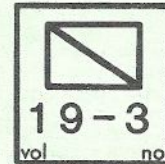


NEWSLETTER OF AHIKS



THE KOMMANDEUR

THE SOAPBOX

First, a status report for all us US types about my request for K delivery via bulk mailing. I received about 50 replies, placing the deliveries from May 18 to June 10. I mailed them on May 11. There was NO geographic consistency on the arrivals as all states seemed to get them any which time. Being a basic optimist, I will assume that the remaining 435 Ks mailed out on May 11 were in fact received somewhere between the dates above. And that's not that bad. This K will go out the same way, mailed mid-July. If anyone doesn't get there K in a reasonable time, let me know. Thanks!

One of our Canadian members, Mike Kaulbars, sent me proposal for the membership at large that deserves some comment from this desk. Mike's proposal was to institute a comprehensive review of the games available out there. What he proposed is a ballot system, with John Doe proposing to review game A. A ballot in the K would be filled out by all members who know and have played game A, rating it on PBM suitability, complexity, etc. John Doe would then correlate the ballots and incorporate them into his review. He'd write it, I'd print it, and we'd all be better for it.

Not a bad idea, but there are a couple points that should be brought out. One concerns the purpose of a review and the other concerns how a review should be written.

First, a game review's basic purpose is, frankly, a form of advertising. With so many games on the market, a player needs some way of separating the turkeys from the gems. The magazines like F&M and the Wargamer use reviews as the basis for their existence. In fact there's a heavy competition between them to review games first. Timeliness is important in reviews because if you wait too long to tell the public about a great game (or a dog) there will be other games out catching the gamers attention. Mike's idea seems to move toward using the review as a library for new AHIKS members to look over what's available to play and buy. While not a bad idea, the gamer could have gotten that info from the magazines above or contacted a particular game's AHIKS JUDGE to get a reading on an older game.

Secondly, Mike's idea about incorporating ballots into a review makes the review a committee job (and protects the writer from letters to the editor screaming about "that incompetent turkey"). Again, not a bad idea, particularly if you have a thin skin. But let's be blunt: reviews are nothing BUT

hopefully educated opinions. And no reviewer will ever please everyone. Just take a look at the continuing battle between Perry Moore and the rest of the gaming industry if you don't believe me!

So, what makes a good review? A review should discuss the games components... is the map easy to use and read, can you look at it for a long time (remember DARK DECEMBER'S orange map!!). Are the counters readable and useable? Are the charts where they should be or do you have to hunt them down? Are the rules clear? Keep in mind that clear to one person isn't clear to another...my basic rule of thumb is "can I sit down and play immediately after a rules reading" If I can start playing quickly, even with mistakes, then the rules are pretty clear. Then you take notes of questions you have and go through the rules again and try to answer them. A review should discuss the game system, combat, movement, the chrome that adds (or detracts) from the game and how they interrelate.

Now these two sections can be written by ANYONE, because you're basically describing what you see and read. The REVIEW comes when you tell about how you felt playing the game. Was it fun but slow? Was it confusing and aimless? Did it excite you? Make you think about different strategies while you played? Punish you for tactical mistakes? Was it a numbers game? In short, gang, your opinion of the game. Give the reader an overview of the system, and tell him how you reacted to it. For example, I reviewed STORM OVER ARNHEM for the late lamented Campaign. One of my statements in it was that I FELT the system didn't do the battle justice, but that as a GAME it was great. In a Wargamer review of LA REGIA MARINA, I commented about the excellent feel for the campaign that was built into the rules, but that the system made it a pure numbers game. Or for my F&M review of MAN OF WAR, I praised the system for doing what the designer set out to do - make a playable fleet maneuver game - but admitted that the combat system was too abstracted for my taste. PURE OPINION! But what each of those reviews did (and hopefully my other reviews as well) was give the reader enough information to make an intelligent choice, or whet his appetite for a closer look.

Reviewing isn't easy and it does place a burden on you. For example, misread a rule and you could downgrade a game erroneously. But that shouldn't stop you from trying. It is an important tool and, in a group like AHIKS, your input and effort will be appreciated by all the members.

Trust me...have I ever lied to you? Hmmmmmmmm?

-JDB-

NORTHEAST PASSAGE

ATLANTICON LIVES! Date: August 3-5, 1984. Place: Towson State University in Towson MD. Address for info: Atlanticon 84, PO Box 139, Middletown, NJ 07748. If you haven't received word from another source, write to me and I'll photo-copy the pre reg form. Hope to see a lot of you there!

From the look of the pre reg form for the Con, more than 70% of the events are FRP oriented. A few years back in the "starlight ballroom" in Cherry Hill, the omens were clear as I labored over a game of Russian Campaign. The guy on my right wearing a dunce cap; a game of Cosmic Encounters to my left; and strange stares from the funny little guy with the leather bag in his belt. The most memorable moment was reserved for 2 am when a high pitched scream across the room was followed by a loud, "My God, he's got a FLAMING SWORD!" The young people I have worked with in the community choose FRP over board gaming almost exclusively. It'll be interesting to see if they change their minds when they hit their 30s. I don't know what the end result will be for wargamers but it could lead to groups like AHIKS assuming an even more important role.

Mike Kaulbars in Canada has given me a good idea about how to get out a regional newsletter. Rather than have a regular schedule, he suggests the editor of same simply wait until there is sufficient material to fill a page or two before printing it and passing it along. This would preclude any short-term information (dates of game weekends, etc.) but would allow for articles of a regional nature, highlighting a turn or two of a game being played to point out strategy or PBM hints. I will therefore wait diligently by my mailbox in great anticipation. PLEASE remember that if your article is of club-wide interest, by all means send it to the K (Yeah! Ed.)

Dave McCormick sent me a note (and the cartoon! Ed) to suggest that any member that makes it to Atlanticon could opt for a side trip Sunday afternoon and Monday to Gettysburg. Those in the NE region have already received a flyer, but anyone else who's interested, give me a call or write. Sunday night at Herr Ridge Tavern - who could resist!

Wes Miller of Northboro, MA, wrote to say that he and a local gaming group are going to invade a tennis court in September for some "serious" naval miniatures action. Wes indicated that they prefer members over 30 to participate - something about mid-life crisis being a common factor among his group! Anyone interested should contact Wes at PO Box 184, Northboro, MA 01532 (617) 393-3080. Sounds like a class outfit so experience should probably be considered a prerequisite. Wes is also working on a computer version of Yaquinto's "Armor". A few playtesters may be needed. This is an Apple program and you should own the game. Contact Wes if interested.

Jeff Cornet of the Connecticut Game Club answered my call concerning team competition, although it sounds more intricate than I would prefer. They have 6 or 7 clubs that have FTF competition so if you're in the NE and within range (Boston and West Point have competing clubs), you might consider contacting Jeff to see if your club qualifies. Contact me for his address. I'm still looking for a simple PBM format for regional competition.

Finally, a "review": Panzerkrieg, by AH. Yes, the former OSG title. Sigh, this game is a real mess from the standard size counters on a reduced hex map to some of the most offensive rules I have ever seen. My favorite: "NO SOVIET UNIT MAY BEGIN OPPOSITE GUDERIAN BESIDES INFANTRY(ONLY) STACKS AT CHERNIGOV AND NOVGOROD-SEVERSKY. Priceless!



THE KOMMANDEUR VOLUME 19 NUMBER 3 JULY 84

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GENERAL INFORMATION

The KOMMANDEUR is the official newsletter of AHIKS, an international society of mature adults who play historical simulation games by mail. Society dues are \$12 per year, prorated quarterly, with a one time initiation fee of \$8. Additional information is available from the Secretary or the European Regional Director (addresses above).

Subscriptions to the KOMMANDEUR are not available to non-members nor do we accept advertising. However, we do accept "ad trades" on an issue-for-issue basis with other publications and organizations. Inquire with the Editor or the European Regional Director for details.

What's "opposite" mean? Rostov? India? Turkey? Your guess is as good as mine. There was apparently no game development or rewrite done with the game. Just a quick map reduction to fit the bookcase format and onto the shelves before Xmas Pretty cheap. What's worse is there are some nice concepts just dying for a little refinement. Good work AH. I know in some future issue of the General there will be a feature article on the game, extolling its virtues and "officially" correcting the rules. I don't like this "get it out and we'll correct things later" philosophy. (You're not alone, Ed.)

Kinderfest 84 is on for October 19-20. BE THERE!

-Kevin Murray-

THE BARRAGE

We have two new members this time: Christopher Jimenez of Hinesville, GA, a clerk; and Ed Menzel of Roswell, GA, an engineer. Ed comes to AHKS with "some" prior PBM experience - being involved in over 30 PBM games previously. Chris was referred to us by AHKSer Scott Moseley - WAY TO GO, SCOTT!

Your RD is, at present, in the throes of moving to Carlisle, PA, to spend a year teaching military history at the Army War College there. It should be an interesting year. (Slight understatement - anyone who has ever visited and drooled over the fantastic library there will know what I mean. Ed) I may even get a chance to see how the pros do some of their gaming. My Carlisle address is listed in the officers column. While I'm geographically out of my region, I will finish out my year as RD and step down in January - unless someone wants to step forward and take over the duties immediately. HINT, HINT!

This move effectively wipes out Origins this year for me (couple others in the same boat, like me! Ed), but I hope to make it to Atlanticon 84 in August. Hope to see some of you there!

-Graham Cosmas-

THE WESTERN FRONT

(I requested Harry to fill us in ASAP on Origins - here is his FIRST HAND account! Ed.)

Origins 84 was a Big Success with only one major Fubar - the event tickets were late arriving causing the opening to be delayed by two hours. Tournaments were on schedule and where they were supposed to be without a lot of last minute changes and confusion. Everyone was glad to see TSR there.

Avalon Hill dropped a sugar coated bombshell - they announced the new Squad Leader Rule Book would be out next year, better and cleaner than ever, BUT you'd have to pitch ALL your counters and keep the boards. Reaction after people started thinking about it was the closest thing to a lynch mob I've seen in a long time. It will be a subscription book, which I'm sure won't be cheap and very much like miniatures. Someone compared the AH marketing strategy to the "Barbi & Ken" system and I'm certain that AH would love to sell formal attire to your 9-2 tank commander who knocks out 5 T-34s single handedly - so he could go meet Adolph personally.

Dealers were very happy as they had an air conditioned room and lots of traffic. (Another source stated that 6 new historical games were introduced as compared to 42 last year!! Ed.) Board games and miniatures were in a separate hotel from fantasy RPG with the mix of adults/kids at 80/20 - it was the reverse at the RPG hotel (which had six calls to the fire department during the convention of which one was a fire. About 50 applications to

AHKS were taken so we should see an increase in the membership from all this.

Having worked with Origins this year, I believe it should be professionally done on an ongoing basis by a one or two man staff along with the sponsors and local help. The amount of preplanning, coordinating, and scheduling is tremendous along with a lot of hard work. At one point Don Eisan was so tired we almost got him to Gamemaster a D&D module! (GASP! Ed.)

-Harry Welch-

REVIEWS

On the average, I read about a book a week. Most of it is escape reading, but I also have a respectable military history library.

Of the novels I have read based on military action, one of the best is DANDO ON DELHI RIDGE by William Clive. The subject is the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857; the protagonist is Joseph Dando, a private in the Royal Rifle Corps. Clive obviously did a lot of research into the times as the book is filled with bits of information that ring true, be it describing wives shipping out with their husbands or the equipment the men carried. Clive explains the the entire rebellion as well as the action that Dando experiences. The Bad news is the book is out of print, but local libraries should have it. Another book by Clive, DANDO AND THE SUMMER PALACE, is good but not on par with the first. This one covers the Third China war in 1860.

There is another historical series about the British Army. This one is set during Wellington's campaigns in Spain and involve a Lieutenant named Sharpe. This officer is patterned after Hornblower but of a much smaller calibre. He is poor, risen from the ranks, struggles continually against rich, well placed fellow officers, has a massive underofficer, and the ear of the mighty. Unlike Hornblower, he likes the ladies and they like him. The author, Cornwell, puts the first novel, SHARPE'S EAGLE, into historical perspective fairly well, but the second, SHARPE'S GOLD, is based more on a historical unknown. The next two books, SHARPES COMPANY and SHARPE'S SWORD, move back toward the historicity of the first. The series will probably continue until Waterloo.

Another book that will be hard to find is Guy Sajer's THE FORGOTTEN SOLDIER. This is a non fiction account of a Frenchman who joined the Wehrmacht and eventually the GROSS DEUTSCHLAND and spent WWII on the Russian Front. It is well written and revealing.

On a more modern note is WAR IN THE FALKLANDS - THE FULL STORY by the London Times Insight team. Frankly, there has to be a better book. (there is. Try THE BATTLE FOR THE FALKLANDS by Hastings and Jenkins. Ed.) Too many pages are spent on historical perspective and behind the scenes conferences and too few on the action and the analysis os same.

Finally, in THE FACE OF COMBAT by John Keegan, there are two excellent analyses, Agincourt and Waterloo. The former is particularly interesting because Keegan seems to have cleared the mythical mist away from the battle. Using logic and a knowledge of the weapons, he describes what must have occurred and what it must have been like to be there. I was very impressed with his writing. Waterloo was okay and the Somme not particularly memorable, but the piece on Agincourt makes the book worth the look.

-Omar Dewitt-

IDEAS

PLAY-BY-MODEM

I have been reading the "gaming and computers" articles in the K. What I would like to propose is that we as a group take the step of putting into action a PBM (Play By Modem) multi-player computer monitored game. With many people involved we can split the programming task into manageable pieces AND utilize special talents effectively. I envision working across many different micros, so the make of machine will not matter.

As a starting point for thought, how about a naval game like FLATTOP, where limited intelligence would improve the game. I'm willing to serve as a clearing house for the discussion of this. If you decide to write, please indicate hardware, your own capabilities (languages, telecommunications, systems design, project management, documentation, play test, etc), and what you'd like to contribute. If this first game is done right and well, the programming modules and techniques should transfer easily to other games. In addition we'll have a pool of people to draw upon.

Please post all correspondence to: Gregory Leisner, 6131 W Leon Terrace, Milwaukee, WI 53218

-Gregory Leisner-

FROM THE MATCH COORDINATOR

Welcome to all recently joined new members. Good to have you aboard. Good luck and good gaming!

I would like to take this opportunity to extend congratulations to our new Editor J. Bartt for the expeditiousness of the K since his arrival. (Ah, shucks...Ed). Keep up the good work.

Every once in awhile there are those who fail to get the message and by doing so are frustrated due to the delays in receiving requested information. I have presented in this column items which will assist our membership and avoid those problems. I urge each to take some time to read this column for basic helpful hints.

A. There have been a few requests from members to be issued ICRKs and OoBs for themselves and NON MEMBERS. This can't be done. AHIKS services are for members in good standing, who have been accepted within the Society after compliance with our by-laws. Please don't request such matches.

B. Every new member will receive from the secretary a NEW MEMBER GUIDE. This will explain many of the questions that might arise.

C. An initial match will be assigned upon receipt of one's initial DATA SHEET. Every effort will be made to match one in the order of preference, but there may be times when the requested match is not available. One requested match will be assigned in order that the new member begin his/her PBM experience without delay.

D. All members are assigned an initial rating of 1200 and each member is rated on a match completion. The AHIKS rating system has nothing to do with the Avalon Hill AREA rating system and AHIKS has NO obligation to report any results to AH - that is the member's responsibility. Members can request an AREA rated match.

E. Although each member is rated within the AHIKS system, each person has the right NOT to have his rating published in the K. A request for NON publication should be sent to me.

F. Each AHIKS member is assigned a CODE NUMBER for administrative purposes (similar names, etc...) When corresponding with me, PLEASE use your number. The code number also acts as information for the members in the OPEN MATCH REQUEST to let them know that their requests have been received.

G. The SET REQUEST FORM is a vital link between the MC and the members. Please fill out the form completely to avoid confusion.

H. Whenever a match is completed (two games or less), the ICRK MUST be returned to the MC. Fill out the top of the form completely and return it YOURSELF to the MC.

I. Upon receipt of a match assignment, you should contact your opponent and agree on the rules of play, sides, and any other information necessary to make the match go smoothly (vital if the game's PBM system is being felt out as you go. Ed). Each player should make certain they are playing with the same rules and errata, local changes and clarifications, and finally, who/what will be the authority for disagreements.

J. If you have an opponent all ready and need only OoB and ICRK, then write to me requesting them. Please include your opponent's name, address and code number to insure fast action.

K. It is the responsibility of the members to inform the MC of any changes, cancellations, or modifications to match requests. All requests NOT filled after one year are returned, unless cancelled previously.

L. Any member who desires to GameMaster a game can submit his name to the MC stating the game and how many members he is willing to handle for the game.

M. There is a great need for members to come forward and request to play new members. Please remember when you were initially joined in order to find good, reliable PBM opponents. Let's help our new members get involved the right way!

N. Now, a sore point: complaints. Any member who has a complaint for any reason should contact his regional director. Your RD will take the necessary action to satisfy your complaint and get back to you as soon as possible. NOTE: The MC is not the one to contact!!

O. A most important point: response. If for any reason your arte going to be late with a move, or something's come up forcing a temporary halt to your gaming - LET YOUR OPPONENT(S) KNOW! It will remove the frustration of waiting. Most members have been in similar situations themselves and will understand.

P. If and when you change your address, let me know as soon as possible.

OPEN MATCH REQUESTS

1776 (610); 1809 (1003); 1941 (825); Afrika Korp (326); Across Suez (748); African Campaign (927); Assault on Leningrad (233); Anzio (749); Battle for the Ardennes (292); Battle of Britain (988); Battle over Britain (544); Blitzkrieg (902); Battle of Moscow (216); Bulge One Page (749); Bulge '81 (1014); Caesar at Alesia (817); Close Assault (449); Cross of Iron (9321); D-Day (794); Decision at Kasserine (236); Dresden (804); Empire of the Middle Ages (GM 786); Federation Space (804); Fifth Corps (804); Flattop (805); Flying Circus (819); Fortress Europa (262); Gazala, 1942 (449); Gettysburg 77 (adv, 997); Global War (804); Invasion America (276); Invasion of France (9195); Isandhlwana (748); Kriegspiel (863); Luftwaffe (1009); Lam Son (804); Modern Battles Quad I & II (748); NATO (1003); Norway-1940 (9195); Napoleon at Waterloo (748); Napoleon's Last Battles (470); Napoleon at War (470); Never Call Retreat (236); Operation Crusader (9195); Panzer Leader (969); Pearl Harbor (9195); Port Stanley (236); Prestag (773); Red Sun Rising (804); Rifle & Saber (511); Singapore (236); South Africa (804); Streets of Grap (804); The Russian Campaign (1014); Sturm Nach Osten (233); Their Finest Hour (9195); Winter War (804); WW-III (804); White Death (9195); WS&IM (377)

NEXT K DEADLINE:
25 August 84



FOR SALE: Like new, only the counters have been punched - never played! France-40, Alexander, Chancellorsville, each \$10. Fortress Europa, \$12. The Ardennes Offensive, \$6, and 1942, \$4. Contact: Ron Gherman, 467 Linda Mel Drive, Marion, OH 43302

FOR SALE: A large selection of Napoleonic, Civil War, and some WWII games. A sample is a nearly complete collection of Marshall Enterprises, Austerlitz, Eylau, Talavera, Wagram. Most maps and accessories are laminated. Send SASE to Don Owens, 1007 W. Columbia #1, Farmington, MO 63640.

WANTED: Global War by SPI, complete and in good condition. All letters answered. Contact: Dick Boyes, 12824 NE 185th Ct, Bothell, WA 98011

FOR SALE: War in Europe for \$50. Includes shipping and insurance. Contact: Bill Lindow, 105 West Rosewood, Rose Hill, KS 67133

FOR SALE: Many war games. For list send SASE to: Bill Retoff, RR2 Box 6, Minonk, IL 61760

APPLE OWNERS UNITE: We have started an informal newsletter for Apple Owners: The Apple Corps. If you are interested in sharing ideas, reading, and writing game reviews, and seeing who else has the amazing Apple, write Omar Dewitt (address on page 2)

Jim Frediani, RD Pacific, is looking for a replacement sometime in the near future. Anyone interested contact him at the address on page 2.

SET REQUEST FORM

NAME _____ MEMBER CODE _____ TELEPHONE () _____ DATE _____

Use the letter codes below: After each game requested, insert (in parentheses) all letter codes that apply, in any order

- N: will play New Member (list the number of months you will hold this open before being matched with an old member)
- M: Multi-Player game request (# Of players)
- G: willing to Game-Master or monitor a game
- E: will play European opponent if available
- A: prefer AREA rated opponent
- F: prefer "FAST" game (four day replies) if available

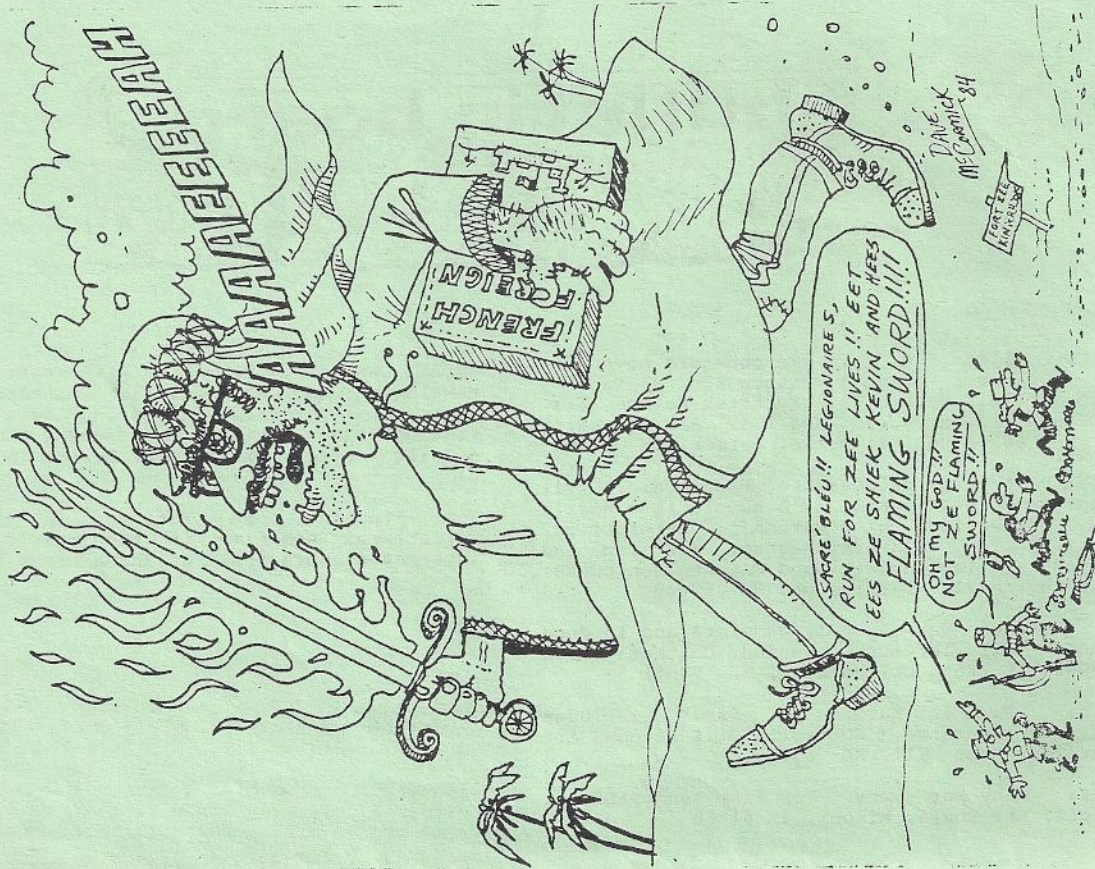
Are you AREA rated? () YES () NO

To request matches: Insert the game title(s) on the following lines, including all letter codes that apply. If you place more than one game on a line, you will be matched with the first opponent available for one and the other entries will be ignored. List the games in order of preference.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

() My address has changed from the mailing label on the back (write the new address near the label)

A SALUTE TO:
KEVIN MURRAY



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