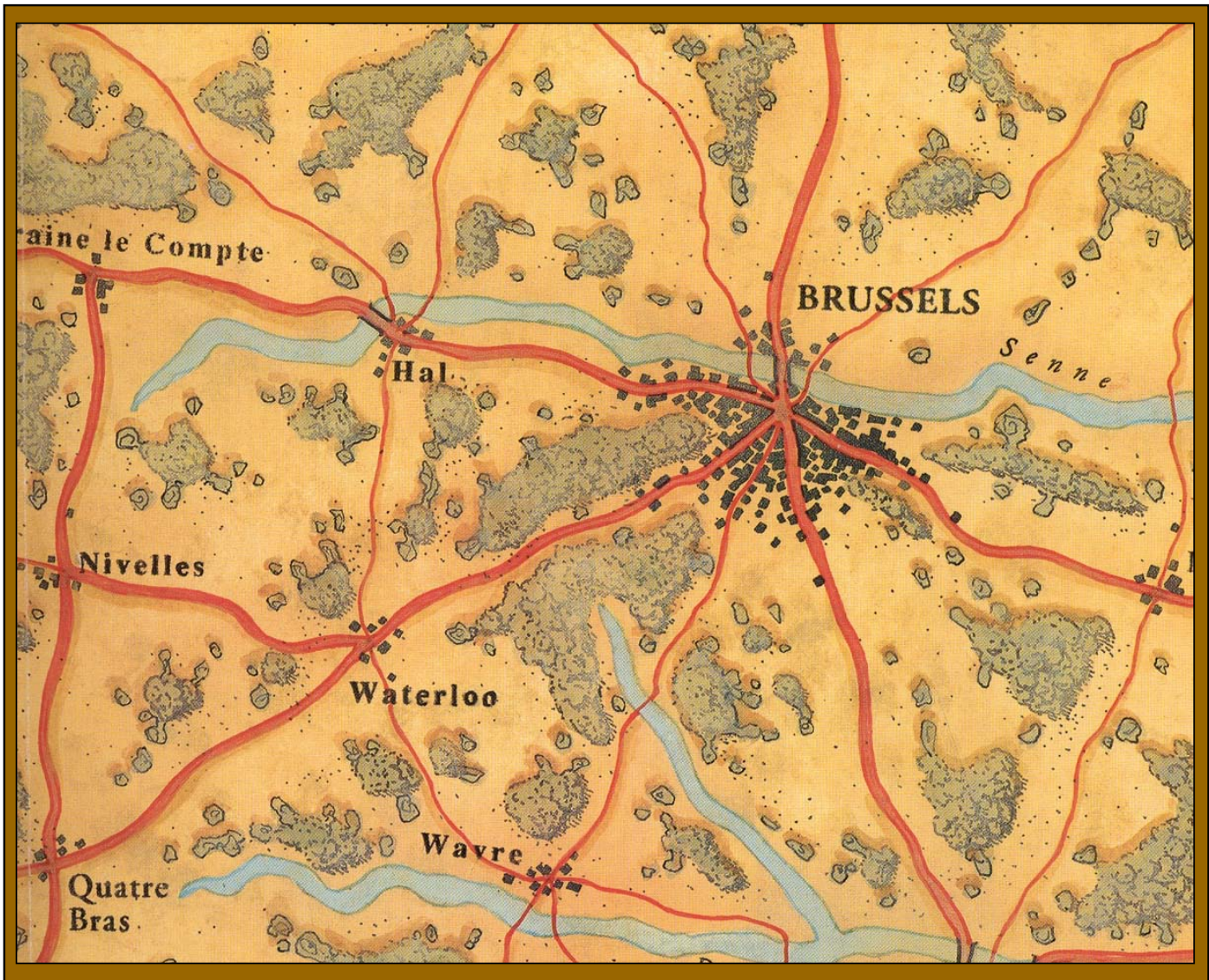
The battle board is both very attractive and very useless. The card has an aerial view of a Belgian (Or maybe Virginian? It appears to be the same battle board as in *Bobby Lee...*) countryside split into three columns and a reserve. What makes this card so useless is the lack of a middle ground in which to give battle. This existed in the previous game.

There are a number of system changes from the second edition:

- **Unit Types** - There are no longer counters

for horse artillery - Columbia Games thought it would be best to amalgamate these units into the cavalry divisions. The units that now exist are cavalry, infantry, artillery and leaders.

- **Deployment** - Having more units available has resulted in a greater initial set up density - the Anglo-Dutch can deploy up to five units per town, the Prussians up to six units per town, and the French up to sixteen (!!) units per town.
- **Group Movement** - This too has increased with the increase in units. The movement limit per turn is now three groups for the French and four groups for the Allies (two for the Anglo-Dutch, two for the Prussians), regardless of size. This can be split up, but if together, is still considered a group.
- **Road Capabilities** - Major roads can now support up to ten units per turn, and minor roads can support a maximum of six units.
- **Rivers** - Road capabilities are no longer automatically halved when crossing a river - now this occurs only when there is opposition.
- **Forced Marches** - Units may now force march to retreat, but as always, with the risk of attrition. A die roll of one to four causes a unit to lose one step level.
- **Disruption** - This occurs when units retreat. Units involved are turned face down to indicate their status and may not reinforce any battle for the remainder of the current campaign turn.
- **Pursuit Fire** - There is none in the third edition. The players automatically receive rout attrition. (Two steps are lost for artillery, one for infantry, and one for cavalry if engaged by cavalry.)
- **Battle Fire** - Cavalry units now have triple fire capability when first engaged and double fire capability at all other times. Artillery units retain their two traditional ranges - long range (across the middle ground of the battle board) at single fire and short range (firing at units in the middle ground) at double fire. For short range artillery, the guns are no



longer silenced after one cannonade, but may instead continue to fire into the melee at double fire.

- **Battle Losses** - Unlike the second edition, in which losses were removed from whichever unit the owning player desired, losses are now removed first from the unit engaged with the highest combat value, continuing downward. The exception to this rule is when units have formed square.
- **Leader Move Bonus** - Units starting a turn with a leader unit in their midst receive an additional two units per road maximum. Thus, major roads with a leader present can support twelve units, (six if forcing a river crossing) and minor roads eight (four if forcing a river crossing).
- **Leader Morale Bonus** - An optional rule for battle morale allows leaders to provide plus one to the morale rolls of friendly units in the

same battle column.

- **Supply** - The Allied armies still retain their original supply bases; however, Brussels is now only worth one Anglo-Dutch unit lost per turn in French hands, while Liege in French hands can result in two Prussian units per turn lost.
- **Squares** - If the optional rule concerning squares is used, firepower effects change to:
 - Engaging cavalry has single fire capability
 - Engaging infantry has double fire capability
 - Artillery fires into squares at double fire capability
 - Infantry in square has single fire capability

Napoleon couldn't create time, but apparently Columbia Games knows the trick - they've expanded

the game to thirty turns while reducing from eight to six the number of days of operations. With the change in group movement and the leader movement bonus, each player receives a welcome increase in mobility, flexibility and deception. This particularly aids the French, allowing them to better mask their true intentions for as long as possible. These changes also somewhat alleviate the obsessive need in the past for the French to advance at a frenzied pace.

The decrease in the value of Brussels and the increase in the value of Liege not only makes the game more realistic, but also illuminates a new horizon of options and opportunities for both players. Coupling this change with the additional turns and group movement, the strategy of the Eastern Approach (developed in Issue #13) becomes much more palatable for the French.

Cavalry now commands maximum firepower on the battlefield. It isn't consistent, but when it strikes, it can be devastating. Artillery, on the other hand, now becomes more devastating on the defense and can be quite consistent with its new level of firepower.

So what do all of these changes mean? In a nutshell, a much more balanced and enjoyable game, assuming that one can get through the third edition gibberish Columbia Games calls rules. It is readily apparent they didn't put the time into the third edition rule book they had in the other game components. Instead, one sees a hodgepodge of old and recycled ideas, good new ideas, clarifications on existing rules and some borrowed (and untailored) thoughts from the then in play test *Bobby Lee*.

This is not to say that this is a poorly constructed game - on the contrary, the game is, overall, better than before. The problem is one wouldn't know it if all they had to base their opinion on was the third edition rule book. It is inexcusable, considering this is the third time around for *Napoleon*, that this reviewer had to call the designer to clarify rule omissions, additions and changes. I hope when other Napoleonic titles are brought out by Columbia Games (something assured to me by Tom Dalglish, *Napoleon's* original designer and retro-fitter for the third edition), they will take the full measure of time and commitment that this game system deserves to be all that it can be - a masterpiece.

(Rich Erwin: A review of Napoleon in the Fall 1993 Canadian Wargamers Journal provides an excellent set of recommendations for this game.)

HEN'S TOOTH

Jagdpanther's
Gorlice-Tarnow

Published in Jagdpanther #7 in 1974 • Designed by Stephen Cole

reviewed by **Rich Erwin**

Command of late has received a lot of flak by many for what they perceive as an "it all tastes like chicken to me" approach to producing wargames. Magazine wargames have often been the place where experimental designs and less focused-upon arenas of conflict come into being. Command has, to its credit, created a number of solid designs and some of the cleanest and easy to comprehend sets of rules in wargaming. It also has produced consistently excellent graphics - Larry Hoffman is, in many ways, the unsung hero of XTR's success. Where people have had difficulty, I think, is a lack of chrome, an unwillingness to go beyond a certain level of complexity, and, to a certain extent, an unwillingness to take risks. The Wargamer and Strategy & Tactics have in the past.

Command's clarity of rules presentation shows us most game designs are, at heart, fairly similar. What Command doesn't always seem to realize is it's the chrome that can cause differentiation and give it a more period flavor. Granted, chrome can add loose ends to a game if done poorly, but if that's the concern, then I would recommend using optional rules to add chrome to a system. Then individual players can decide for themselves whether they're worth the effort of inclusion.

One place where Command can learn a few lessons in flashiness is with Jagdpanther's Issue #7 game *Gorlice-Tarnow*. The Combat Results Table is unimaginative by 1990s standards (defender retreat, attacker retreat, defender eliminated, attacker eliminated, exchange) and the production quality leaves much to be desired. Russian units are corps, and most other units are divisions. Not only must the counters be mounted and cut, but the map itself must be aligned, cut and combined to suit. In all, most of the game is what you'd expect from a Third World product of the early-to-mid 1970s. However, the chrome is nothing short of wonderful.

Gorlice-Tarnow covers the entire Eastern Front in World War I. This means not only the area centered around present-day Poland, but the Balkans and as far south as the Dardanelles. While it isn't as exciting as up in the Northeastern Front, Command might think about an optional expansion for *When Eagles Fight*, as they have thought about an expansion kit for their *Victory in Normandy*.

Another twist are rules for subject peoples. This affects mostly the Austro-Hungarians - the Czechs are always rebelling or refusing to fight, Slavic units can't attack Serbian units (though the Serbs can attack them), and Polish units can't attack Russian Polish units (and vice versa). Rumanian Austrians are off the map if Cluj is taken by the Entente before 1914, and Slavic Austrian units are off the map if Arad is taken before 1914. If two similar ethnic units from different sides are adjacent to each other, the die must be rolled for a possible desertion of the unit!!

The Central Powers must also cause a revolution in Russia, as with *When Eagles Fight*. This can be accomplished by taking four of six cities and fortified areas - Riga, Odessa, Vinnitsa, Kovno, Branovitch and Brest. Since *Gorlice-Tarnow* covers a larger front than *When Eagles Fight*, it's a disaster for the Entente player to lose the Russians. The Central Powers player must also remove one third of his German and one fourth of his Austro-Hungarian units - they're busy interning Russians. They're returned to the game at a rate of two units per turn via Warsaw.

The best concept and the worst executed idea in *Gorlice-Tarnow* are the command and control rules. It's something needed if you want to get a feel for the sheer idiocy of most leadership in World War I. From a list of generals available per scenario, counters related to the general are put into a cup. Two are removed at random, and the rest assigned unseen to their respective armies. Armies are created and units assigned to them - there are geographic limits to how far an army can be kept under a single leader's control, and too many units under a leader's control degrades his performance. Every turn, a die is rolled for each leader and cross-referenced against their competency value. Bad leaders rarely move, while good leaders will go pretty much where you want them to go. All leaders have the possibility of committing a special act, which requires a special die roll and could result in anything - from retreating to making inspired attacks.

Unfortunately, there are no leader counters or army delineators. Toothpicks can take care of the latter, but the lack of the former is initially confusing and a little irritating. You already have to go to a lot of trouble to cut, paste and mount them. Now you have to create them? At least we live in the age of

desktop computer graphics for under \$1,500...

The kludgiest aspect of *Gorlice-Tarnow* is the victory conditions. As I read the rules, while both sides can collect victory points, both the Entente and Central Powers player could simultaneously could have an automatic decisive victory if they can knock one of their key opponents (Russia and Austro-Hungary) out of the game before 1915!! One player could also achieve the conditions necessary for a substantial victory while the other could achieve a decisive victory. It's obvious in some ways to determine who would win, but in others it's a bit confusing. A definite need exists for tightening this section of the rules.

The game as a whole plays a lot like *When Eagles Fight*, (which isn't surprising, given the strategic nature of both games), save for the chrome mentioned on the previous page and the now-considered poor Combat Results Table. And while the victory conditions could make both sides happy to have accomplished something, it'll leave more than a few folks uneasy that a typical game can't be fully resolved.

Nevertheless, Command should take a good look at *Gorlice-Tarnow*. It's sloppy, and Command is improving in the area (both with *When Eagles Fight* and *When Tigers Fight*), but there's a lot of food for thought when it comes to chrome and how to apply it well.

3W's

Army Group Center

Published in 1993 • Designed by Masahiro Yamazaki

reviewed by **Henry Lowood**

Masahiro Yamazaki has emerged in just two years of work as one of the most prolific designers in the wargaming hobby. *Army Group Center* is his fourth published design, following *Zitadelle* (3W, 1992), *Stalingrad Pocket* (The Gamers, 1992), and *War for the Motherland* (Rampart Games, 1993). While all four games are devoted to the Eastern Front, their scales, topics, and game systems vary considerably. So has the degree to which he has succeeded. Indeed, it is not too harsh to say that Mr. Yamazaki has been erratic, with his best effort - *Stalingrad Pocket* - owing much of its success to the able efforts of its series designer and developer, Dean Essig.

Army Group Center thus might be seen as something of a make or break test for Yamazaki. Unfortunately, I doubt that very many gamers will agree with Keith Poulter (quoting himself in a recent advertisement) that this is an

"amazing game; ... Masahiro Yamazaki is emerging as one of the finest designer[s] in the industry. A game that will hold you spell-bound."

On the contrary, *Army Group Center* simply continues Yamazaki's established tendencies in game design - both good and bad - by mixing sound with awkward systems, pouring in both exciting and puzzling innovations, adding more complexity than historicity, and, in the end, producing a stew with an off taste.

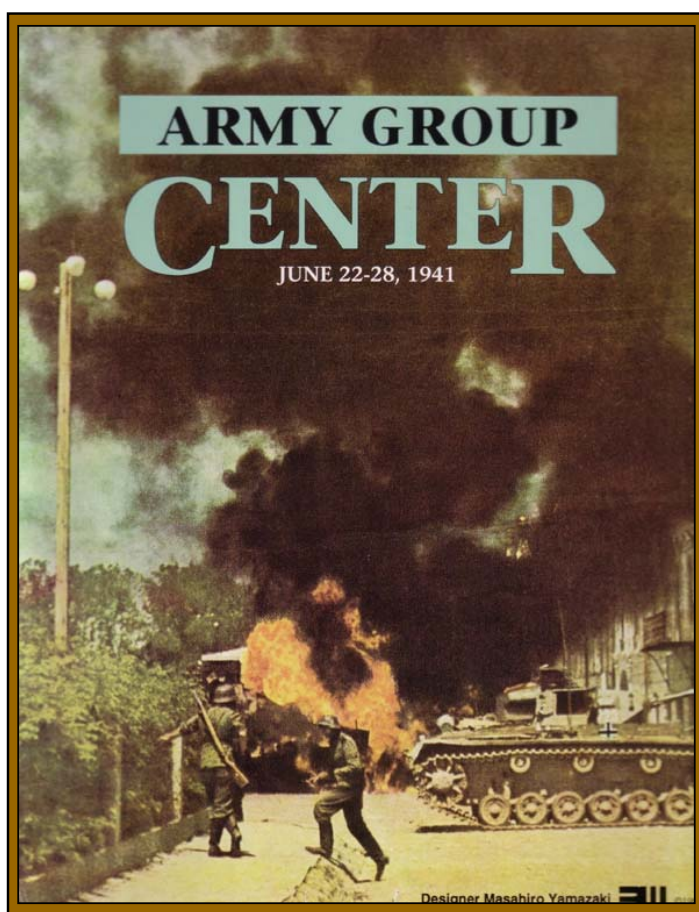
As is obvious from its title, this game simulates the opening blows of Germany's Army Group Center, consisting of two panzer groups and two field armies, against the Soviet's West Front, with four ar-

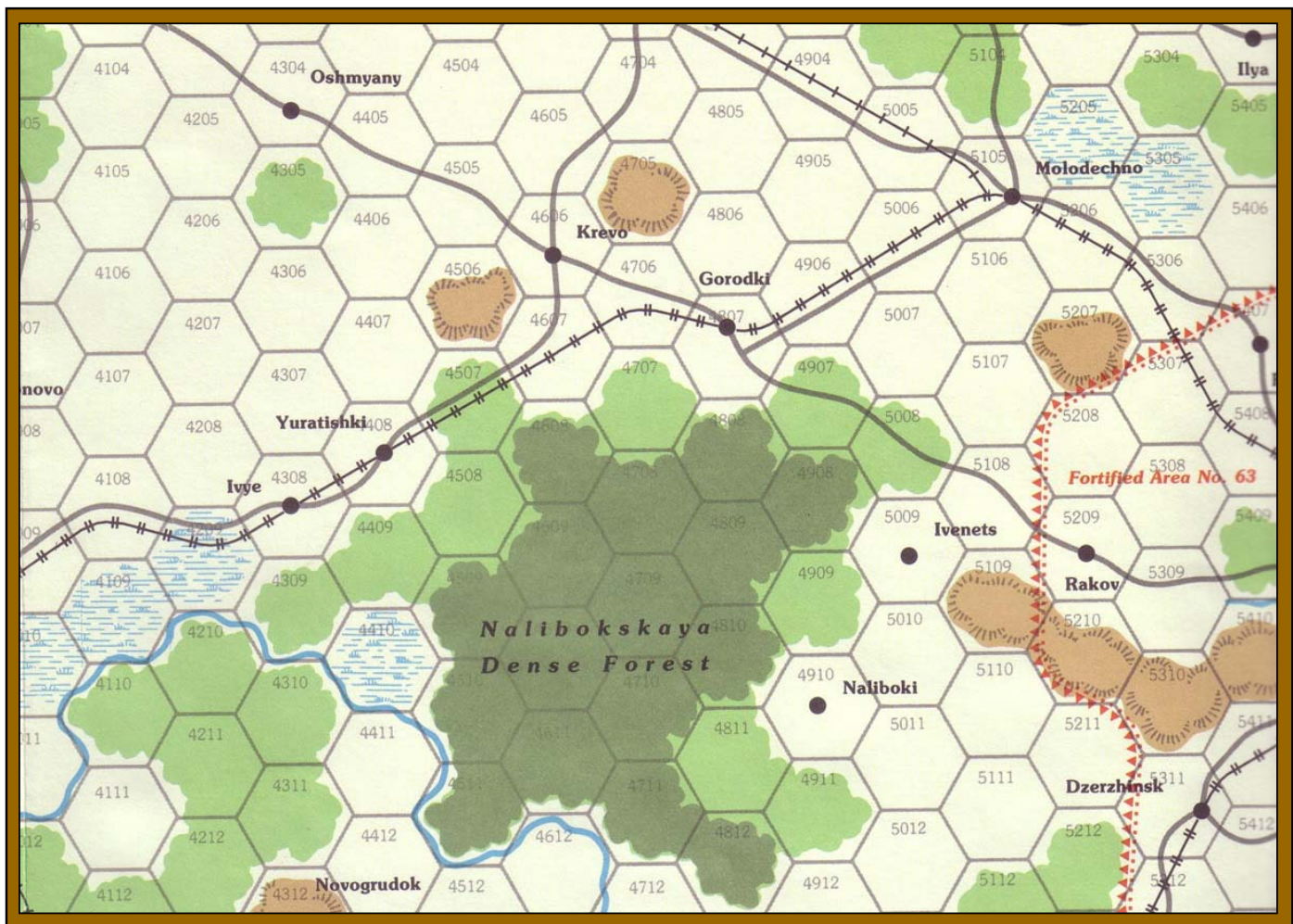
mies and other supporting forces, in late June of 1941. The first weeks of the campaign were a walkover, and the Germans cleared the terrain over which *Army Group Center* is played by early July. Large pockets around Bialystok and Minsk were essentially closed by the end of the week depicted in the game. Clearly, one of the designer's challenges in simulating this campaign is to keep it interesting, both by constructing victory conditions that plausibly

cast the final outcome in doubt and by giving the Soviet player something to do besides counting losses and German victory points.

The single map of *Army Group Center* extends roughly north-south from Vilnius to Pinsk and the Pripet Marshes, west-east from the German start-line to the Berezina River. Only the eastern edge of the map has a straight edge, as most of the corners and edges are littered with a variety of tracks, boxes, and tables (twenty-three in all!) that result in all manner of indentations along the other three map edges. The map includes an even sharper dog-leg than the one in Yamazaki's *War for the Motherland* (an interesting predilection), with Moyzr occupying the green be-

hind an unflankable line of fortifications - bunkers, no doubt. It is true perhaps that the charts simply use up terrain skirted by the historical German advances on Pinsk and Slutsk, but they also eliminate a railroad line and major road of potential use to Soviet reinforcements. Mark Simonitch's map graphics are serviceable and clear, but overall the map seems tight and confining. The counters are acceptable, although marred by an odd tutti-frutti of colors designating higher command structures. Likewise, the rule book and charts are adequate, but there are no breakthroughs or new ideas in the play





aids, and some rules would have benefited from clearer exposition.

As a game designer, Yamazaki is never short of innovative ideas and unusual twists on familiar mechanisms. He likes to mix and match, as well, putting well-worn concepts alongside brazen novelties. As in his other designs, in *Army Group Center* he sometimes bends sound systems until they break. The two best examples of Yamazaki's design approach are probably his use of modes to govern the activities of units in a turn and combat resolution.

The use of unit modes, as they are called in *Army Group Center*, is not at all new, of course. Yamazaki defines a combat unit's mode as "its current organization and what sorts of actions it is prepared to undertake." His application of this idea in practice is reminiscent of Jack Radey's Russian Front titles, particularly *Duel for Kharkov*. Every unit is always in one of six modes: prepared offensive, mobile offense, stand defense, withdrawal defense, transfer, and reserve. For the most part, these modes are actually characteristics of superior (corps) headquarters, so that the markers do not actually reside on each and every unit; rather, they are shown on an off-map track. There are restrictions

on mode changes, such as limitations on the number of corps allowed to change modes. Moreover, changes are not automatic. To attempt such a change, one consults a Mode Change Table. This chart cross-references the six unit modes. To make a mode change, a player must produce a die roll result less than or equal to the number in the appropriate cell in the chart. Thus, changing from mobile offense to withdrawal succeeds forty percent of the time, but changing from prepared offense to withdrawal only has a twenty percent chance of success. No change has better than a ninety percent probability of working. So far, this system seems quite reasonable, but there are numerous complications and quirks in practice. It is odd, for example, not to have any clue as to movement allowance on the units themselves, but this is easily learned. Stranger perhaps is the notion that intrinsic combat strength is unaffected by mode.

The decision to make movement allowance entirely a function of mode (and not of unit type) pushes a lot of business onto the Terrain Effects Chart (which does differentiate by unit type) and the movement rules. Some of the results are surprising; for example, infantry units in transfer mode are able to march eight hexes along roads, which, while the

German

PrGr 2 M=10	24P 3Pz 1-2-6	24P 3Pz 4-3	24P 3Pz 3 (1)	24P 4Pz 3-3	24P 4Pz 3 (1)	24P 10M 2-0	24P 10M 4-3	24P 10M 6 (1)	24P 10M 3-0
46P 46P 1-2-6	46P 10Pz 4-3	46P 10Pz 3 (1)	46P 10Pz 2-0	46P 10Pz 2-0	46P 10Pz 2-0	46P 10Pz 2-0	46P 10Pz 2-0	46P 10Pz 2-0	46P 10Pz 2-0

47P 18Pz 4-3	47P 18Pz 3 (1)	47P 29M 2-0	47P 29M 2-0	47P 29M 6 (1)	47P 29M 1-2-3	47P 29M 6 (1)	47P 29M 6 (1)	47P 29M 6 (1)	47P 29M 6 (1)
Res 104 1 (3)	4A M=9	7 1-3-3	7 6 (1)	7 6 (1)	7 6 (1)	7 6 (1)	7 6 (1)	7 6 (1)	7 6 (1)

9 263 6 (1)	9 292 6 (1)	13 1-2-3	13 6 (1)	13 6 (1)	13 1-3-3	43 6 (1)	43 6 (1)	43 6 (1)	43 6 (1)
Res 293 6 (1)	9A M=9	8 1-3-3	8 6 (1)	8 6 (1)	8 6 (1)	8 6 (1)	8 6 (1)	8 6 (1)	8 6 (1)

42 87 6 (1)	42 102 6 (1)	42 129 6 (1)	Res 403 1-0	PrGr 3 M=10	39P 7Pz 1-1-6	39P 7Pz 6-3	39P 7Pz 3 (1)	39P 20Pz 5-3	39P 20Pz 3 (1)
39P 14M 2-0	39P 14M 2-0	39P 20M 2-0	39P 20M 2-0	57P 12Pz 1-2-6	57P 12Pz 5-3	57P 12Pz 3 (1)	57P 12Pz 5-3	57P 12Pz 3 (1)	57P 12Pz 2-0

57P 18M 2-0	5 1-2-3	5 6 (1)	5 6 (1)	5 1-3-3	6 6 (1)	6 6 (1)	6 6 (1)	Res 101 1 (3)	A1 2-0	A2 2-0
A3 2-0	B1 2-0	B2 2-0	B3 2-0	C1 2-0	C2 2-0	C3 2-0	D1 2-0	D2 2-0	D3 2-0	

Army Group Center

Front 1

E1 2-0	E2 2-0	E3 2-0	F1 2-0	F2 2-0	F3 2-0	G1 2-0	G2 2-0	G3 2-0	4-3-1 JG27 1
5-4-1 JG51 1	5-4-1 JG53 1	3-3-2 SG210 2	3-3-2 ZG26 2	1-2-3 K02 2	1-2-4 K03 4	1-3-3 K053 3	1-2-5 STG1 1	1-2-5 STG2 1	1-2-5 STG7 1

-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1
-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1

-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1
-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1

-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1
-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1

Destroyed	Destroyed	Destroyed	Destroyed	Destroyed	Destroyed	Destroyed	Destroyed	Destroyed	Destroyed
Destroyed	Destroyed	Destroyed	Destroyed	Destroyed	Destroyed	Destroyed	Destroyed	Destroyed	Destroyed

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Soviet

3A	4r	77	56	85	11m	29	33	204	86
M=6	1-2-2	4-(1)	4-(1)	4-(1)	1-1-4	2-4	3-2	3-(1)	1-0
7	10A	1r	2	8	5r	13	86	113	6c
1-(3)	M=7	1-2-2	4(1)	4(1)	1-1-2	4-(1)	4-(1)	4-(1)	1-1-3

6c	36	6m	4	7	29	13m	25	31	208
2-0	2-0	1-1-4	6-4	6-4	3(1)	1-1-4	3-2	3-2	3(1)
155	6	4A	28r	6	42	49	75	14m	22
4(1)	1(3)	M=6	1-1-2	4(1)	4(1)	4(1)	4(1)	1-1-4	3-2

14m	30	205	33	17	13A	2r	100	161	21r
4-2	3(1)	1-0	1-0	M=6	1-2-2	4(1)	4(1)	1-1-2	4(1)
21r	24	37	44r	64	108	47r	55	121	143
4(1)	4(1)	1-1-2	4(1)	4(1)	1-1-2	4(1)	4(1)	4(1)	1-1-4

17m	27	36	209	20m	26	38	210	4ab	7
1-2	1-2	2(1)	1-1-4	2-2	2-2	3(1)	1-1-2	2-0	2-0
4ab	214	50	8	4	20A	20r	144	160	41r
2-0	4(1)	1(3)	1(1)	M=7	1-1-2	4(1)	4(1)	1-1-2	4(1)

41r	118	125	41r	53	110	172	18	153	7m
4(1)	4(1)	1-1-2	4(1)	4(1)	4(1)	4(1)	4(1)	1-1-4	3-4
7m	18	1M	11A	3m	5	84	126	128	A1
4-2	4-3	M=6	1-1-4	2-3	3(1)	4(1)	4(1)	2-0	1-0

Front 2

A3	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3
1-0	2-0	1-0	1-0	2-0	1-0	1-0	2-0	1-0	1-0
E1	E2	E3	F1	F2	F3	G1	G2	G3	H1
2-0	1-0	1-0	2-0	1-0	1-0	2-0	1-0	1-0	2-0

H2	H3	J1	J2	J3	K1	K2	K3	L1	L2
1-0	1-0	2-0	1-0	1-0	2-0	1-0	1-0	2-0	1-0
L3	M1	M2	M3	N1	N2	N3	P1	P2	P3
1-0	2-0	1-0	1-0	2-0	1-0	1-0	2-0	1-0	1-0

2-3-5	2-3-5	2-3-5	5-2-1	5-3-1	1-2-4	1-2-4	0-2-5	0-3-4	GAME TURN
95D 3	105D 3	115D 3	305D 1	43D 1	128D 3	138D 3	42DD 4	52DD 4	WEATHER
-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	

4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2
DIS	DIS	DIS	DIS	DIS	DIS	DIS	DIS	DIS	DIS
4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2
DIS	DIS	DIS	DIS	DIS	DIS	DIS	DIS	DIS	DIS
4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2	4-4-2
DIS	DIS	DIS	DIS	DIS	DIS	DIS	DIS	DIS	DIS

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suggests is likely. However, it is improbable that many will be intrigued enough to replay *Army Group Center* over and over. In the historical scenario, players stuck with the Soviet side will be confronted by one of the least appealing situations in wargaming, with little chance for victory and an even smaller likelihood of doing anything even remotely interesting with their units. Players who enjoy the system will move quickly to either of the two hypothetical scenarios, both of which give the Soviet side a better chance for victory. But these scenarios are, after all, hypothetical, and wargamers often shy away from such tinkering with history. Those with less enthusiasm for *Army Group Center* and ample patience will find just enough here to take a deep breath and find the patience to wait for Masahiro Yamazaki's next design.

CHEAP THRILLS

Task Force Games'
Prochorovka

Published in 1979 • Designed by Stephen Cole

reviewed by **Rich Erwin**

Most wargames are well-organized affairs, at least with regard to initial set up. It's only within recent memory that many games available don't have a parallel pair of counter-based conga lines, with a handful of other units at various victory hexes. At the very least, the battlefields of almost all games are fairly well defined - This is my place and that is your place, and never the twain shall trespass until after turn one. While I wouldn't call *Prochorovka* the wargaming equivalent of a Jackson Pollack painting or a thrash band at their most intense, if you prefer a game that strictly stays within the lines, *Prochorovka* isn't for you. Turn the page.

Still here? Okay, let's go...

Prochorovka is about one of the key battles of the maelstrom called Kursk. General Hauser's SS Panzer Korps had finally broken through the last of the Soviet defense lines surrounding Kursk, and his forces had just fought off a counterattack by the Soviet 31st Tank Corps. After reorganizing on the night of July 11th, 1943, the Germans headed north just before dawn on the following day. In heavy fog, the SS Panzer Korps ran into lead elements of the Soviet 5th Guards Tank Army. The battle that followed was one of the most bloody of the Kursk campaign, with almost seven hundred armored vehicles turned into burning hulks before the battle was over. It ended effectively in a tactical stalemate and a strategic failure for the Nazis. Given increasing pressures by the Anglo-American forces via the upcoming invasion of Italy, German forces had to be moved out of Russia to meet the coming threat in the Mediterranean. From this point on, the Germans were on the defensive in the East.

As game systems go, *Prochorovka* is simple but effective - a 16" x 20" map, around 108 counters, and fairly basic rules which emphasize playability over simulation. Move-fight-recovery makes up a player's turn. What makes things interesting are the initial set up, no zones of control for any units, no supply rules (the game covers a ten-hour period) and the ability to bid artillery support in combat.

Units on both sides are in three columns moving toward the front. Each are isolated to an extent from each other, because of the Psel River (crossable only at two bridges, one already blown by the Soviets before the start of this game) and a railroad line built on an embankment that varied in height from twelve to eighteen feet (crossable only at one point, near the town of Prochorovka). Engineers exist on both sides to repair the blown bridge if desired.

The catch is the lead units from both sides are intermingled with each other, requiring a special first turn rule which determines initiative for each side in each of the three sectors and how to resolve battle with the intermingled units. This may seem to be nothing all that exciting, but when you consider that victory points come from both destroyed units and the taking of towns, that both sides will be zipping about to be the last to hold onto any town hex available, and that the differential-based Combat Results Table is mildly bloody, killing units during the first turn might

make a difference.

Artillery is differentiated more in *Prochorovka* than any of the other ground forces involved. Units are capable of offensive, defensive or independent bombardment - the latter is particularly effective in extending your punch if played correctly.





Three types of artillery exist:

- D (Soviet anti-tank and self-propelled artillery) requires a line of sight and may not bombard independently, but may move and fire in the same player turn.
- A (towed artillery) can fire without a line of sight and can independently bombard, but cannot both fire and move in the same player turn.
- S (German self-propelled artillery and Soviet mortars) doesn't require a line of sight, and can independently bombard in a player turn, and can move and fire in the same player turn.

Many Soviet units are marked X. These are A type units with more firepower than a typical unit of its type. Many allow multiple firings, which could make the difference for the Soviets.

When combat takes place between adjacent units, both sides can continuously bid and counter bid artillery and air support until the rules forbid any more. Both sides are restricted to having air support

available for only five turns, may have no more than three air support points per battle, and it must be called for one turn in advance for use by a given unit. Both sides are restricted to using artillery units attached to the same division (for the Germans) or corps (for the Soviets).

When combat finally occurs, units that have retreated are inverted. (Type A artillery units have to invert after moving as well, so as not to incorrectly use them in combat during the same turn.) During the Recovery Phase of the player's turn, that unit may be left inverted and retreated three hexes, or flipped over to its face side and left where it is. This can make a big difference if one side or the other needs to start a general retreat (most likely the Soviets), leaving minimal units behind and preserving the strongest available force for a new defensive line.

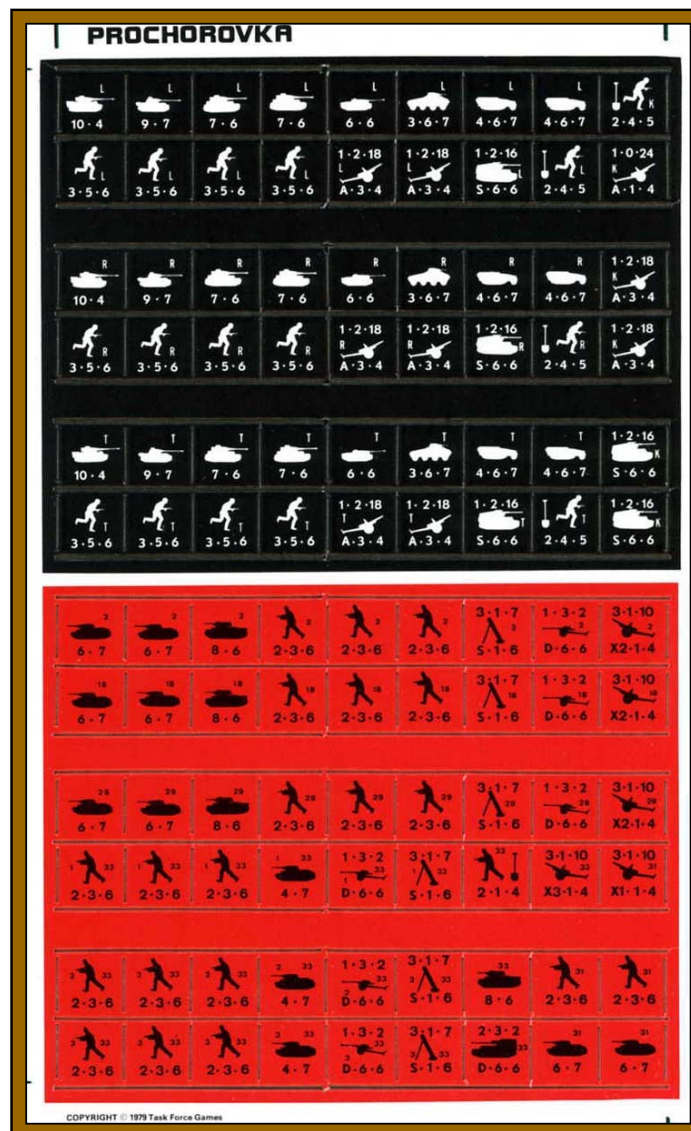
Prochorovka ends up playing very fast, with a great deal of excitement. One thing I've often been told is that it is much tougher to win as the Soviets than as the Germans. I think this in large part because the German player's role is to boom 'n zoom - keep

hitting and keep moving, especially in the central corridor, while the Soviet player has to judge when to hit and when to hold or run. The Soviet player also isn't often comfortable with using his artillery to the fullest. He has some nasty capabilities, especially in regard to independent bombardment, to slow down and occasionally sting the German player. For all of you simulation-oriented folks, here is where *Prochorovka* shines - there really aren't many games that provide an example of just how nasty and vital Soviet artillery was in World War II.

If *Prochorovka* fails, it is in terms of the inability of both sides to always know where the other was - initially because of the fog, later because of the dust kicked up in the midst of battle and the smoke from burning tanks. One possible fix would be to get two differently colored sets of counters and put them on top of units until opposing units are adjacent to each other, then display them for the battle and re-invert them after separation. For spotting at longer distances, use a graduated scale - since the longest distance for spotting allowed is five hexes. Provide automatic spotting for adjacent units, then a roll of

- One through five required for two hexes (including the targeted unit),
- One through four for three hexes,
- One through three for four hexes, and
- One or two for five hexes.

Eastern Front, *Prochorovka* will fill the bill.



Add a few blank counters to go with the units, and there is bound to be a little sweat on the map before long.

As Cheap Thrills wargames go, however, this one is a definite winner - it's simple with a couple of twists in the right places, fast playing, and easy to find for \$10 or less. If you want a quick romp in the

GMT Games'

Lion of the North

Published in 1993 • Designed by *Richard Berg* and *Mark Herman*

reviewed by **Boyd Schorzman**

When GMT Games published *SPQR* in 1992, many players (and reviewers) looked forward to the release of follow-on designs to that spectacularly successful design. Sure enough, several game extension kits emerged - *War Elephant*, *Consul for Rome*, and *Pyrrhic Victory*. Many were surprised that the first full size game to be produced based on the *SPQR* system would move over fifteen centuries ahead chronologically! *Lion of the North* is a tactical game portraying the two best known battles of the Soldier King, Gustavis Adolphus. Gustavis campaigned in Germany from 1630 to 1632 against the Imperialists and the Catholic League in an attempt to save Protestantism in Central Europe. He succeeded, although at the cost of his own life.

Lion of the North continues with the same outstanding counter art by Roger MacGowan that was so popular in *SPQR*. The 480 counters are if anything better than *SPQR*. In addition to the single and double sized units that we became familiar with in *SPQR* (with the same neat pictures of soldiers), *Lion of the North* also includes large double-sized square counters representing the imposing Imperial and Saxon tercios. As an additional note, each of the two battles represented (Breitenfeld and Lutzen) essentially have their own separate counter mixes. A detailed examination of the counter sheets reveals that *Lion of the North*, unlike *SPQR*, possesses a plethora of historical detail simply represented by the counters themselves.

The maps are attractive if not spectacular. One large double-sided map is used for both Breitenfeld and Lutzen while the single half-sized sheet is

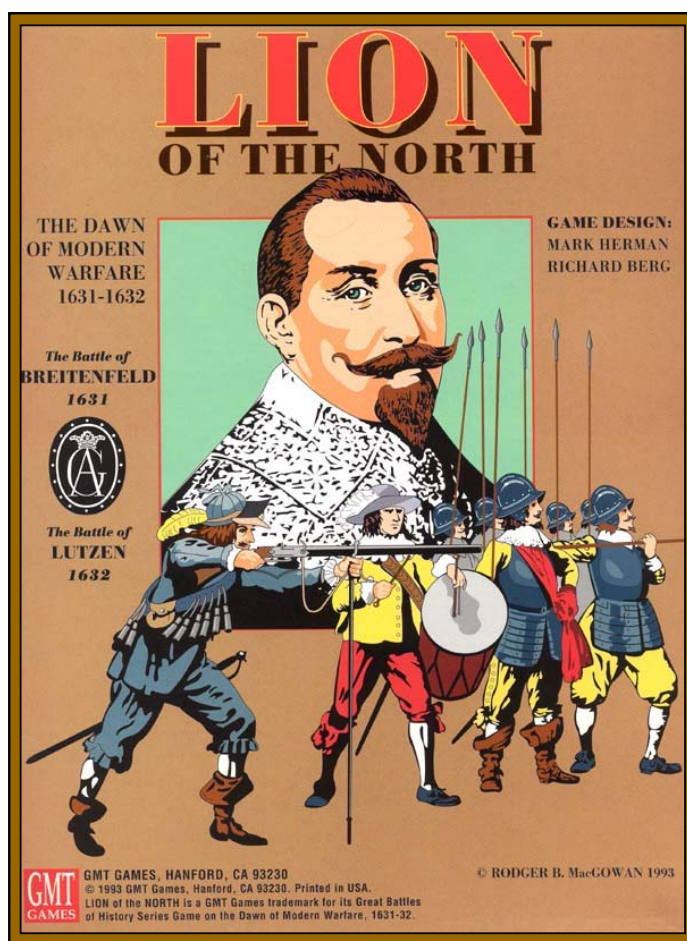
added only for Breitenfeld. It should be noted in defense of the map artist that battles of this day were fought in the clearest possible terrain.

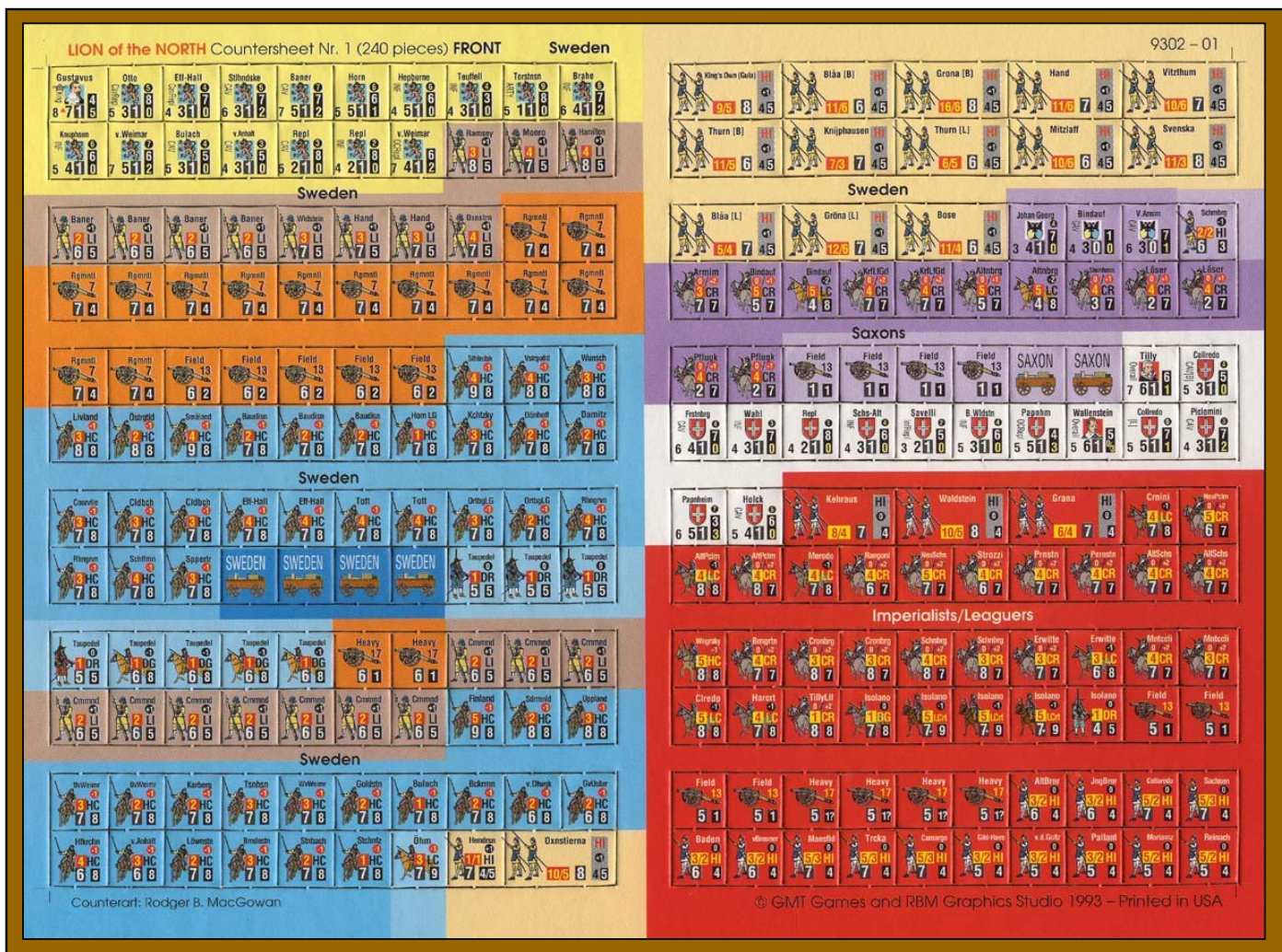
The game comes with a thirty-two page rules book and a sixteen page scenario booklet. Don't let the size of the rules deceive you, by my estimate a third of the verbiage (at least) in the rules book alone are historical comments. In my opinion the designers of the game did most players a favor by providing considerable historical commentary - most North American game players have little familiarity with tactical nuances during the age of musket and pike. The scenario booklet is even more generous in terms of commentary sometimes to the point of absurdity - I wasn't as amused by the Greta Garbo reference as Richard Berg was. At any rate, by simply reading the rules and designers' notes, potential players will gain an appreciation of the era.

Each battle provides a free set up alternative to the historical deployment. Playing time is estimated between three and six hours for each although my experience is that each of the battles takes somewhere

between four and seven hours to play.

In terms of play the major difference between *SPQR* and *Lion of the North* is one word; gunpowder! And what a change it is. Ironically, veteran *SPQR* players will recognize more similarities than differences between the ancient antagonists of that era and those of *Lion of the North*. It has been said the greatness of Gustavis was his vision in appreciating the true impact of firepower verses melee. The game system allows players to appreciate the foresight of Gustavis as it is quite easy to become lulled into viewing shock combat as the dominant tactic.





Most familiar to players of the ancient era games will be the heavy infantry of both armies. Each heavy infantry counter consists of two strength levels. One number represents pikemen that Alexander would have felt at home with, while the other represents the number of musketeers each unit possesses. Swedish heavy infantry possess frightening firepower and the ability to fire in salvos. At Breitenfeld, the Imperial and Saxon armies also possess Tercios which can be best imagined as square phalanxes with many all-around defense capabilities and correspondingly low mobility. Both tercios and heavy infantry are relatively effective defensively against cavalry.

The light infantry of the day were primarily musketeers with little shock proficiency and in the game are more or less easy meat for their heavier brothers. Functionally, light infantry is most often used to provide additional firepower for groups of cavalry.

Heavy cavalry will also remind players of their *SPQR* equivalents. In this era, heavy cavalry possess some minimal firepower capabilities which was primarily used to enhance their charge abilities. Light cavalry is used by the Imperial player and

consists mostly of little more than armed bandits - great for sacking baggage trains or chasing down already routed troops. The least savory units are the Croatians, and the designers' notes take advantage of current world events shamelessly (if accurately) in their portrayal of these units.

A totally unique type not seen since SPI's *Musket & Pike* appears in *Lion of the North*; the Imperial caracole cavalry. These heavily armored horseman were a response to the tercio. Their main tactic was to ride just outside of melee range of the enemy ground-pounders and then to repeatedly discharge their pistols into the dense phalanx-like infantry formations. In *Lion of the North* players have few chances to actually use caracole cavalry in their intended fashion. Just as well, the Swedish army's organization more or less invalidated the entire caracole concept. Caracole cavalry usually end up being used as simply less than capable heavy cavalry.

Finally, a totally new type of unit to appear in *Lion of the North* is artillery. Before cannon-cockers out there get too excited, however, it helps to remember that this is very early artillery. Heavy and field pieces of both sides are virtually immobile and tend

to defect to the other side given half an excuse (the cannoneers were civilian contractors not really paid to deal with pikes, etc...) hence the pieces are printed with the opposing color on the opposite side! The Swedes possess the vaunted regimental cannon which are much more mobile (and useful) than the heavier pieces.

As far as how the game plays, again the big difference is gunpowder. Units in *Lion of the North* take significant casualties, the vast majority of which are inflicted by small arms fire. Muskets have a range of two hexes and pistols one hex. If more than one casualty is inflicted on the target, then the victim must make a troop quality check that will potentially result in disruption. Artillery inflicts few casualties but does have the effect of administering disruption results on target units.

Gone are the troop quality hits of *SPQR/Great Battles of Alexander*. Units are now either disrupted or they pass. Units that receive a disrupted result while already disrupted are routed with the predictable results. Units possess a good morale side and a disrupted side with the major difference being the disrupted side has a lower troop quality value.

Battles are won when one side is forced over its army withdrawal number. Each unit has a withdrawal value when it is either destroyed or it routes off the map. Unlike the ancient games where this is purely a function of troop quality, in *Lion of the North* a unit's withdrawal value is its troop quality multiplied by its strength. As a result, the large heavy infantry and tercio units are both the armies' biggest strength and a considerable vulnerability.

The Breitenfeld scenario is both the most interesting and the most humdrum all at once. Interesting because the two armies present represent two different military systems, boring because the outcome is almost inevitable. The Imperial forces under Tilly show up with over a dozen of the huge tercios, accompanied by scores of caracole cavalry and little else. The Swedes possess a more balanced force of heavy infantry, and heavy cavalry reinforced with light infantry. The only real disadvantage the Swedes have is they are saddled with not-so-brave Saxon allies who are more interested in running

than fighting. The Saxons are organized in a similar fashion to the Imperialists, but they are further hampered by being very poor quality. The battle is quite enjoyable as an introduction to the era and does have replay value as long as the more competent player always takes the Imperial side.

Lutzen is quite a different matter. Lutzen occurred over a year after Breitenfeld and the Imperials have begun to modify their army to meet the new reality of the battlefield. At Lutzen the Imperial host much more closely resembles their Swedish foes. At Lutzen the initial Imperial Army is about the same size as the Swedes but has the potential advantage of reinforcements (with variable arrival times). The battlefield is divided by a road and ditch that the Imperial commander Von Wallenstein had dug to serve as a barrier to assist in defending against a Swedish attack. As if the ditch were not enough, both sides of the field are restricted, on one side by

a rain swollen creek and on the other by the burning town of Lutzen that Wallenstein fired to anchor his right flank.

If players want an intense, balanced, unpredictable battle then Lutzen is for them. Oh yes, there is fog. It comes and goes and comes back again somewhat at random. It is very difficult to accomplish any game activity in heavy fog and even light fog interferes with the best laid plans of mice and players. The fog rules will force both players to be able to react to rapid unpredictable changes. The combination of variable rein-

forcements, vagaries of the weather, and two closely matched armies creates quite a fascinating contest.

Veteran *SPQR/Great Battles of Alexander* players will find much to like in *Lion of the North*. I would also recommend the game to anyone interested in the musket and pike era, or those who enjoy tactical games rich in detail. *Lion of the North* is definitely not another cookie cutter game where units are indistinguishable save for the movement and combat values. In *Lion of the North* each unit frequently has its own idiosyncrasies to ponder. Players will not confuse the field of battle at Breitenfeld or Lutzen with any other.



Avalon Hill's *Guadalcanal*

Published in 1993 • Designed by S. Craig Taylor

reviewed by **Dee James Coltraine**

Guadalcanal is a double-blind game that covers some of the significant naval action around the Solomons in August, October, and November 1942. Players move task forces strategically and fight ship-to-ship and plane-to-plane tactically. (The latest version of Avalon Hill's *Midway* uses similar mechanics.) The double-blind system works, but remember that double-blind is not for faint-hearted gamers who run scared when they can't see everything.

Reviewing this game represented an interesting challenge for me. I've played *CA* and *Ironclads*, and that's the extent of my naval board gaming experience. However, I'm very interested in the battle for Guadalcanal. (*Publisher's Note: See the review of Avalon Hill's original Guadalcanal in Paper Wars #5 by the same author.*) So please forgive me if I make any naval game reviewing *faux pas*.

The physical quality of the game is very high and includes hard gaming boards, excellent counters, and functional gaming aids. Excellent physical qualities do not make a good game but poor graphics, wrinkled maps, and improperly cut counters can surely sink one.

There are three boards - a geomorphic battle board (open sea with a hex grid) and two search boards (one search board for each player). Each player has a search board because the game is double blind at the strategic level. The two search boards cover the Pacific Theater from the Bismarck Sea to Espirito Santo. Avalon Hill makes good use of graphics and color on the maps, because the relevant features of the battleground are readily found without much difficulty. There is only one tactical battle board and no blind tactical movement because naval battles fought at the tactical level are not really blind (except for night or heavy fog). The tactical battle board is functional and serves to provide a hex grid for fighting the tactical battles. I liked the map boards.

The counters are printed on both sides with a birds-eye view of the ship or aircraft as the main distinguishing trait of each counter. The main counter color is a pale blue for the front and back. The back also has a large white bar across the top of the counter. (Base and field counters also have a white bar on the reverse.) Ship and aircraft counter infor-

mation is printed in red for the Japanese and dark blue for the Allies. The aircraft counters also have a colored dot to distinguish land based from carrier based aircraft. Information on the counters is easily accessed and readily discernible by a player in the heat of combat. My only criticism is the fact many of the counters are die-cut with blades that leave a paper tab at the halfway point on one edge of the counter in addition to the normal holding tabs in the corners. This is irritating for corner clippers like myself, because having counters dog eared on the edge is not very pleasing. I'm sure they provide added stability for handling and packaging purposes but they're a real irritant for me. However, minor irritants aside, I liked the counters because of their centering, their elegant simplicity, and the clear uncluttered quality of their graphics.

We all know it's quite impossible for Avalon Hill to produce a game without off board charts or the order of battle, and this game is no exception. The game has three such devices - a Search Board Screen (used to facilitate double blind play), an Allied Operations Card, and an Imperial Japanese Operations Card.

The purpose of the Search Board Screen is to literally stand between the search boards and prevent player's from observing each other's activities. The Search Board Screen also includes the sequence of play and four other very useful charts printed on each side.

The Allied Operations Card has two major sections. The first section (the top third of the card) contains rectangular boxes with silhouettes of the four aircraft carriers available to the Allied player. Information regarding aircraft capacity and launch capability are printed above the silhouette. The aircraft carriers' boxes are divided into two aircraft counter squares (ready and arming). This is how a player keeps track of aircraft status while the aircraft are on board ship. The second section (the bottom two thirds) contains six numbered task force rectangles and four named land base rectangles.

The task force rectangles are divided into five boxes. The first (and largest) is for holding individual ship counters assigned to the task force. Individual ship counters are placed here. Only the task force counter is actually placed on the strategic search board. The other four boxes are for aircraft

counters and represent the type of mission the aircraft have been assigned. The four boxes are high combat air patrol, low combat air patrol, normal strike, and maximum strike. When aircraft are launched from the aircraft carriers in the task force, they are placed in one of these four boxes in preparation for their use on the battle board.

The base rectangles are divided into six boxes. The first (and largest) is for holding individual aircraft counters assigned to the base. The first box is divided into two aircraft counter rectangles (ready and arming). This is how a player keeps track of aircraft status while the aircraft are on the ground at the base. Individual aircraft counters are placed here. Only the base counter is actually placed on the strategic search board. The other four boxes are also for aircraft counters and represent the type of mission the aircraft have been assigned. The four boxes are high combat air patrol, low combat air patrol, normal strike, and maximum strike. When aircraft are launched from the base they are placed in one of these four boxes in preparation for their use on the battle board. Information regarding base aircraft capacity and launch capability are printed above the base rectangle.

The Imperial Japanese Operations Card has two major sections. They contain the same type of information as the Allied Operations Card. The only differences between the two are the following:

- There are four aircraft carriers, two light aircraft carriers, and three seaplane carriers;
- There are eight named task forces and five named bases.

Otherwise, the information and use is the same.

The physical quality of the game is excellent (Avalon Hill has learned a thing or two since the early days of froo-froo pink and robin's egg blue counters). However, in these days of computer graphics, four color presses, and precision die-cutters there is no excuse for poor physical quality, except negligence. The litmus test for a game produced in the nineties should be in the game mechanics. And that's where we go next.

The mechanics are vintage Avalon Hill. There is a basic game and plenty of optional rules to increase realism and enhance the feel of the conflict. Options aside, there is still plenty of action and enough bloodletting to satisfy a moderately sanguine armchair Admiral of the Lower-Half.

There are four phases, twelve sub-phases, and thirty sub-sub-phases. The game flow is basically move, attack everything in sight - especially the carriers, and recover aircraft. Of course with a double-blind system the trick is finding something to attack and

getting your aircraft to the target. I say aircraft because the fighting should be aircraft versus surface craft unless both players are incomprehensibly stupid or they really want a surface engagement. But one should never rule out the Bozo factor in war or wargaming.

The search phase is only slightly more complex than *Battleship* and is not especially noteworthy. Let's assume the players have, by virtue of astute anticipation and prescient play, found one another's fleets. The players will launch their aircraft and attack the opposing fleet, especially the aircraft carriers. Unfortunately, in the basic game there is no air to air combat and the defender has to rely on anti-aircraft guns to protect his ships, especially the aircraft carriers. Aircraft attacking surface craft use either torpedoes or bombs depending upon what they may carry. When the aircraft position themselves for their attack the fleet may protect itself, especially the aircraft carriers, by downing the attacking aircraft. Aircraft still flying after the anti-aircraft combat may execute their attacks against the enemy's fleet, especially the aircraft carriers. Sounds simple but it doesn't always work out that way.

Both players hardly ever find each other at the same time and a player can't keep aircraft in the air indefinitely. An aircraft carrier may be loaded with unlaunched aircraft when the fleet is discovered and attacked. Having an aircraft carrier with a loaded flight deck sunk is trauma enough to make any gamer lose their lunch. Conversely, a player may pig-pile attacking aircraft on an aircraft carrier, suffer horrendous losses to anti-aircraft guns, and then fail to sink or even damage the aircraft carrier. Overlooking all surface craft but the aircraft carriers can have a deleterious effect on your air fleet because of the undiminished anti-aircraft capabilities of the overlooked ships. However, sinking the aircraft carriers eliminates the mobile landing field for naval aircraft and thereby eliminates the aircraft as they fall into the sea. Interestingly enough, a single unlucky engagement may destroy so many aircraft or surface craft that a player may not be able to mount further serious opposition.

The tension in this game derives from the need to remain hidden as long as possible and to find your opponent as soon as possible. Once an opponent is found your aircraft must launch and make the most judicious attacks possible. Rash, intemperate, and/or uncoordinated attacks may leave your air fleet crippled or ineffective for the remainder of the scenario. This can almost always mean the difference between winning and losing. Once a fleet is found the tension shifts to deciding how to defend and how to attack. Deciding which ships to attack and

how much force to allocate to each attack is as tense as deciding how to deploy the fleet and where to direct the anti-aircraft firepower. The game mechanics are relatively simple and easy to implement, they're almost transparent to the players and therefore they permit the players to enjoy the dual role of predator and prey as they hunt and are in turn hunted. Properly played this game has a visceral quality not found in many other games.

I like this game and would recommend it to naval gamers or anyone interested in the Guadalcanal campaign - a solid, well done game. Unfortunately, I have two complaints. The first is that this was not an upgrade and reissue of the original classic. The second is that there is no campaign scenario in this game. The first is a personal pet peeve - however, the second should be a criminal offense punishable by some form of gaming torture. I recommend forcing the designer and developer to play *Kriegspiel* twenty-four hours a day for a month.

THIRD WORLD

Thunderhaven Games'

Alexander at Tyre

Published in 1993 • Designed by Dave Chapel

reviewed by **Barry Dezarn**
and **Shawn McEnvoy**

Alexander's siege of the island city of Tyre in 332 BC was without question one of the greatest sieges of the Classical Age. A true challenge for the boy king, it took seven months - others had tried without success for as long as twelve years - and it proved to be one of his greatest military accomplishments.

The control of Tyre was imperative in Alexander's plan to secure the Eastern Mediterranean. Once Tyre was under his control, all of the Phoenician towns and the large Phoenician fleet would be in his hands. Cyprus would fall easily with Tyre and Phoenicia under Alexander's control, and then he could attack Egypt. With victory there, Persia would then be denied access to the sea and most of the continent out to the Euphrates River.

Thunderhaven Games' *Alexander at Tyre* has worked hard to capture all of the elements of this exciting conflict; the naval battles, the various siege attempts and the struggle within the city. The map portrays the walled island city, the nearby shoreline (one kilometer distant from the island, in actuality), and plenty of azure blue sea (with gigantic hex overlays) for maneuvering the fleets. The map is well done and complements the outstanding artwork on the units themselves.

Land units, on 5/8 inch counters, portray an individual figure of the appropriate formation on a two-tone (sky/ground) horizon. This gives them a near three-dimensional look and is very appealing. Most land units have no less than ten colors to portray the individual figure's weapons, armor and clothing subtleties, as well as information concerning the unit's strength, combat and movement capabilities.

Information on all units is well laid out and easy to read. Informational counters are also well represented and easy to use.

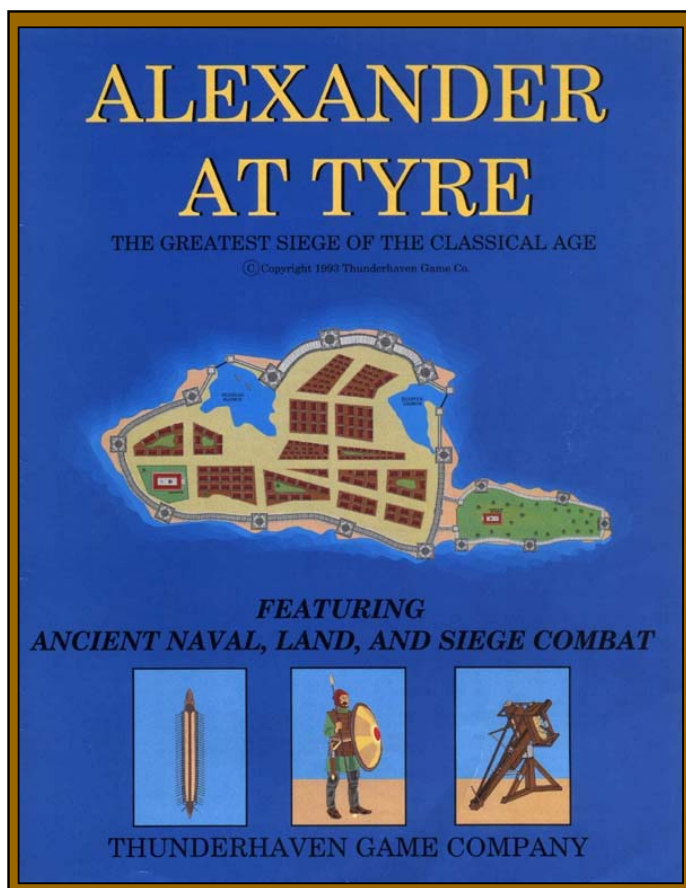
Given the existing conflict and the masterful job on the map and counters, one can hardly wait to play this game! However, as with all new game systems, you first have to familiarize yourself with the rules. The thirty pages of rules and scenarios, while not

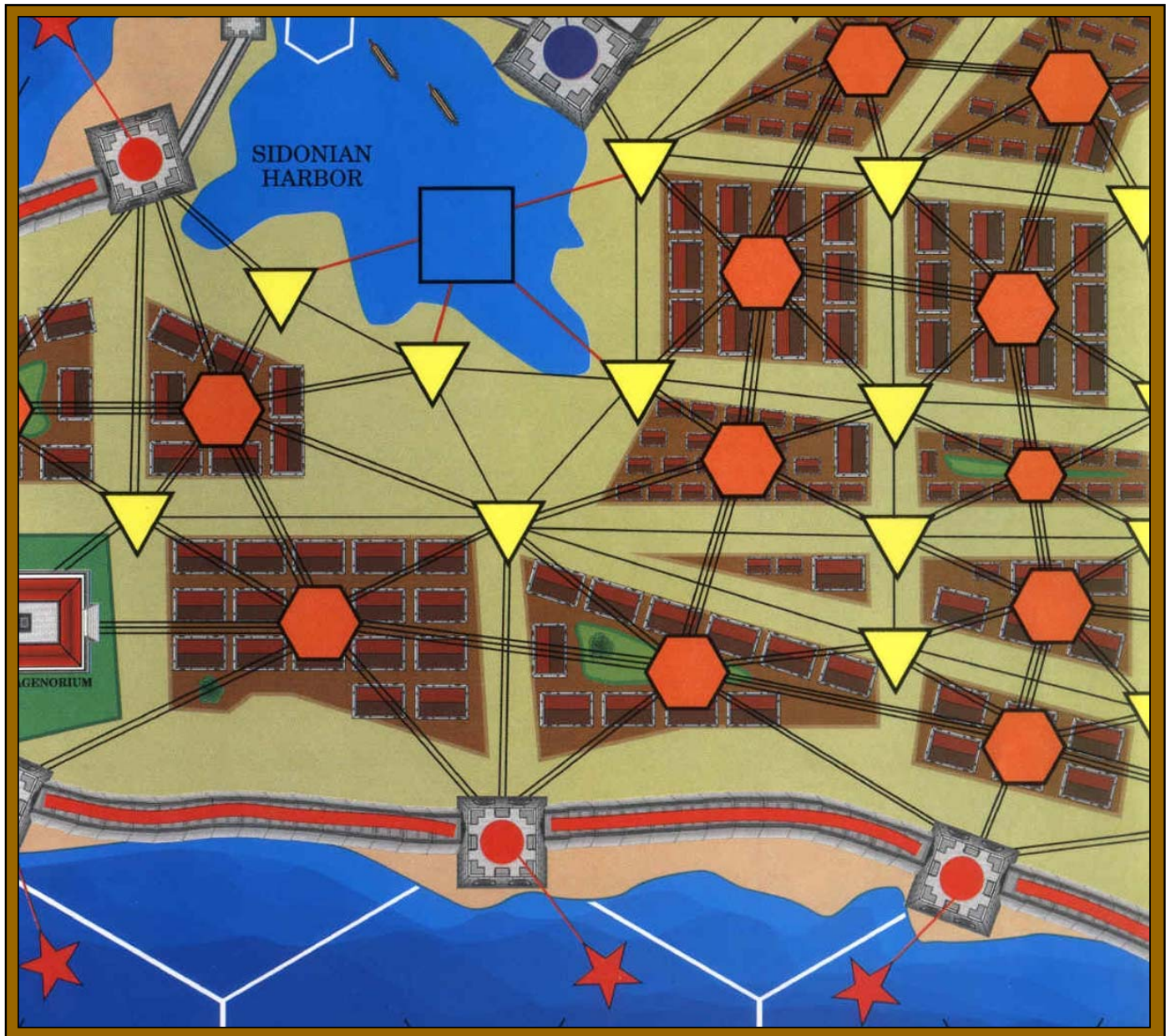
overly complex, are not something you can whip through. A good effort has been made to introduce the rules gradually in the three smaller scenarios - Naval Battles, Fight for the City, and Fight for the City (Siege Version). These first three are fairly manageable. However, integration of the land, naval and siege rules in the Campaign Game is awkward, and we found ourselves flipping through pages for rules clarifications more often than we wanted.

Better use of the Quick Reference Cards for both land and naval operations would have made play easier. For example, there's a huge open hex on the Land Operations Chart, which I'm assuming is for working through examples of naval combat. It would have been a much more efficient

use of space to outline land combat and siege combat, as has been done with naval combat. There are some fine examples of play in the rule book, and if one plays this system a few times, the gray areas can be sorted out and the rules become second nature. The flow of the rules and their integration with the examples of play just could have been better accomplished. A month or two of blind play testing could have made all the difference.

The naval rules encompass; facing, formation and formation superiority; size and strength, turn rate and turn spacing; sea-based artillery, marines and





naval leaders; grappling attempts and effects; boarding and capture. While this all sounds very exciting (and very complex), Thunderhaven Games has made it all manageable. The naval rules are highly abstracted, but this stylized combat procedure keeps the level of complexity to a reasonable level.

Although you don't get much of a feel for maneuver at sea, in the context of a game like *Alexander at Tyre*, with three subsystems at work, the naval rules are fine. We have heard, though, that Thunderhaven Games is considering the development of a tactical naval game to simulate ancient naval battles using the *Alexander at Tyre* system. While they work fine in this game, they need more meat, in our eyes, to drive a game all by themselves.

This is by no means a low complexity game, especially when one takes into account the naval and

siege rules. However, after a few run throughs to get used to the system and ensure that the three subsystems are understood, there is a lot of potential for fun. It is a classic struggle with a great selection of men, warships and siege craft. Any serious fan of Ancients warfare will find this a must for their collection. It is, however, a game that could be great, and ended up being only very good.

Decision Games'

Seven Years War

Published in *Strategy & Tactics* #163 in 1993 • Designed by **Craig Taylor**

reviewed by **Scott McCannell**

Seven Years War is a strategic-level simulation of the war fought by Prussia and her allies between 1756 and 1763 against a coalition headed by Austria. This coalition had formed to knock the fledgling Prussia down a notch or two. This would return the political milieu to the way it had been, more or less, before Frederick had the audacity to snatch the juicy province of Silesia away from Maria Theresa in 1740.

The map depicts Central Europe from the Netherlands in the west to Warsaw in the east, from Denmark in the north to Vienna in the south. Color-coded fortresses add a splash of color to an otherwise colorless map. A turn record track, diplomatic points track, balance of power index and several charts and tables necessary for play are printed on the borders.

The counters are uniformly bland, being printed with symbols rather than silhouettes. Each is back printed, however, with a fog of war side. These feature a national symbol that is generally more appealing than the unit symbol.

Rather than launch directly into my reason for disliking *Seven Years War*, I will describe briefly two rules players might want to adapt to other campaign games covering the period (Avalon Hill's *Frederick the Great* and 3W's *The Campaigns of Frederick the Great*). These are:

- The historical events table, and...
- The rules concerning diplomacy and balance of power.

Some games that cover this period focus so tightly on Central Europe one gets the impression nothing happened anywhere else in the world during the late Eighteenth Century and battle tactics remained static. Not so. Armies experimented with combined arms formations; in the New World, for example, the French and Indian War pitted the French and their Indian allies against the British.

The Historical Events Table is a simple random events chart that adds a little spice to a game set in a period some gamers find too dull for their liking. One event allows players to build combined-arms legion units. Another, British advances in French and Indian War, calls for the French to remove

strength factors from the game to bolster its position in North America. Yet another, Ottomans attack Austria, requires the coalition player to remove twenty factors. (This can be devastating if it happens on the first turn of the campaign - which it did during one game I played: Ouch!) Prussia might even gain a diplomatic edge as a result of correspondence between Voltaire and Frederick.

Most of the results on the Historical Events Table can be adapted to existing *Seven Years War* campaign games. To do so, players must adopt the diplomacy system from *Seven Years War* and determine comparable strength-point values for troop losses such as the ones mentioned above.

If a player isn't faring well on the battlefield, he might still have some hope: Diplomacy. Each turn, a player is awarded diplomatic points based on the countries that make up his alliance and on his position on the balance of power index. After receiving the points, players take turns spending them on diplomatic actions.

A diplomatic action is an attempt to force an enemy-allied country into neutrality or to gain control of a neutral or enemy allied country. One player declares how many points he'll spend on the action and the other declares how many he'll spend to counter. The active player then rolls a die and consults the Diplomatic Conflict Table. There are four possible results:

- T - Player takes control of the target country;
- N - The target country becomes neutral; - there is no effect;
- D - Diplomatic incident, player shifts balance of power one space in his opponent's favor.

The balance of power index measures the relative military and diplomatic strengths of each side. A player moves the index in his favor, for example, when he takes a fortress, wins a field battle or conquers a country. Although a player wants to beat his opponent, he doesn't want to do so too thoroughly, because he doesn't want to destroy the balance of power. If the balance of power ever reaches plus or minus eighteen, the Great Power system collapses and is replaced by nationalism and revolution: The game ends and no one wins.

The diplomacy and random events systems sound good on paper, but the simple move-attack system has a flaw so frustrating that it's easy to overlook the game's good points.

That flaw is the movement system. As in other games about the period, a force's ability to march is based on a die roll and the leader's ability. However, the *Seven Years War* system is much more extreme. A force might not march at all, or it might march twenty-four or more hexes in a single month long impulse. That means a Prussian army in Magdeburg can march more than three hundred miles to Vienna in one month.

At times, the march die roll determines a force's destination as well or whether it will force march. If a player intends to move a force a mere three hexes and rolls forced march, with attrition, he takes casualties before moving that measly distance. (There's even a silly result called March to the Guns, which requires a force to move adjacent to the closest enemy-occupied hex).

During the 1757 campaign, Frederick the Great marched from Rossbach to Breslau in less than a month (a rare feat), but in *Seven Years War*, such marches are commonplace. Still, the extremely long marches might be workable if there were at least some sort of interception system. Unfortunately, there isn't. That huge mobile force sitting in Prague can't do a thing as the Prussian army marches past on its way to Vienna.

Strategy & Tactics #163 contains several articles that fans of the period will want to have, including one about the siege master Sebastien Vauban. As for the game itself, I'd only recommend it to the hard-core few who will spend time to cull from it those parts they want to incorporate into existing game systems.

Perry Moore's *The Research Paper*

reviewed by **Rich Erwin**

The Research Paper is a new publication, courtesy of Perry Moore. It's supposed to be a poor man's Strategy & Tactics, and it definitely looks as though it came out of a copier left for dead at the local junkyard.

Each issue is supposed to contain a game of Mr. Moore's design. A few folks complained to me, however, that the promised *Gela '43* wasn't enclosed in their copies of issue #1. Be sure to write Perry for your game if it wasn't included, but, to be honest, I've seen the game, and without an errata sheet, it's not worth fighting for.

Issue #2 was sent for me to review. The issue is focused on three articles - Berlin After the War, speculation on whether the Japanese should have invaded Hawaii after Pearl Harbor, and the Indo-Chinese War of 1962. The article that most people will have fits over is the first - declaring German women immediately after World War II "the easiest white women in the world for sex" is bound to make lots of folks turn the page. The Hawaii article attempts to titillate us again with a racy cartoon and a menu for a Honolulu cafe frequented by the American military in 1941. (I guess Perry thinks that, if he covers the often-declared basic desires of guys - sex and food - he'll sell newsletters like hot cakes.)

The biggest problem with the newsletter as a whole is that, while Perry can create good and often original game systems, idea men aren't always good editors of their own conceptions, and Perry Moore has this problem in spades. It becomes

painfully obvious in most of his homegrown game designs, and is even all the more on display here. Even if you can live with cut and paste artwork back when it meant scissors and white glue, many articles simply lack a basic level of coherency that we're used to in Command or Strategy & Tactics, or even your daily newspaper.

The game included in this issue, *The Iran-Iraq War*, covers the first six months of the war, during its mobile phase. There are some excellent ideas here, especially the requirement of attack, refit and maintenance points to use and repair units before sending them out to battle. I like having a simple means of including logistics in a modern period operational-level wargame, and this one does so well. Unfortunately, the game is a crashing bore if you follow the historic scenario. If you attempt a free set up scenario, the possibilities become much more interesting. However, be warned - if you haven't ever bought a Perry Moore game before, aesthetics aren't their strong suit. I like this game overall more for its ideas than its playability.

If Perry wants to expand his efforts beyond the occasional game design, he shouldn't be working on *The Research Paper*. Given his talents, he should be sending all of his designs out to the larger outfits, selling his concepts and ensuring that development doesn't kill the essence of their design. It's worked with Clash of Arms Games' *Landships* (due out this year), and the hobby would benefit much more.



Clash of Arms Games' *Over the Reich*

Published in 1991 • Designed by J. D. Webster

reviewed by **John Caraher**

Clash of Arms Games has just released *Over the Reich*, the first foray of noted jet game designer J. D. Webster (*Air Superiority*, *The Speed of Heat*) into World War II air combat gaming. Focusing on air combat over Nazi Germany in the latter half of the war, *Over the Reich* can be a multi-layered game in which players attempt to assemble, detect and intercept large formations, maneuver for advantage before combat, then engage in desperate combat between interceptors and escorts (and the bombers they seek to protect), or it can be a simple fighter duel. Either way, the heart of the flight system will be familiar to anyone who has played any of the designer's previous air combat games. But don't be fooled - this game is definitely not just *Air Superiority* with propellers!

Comparisons with other games are inevitable. First, it definitely does not compete with perhaps the most visible new World War II air combat game, Avalon Hill's *Mustangs*. As part of the Smithsonian series, *Mustangs* is aimed squarely at the beginning gamer, and it is its popularity among this group that will determine its true worth. *Over the Reich* is most definitely not a beginner's game, and neither the designer nor Clash of Arms Games would tell anyone otherwise. The other game to which comparison is inevitable is the *Air Force/Dauntless* system, for years the de facto standard board game for simulating tactical air combat in World War II. The *Air Force* series has been a popular and enjoyable game through the years and will no doubt continue to have its following, but *Over the Reich* eclipses *Air Force* for realism much the same as *Air Superiority*

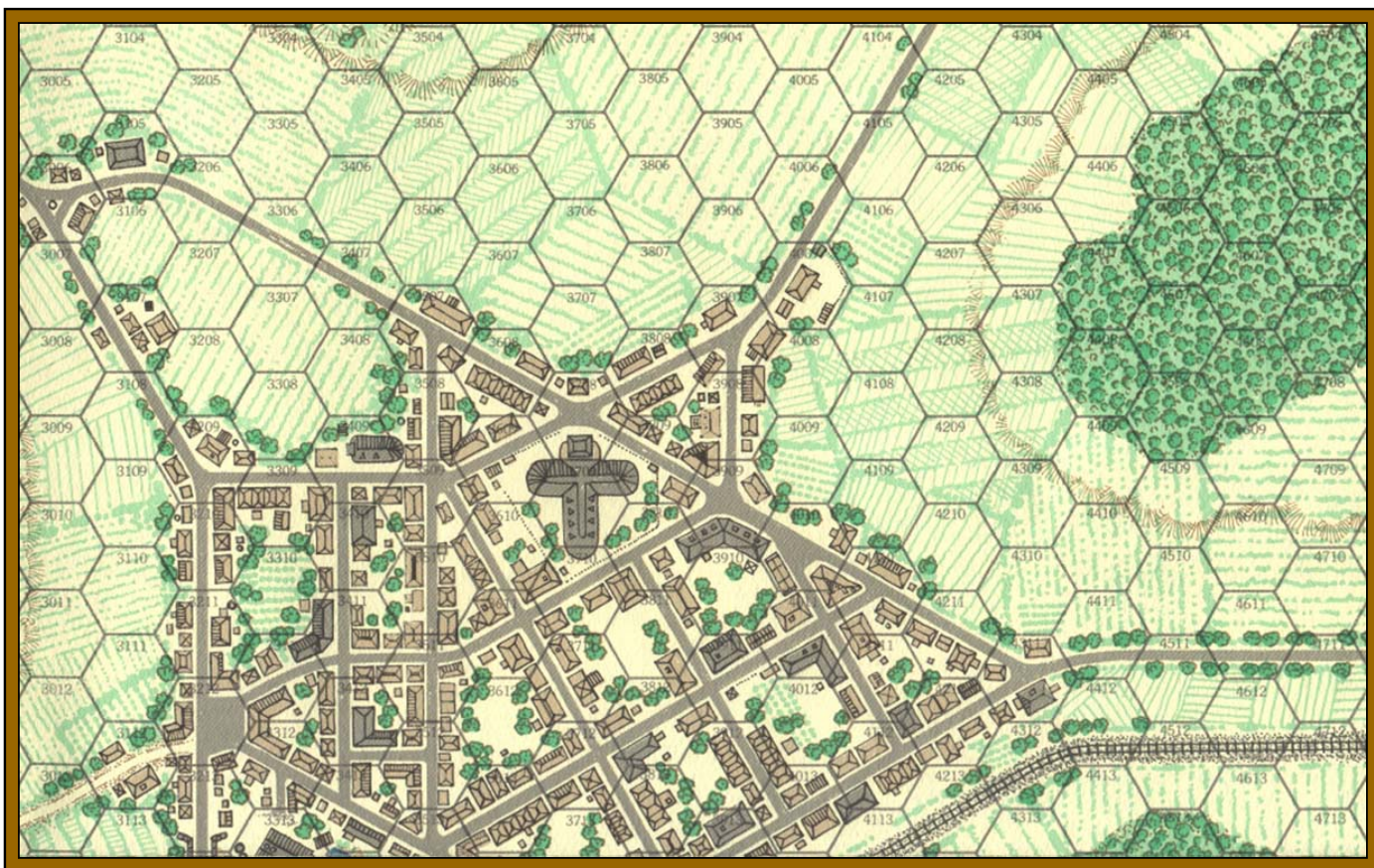
made obsolete all previous tactical jet games, such as SPI's *Air War*. One reason I suspect *Air Force* will continue to be popular in the face of this is that *Air Force* may be simpler system to learn and play - realism comes at a price this time, unlike when *Air Superiority* outclassed *Air War* both for realism and playability. But from the ground up, the combat scale in *Over the Reich* was designed to be authentic in ways that *Air Force* could never hope to be.

Begin with the scale. To translate the fundamentals of the jet games' movement system into an era of slower, more maneuverable aircraft, the duration of each turn was reduced to 4.2 seconds. Given the short turns and the slower roll rates of World War II aircraft, tracking angle of bank, which was largely abstracted out in J. D.'s jet games, becomes important. To round out the scale, each hex depicts an area one hundred yards across and each altitude increment represents one hundred feet. The result is that each speed point is fifty miles per hour - handy for translating historical accounts into scenarios. Naturally, J. D. employs the same twelve-point facing system used in his previous games,

giving finer directional resolution than the *Air Force* six-point facing allows. The shorter turns place a great premium on the ability to plan ahead several turns, and while it doesn't take much (if any) longer to grasp the flight mechanics in *Over the Reich* than *Air Superiority*, becoming a truly proficient fighter pilot takes longer.

I actually feel that in many ways my prior experience with *Air Superiority* and *The Speed of Heat* may have led me to overestimate the difficulty of learning *Over the Reich*. Some play test groups





have reported complete novices to J. D.'s games pick up the basic flight rules very easily, and part of that is their lacking of interfering memories of *Air Superiority* / *The Speed of Heat* rules. There are also none of the intimidating high-tech weaponry necessarily represented in *Over the Reich's* jet age cousins. As a result, much more of the game is accessible to the novice player.

Another great virtue of this game is the depth of research. J. D. Webster did more than simply re-scale the jet system to fit World War II aircraft. Wherever possible, performance characteristics were based on exhaustive investigation of everything from stall speeds and NACA airfoil numbers to particular vulnerabilities of each type. While J. D.'s pilot's intuition from flying military aircraft has occasionally substituted for some hard-to-find facts in designing his jet combat games, much more of what happens in *Over the Reich* is based on aerodynamic theory and knowledge of true performance statistics.

There's a lot of color in the combat scale. Most of the kills are scored not by the steady accumulation of hits but by taking damage to a few critical systems (such as engines and pilots). In and of itself this is not such a breakthrough in game design; veteran *Air Force* players will readily recall the feeling of relief as his opponent racks up wing and fuselage hits rather than engine hits. But in *Over the Reich*,

the damage system is much more dramatic and intricate. The number and type of such critical hits is influenced heavily by a variety of factors, such as the hitting power of individual rounds, rate of fire, and the protection built into each aircraft by its designers. When a shot occurs, the range is cross-referenced with the guns available to generate an attack strength. Each aircraft has an intrinsic defense strength, which is multiplied by a deflection modifier based on the direction from which the attacker fires. This gives an odds ratio, subject to some other modifiers, and the result of the die roll is the number of hits scored. Then the fun begins.

The attacker divides the number of hits by the best (lowest) critical hit rating of the guns he fired. This yields the number of critical hits suffered by the target. This critical hit rating typically ranges from four for .30 caliber machine guns to one and a half for large cannon; thus, if you score three hits with .30 caliber guns you would get no criticals, while the same shot nets two critical hits for a plane packing a 30 mm cannon. This nicely reflects the difference between filling your target with many tiny, inconsequential holes and tearing off large chunks with a big gun. The attacker then rolls to determine which general area the critical hit affects: Engines, fuel, cockpit, wings, equipment or controls. The defender then determines the specific effect of the critical hit, applying modifiers based on the pres-

ence of pilot armor, self-sealing tanks, and other factors related to the plane's ability to ward off damage from that particular type of hit. The result is not immediately revealed, except in terms of obviously visible damage such as fires, leaking fluids, trailing landing gear, etc. All this takes a bit of die rolling, but there's a lot of suspense at each stage. In the last game I played, a B-26 scored a fluke hit against my FW-190; scoring two critical hits. The first proved a hollow hit for no damage, and I was feeling fairly confident until the second hit was determined to be a cockpit hit. "That's not so bad," opined a fellow Luftwaffe player as I threw the die to determine my fate, and he was right - the cockpit protection on my plane reduces the odds of an immediate fatality on that table to ten percent. It's probably not necessary to mention which result I then obtained...)

What makes this game truly stand out is its scope. This is not so much in

terms of the number of aircraft represented or the variety of scenarios (though both are good and will improve as further games and modules in the series are released) as in the depth of play. A scenario in *Air Force* consists of a single air battle, and *Air Superiority* and *The Speed of Heat* can be played that way as well. But the two layers above that, the tactical and operational levels, put each engagement in a context that is frequently lacking in a pure tactical level game. The tactical layer serves as a bridge between the combat and operational levels, or it can be used to generate the initial set up for a purely tactical game. Based on which side first spots its foe, formations jockey for position, trying to set up a bounce, gain an altitude advantage, or break away before combat occurs. The operational level immerses the player in details of assembling large formations, coping with bad weather, and deciding when and where to engage the enemy. There are many possible random events, ranging from take off and landing mishaps to chance encounters with enemy fighters. One of the great problems the Luftwaffe faced - poor fighter range - becomes painfully evident to the German player at this level. This is a critical facet of the air campaign in Europe that a game like *Air Force* cannot reveal. There are also rich possibilities for using the operational level as the basis for a campaign game, though the rules stop at the level of a single mission.

The game includes 240 counters, one two-sided map (terrain on one side, blue hexes on the other), one seventy-two page booklet of rules and scenarios, sixteen player aid sheets and charts, and twenty-four aircraft data cards. The types represented in-

clude twelve Allied and twelve German aircraft.

- The Allied aircraft are the Spitfire IX, Spitfire XIV, Tempest, B-17F, B-17G, B-24J, B-26B, P-38J, P-46C/D, P-47D/M, P-51B, and P-51D.
- The Luftwaffe aircraft are the Bf-109G-6, Bf-109G-10/K-4, Me-110G-2, Me-163, Me-262, Me-410A-2, FW-190A-4, FW-190A-8, FW-190D-9, Ta-152, Ju-88C-6, and Do-335.

At least two more releases are in the works. The first, tentatively titled *Achtung Spitfeuer!*, will cover the early part of the war, emphasizing the Royal Air Force and the Battle of Britain, while the second will focus on the Pacific theater. (*Publisher's Note: Achtung Spitfire was released in 1995 and Whistling Death was released in 2003?*)



Over the Reich is the most detailed treatment of the final

stages of the air campaign against Germany available at the tactical scale. Its operational level gives a good representation of the broader context of each combat, and the tactical level plays quickly and generates interesting set ups for the combat scale. The flight system is based on a proven, realistic and playable design, and richness of the combat results is striking. *Over The Reich* is a must have game for anyone seriously interested in World War II tactical air combat.

3W's

Crossbows & Cannons II

Published in 1993 • Designed by Robert Markham

reviewed by **Robert Lindsay**

3W, starting with *Royalists & Roundheads*, can lay claim to having created the Nineties' equivalent of the old SPI's *Napoleon at Waterloo* system. The latter directly led to many direct descendants from SPI, and countless related games from other companies. The most recent release in this system is *Crossbows & Cannons II*, four more battles from the early ages of musket and pike.

Physically, 3W's games have improved markedly of late. The four maps are split into two game maps on each side of the 22" x 34" map. One slight annoyance is a small overlap between the two sides of the maps, so you would lose half a hex row if you cut the map in half to make handling the game easier. The maps themselves are done in muted colors, and resemble a period map colorized - it provides a nice effect. There are many terrain types and they are easy to tell apart. The counters are very pretty, done in the picture style first made popular with XTR's *Kadesh* game. These are not as pretty as XTR's or GMT Games' products, but they are a vast improvement over the *Royalists & Roundheads* counters used in the system earlier. The only real problem is that it is almost impossible to tell the various flavors of skirmisher light cavalry apart (light cavalry, light cavalry crossbowmen, stradiots, genitors). The counters are also color-coded to their leaders, to help out the command and control rules. Most of the games also feature a set up letter to speed set up of the game. The command chits of earlier games in the system have been replaced with leader tracks for marking the commands of each side. The combat system has been modified to use a ten-sided die, and there is also a sheet listing the units for each game so if you get the counters mixed up (or your two year old daughter does it for you), (*Rich Erwin: Trust him - he knows...*) you can sort out the resulting mess. The rules are in a twelve page booklet, with only very minimal designer's notes and historical background, which I think is a mistake, given that all of these battles would be obscure to all but the most dedicated fans of this era. All in all, a reasonable and attractive set of components.

The rules in this system are essentially unchanged since *Royalists & Roundheads*. They consist of selecting (or trying to select) a command for each leader from the following:

- Advance (must move one hex closer to enemy units),
- Attack (bonus in melee, must move one-half of movement allowance closer to enemy),
- Stand (move only one hex, bonus in melee in defense),
- Retreat (must move one-half of movement allowance away from enemy), and...
- Muster (like retreat, but automatic if casualties occurred).

The overall commander can change to whatever command he wants as can units within the overall commander's command range. Other leaders must roll under their command rating to change commands, which can lead to some problems for the player. Movement follows this, and is pretty standard (three to four movement points for infantry, one for cannon, eight to ten for cavalry). (One interesting thing is that while units can start the scenario stacked, they may not stack or move through other units during the game, although they may unstack. Facing has also been changed from a three hex front in *Royalists & Roundheads* to the more rational two hex front.)

Then follows defensive fire, offensive fire, melee and rally of routed units. The victory system is still the same - once the number of routed/eliminated strength points rises past a certain value for either player, a die is rolled. If the roll is within a specific range, the side that's reached its limit routs and the other side wins. If neither side routs by the last turn, the game is a draw.

The major change since the first game in this system is in the combat system charts. In *Royalists & Roundheads*, it was almost impossible to hurt the other side. The best shot possible on the Fire Combat Results Table (artillery firing one hex away from the target) resulted in a fifty percent chance of a single-step loss. The Fire Combat Results Table is now much more vicious, and the Shock Combat Results Table somewhat more so than in its earlier incarnation. The biggest effect of this is on skirmisher units. While they have been reduced to a single strength step, at a range of one hex, they have a fifty percent chance of causing a step loss and a ten percent chance of causing two step losses. In this game all the battles are loaded with skirmisher

units. This has a major effect on play. Let's say you have some heavy cavalry and want to clear out those skirmishers in front of you. You run two heavy cavalry units up against a pair of skirmishers stacked together. They use defensive fire, likely causing one step loss and a morale check. To melee them you have to make a morale check to attack. If everything goes right you might have a thirty percent chance of taking out one skirmisher unit. If not, they are going to pump you full of arrows in both the next Offensive Fire Phase of their turn and the Defensive Fire Phase of your next turn. Shock attack-oriented heavy units really get screwed by this new system. An example is the battle of Pinkie, where the English heavy cavalry is next to useless. While missile units could have a dramatic effect on battles of this period if used right, virtually emasculating shock attack-oriented units just doesn't feel quite right.

There is also a set of advanced rules for this series. It converts the game into an impulse system where you draw a chit out of a cup. If the color is for your side, you may move or attack with those units. There is also a more intricate melee table included, though I'm not sure it changes the basic advantages of fire over melee built into the system.

As for the battles themselves, it's a rather mixed lot.

- The battle of Pinkie (England versus Scotland) is the largest. The Scots have few of the all-important skirmisher units, and have to avoid a certain area of the map bombarded by the English fleet off shore, but the English are stuck with a large supply of shock-only heavy cavalry that's going to get chewed up by the Scots' left-flank infantry and missile-armed light cavalry.
- Cerignola features a group of Swiss and French units that must charge a Spanish force dug in behind a trench and fortifications. The Swiss/French force has some artillery, but so do the Spanish, and a frontal assault has always been a bad choice, even if you do have elite Swiss pikes.
- Forovo features a battle between the French versus a combined force from Milan and Venice, with over half of both sides forces as skirmishers! Unfortunately for the French, the Italians get to start the battle behind a rampart.
- Novara, with the French fighting the Swiss, is also loaded with skirmishers. This one is more balanced as there are no overwhelming terrain features for either side.

All of the battles suffer from victory being deter-

mined solely by unit losses - under some circumstances, why attack at all?

There is one sad thing I would point out about the whole of this series. SPI's quadrigames were used to train new game designers. Many of the most famous SPI alumni started designing with a quadrigame. Nowadays, however, all of these games are produced by one person, Rob Markham. While he may be a good designer, there is a definite sameness that ultimately is the biggest failure of this whole series. With the lack of historical background, designer's notes, and special rules or chrome in many of these games, the whole series eventually tastes stale. With so many games in this series produced in such a short time, an assembly line feel to the system is inevitable, regardless of how good the cover art looks. While this certainly was often true of the SPI quadrigames, the fact they were done by so many different people always gave the designs the opportunity to be different from quad to quad if the designer was willing to take the chance. While the Markham Era at 3W has definitely produced a lot of games in a short time, there needs to be more variety in terms of the designers involved or in terms of greater chrome.

Decision Games' *Empires at War*

Published in 1993 • Designed by **Joseph Miranda**

reviewed by **Robert Lindsay**

Decision Games, publishers of Strategy & Tactics, Moves, and a small line of boxed wargames, is a very quirky outfit. In some respects they are like a bunch of graduate students working on a project. It all seems so clear and well done in their head, yet somehow it never quite works in application. The amount of errata Strategy & Tactics issues have generated lately is appalling. This is sad, since many of the game topics they are doing probably won't ever be done by anyone else (I doubt anyone is waiting for their chance to produce another game on the Russo-Turkish War). Their first three boxed games, *Four Battles of the Ancient World*, *Napoleon's First Battles*, and *Seven Days' Battles*, have received a lukewarm reception at best, particularly with the infamous folding rule book of the latter two games. (*Rich Erwin: To be completely accurate, Four Battles of the Ancient World sold like hot cakes, but among those who want a little more accuracy in their wargames, this one is anathema, probably second in its intense dislike by that crowd only to Axis & Allies.*) But like good graduate students, they keep trying, constantly hoping to get it right next time.

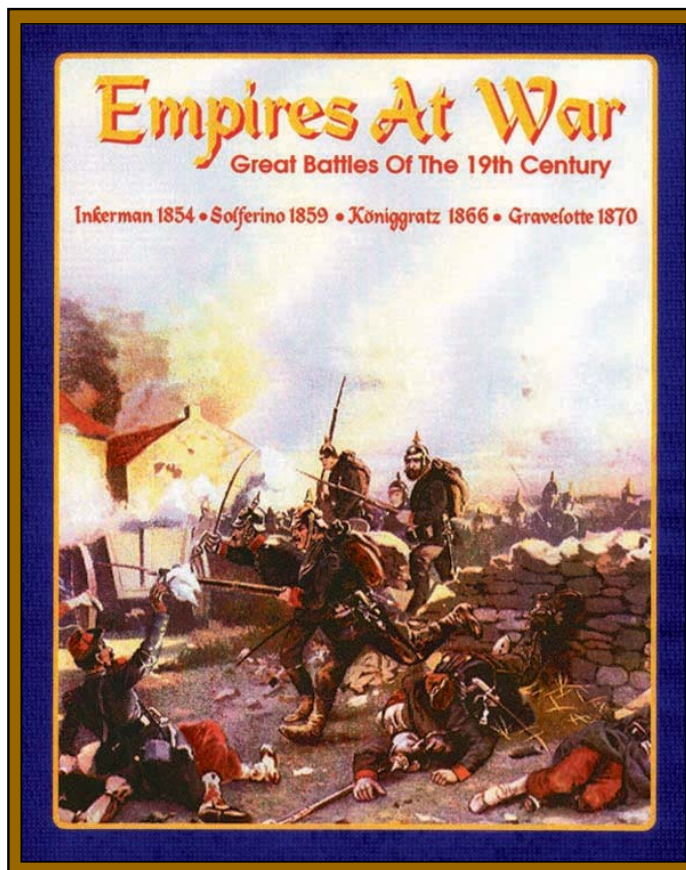
Empires at War is their latest attempt. At first I was very skeptical about getting this game, especially since it was based on the system used in the *Friedland* game in one of Strategy & Tactics' more spectacular errata farms. But I'm a sucker for obscure battles, and European battles of the Nineteenth Century are pretty obscure to American gamers. It helped that a friend was in town buying me a late birthday present. So I went for it.

The four battles covered here aren't often seen in

the hobby. The only current in-print game that covers this period to any extent is Command's *Blood & Iron*, concerning the Battle of Koniggratz. SPI's *Crimean War* quadrigame covers Inkerman, and as far as I know there is no American wargame around on Solferino or Gravelotte. (*Rich Erwin: Jeux Descatres did a Solferino game, but it's essentially Napoleon at Waterloo with subtitles. Spence and Gable did a Koniggratz game long ago. Pacific Rim Publishing's Blood & Iron will cover this period at a more operational level.*)

Physically, *Empires at War* represents a product by people who are slowly learning to use their computer graphics software. The map graphics are serviceable, roughly the same level as late-era SPI, but in no way comparable to Avalon Hill or Clash of Arms Games' maps. There are four terrain types: Woods, towns, river/stream hex sides and slopes used to form hilltops. In all games, the predominate terrain is clear, with woods and slopes a close second. One interesting thing is that two of the games vary greatly in size, with Gravelotte taking up three-fourths of a full 34" x 22" map, and the Inkerman battlefield only ten by ten hexes. The

counters are also functional. The background color for each side in each game is either a medium red or medium blue. A more or less standard NATO symbology is used for the four types of units: Infantry, artillery, cavalry and leaders. Each corps is also color-coded, which helps greatly in setting up the game and the command and control rules. Another odd point is that a country's colors are not consistent over all four games, so that Prussia is blue at Koniggratz, but red at Gravelotte. The rules are sixteen pages long and there are three separate pages of charts.



The game system is divided into basic and advanced rules. The basic rules cover bombardment, command and control, movement, combat and rallying units, in that order.

Bombardment is first and is very powerful. Only towns, woods and hills block line of sight, and, depending on the game, artillery has a five hex range. The Bombardment Combat Results Table has four results:

- **Disrupt** (flip to reverse side),
- **Disrupt/Check** (if the unit passes a morale check there is no effect, otherwise the entire stack disrupts),
- **Attrition** (one unit is eliminated, the others in the stack are disrupted) and...
- **Attrition/Check** (if the unit passes a morale check, the stack get a disrupt result, otherwise it suffers an attrition result).

Disrupting units is easy, but as multiple disruptions have no cumulative effect, killing units is much harder via bombardment alone. The way to kill units is to send in your infantry and cavalry after the bombardment.

To do that, however, they will have to pass a command and control check. This is done by checking each unit's command and control rating against a die roll on a table. You may or may not be allowed to move the unit, or you may have to move the unit toward the nearest enemy unit, whether you intended to or not. You also have to check for all units, whether you want to move them or not, so this leads to a lot of die rolls.

Combat has several twists. All cavalry and some infantry have to use the Charge Combat Results Table, which is more devastating to the attacker if they fail. Other infantry can use the Skirmish Combat Results Table. It's less bloody, but a defending unit is also less likely to retreat. On both Combat Results Tables, there are many results which cause the attacker to check morale. If they fail, they disrupt, but if they pass their morale check, then the defender checks morale with the same consequences. Another difference in combat is multiple units can attack a individual defending stack separately, so you can send in a unit on the Skirmish Combat Results Table to disrupt the enemy and follow it up with a charge by the rest of your units.

After combat, all of the attacking player's units can be rallied. This is regardless of command and control status, or whether they are surrounded, so this is a very helpful rule. A recruit unit has a one in six chance of rallying, while an elite unit has a four in six chance of rallying.

The advanced rules replace the basic rules command and control system with one centered around leaders. In addition, there are rules for cavalry to attempt a second combat per turn, hidden units, a random events phase and rules for engineers.

The most important advanced rule is the new command and control system. Instead of having to roll to move each unit, you have corps, army and overall commanders. Units within range of a commander may now just roll once, using the commander's rating. The catch is you can only roll once for a given unit, so if your overall commander fails his roll, half of your army could sit on the sidelines for a turn. Do you feel lucky?

The Random Events Phase is rolled for every player turn, with a fair number of varied events (optional reinforcements, fog, ammo shortages) that keep things lively. It's a nice addition.

The second combat attempt for cavalry rule really helps give cavalry some flavor. Under the basic rules, cavalry behave like poorly-trained fast infantry, stuck using the Charge Combat Results Table. With this rule, if they force their opposing unit to retreat, they are allowed to advance two hexes after combat and attack again at double strength. And if they succeed again they attack again, and so on... I'm not sure cavalry of this era really were that powerful, but it makes using them a lot of fun. It also means they tend to find themselves deep in in-jun country once the charge is over. That in turn makes them easier targets after a charge, and that does seem historical.

The hidden units rule is one of Mr. Miranda's constants in all his games. It doesn't really add much to the system, requires you to put markers out all over the place, and generally slows everything down. I ignored it and did not feel like I was losing very much. Decision Games gave this game a fairly high solitaire rating, which to me either means they don't think the hidden units rule adds much either, or they are scamming their customers.

The last of the advanced rules are for engineers. These can be used to build fortifications and bridges over rivers. Given there aren't a lot of rivers to be forded in any of these battles, and given the victory conditions are based on unit losses, not terrain objectives, there's very little reason to attack fortifications. These rules add little.

The victory conditions in all games are primarily dependent on unit casualties. In addition to this, there is a morale level for each side in each game. Disruptions and unit elimination are tallied and compared against the morale level. Once the tally exceeds that side's morale level, all units' morale level drops by one. This has a subtle but serious ef-

fect on the game as units must frequently check morale in combat. If a unit fails a morale check retreating through a zone of control, the unit is eliminated.

Amazingly for Decision Games, The rules are coherent! As far as I can tell, there are no major gaps in the rules. The rule concerning where a unit can go when it must "move to the nearest enemy unit" is open to abuse, and the set up for a few of the units in a couple of the games is unclear, but by and large this is the cleanest set of rules produced by Decision Games yet. Congratulations to them for that!

As for the individual games:

- Inkerman is a small brawl between a high morale but smaller Allied force and a larger but poor-morale force of Russians. Given the very small map and short length (eight turns), it's essentially an introduction to the system.
- Solferino pits a poorly-led but well-trained group of Austrians against a better-led and well-trained group of French and a poorly-led and trained (but numerous) group of Piedmontese.
- Koniggratz has another group of poorly-led Austrians with some very good artillery going up against a well-led and trained Prussian force with lousy artillery.
- Gravelotte has a poorly-led but well-trained group of French (with a very low morale level) trying to hold off a much better-led and trained group of Prussians.

So how does it all play? Actually, pretty well. The basic game command and control rules lead to a lot of die rolls each turn, so the game actually plays faster with all the advanced rules. The two Combat Results Tables work fairly well also. You quickly learn the Skirmish Combat Results Table is good for disrupting units but poor for causing retreats. This is the best way to kill units via advance after combat encirclement. The Shock Combat Results Table is the reverse of the Skirmish Combat Results Table, with a one in six chance of eliminating your units at odds of one-to-one, but with more retreat results possible. Cavalry's ability for multiple attacks add a bit of fun. Artillery bombardment shows this arm coming to dominate the battlefield, but not able to rule it, as was true historically. The rally rules encourage low-odds attacks, since even if you are disrupted when attacking, you still get a chance to rally after combat. The command and control rules lead to all kinds of embarrassing situations - such as when the corps needed to cover your flank decides to take five when your strike force goes in for the

charge...

All in all, Decision Games has finally produced a good game. It is not perfect, but it has several interesting twists in its combat and morale rules which elevate it about the ordinary. The graphics are a little drab for this day and age, but the rules are complete and the system plays well. What more can you ask of a bunch of graduate students?

Pimper's All the World's Wargames

reviewed by **Rich Erwin**

I provided a recent review of the *Wargame Collector's Guide* by Tom Slizewski, comparing it against one of the oldest references around, *Pimper's All the World's Wargames*. Suddenly I get letters asking, "Pimper's? What's Pimper's? Tell me more!!"

A gentleman by the name of Jeff Pimper was assigned by the government long ago to tabulate and put in a database all of the commercial wargames in print. This was eventually taken over by George Phillies of the Strategic Gaming Society and expanded as time has passed. There are now three volumes (each document is about ten to twenty stapled pages), covering the years 1953-1977, 1978-1982, and 1983-1989. There's also an addendum to the first volume. This entire set sells for \$11 - \$4 for Volume I, \$3.50 for Volumes II and III each. A fourth volume, due out in 1996, will cover through 1994.

(Publisher's Note: Pimpers are still available from Strategic Gaming Society.)

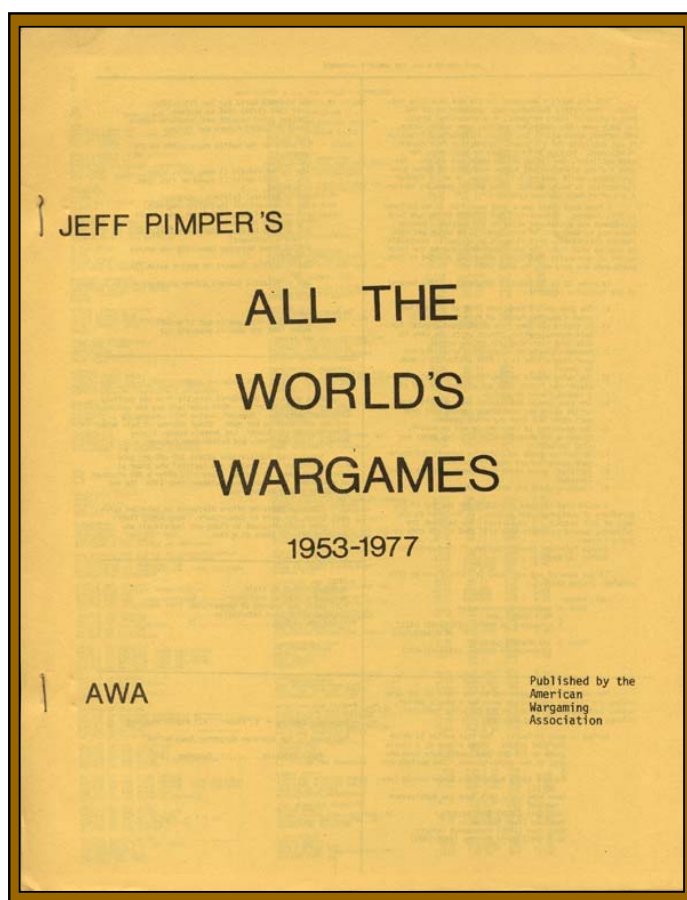
What you get is the most complete listing of wargames ever created, given its time period. Each title lists date of publication, and what company published it. In later volumes, there is also stated the period and the scale. It was here, for example, that I found out about Stephen Cole's precursor to Jagdpanther, Bushwacker. If you're a game collector, it's just plain ol' salivary gland-inducing to see all of those addresses of long-gone companies in the back of the first two volumes and wonder if, with a little sleuthing, you can get that rare bauble. It does not rate the games or provide market value prices,

which I consider probably frustrating for some folks, but understandable. (Perhaps a star for each of the Charlie winners?) I wouldn't mind if the complete names of the designers of each game were specified where possible.

The major weakness of Pimper's is organization. Splitting the set into three time periods can be a little frustrating. I'd prefer a single volume, which

would make it an easier reference to flip through at a quick glance. Since Mr. Phillies still has this list on a database, it wouldn't be impossible to do, and would enhance the value of Pimper's immeasurably. The production quality could be improved easily for a modest cost, and I'd like to see the specifics for all of these games consistent with the latest volume.

As is, if you want to really have that complete set of wargames you dream about, *Pimper's All the World's Wargames* will give you some idea of just what really is out there.



New Rules for Empires of the Middle Ages

by **Brad Martin**

Empires of the Middle Ages is a game of superb flexibility and playability. The design is such that each game is different and entertaining. However, even a great game has some facets that require modification or extension.

The Long and Winding Road

I have found many people wish to play *Empires of the Middle Ages* right from the beginning, 771 AD, but without going through the process of simulating Charlemagne's empire (as delineated in Section 32 of the rule book). An alternate start up is to use the language code guide, printed on the map, to randomly select each player's starting location. Number each language from one to seventeen, then have each player roll a twenty-sided die, rolling again if the number rolled is above seventeen or already rolled by a another player. After having determined the language of his empire, each player selects one area of that language type from which to place his court. Each player then rolls a die to determine the number of additional areas of his empire of the same language type. These extra areas can be selected by the given player, but preference must go to those connected by land routes to his court. Use the Initial Social State Levels, Fortification, Religion and Language specifications as stated in Sections 27.3 - 27.6, and the Leader Stature and Treasury rules per Section 30.0.6.

The Tax Burden

In the Middle Ages, transportation and communication, or more accurately, the lack of them, was the major factor working against the longevity of empires. Much of the taxes levied on the peasants never reached the court, but instead was lost to tax-farmers, avaricious nobles or bandits. This accounts for the itinerant nature of medieval kingship. The king, accompanied by his court, had to continuously travel about his domain, visiting the royal estates and those of his vassals to literally consume what was his due. Only by tapping directly into local resources could the king accumulate the resources necessary to wage a campaign beyond the borders of his empire.

To reflect this immobility of resources in *Empires of the Middle Ages* -

- All gold points collected by taxation remain in the area from which they were collected. Place the markers in the area box. These gold points may only be used when the leader marker is in the area to undertake an endeavor.
- If an area with gold points in it is lost, the gold becomes the property of that area's new owner.
- Gold from one area may be moved one area closer to the court area whenever a leader attempts an administration endeavor in the original area.
- A leader attempting an endeavor in an area may collect all of the gold points in an area. Place the gold with the leader counter not in the Royal Treasury.
- A magnate-controlled, neutral or heretical area containing gold points may use the gold in defense endeavors. For this purpose only, the most distant player controls the defending area.
- A leader loses half the gold points in his entourage if he ever fails a leadership check.

The Cost of Living

Endeavor Costs

Conquest	2
Pillage	0
Diplomacy	1
Defense	1
Fortification	2
Ruling	0
Adding one to a leader's effectiveness rating	1
Each sea area between a leader's base and their target area	1
Calling a diplomatic parley	2
Attending a diplomatic parley	1
Supporting an exiled player	1

Out of the Blue

In the standard *Empires of the Middle Ages* rules, raiders can be especially devastating. They often can imbalance a game by stifling the plans of players with areas in Spain, England, Southern France and Italy. There's little a player can do against a force which can have a leadership rating of as high as nine and no home base toward which one can launch a retaliatory strike.

As a solution to this problem, I've integrated the Raider Activity Schedules [Section 24.4] into an expanded Magnate Appearance Chart. Phase three of the sequence of play is therefore deleted. In phase four roll a die and consult the chart below:

Magnate Appearance Chart

Die Roll Effect

1	Consult Magnate Matrix Chart 1																				
2	Consult Magnate Matrix Chart 2																				
3	Viking Raid - Select the most pillagable area as per the rules. Have the raider use three year cards. After 1000 AD - Consult the Syrian Magnate Table																				
4	Maygar magnate expends three year cards Castle Maintenance - Each player must pay one gold point for each fortification marker within his empire. Failure to pay results in the removal of the marker or its reduction from a strength of three to a strength of two.																				
5	Sarcean magnate appears. Roll a ten-sided die: <table><tr><td>1</td><td>Tuscany</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>Naples</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>Sicily</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>Provence</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>Toulouse</td></tr><tr><td>6</td><td>Lombardy</td></tr><tr><td>7</td><td>Cordova</td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td>Granada</td></tr><tr><td>9</td><td>Valencia</td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>Rome (This may trigger a crusade. See Section 23, ignoring the time/date requirement.)</td></tr></table>	1	Tuscany	2	Naples	3	Sicily	4	Provence	5	Toulouse	6	Lombardy	7	Cordova	8	Granada	9	Valencia	10	Rome (This may trigger a crusade. See Section 23, ignoring the time/date requirement.)
1	Tuscany																				
2	Naples																				
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5	Toulouse																				
6	Lombardy																				
7	Cordova																				
8	Granada																				
9	Valencia																				
10	Rome (This may trigger a crusade. See Section 23, ignoring the time/date requirement.)																				

Expend three year cards pillaging

adjacent areas.
After 1200 AD: Mongol magnate appears in the steppes.
6 Heretic Magnate appears. Roll a die for location:

1	Switzerland
2	Toulouse
3	Bohemia
4	Antioch
5	Friesland
6	Scotland

Follow Section 19.1 as stated.

In general, magnates appear in a given area regardless of whether or not the area is in unrest. However, it cannot be a court area.

Talk, Not War

In order to enhance the prospects of conflict resolution by negotiation (Section 20.5), I have added the following methods of calculating an empire's voting power in a diplomatic parley:

Areas in an empire	Votes
0 - 5	1
6 - 10	2
11 - 20	3
> 20	4

International Influence: Number of ties/claims outside the empire, divided by two

Bribery (per ten gold points): Plus one

The Gamers' *Matanikau*

Published in 1993 • Designed by Sam Simons

reviewed by **Terry Rooker**

Matanikau is the latest entry in the Tactical Combat Series from The Gamers. The game covers the fighting around the Matanikau River on Guadalcanal in 1942. It is the first game of the Tactical Combat Series set outside the West European theater, but it continues the trend of the Tactical Combat Series being principally infantry actions with tanks relegated to a supporting role.

There have been several changes to the structure and appearance of the Tactical Combat Series system since the earlier games, but even so it is still compatible with previous games in the series. For the most part the revisions did not affect the core game functions.

The Tactical Combat Series system is famous (or infamous?) for its command and control rules. The system requires you to graphically draw out your intentions on a copy of the map, called an op sheet. There are rules for the implementation delay, and how to change the op sheets. It provides a rather literal simulation of the command and control functions, but it also adds a large paperwork burden to the game. This system continues intact.

The op sheet implementation delay is adversely affected by the size of the units assigned. The smallest element available is a company, so there tend to be a multitude of company op sheets in a typical game since they are more efficient than those for battalions. This is counter-intuitive, so in a revision, a staff modifier applies to battalion-sized operations, making them more efficient than company operations since the size-modification delay is reduced.

Yes, the op sheets are a lot of paper work. Yes, there are other mechanisms that simulate the same or different parts of the command and control cycle. Still, it works and it forces the players to anticipate enemy activity rather than exercising instantaneous control. I like it for what it does, others hate it.

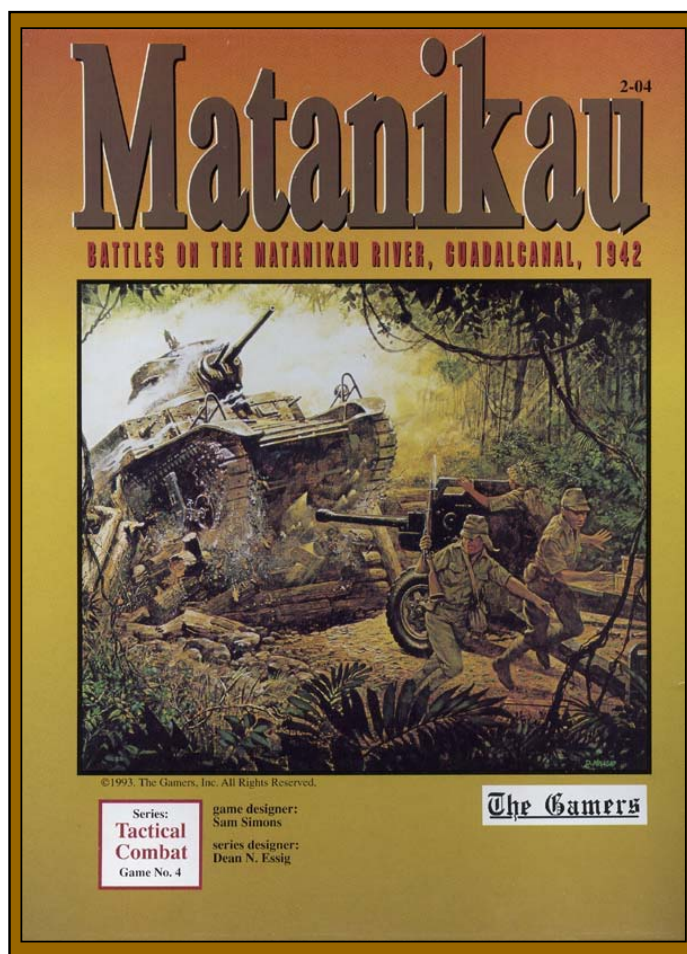
While many other rules have been revised, they were mostly changed to reduce the number of die rolls. There is the same differential-based combat results table that differentiates based upon point fire and area fire.

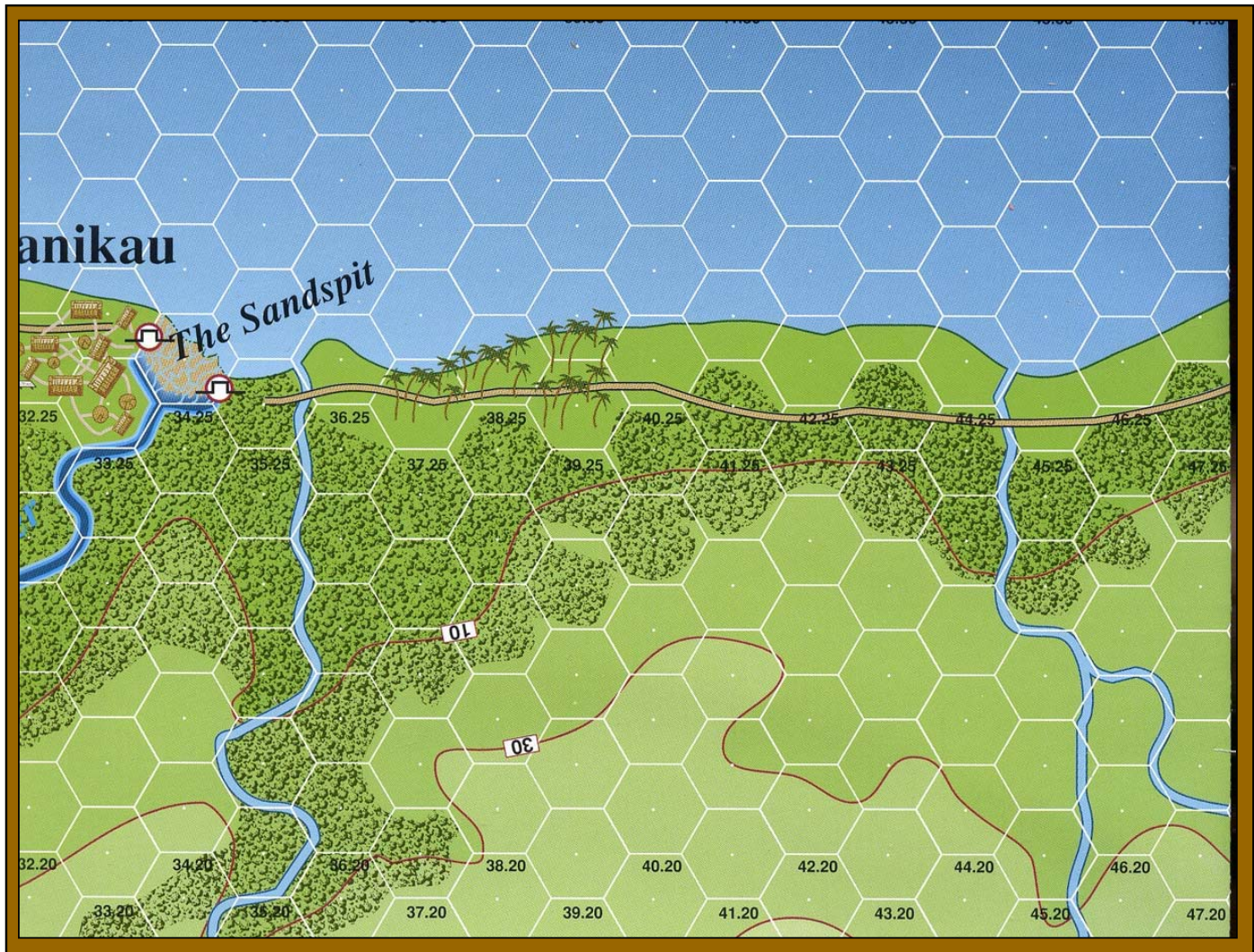
The morale system also survives. It's a nice feature as it's possible to drive enemy formations away from the battle, without inflicting disabling casualties; they simply lose the will to hang around the battlefield. On the other hand, you must watch your own morale levels. Even though a unit may appear nearly full strength, its morale might be close to breaking.

The biggest change to the mechanical part of the system is the artillery rules. The original Tactical Combat Series rules had an onerous artillery resolution system. The addition of rocket artillery basically broke the original system and there were a couple of previous attempts to patch things up. With *Matanikau*,

the artillery rules are given a complete overhaul. Gone is tracking individual rounds, and walking the sheaf onto the target. Instead there is an initial round that can scatter, and the distance to the target will affect the accuracy of the mission. It's simpler and much faster. I am still uncertain if it provides as much accuracy and/or flexibility as is claimed in the series designer's notes.

One of the most noticeable changes is the graphics.




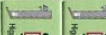


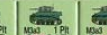







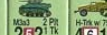


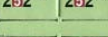
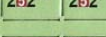
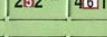
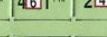
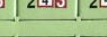





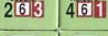














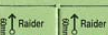


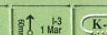

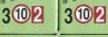
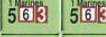

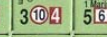







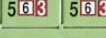
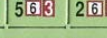
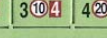

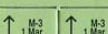
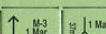
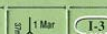

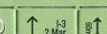
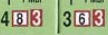
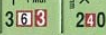





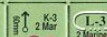

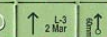
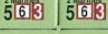
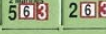
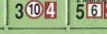




Since Dean Essig had his unfortunate accident, he has apparently had ample time to play around with what shapes and colors work best. The artwork in the first games in the Tactical Combat Series system was somewhat plain. By *Omaha* it was somewhat garish. With *Matanikau*, he has hit a happy medium and the components work very well, both in visual appeal and ease of use. One item that helps is that this is physically the smallest of the games in the Tactical Combat Series system to date. There is only one 22" x 34" map sheet, and while there are seven hundred counters, nearly half of these are administrative counters. The game rule book (as opposed to the Tactical Combat Series standard rule book) is mostly scenarios and op sheet forms as there are only three pages of additional rules for this specific game. The number of counters may seem daunting but the game actually covers four separate one to two day battles, so there are never more than two regiments per side. This makes for a series of manageable games, and is a welcome change from previous games in the series, where most of the scenarios involving less than fifty turns were almost trivial.

Matanikau is a departure from previous games in many other ways. The playing area is much more constricted than even *Objective Schmidt*. The map sheet covers the area west of Henderson Field, and is mostly jungle terrain or ocean hexes. Even when there are clearings in the jungle, they tend to be hills which still block the line of sight. You can expect to close very tightly with the enemy in *Matanikau*, and is in keeping with the nature of the battle. The Guadalcanal campaign was famous for its jungle assaults. The closeness of the jungle will make artillery less important as you very rarely have adequate line of sight to register a mission.

With the possible exception of *Objective Schmidt*, the action in *Matanikau* takes place in a smaller part of the map than any previous game. Even in *Objective Schmidt*, the US goal was to drive off the edge of the map, so that even though much action was centered around a single river crossing the US forces still needed to fight down to the bridge and then fight out of the bridgehead. In *Matanikau*, the action is more focused, partly because it simulates several smaller battles and not the entire campaign. In these battles the objective was controlling the

Countersheet Front: Matanikau sheet 1

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 Raider 3102	 Raider 3102	 I-3 563	 I-3 563	 I-3 563	 I-3 263	 I-3 263	 I-3 263	 I-3 263	 I-3 263	 I-3 3104	 I-3 3104	 I-3 3104	 I-3 3104	 I-3 3104	 I-3 3104	 I-3 3104	 I-3 3104	 I-3 3104	 I-3 3104
 I-3 483	 I-3 363	 I-3 363	 I-3 240	 I-3 240	 I-3 563	 I-3 563	 I-3 563	 I-3 563	 I-3 563	 I-3 563	 I-3 563	 I-3 563	 I-3 563	 I-3 563	 I-3 563	 I-3 563	 I-3 563	 I-3 563	 I-3 563

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The Gamers

river crossings by the village of *Matanikau*. This was the only place where mechanized traffic could cross the river. Since the scenarios are smaller and shorter, the objectives tend to be local to the center of the map. The limited of line of sight caused by the jungle terrain also compacts the action, as units must be shoulder-to-shoulder to maintain a solid line.

In *Matanikau*, the US Marines can ignore Save Yourself Retreats. These are morale results which send the affected units running away from spotted enemy units (very similar to panic results in other games). This rule presumably reflects the Marine grit, and their tendency to be physically displaced rather than have their spirit broken. The Japanese, by comparison, reflect their offensive punch through a morale benefit for stacking. The more units in the hex, the better the modifier. Granted such bunched-up units will draw more fire, but the morale benefit can still be advantageous. The Japanese also ignore surrender results on the morale tables. Instead, the affected units will conduct a banzai charge. (This result is similar to berserk results

in other games.) The affected unit designates a target hex containing US Marines. The banzai unit must assault that hex until destroyed, or until the target unit is eliminated. The Japanese also get the benefit of not imposing some other assault-related morale modifiers, and they do not have to suffer a negative night morale penalty. This rule stems from the Japanese emphasis on night operations.

In contrast, one of the special US rules is that the Marines must dig in each night and cannot leave their holes until morning! Obviously, the Japanese player will want to seek night actions. This is also a change from European Theater Tactical Combat Series titles, where night turns were typically a time for consolidation and regrouping. There are other, more typical special rules that provide for specifics of the campaign, such as US landing craft and inadequate Japanese artillery doctrine. While important, these other rules do not change the feel of the game from previous releases in the series.

There is one missing rule that is discussed in the designer's notes concerning the supposed Japanese su-



periority in jungle fighting. The designer dismisses a special Japanese rule as unnecessary because there was no superiority. Still, in many accounts of the various battles early in World War II, there was an apparent advantage to the Japanese jungle operations. This apparent advantage could be explained in several ways. First, the Japanese doctrine was more focused on closing with the enemy, and this was basically the only way to operate in the jungle. Second, the Japanese army was less technologically reliant, so it was less encumbered by the jungle. Third, the Japanese army may have adapted to the jungle more quickly. Although the first two are partially included in the game, the last possibility is not. Quite frankly, I have not played enough games to determine if there is a Japanese advantage. Even if I did, there would still be the question of whether there should be. On balance, the designer probably took the best course.

The action tends to be mainly slugfests in the jungle, trying to dislodge your opponent. Even though there are opportunities for maneuver, the jungle slows many of these to a crawl. And when you get

to your objective you will probably end up in an assault, as the situation does not provide the luxury of trying to dislodge enemy positions by fire.

This is by far the most pure infantry game in the series. There are a few tanks, one company per side. The Marines get Stuart light tanks and halftrack-mounted anti-tank guns, while the Japanese get an assortment of their light and medium tanks. Still, a Japanese medium tank is little better than a Stuart, so there is little advantage here. Both sides will likely expend their armor in one big push along the coastal road, then resort to infantry crawling through the jungle.

Both sides must learn a new style of play. The Japanese player must be bold. His doctrine and forces are not structured for an attrition-based campaign. He must continually close with the enemy and assault him. The morale rules support this style of play, especially at night. You will find bunches of Japanese troops trying to overwhelm individual US positions. The Marine player will try to catch the Japanese out in the open. In most of the scenar-

ios, when this happens, the Japanese player will suffer (there is one scenario where the Marines do not have much artillery ammunition).

The Marines have some units that are comfortable running around the jungle and they can be used to extend lines and otherwise conduct maneuvers through the jungle. The Marines also get one battalion that is immune from the op sheet requirements - this represents the initiative of Chesty Puller. I have had several discussions with others about whether this is too great an advantage. As with any game, if you don't like it, then change it. I suggest giving Puller's battalion a command prep rating of one (which significantly speeds up implementing new op sheets). In this fashion, Puller would at least be committed to an op sheet and could not react instantly, as he can in the published rules. Even with Puller per the game rules, though, the Marines can have a tough time of it. Every evening they must consolidate their position as they instantly dig-in on night turns. If the Marine player is not careful, units could be out of supporting position when they go to ground.

Matanikau presents a completely different situation to the players than what they may be used to in a World War II game, or perhaps even in a Tactical Combat Series game. While the jungle slows you down, there are interesting possibilities. If anything, *Matanikau* rewards good planning more than previous games in the Tactical Combat Series. The terrain makes it difficult to identify enemy activities until it bursts upon you, so you get little advance notice. The terrain also makes it difficult to respond quickly once you find the enemy. The problem is no matter how brilliant your plan or how well you anticipate enemy actions, you must eventually close with the dug-in troops guarding the river crossing. There is no way around it. In this sense, this is a classical infantry situation. It may not appeal those who play for wide sweeping armored thrusts. It certainly presents a different view of the war with an uncommon (for wargamers, anyway) set of tactical problems. For those interested in a grunt's-eye view to the Pacific War, *Matanikau* may be the best game yet.

FUTURE GEM

XTR's

When Tigers Fight

Published in Command #26 in 1993 • Designed by L. Dean Webb

reviewed by **Robert Lindsay**

Many years ago a friend and I were discussing World War II and he said "You know, the CBI (China-Burma-India) theater must have been the most squalid place to fight in all of the war." Thanks to Command Magazine and designer L. Dean Webb, you now have a chance to find out just how tough it was, via the last great Japanese offensive of World War II. From the monsoon-ridden mountains of Burma to the great rice paddies of China, you fight over some of the vilest terrain imaginable with everything from P-40s (the legendary Flying Tigers) and the Chindits to hordes of Chinese infantry.

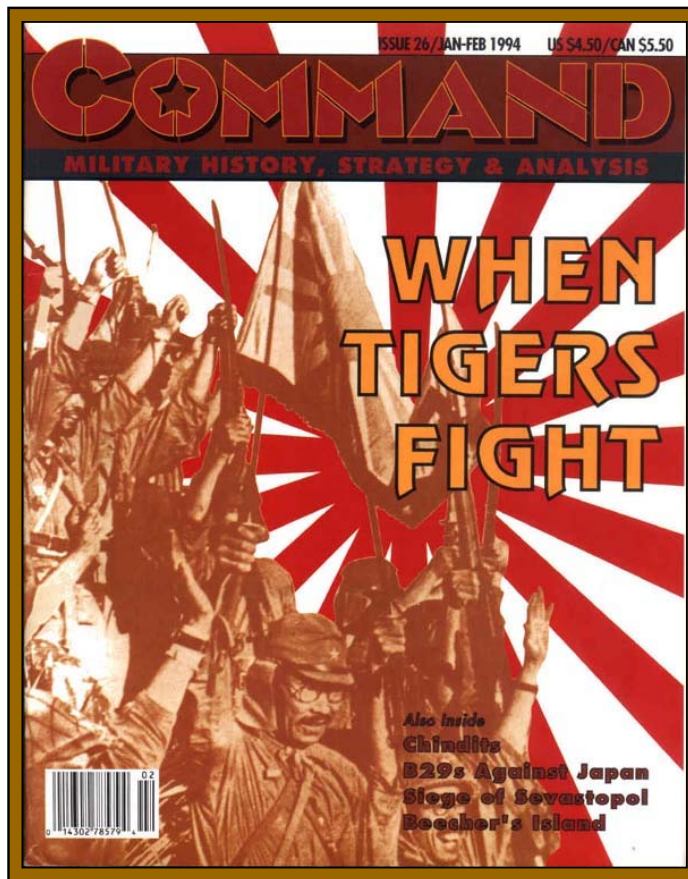
When Tigers Fight shows XTR maintaining their high production quality. You get two full counter sheets of 5/8 inch counters - most are for the game, and the rest are for variants and replacements. The map and counters are well done as usual, with appropriate colors used for the wide variety of terrain in the area of China, Burma and India that the game covers. The only strange thing is an odd purple color for the untried Chinese infantry. Another standard feature for XTR is the set up hex numbers are printed on the counters, along with a small dot to indicate a replacement counter for multi-step units. You can set up this game up and be ready to play in thirty minutes. A new first, and something I heartily approve of, is the inclusion of a chart on card stock to handle all the charts that are not on the map. It includes a Combat Results Table, handy summaries of the sequence of play, supply effects, overruns (known here as infiltration assaults), and a Terrain Effect Chart.

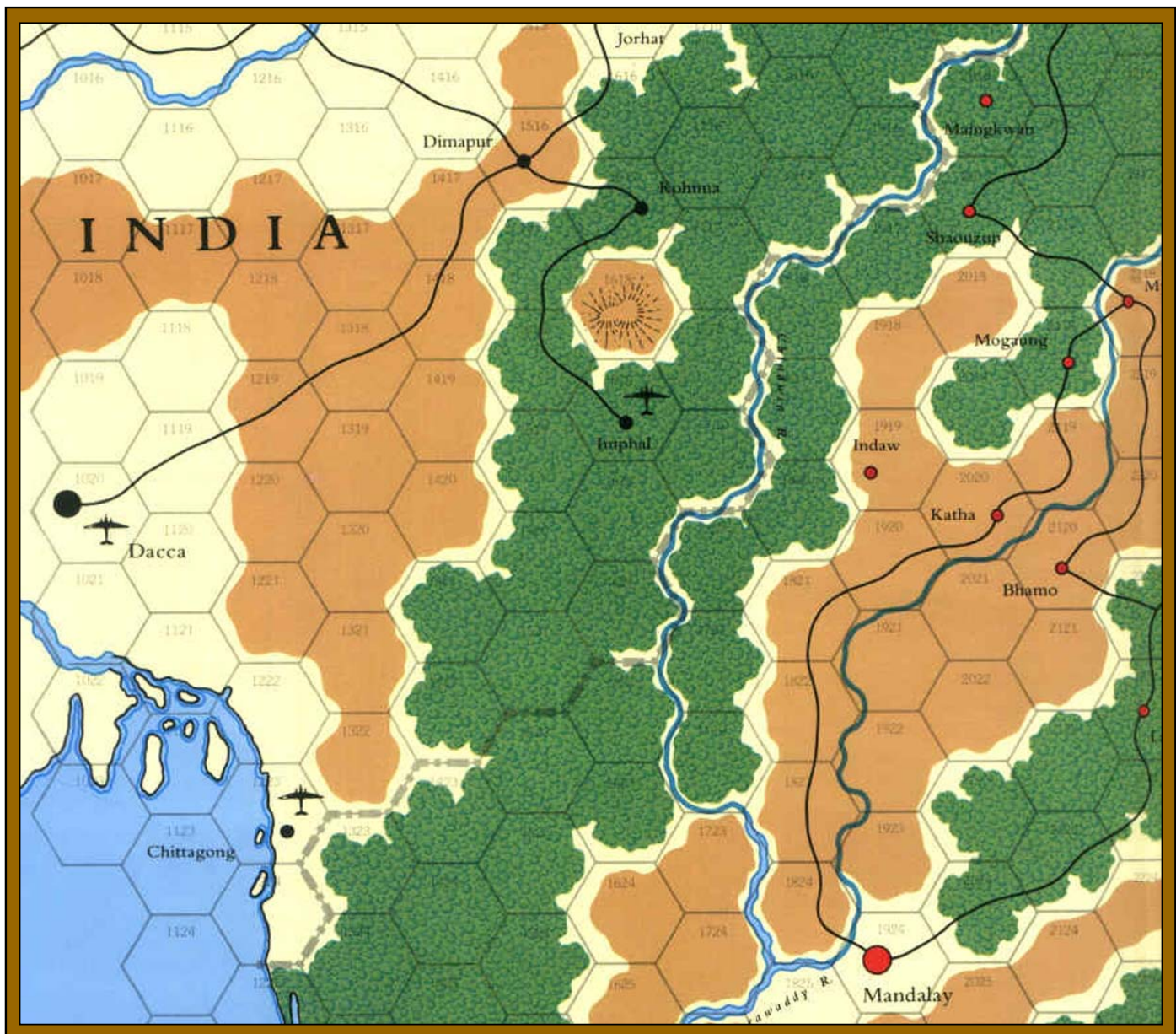
When Tigers Fight covers the four offensives the Japanese army launched in China and Burma to

crush the Chinese Nationalists and cause India to rise up against the British. Units are divisions, brigades, and three types of Chinese forces - veteran forces, American-trained forces and lots of untried Chinese armies, whose strengths are unknown until put into combat, just as in *Panzergruppe Guderian*. There are ten turns, and to win automatically the Japanese must either take two of three Chinese supply centers, or take enough air bases in Burma to lower the total to less than six. If the Japanese player can then roll, in any turn thereafter, a value greater than the air bases owned by the British, supply to the Nationalist Chinese is considered strangled. Failing that, victory is decided on turn ten with points for both sides. For the Japanese, these are controlling all cities east of the 38xx hex row, Mandalay, and all of the Flying Tigers bases. For the Allies, retaking a formerly Japanese-controlled city in China, controlling Myitkyina, and keeping Imperial units out of India earn that player victory points. The victory conditions insure there will be lots of fighting all over the map. They are fairly difficult for the Japanese to meet, but the British/Chinese player is doing most of the bleeding in the game, so it works out. As far as I know, there has

never been any game that covers the entirety of this campaign. There was the long ago Game Designers' Workshop's *Burma*, and Pacific Rim Publishing recently did a game on the fighting around Imphal (*The Last Elephant Offensive*), but essentially this is virgin game territory.

The game uses much the same system Command has been developing since their 1918: *Storm in the West* issue game - strategic movement/movement/combat. Overruns are renamed infiltration assaults and can only be done once per Japanese unit or





stack, only in an adjacent hex, and never in cities. There is strategic movement for both sides, on a city/town-to-city/town basis with a limit of three units per turn. There are no zones of control. The combat system is odds-based with the usual set of modifiers. All results are in step losses, with no option to retreat. (Yes, that's right - think before you attack.) Losses are doubled when attacking cites. Thus, even the weakest Chinese unit can expect to take at least one step of Japanese troops with it. Needless to say, this results in a very bloody game.

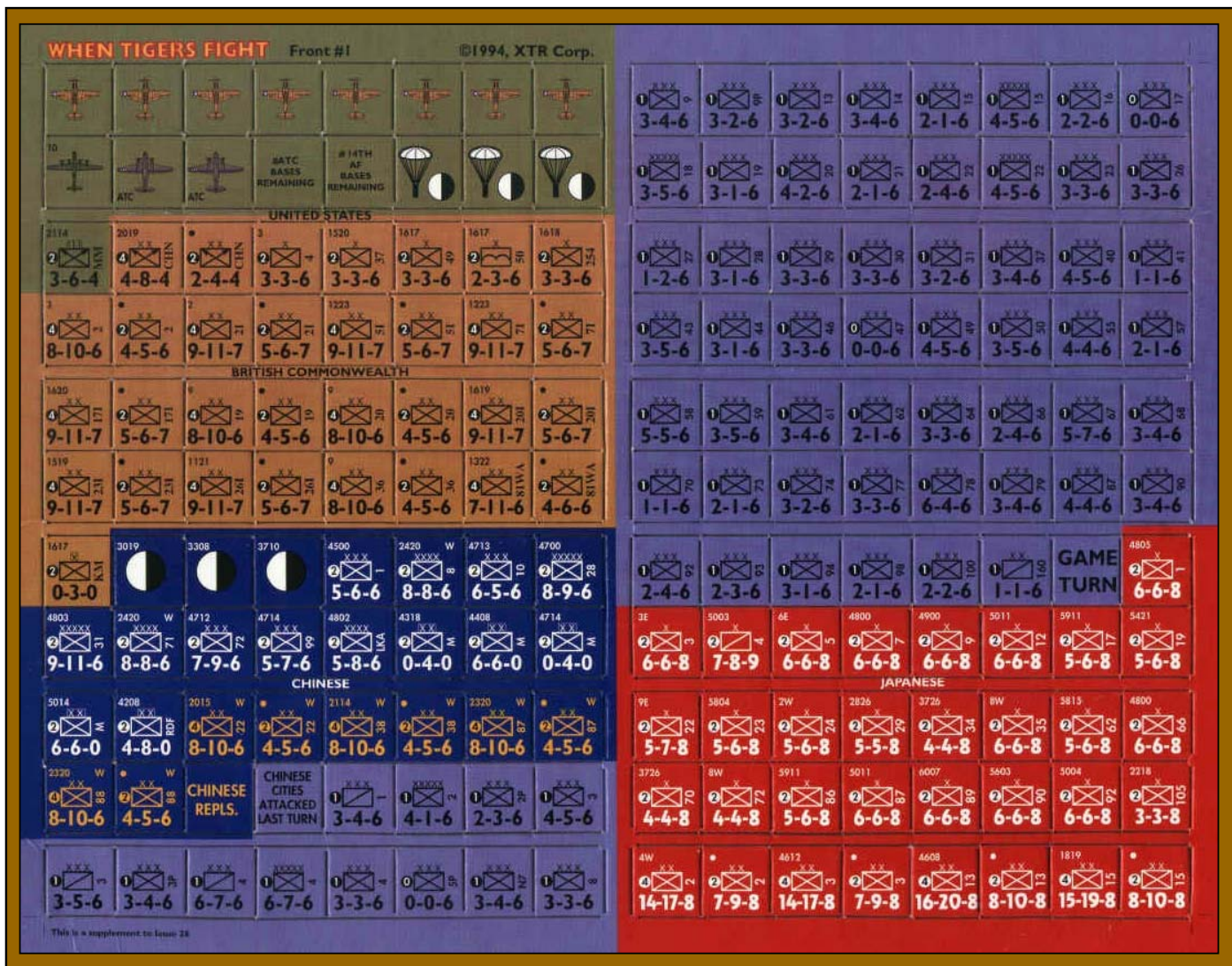
The chrome is provided by rules for:

- US air power (and the Japanese taking their bases),
- Air transport and supply (which causes problems for China since it will interrupt the flow of supplies to them),

- Monsoons (the Burma front slows to a crawl and each side can lose one to three steps of units due to disease),
- Limits on the number of Japanese prepared assaults each turn along with limits on the amount of fuel they have for their tanks and aircraft, and...
- Garrisons for the Japanese (twenty percent of their forces must just sit and hold cities else they will rise in revolt).

As with most Command games the rules are almost errata free, clear and playable. They forgot to replace *MA* with *IA* in one place on the rules for infiltration assault.

Against the Chinese, the Japanese have overwhelming strength, but the limits of their fuel supply and on prepared assaults make it very difficult to finish



off the Chinese. The Burma front is another matter. Here the Japanese have the supplies, but not enough troops. The British outnumber them almost from the start, and it only gets worse. The British airfields are so close, you almost cannot resist going for the automatic victory. When the monsoon arrives, the Burma front slows to a crawl (terrain effects costs are doubled) and both sides start taking casualties from disease. Meanwhile, in China the Japanese are stuck trying to:

- Hold what they've taken and...
- Maintain an offensive.

They can beat the Chinese anywhere, but focusing on a single objective is mandatory. The replacement rate of the Chinese untried units is amazing, and it becomes very similar to stomping cockroaches. Often, victory seems so close for the Japanese in China, and then you notice that all your divisions are down to one step...

The Allied player has to learn when to give up space and when to die in China. Remember - there

are no zones of control, and the Japanese can't execute an infiltration assault unless they are adjacent to you. Patience is the watchword in Burma. Your Chindits will get hammered by a typical Imperial player, but eventually your chance at pay back in Burma will come. The replacement rate in China will drive the Japanese player to toying with his sword, but realize these guys will die in droves no matter what - don't be complacent and use the Flying Tigers without mercy.

Rich Erwin: This is a game I really enjoy, but I do have one bone to pick. It's to the Japanese player's advantage to stay on the defensive in Burma in this game. I wonder if the historic British reinforcement rate would have come to pass had the Japanese not initiated the Imphal Offensive. So, I suggest no British reinforcements unless the Imperial player attacks British units in Burma or until turn six. Turn two units appear on turn six, turn three units during turn seven, and turn nine units are unchanged in their appearance.

Errata for When Tigers Fight

For those of you who enjoy XTR's *When Tigers Fight* as much as I do, here is some errata available to clarify a couple of problems:

- There is no Japanese Strategic Movement Phase on turn one.
- Chinese untried units may enter (and recapture) black cities, not just red cities.

In the Pipeline

Avalon Hill

JUST OUT

- *Roads to Gettysburg* (\$35) Latest in the *Stonewall Jackson's Way* Series
- *Assassin* (\$20) Card game of espionage

Clash of Arms Games

JUST OUT

- *Kolin, Frederick's First Defeat* (\$40) *La Bataille* --> Seven Years War

IN THE PIPELINE

- *Landships!* (March/\$32) World War I tactical armour / by Perry Moore
- *Command at Sea* (Origins '94/?) *Jutland*-style naval game
- *Home Before the Leaves Fall* (Origins '94/?) 2400-counter Marne Campaign / by Dave Bolt
- *1807: Eagles Turn East* (Fall '94/?) Kevin Zucker design

Columbia Games

JUST OUT

- *MedFront* (\$55) *EastFront* system in the Mediterranean

IN THE PIPELINE

- Block-styled game covering the Pacific Theatre of World War II
- Civil War game covering the Western Theater

Decision Games

JUST OUT

- *War of the Rebellion* (\$50) Originally by West End Games

IN THE PIPELINE

Strategy & Tactics

- #165: *Caesar in Gallia* (third game in the *Trajan* series)

- #166: *Olustee/Savage Station* (*Seven Days' Battles* System)
- #167: *Austro-Prussian War* (*Franco-Prussian War* series)
- #168: *Operation Shock Troop: Golan Heights* 1973
- #169/#170: *The Atlanta Campaign* (Uses *Seven Days Battles* System)
- #171: *On to Moscow*: Swedish invasion of Russia in 1709

Excalibre Games

JUST OUT

The following Yaquinto/Battleline games are not only reprints, but complete production and rules revisions, according to the company:

- *Wings* (\$40)
- *Panzer* (\$40)
- *Ironclads* (\$39)
- *Ironclads Expansion Kit* (\$36)

The Gamers

JUST OUT

- *GD '40* (\$34) Tactical Combat Series game on the counterattack by the French on the German bridgehead at the Meuse

IN THE PIPELINE

- *The Ardennes* (March/\$30) Standard Combat Series game

GMT Games

JUST OUT

- *Down in Flames: The Rise of the Luftwaffe*
- *Julius Caesar: The Civil Wars* Four battles

IN THE PIPELINE

- *Operation Mercury* (January/\$35) Revision of *Air Assault on Crete*

Moments in History

JUST OUT

- *Triumphant Fox - Rommel's Finest Hour: The Gazala Battles, May/June 1942* (\$30) Operational North Africa

IN THE PIPELINE

- *Ring of Fire: The Fourth Battle of Kharkov, August 1943* (April/\$30)
- *Men of Iron: The Battle at South Mountain, 1862* (Origins 1994 \$30) The return of the *Great Battles of the American Civil War* series, design by Richard Berg

Perry Moore Games

JUST OUT

- *Iran-Iraq War* (??) The mobile phase (in Research Paper #2)
- *Operation Ho Chi Minh* (\$14) The fall of South Vietnam - 1975

Terran Games

IN THE PIPELINE

- *Bastogne or Bust!* (May/\$25)

Pacific Rim Publishing

JUST OUT

- *Blood and Iron* (\$40) Germany, Austria and France: 1850-1870

IN THE PIPELINE

- *Shenandoah: Valley of Fire* (February/\$16)
- *Operation Forager* (Spring/\$30) Retaking the Marianas in 1944

Counterattack

- #5: *Black Day of the German Army* Amiens Salient, 1918
- #6: *Grant Moves South*

Rampart Games

IN THE PIPELINE

- *Cromwell* (February/??) Revision of the Simulations Design Corporation game
- *Frozen Chosin* (March/??) By James Werbaneth

Rhino Game Company

IN THE PIPELINE

- *Battle for France* (\$30/??) Operational-level France '44 game
- *1940/1942 Expansion Kit for The Legend Begins* (??/\$20)
- ?? (November 1994/\$30) Operational-level St. Vith

Spearhead Games

IN THE PIPELINE

- ?? (??/??) World War II tactical game by John Prados

Thunderhaven Games

IN THE PIPELINE

- ??? (Origins '94/\$??) Ancient naval battles pack using the *Alexander at Tyre* system
- *Okinawa* (late '94/\$22) Specifics unknown as yet

3W

IN THE PIPELINE

- *Run Silent, Run Deep* (November/\$33) Designed by Mike Smith
- *Lawrence of Arabia* (November/\$35) Reprint of the Roger Nord classic
- *Napoleon at Austerlitz* (November/\$33) Reprint of The Wargamer original with improved map and rules
- *Henry V* (November/\$30) Best described as *The Black Prince II*

IN THE PIPELINE

- *Alma* (March/\$33) Tactical battle - Crimean War
- *American Aces* (March/\$28): Follow up to *Aces High*
- *Crimean Shield* (March/\$36) By Masahiro Yamazaki: Eight hundred counters
- *Ironsides* (March/\$33) Strategic English Civil War

1994 POSSIBILITIES

- *VI Against Rome* (??/\$33) To be designed by John Suttcliffe
- *Legions of Rome* (??/\$33) Similar in scope

to *Imperium Romanum II*

- *Marne/Meuse-Argonne* (??/\$33) Twin-pack of operational World War I games
- *Guadacanal* (??/\$33) by Mike Smith
- *Tahiti* (??/\$33) Tribal warfare
- *Crusades II* (??/\$33)
- *Messerschmitt/Spitfire* (??/\$35) World War II individual plane combat using the *Aces High* system
- *Panzers East!* (??/\$33) Strategic Eastern Front: Two maps
- *Spires of the Kremlin* (??/\$35) Second in the Vance Von Borries *Eastern Front* series

XTR

IN THE PIPELINE

- *Seven Seas to Victory* (May/June '94/\$??)
- *Fateful Lightning* (September/October '94/\$??)

Command

- #27: *Proud Monster* Huge operational Eastern Front game
- #28: *Like Lions They Fought* (Rorke's Drift)
- #29: *1914: Glory's End*
- #30: *Across the Potomac: The Gettysburg Campaign*
- #31: *Budapest '45*
- #32: *Bunker Hill*