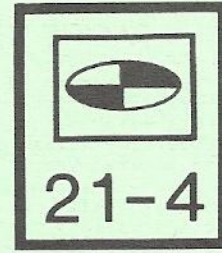


K

NEWSLETTER OF AHIKS



THE KOMMANDEUR

OPPORTUNITY FIRE

Well, gentlemen, when I first wrote this column I promised you that I would always have something to say. At this point, I have what I consider something very important to say.

I'm not sure many of you out there realize just who and what AHIKS represents to the rest of the hobby. We are about 600 organized devotees in a hobby that has become (nationally) very DISORGANIZED in recent years. This is not to infer that the average consumer in the gaming hobby was ever *effectively* organized on any large scale, but I am trying to make the point that there WAS some organization in the past.

I have only (did I say ONLY?) been actively gaming since 1976. I was amazed to learn that after being actively engaged for 10 years that I was blissfully unaware that national championships with prizes totaling literally thousands of dollars given out at conventions held at national monuments rented out for that purpose had been taking place on a regular basis the early history of the hobby. Did you?

I didn't know that AHIKS was the OLDEST wargaming organization around. Next March we'll be legal (that is, 21 years old). We beat the SECOND oldest organization (the IGA) out of the title by a scant three months. Had you ever even heard of the IGA? I hadn't.

I don't know about you, but I am pretty proud of this hobby. I have made some good friends. I have watched it grow. I have seen it open its doors from a narrow corridor of a limited number of games on predictable subjects to a reverse pendulum swing where there are virtually SO many games out on the market that you almost have to have read a review before you'll trust yourself to buy it. How about you?

By talking to folks who have been around longer in this hobby than I have, and who were more involved, I am slowly beginning to come to the realization that there are a ZILLION things about this hobby that I don't know. I'm also finding that the more people I talk to (who are just as "involved" as I am), the more people who are in the same boat. The only common denominator that I have found with all of you and me is that we feel we are sort of left out in the cold. We all feel like we should have a little more "control" (actually, control is the wrong word, but I can't put my finger on exactly what I want to say) over our gaming destiny. I would like to get some hard facts so that I feel like I would be at least semi-qualified to DO something. *Anything!* I'd like to be better informed. Would you?

Does it make you mad that companies deliberately publish games, knowing they are still unfinished, and then expect you to PAY for the tools to FIX it? Those that even bother to PUBLISH second editions? Wouldn't it be nice if you could do something to make it better?

We all know that we buy games and then never play them. Have you ever wondered if there are actually a few games out there that have NEVER been played? I do.

Have you begun to wonder what this is all leading up to? I thought you'd never ask!

Among the many treasures found in this monster package is a survey. It asks you some standard questions about yourself and then asks you to list EVERY GAME YOU OWN and answer a few questions about each one. Gentlemen, I am going to BEG you to fill this out in the next few days and forward it to our Match & services officer in the stamped envelope provided. No names please. If you have any doubts, please xerox the back side so you will have enough room to list ALL of your games. The boxed games, the ziplock games the magazine games... ALL your wargames! The only thing we ask you to leave out is your role-playing games.

If you think you can interest any of your non-member friends to fill one of these out, don't hesitate to give him a xerox copy. We would like to get the BIGGEST input survey ever done in the hobby to date. The more responses we get, the more meaningful the numbers will be. Aside from just providing us with the single most valuable information resource base in the hobby, it will also provide us a foundation to build on one with another. Wouldn't it be funny if we all considered COBRA to be the best PBM game ever but none of felt that the others might like it enough to play it?

I think AHIKS can do wonderful things for us. This survey will be the beginning of something important in our gaming lives. Get involved. One thing that has always ticked me off is the feeling that I was a part of something that I would like to make better. I always found that I kept coming back to the central question, "What can I, as one guy, DO?" Friends, you have in your hands a survey. It is something that ONLY one guy can do! But it takes ALL of the 'one guys' to get it done right. That's you and me individually. By ourselves we can't get much done. Let's help each other out OK?

SEND IT IN!

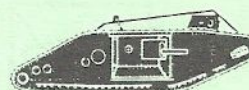
Chester

THE SECRETARY

News Notes: I will be running the "Victory in the Pacific" tournament at ATLANTICON '86'. I will also be running a demo game of "World in Flames".

Available: Firebrands, the Newsletter of the "World in Flames" League. Send US \$20. for membership, including subscription to issues 0-32. Special offer: while supplies last: membership includes free copy of 2nd Edition rules and charts (if requested). Memberships outside US Postal Rate Zone are \$30. and do not qualify for special offer. Single copies are US \$0.60 each within US Rate Zone, US \$1.00 outside; back issues 0-9 are available.

Wanted: playable copies of: Dark December; (Nova) Axis & Allies. Quote price and condition by postcard or letter to: Bill Salvatore, 2841 Summerfield Road, Falls Church, Va. 22042.



PACIFIC THEATER

We have one new member to add to our theater, Steve Harris, an Air Force Technical Sergeant and Radio Repairman. Steve is stationed in Okinawa and he has been in the service almost 14 years. He has been wargaming for several years and doing PBM for about three years. Steve's period of interest is the Civil War and the big WWII. Steve hopes to make new contacts and add variety to his wargaming experience by joining AHIKS.

I had the opportunity to meet our new VP Mark Palmer and our editor/publisher Chester Hendrix within the last week. Mark is trying to define his duties as VP, one of which is to streamline complaint processing. Since this is one of my hot buttons I was able to get in my two cents on this one. We also talked about his new column "Home Front." He would like some feedback on how you all feel about it. Personally I think it is an interesting idea and it should be given a chance to see how it develops. [This especially includes the wives and/or husbands of gamers! I would really like to print some letters from family members, and this was part of the reason THE HOME FRONT was instituted. A goodly percentage of us are married and have kids and would like some forum to share this wonderful hobby with them, as well as provide them an outlet in which they could share their feelings with US.ed]

Chester showed up at a gaming convention being put on by a group called Games Caucus, which is a gaming club from San Francisco. The convention was held over the Memorial Day weekend. The turnout was decent but not overwhelming (I could find a parking space). [This convention was also amazing in that the EMPHASIS was NOT on fantasy! These folks are breaking their backs trying to give EVERYBODY (the wargamers, the miniaturists and the fantasists) EQUAL treatment. If you live on the west coast, and you would like to see conventions with a little more balance, you REALLY need to support this one! Contact Chuck Leath for more info. ed] The activities included seminars, wargames, fantasy, miniatures, and miniature painting contests. Chester is an enthusiastic fellow with alot of good ideas, and I think he deserves some praise for the excellent job he is doing with the K.[blush]

I entered a Fortress Europa (FE) tournament, which was sponsored by the International Gamers Association (IGA), and ran into a few other AHIKSers (Randy Heller, David Hull, and Henry Lowood). Randy and Henry also belong to IGA. The proctor of the tournament was Russel Powell, the president of IGA. By the way, IGA is primarily an ftf wargaming club, with a small pbm section. About the tournament, there were three rounds totaling eight games, with Randy Heller of AHIKS/IGA emerging the champion. We played the Invasion Scenario of FE, and out of eight games the Germans won 6-2. Randy won the only two Allied victories. We can conclude from this that Randy knows something about FE and he is the man to beat.

I also attended a seminar given by the aforementioned Russell Powell of IGA. He gave an interesting presentation on the history of board wargaming starting from 1958. He talked about the type of clubs that existed in the early days, and it seems there were more wargaming clubs and serious club competitions in those days. It was interesting to learn that many of the early club members started some of the games companies of today (e.g. Gary Gygax of TSR). Russell made a lot of interesting points and in some future issues of the Kommandeur I will try to expound on them. In summary Russell feels that the wargamers of today do not have as much control over the hobby as they used to. He feels that the manufacturers have more control over the hobby than the hobbyists. From my limited perspective of such weighty matters I cannot dispute or support his view. If any of you have some opinions on this matter drop me a line and I will try to summarize viewpoints.

CHUCK LEATH



CENTRAL OFFICES

PRESIDENT

John D. Burt
1020 Lake #3
Idaho Falls, ID 83402
(208) 529-9143

VICE-PRESIDENT

Mark A. Palmer
2019 68th Ave. NE
Tacoma, WA 98422
(206) 952-2654

TREASURER

Sid Jolly
731 G Street #E8
Chula Vista, CA 92010
(619) 425-1820

SECRETARY

Bill Salvatore
2841 Summerfield Rd.
Falls Church, VA 22042
(703) 532-6696

MATCH SERVICE OFFICER

Don Eisan
12115 Snow White Dr.
Dallas, TX 75234
(214) 620-1030

EDITOR

Chester E. Hendrix
1054 Lewis Oak Rd.
Gridley, CA 95948
(916) 846-2703

JUDGE

Bill Lindow
12038 Horn Silver Mtn Rd.
Littleton, CO 80127

MATCH COORDINATOR

Les Deck
RR#2 Worcester Rd.
Stowe, VT 05672
(802) 253-9535

EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVE

Allan White
77 Brackley Rd.
Hazlemere, High Wycombe
Bucks, ENGLAND HP15 7EY

EUROPEAN EDITOR

Dave Steed
6 Blacksmith Common
Chalton, Beds
ENGLAND, LU4 9UN

REGIONAL DIRECTORS

NORTHEAST

Tom Hastings
P.O. Box 1706
New Rochelle, NY 10802
(718) 956-1613

WEST

Harry Welch
606 Eastcliff Dr.
Euless, TX 76040
(817) 267-9453

NORTH CENTRAL

Kevin McCarthy
3866 Wallingford
South Euclid, OH 44121

PACIFIC

Charles Leath
574 N. Bayview
Sunnyvale, CA 94086
(408) 733-5484

SOUTHEAST

Arthur G. Dempsey
2319 Riverdale Dr.
New Pt Richey, FL 33552

CANADA

Mike Kaulbars
Dept of Biology
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
CANADA, K1S 5B6

EUROPEAN RD

Ian Daglish
7 The Spinney
Cheadle, Cheshire
ENGLAND, SK8 1JA

SERVICES AVAILABLE

MULTIPLAYER COORDINATOR

Roy Henricks
128 Deerfield Dr.
Pittsburgh, PA 15235

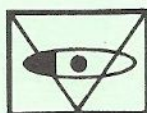
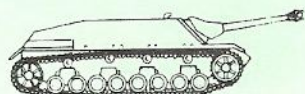
ARCHIVIST

Bill Perry
22 Devonshire Rd.
Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054
(609) 235-2486

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.

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.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Though I am a new member to AHIKS, I have to pass along to all of you that are more experienced at PBHing wargames (simulations if you prefer). You are probably like me and don't have sufficient place to leave your pending games on a table. My solution to that is to use 'Poster Gum'. 'Poster Gum' is a kind of silly putty used to pin notes on walls so as not to damage the solid wall. This will save you lots of space on your table for other more important games or things. The only drawback is that it leaves an oily residue on counters and maps.

Another hint I have to pass on is to plastify your maps. I use the adhesive plastic of the kind that is used for topographical maps. This will protect your maps from most disasters that can occur, like coffee spills.

So far all the players and officers have proven very cooperative in helping understand how AHIKS works. A big thanks to all and in particular to Mike Kaulbars.

Willy #1124

APPROACH THE BENCH

Now hear this! Now hear this! When you send me, the Judge, a question, DO NOT send a SASE. Your DUES are paying for the postage and envelope that is used to return the answer to you. (Hmmm, Maybe that is why we have over \$4,600. in our account.) Also, please include the EDITION of the rules you are using, any agreed upon DEVIATIONS to the game's rules or to the "normal" PBM process, and the game PUBLISHER. The rules edition and the publisher are pretty important as a game may be released by several different companies during its lifetime (example: AIR FORCE, COBRA, CONQUISTADOR). This information will assist me and my game Specialists in answering your questions. Also, make your diagrams legible because I send the specialist a copy, just in case it gets lost in the mail (take a hint from a printer, DO NOT use blue ink or pencil. Use black ink or black felt pen, all copiers will see it. Most copiers are DESIGNED to be "blue blind" and pencil comes out in everything from invisible to various shades of gray. ed]

Do not expect an answer to your questions in less than two weeks, with an average of four weeks. Why?? The judge and the specialists are not paid by AHIKS. This requires us to seek gainful employment elsewhere, which interferes with our AHIKS duties. Those of us with families have added demands upon our time: either spend time with the families or spend it in divorce court.

Then, there is the postal service: Assume it takes 3 days for your question to reach me. The majority of time, I will have to forward your questions to the game's Specialist, which takes 4 more days (1 day to get it into the mail and 3 days for delivery). It takes another 4 days for the Specialist's response to reach me, assuming he has the time to answer all the questions the same day. Then, another 4 days before you receive the answer. This gives a minimum of 15 days. Overtime, vacations, business trips, and family affairs all contribute to additional delays. Then, you can add one-time only (hopefully) problems, like having to wait until 30 April to get updated member address lists so I can find out the addresses of my specialists.

Which brings up another point. (The following paragraph is a personal opinion and does not necessarily represent the official AHIKS view.) There is no excuse for this "amnesty" towards our delinquent members. They are ADULTS!!! They were warned in last years last two K's that it was getting close to the time to pay their dues. If we are going to treat our members as children, then I recommend that we do away with the age limit of 21!! If they do not have their dues in by 15 Jan. (for US members) and 30 Jan. (for overseas members) then they should be assumed to have dropped their membership in AHIKS. If they want to rejoin, then they will have to pay the initiation fee

again. If they do not want to rejoin, then their matches will be cancelled and their opponents notified. If we do not get tough, where will it stop? Will the cutoff date progress each year until eventually the irresponsible members get a free years membership while the responsible members don't? Aarrghhhh!!!

This paragraph is to the current and future opponents of the Society's officers, but especially to mine. If there is a dispute, do not expect me or my fellow officers to receive preferential treatment and always win the disagreements. If I, or a game Specialist, is involved in a dispute, another member who is familiar with the game or the game publisher will be asked to make the ruling. The primary principle of AHIKS is fairness, and I have NO intention or desire of changing that. Do not feel intimidated because you are playing me, another officer, or a Specialist: everyone is equal. Besides, probably 98% of all rule interpretations and questions will be resolved by the Specialist, not by me. If there is a conflict of interest, someone else will make the decisions.

There is some confusion about using the ICRKs. This is primarily due to members feeling that their opponents gain an advantage by knowing the next ICRK to be chosen. I will admit that section 5, "Instructions For the Use of the ICRK", in the old MEMBERS GUIDE is not exactly crystal clear in a couple of spots. Therefore, I will attempt to clarify this issue.

1) You may start your turn "With ANY letter (column). If you ended your previous turn with F-5, you are NOT obligated to start your next turn with F-6. You could start with column X or H. This may result in two or more partially used columns at the end of your turn.

2) Regardless of which column you start with, you must start with "the FIRST unused number (row)" in that column.

3) Once you start a column, you must "continue SEQUENTIALLY down the column. This applies to the current mailing, only. See 1) above.

4) If a column is exhausted before the turn is completed, select any column. "Columns may be selected randomly (i.e. not [in] alphabetical order)." However, you must start with the *first* unused row in this next column.

5) "Do not jump back and forth between columns in the same turn." The only time you can use another column during this mailing is when the current column is exhausted.

6) The defender returns the ICRK column(s) used by his opponent; partially -used columns are sent to the opponent" (unless otherwise specified).

7) because an opponent might derive some benefit by anticipating results from a single partially -used column, a player may use three or four columns simultaneously." This means that there may be two or more partially -used columns remaining from the previous turns.

EXAMPLE: Turn 1: H-1 thru H-5 are used
Turn 2: X-1 thru X-0 and B-1 are used
B-1 Turn 3: K-1 thru K-3 are used
Turn 4: D-1 thru D-0 and B-2 are used

After four turns, three columns (B, H, and K) are in use "simultaneously".

8) If a player selects ICRKs that have already been used (eg: select D-3 and D-1 thru D-4 have already been used), do not change the allocation of the valid ICRKs to the battles and required die rolls. Use the correction procedures to select the ICRKs to replace the invalid ones. Continuing the example, D-3 thru D-9 are selected. Since D-3 and D-4 have already been used, D-0 replaces D-3 and the first unused row in the column alphabetically colsest to column A replaces D-4 (NOTE: these clarifications have been included in the MEMBER GUIDE. They are also highlighted here to be sure you notice them. ed]

THE TRUE NORTH

With reasonable frequency we all find ourselves sitting in front of an unfamiliar map with a pile of strange counters. Either it is a recent purchase, something a friend talked you into, or a back issue of S&T that never got played. Regardless, you are still somewhat baffled. The rules are easy enough (perhaps), and experience in other games allows you to make decisions that are not too incredibly stupid, but it would be nice to be able to play well, if not actually win. Instead you blunder on making some appalling mistakes; building forts where they will never be needed, throwing away divisions on impregnable positions, sending out flanking forces on impossibly long marches to points of dubious value, and generally mimicing historical military incompetence. [I've been doing this way for YEARS, and now you tell me I wasn't supposed to?] Getting any real sense of what one is doing requires a few playings, or an article in the K.

I believe there is a real market for articles on basic, simple tactics for about 90% of the games out there. I am not talking about in depth analysis or perfect plans; just the simple tricks that one learns in half a dozen playings, but that can be a real aid to someone new to the game. These sorts of articles are of particular use with monster games, where playing six times represents a significant portion of your life expectancy.

But (you object) I haven't the time to do a 20 page article on FIRE IN THE EAST. True enough, but who asked for 20 pages? Why not limit the scope and deal with an isolated aspect? Cover one thing in detail, or overall strategy in broad terms. I would be delighted to see articles with titles like 'using the Me109 in AIRFORCE' or 'The CSA Left at MURFREESBORO'. Other topics might be mechanics of play, the CRT, where to send reserves, or where to build fortifications. Bear in mind that what you say does not have to be brilliant, just an aid to the novice. A timely article last year might have saved New Orleans from the Union invasion DOWN the Mississippi in 1861. Very embarrassing that was, now I fortify Vicksburg early. So how about saving me from making a fool of myself on yet another field of battle (what the &3/4##@# do I do with these archers???)?

Other news! I have U.S. stamps for anyone who needs them. Please send one Canadian 34 cent stamp for each U.S. 22 cent stamp. Would all Canadian members please act as 'roving boy reporters' (Jimmy Olsen or Rick Redfern) at any Cons or mini Cons that you attend. Your reports will help others decide if they wish to attend these Cons in the future.

To wrap up this column I want you to give a warm welcome to Wayne Wittal of Port Alberni, BC. Wayne's statistics are as follows; owns and runs 2 small hotels, 2 small children, and about 100 games. Wayne is willing to play just about anything and writes express post, so here is someone for those of you who like short turn around time. Also joining us is Gerry Schwartz of Fredrickton, NB. Gerry is a data manager (ie computers) with over 200 games and an entire wall magnetized. Both Wayne and Gerry are interested in multi-player GMed games, so game masters hunting for players take notice! That's all for now folks...

MIKE KAULBARS

Historical Commentary Republic of Viet-Nam - Summer of 1965

In the Summer of 1965, Nguyen Van Thieu had maneuvered himself into power after a lengthy and ugly internal political struggle. He had inherited a mess. The internal power war had eroded what control the government had and the National Liberation Front, sensing weakness, maneuvered for position within the country. Thieu knew he could not solidify his own position AND wage a war against the encroaching Viet Cong at the same time. So he called for help.

And help came hard and fast, wearing red, white and blue.

President Lyndon Johnson, a strong proponent of the domino theory and of the strategic importance of Viet Nam, decided to go against some of his advisor's wishes. He decided to get the fighting over with as soon as possible and so committed massive US support for the RVN government: 1st. Air Cav Division was committed to II Corps to bolster the ARVN 3rd and 5th Divisions; 101st Airmobile division and the 11th Armored Cavalry Brigade landed in IV Corps to help the 7th and 9th ARVN Divisions; the 9th Marines landed in Chu Lai to join the 3rd and 4th Marines already in I Corps and the 198th Brigade of the 23rd Division landed in Saigon with massive artillery support to take charge of III Corps. Opposing this tremendous invasion was an estimated 30+ organized VC battalions and one NVA division hovering in Laos.

It didn't take long for the US to swing into action. In an unconventional move, the Commander of III Corps bundled up his artillery and raced them from city to city in the Corps area, setting up only long enough to devastate the occupied towns of Tay Ninh, An Loc, and Phuoc Binh, scattering 3 VC battalions and what Intelligence estimated to be a VC Regional HQ in the process. However, the Cmdr. came under immediate fire for his activity: the ARVN were angry over the devastation of their cities, the US High Command complained about the cost of the ammunition used. It was the first taste of what would soon become terribly apparent: This war was to be fought with ever changing rules.

Hard on the heels of this disaster, The VC made one of their own. Three battalions assaulted the lightly held city of Kontum with little or no fire support and were slaughtered by the ARVN battalion dug in there, supported by US air power and regional forces. It was only later that the victorious ARVN commander was told he wasn't supposed to be able to hold that well.

In most other operations, the VC declined battle, choosing to disperse into the country to fight again later. The lone exception occurred in IV Corps where the 2nd Brigade of the 101st ran into VC battalions who fought tooth and nail before being eliminated, caught between the pursuing 101st and the dugin 198/23rd and 18th ARVN divisions. The cost to the US for Operation North Fork was high in terms of both men and material, but the cost was deemed worth it as two VC battalions were destroyed. By mid-summer, fully a third of the active VC units had been suppressed.

But in the North, the NLF Supreme command noted with glee the huge commitment of the US troops and began making plans to escalate the war with a massive committent of their own.

TO BE CONTINUED...

JDB

INTERIOR LINES

In the last issue of the 'K' Bill Lindow asked for some volunteers as game specialists. I knew that we had such people but I'm not sure what their function is or what their qualifications are. I hope we are not allowing a self proclaimed specialist to make rule adjustments on our games.

The idea of an Errata Bank sounds very good to me. Once this is established it will become an important asset to AHKS.

With summer approaching it seems like a good idea to remind everyone to notify their opponents if your moves will be delayed. All it takes is a post card and a few minutes of your time.

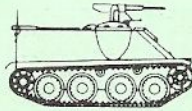
KEVIN MCCARTHY

BULLETIN BOARD

OPONENT WANTED: I have an extra copy of 'Battle For Cassino' by SPI and am looking for an opponent. The copy is not for sale, I will lend it for the duration of the game. Contact William Durocher, C.P. 313, East Broughton Stn, Quebec, Canada, G0N 1H0

RATINGS

PREFIX DESIGNATIONS
 FIRST LETTER = NUMBER OF GAMES PLAYED
 SECOND LETTER = NUMBER OF DIFFERENT OPPONENTS
 THIRD LETTER = NUMBER OF DIFFERENT GAME TITLES



	COL-1	COL-2	COL-3
A	1-2	1	1
B	3-4	2	2
C	5-6	3	3
D	7-10	4	4
E	11-14	5-6	5
F	15-18	7-8	6
G	19-24	9-10	7-8
H	25-30	11-13	9-10
I	31-36	14-16	11-12
J	37-44	17-19	13-14
K	45-52	20-23	15-17
L	53-60	24-27	18-20
M	61-70	28-31	21-23
N	71-80	32-36	24-26
ETC			

RATING POOL BY RATING 06/10/86

NAME	CUR.
1. R. WINDSOR	2050JKH
2. D. BURDICK	2015DDD
3. D. EISAN	1995MKK
4. R. KINSELLA	1990FFE
5. K. MCCARTHY	1905FFD
6. J. CREEGER	1795FFC
7. P. LANDRY	1760HGF
8. R. PIPPUS	1755DDD
9. T. ELLER	1750EFA
10. J. MALASKA	1730FFD
11. T. BUTCHER	1730EFD
12. T. BECKER	1690EEC
13. D. AYERS	1665MLI
14. P. MARTIN	1665HFF
15. L. DECK SR	1660HJJ
16. S. PELUSO	1650QNK
17. R. TELEUCKY	1650NLL
18. J. GRANT	1635FFH
19. P. TRUESDELL	1635EEF
20. J. DYAS	1630EFE
21. J. POPOLIS	1625EFE
22. F. KRAUS	1600HHE
23. K. MILLS	1595KKG
24. L. ROHLFING	1570FFF
25. A. BOWIE	1570DDD
26. M. YARWOOD	1565HHH
27. C. LEONARD	1555JIF
28. R. SHURDUT	1555DEE
29. T. THORNSEN	1550GGH
30. D. HULL	1530DEC
31. W. KLITZKE	1520HHI
32. J. YAZVAC	1520FFD
33. R. GREENWELL	1515FFD
34. B. STRETCHER	1495FFH
35. B. MASTON	1490GHE
36. W. WALDAU	1475EFE
37. J. RAHICK	1435EFF
38. G. GOHEEN	1420HGI
39. W. ZENKTELER	1400HIF
40. D. GRANT	1400FEG
41. T. HAMMER	1400DED
42. T. BOURNE	1385DEC
43. J. JODDIN	1380DDD
44. J. MUELLER	1375JIE
45. D. MCCARTY	1360HGI
46. G. COLLINS	1355DEF
47. J. DOUGH	1340DED
48. W. STANLEY	1340DED
49. C. EGLI	1335GEG
50. H. HUGH	1335DEB
51. I. LEBOUFEF	1310GGF

THE MAP BOARD

Back in Feb., I suddenly found myself as your Vice-President. I must admit that I took about a two week ego trip even though the description in the constitution granted me about as much "power" as I enjoyed as a rank-and-filer. About the time that I started to come down from the clouds and look at the job as more of a service position than a leadership one, I started to receive my first correspondence from the Central Committee.

Sure enough; almost the first item on the list of "things to do" was to change the responsibilities of the Vice-President. Primarily, using the office as the Official Headsman for notifying members that have been officially dropped from AHIKS membership. This hasn't occurred yet, and I hope none of you place me in that position.

The other main concern in that letter was the submission of our new descriptions of our Officers Duties for the revision of the Member Guide. I figured that I would be impeached soon, anyway, so here was a golden opportunity for me to make my "mark" within the Society. I started thinking about how I could give the membership its dues worth, what I would personally like to see changed, and what changes could be initiated to make non-members WANT to join AHIKS.

The answer to all of those questions arrived in the mail within a week in the form of an advertisement from a mail-order merchant. Of course! I will use the office of the VP to function as an intermediary when disputes between members and mail-order merchants arise. I anticipate that I could promote communication between the two parties (member and merchant), could work toward a resolution of the dispute, and I could be totally unbiased.

But what else could I do while awaiting a dispute for mediation? Well, I could offer the membership a review of companies that advertise their products through the mail. I could impress them with my new title of Vice-President in order to get information out of them! After all; EVERYONE has heard of AHIKS.

So I wrote a letter to the company whose ad I received in the mail a few days before I made this decision and eagerly awaited a reply.....and I waited. Realizing that the letter was obviously lost in the mail, I sent another one repeating my request for additional information and stating that I had already sent one letter. And I awaited a reply.....and I'm still waiting.

So, what do you, the membership think of the reviewing of mail-order companies, in general? Do you have any disputes you would like reviewed? For that matter, what else could be done by the officers to give you your dues worth?

YOU-NIQUE ENTERPRIZES, INC.
 P.O. BOX 185, Adelphia Rd.
 Howell, New Jersey 07710

PRODUCT: playing pieces displaying a unit's shoulder insignia (as near as might be determined from the ad).

RESPONSE TIME: awaiting response from two letters requesting more information and possibly a sample unit.

QUALITY: undertimed.

I want to make the official statement that I do not endorse or condemn any merchant's product or service; I am stating facts as I have experienced them. If anyone has more information, please contact me.

MARK PALMER

A GLEAM OF BAYONETS: I ARTILLERY

This is the first in a series of articles on TSRs A GLEAM OF BAYONETS (AGOB). AGOB has been chosen for two reasons, i) I have been playing a lot of it lately, so it is on my mind, and ii) to some extent what I say can be generalized to other games using the TSS system. This article will deal with many of the important aspects of the effective use in artillery in AGOB. However, some considerations will be covered in future articles on ammunition supplies, combined arms, and a discussion of the CRT. Only when all have been published will artillery be thoroughly dealt with.

The accompanying table shows the breakdown of artillery by Army, gun type, # of batteries (bat), and # of factors (fact). The first thing to note is that both armies have about the same number of batteries, but the USA has a 19% advantage in firepower. In fact the average USA battery will be firing on a higher table than the CSA batteries, which is a greater advantage than 19% might lead you to believe.

Table 1. Artillery in A GLEAM OF BAYONETS

As Start	CSA		USA		I,II,XII, & V Res	
	Bat	fact	Bat	fact		
L	8	35	14	67		
N	3	12	4	16	20	108
TB	10	37	12	44	18	98
HA	9	43	10	49	3	15
HB	3	14	3	14	1	6
PA	5	23	10	44	8	47
PB	1	4	1	4	7	28
W	1	2	1	2		
	40	170	55	240	56	296
					29	146

By gun type the two sides break down as follows. About 1/4 of the CSA strength is the inferior smoothbore (L), while the USA has none. These are really only effective at ranges of 5 or less, although their rapid fire capability make them a reasonable close range weapon. Instead of Ls the USA has predominantly Napoleons (N), which can rapid fire like an L but are affective out to 8 hexes. The USA has about twice as many rifled guns (TB) as the CSA, which cannot rapid fire but have good medium range modifiers. The CSA have 13 howitzer (HA & HB) batteries to the USA's 1. By and large these operate like Ns except at close range when they are devastating. As well as huge modifiers they can rapid



fire. The best guns by far are the Parrotts (PA & PB), and the CSA has 30% fewer than the USA. Parrotts are doubled at ranges 3-8, and are worth two of any other battery. Their close range modifiers are acceptable, but they are too valuable to deploy where they might have to operate at close range. Thus the gun types are distributed in a good manner suitable to the roles they will have to play in the game. The CSA has close range, defensive guns (Ls and howitzers) while the USA has medium to long range guns (TBs and Parrotts) for attacking.

At the ranges that the artillery usually operates the Ls are halved and the Parrotts doubled. Thus the difference in total fire power between the two sides is accentuated. From this, one would conclude that the USA will have a clear artillery superiority in the game. However, to have superiority the batteries must be at a close range of 6-8 hexes. Unlimbering closer risks delay due to routs, pins, and casualties from infantry fire. No gun should be deployed to fire at 9 hexes or more, the scatter rules and range modifiers make this an inexcusable waste of firepower. The two exceptions are: i) when it is anticipated that within 1-2 turns the targets will move into range (usually only true for the CSA), and ii) when you are denying the enemy terrain by making it a killing zone (edges of crests etc.), in which case the guns may as well take such chance shots as become available.

Where guns are deployed will depend on terrain, anticipated events, gun type, and time. Usually the important thing is to get the gun unlimbered and firing. When options are available there are some guidelines that should be used. The first thing to decide is what are the guns to be used for, infantry support or counter battery. If the immediate task is to break up an attack deploy far enough back so that enemy artillery cannot effectively neutralize your guns, but so that your range to the opposing troops is 7-8. If your intended targets are guns, deploy forward so that they are within range.

Pick a spot with a good field of fire, which usually means an elevated position. Note that when you are defending with fewer guns that your opponent it is sometimes better to unlimber in nooks and crannies where you can operate without fear of counter battery fire. If possible deploy in terrain with defensive benefits, even, even if it means a minor sacrifice in field of fire. The CSA should deploy by gun type as follows. Place Ls directly in the path of USA attacks. They are the most expendable guns, and the targets will come within their limited effective range. Crucial terrain should get howitzers, their huge modifiers at close range means any infantry that comes adjacent will be vaporized. Parrotts and TBs should be on the flanks of expected attack lanes. They will be safer there, while having the range and power to provide effective support. Ns may be placed anywhere. In a given spot deploy Ls and Ns in front of howitzers and TB, and have the Parrotts at the back. This will mean all guns are firing at an appropriate range. As well the enemy will tend to deal with the closest threat first, leaving your more valuable guns intact.

On the attack artillery deployment should be handled slightly differently. If an attack moves out of support artillery range (which the wise opponent will allow to happen if he can) it will bog down or be stopped while you limber up and move forward. Try to select initial deployment sites that allow you to prolong forward, giving uninterrupted support fire as you are operating, and in AGOB the USA's big problem is to get units going. If we look at what the CSA starts with and compare it to how much the USA is likely to commit in the first few game turns, it is apparent that the CSA will have clear artillery superiority. At start they will have about a 2X advantage in firepower, and by turn 5 or so they have 25% more guns and 12% more firepower actually deployed and firing.

It is imperative that the CSA assert this superiority, and maintain it throughout the game. Batteries must be deployed in good fire positions as soon as possible, and once deployed the CSA must use an

aggressive counter battery doctrine. Eliminate the USA guns as soon as they deploy, use your first fire advantage to see that they do not fire at all. There are several reasons for this. Batteries get no density shifts, so they are often easy to hit. Destroyed guns are worth 2 VPs compared to 1 for infantry losses. Artillery often provide crucial support for defence and offense. If you destroy the USA guns you will probably beat off most USA attacks. If he destroys your guns you will have a lot of trouble holding ground. Finally, when there are lulls in the battle the side with the guns can continue to inflict casualties, even though most of his troops are BCEE'd or withdrawn. If you have reduced the USA artillery in one sector limber up the independent batteries and move to better hunting. Don't rest until every deployed USA gun is destroyed.

For exactly the same reasons the USA should try to overcome the CSA advantage, and if possible gain superiority. This is possible by concentration of the batteries. In all probability the CSA will spread his guns over all the threatened areas. The USA should pick a narrow zone of attack and mass guns for local superiority. If the CSA guns are destroyed on a narrow front the CSA has two options: feed more guns which get destroyed piecemeal, or let the infantry shift for themselves. Neither option is very appealing.

For either side it is possible to overcome local superiority by prolonge. Initially deploy 3-5 batteries within range of only 1-2 opposing batteries. Destroy them and then prolonge into range of another 1-2. Doing this requires planning, and is easier if you have open terrain relative to your opponent.

It goes without saying that you should always fire at the most lucrative target (ie. where ever you get the highest fire table on the CRT). But, all else being equal go for your opponent's guns.

Artillery should be deployed so that their targets are the infantry move forward. Often you will be assaulting higher terrain, so being on the flat will not obstruct your field of fire.

In any game of AGOB effective use of artillery will go a long way to deciding who is the victor. Use counter battery fire to gain the upper hand and then keep it. Decide where you will attack or defend, and then make sure it is your guns that dominate the field. Once you have cleared the field of enemy guns there will be plenty of time to indulge in long range slaughter of opposing infantry. There are no VPs awarded for unused ammunition!

Mike Kaulbars

NOT-THE- DESIGNER REPLIES

If he loves controversy, our beloved Ed should like this one. In the January 1986 issue of 'Game News' D.L. Kemper wrote an article about TSR's A GLEAM OF BAYONETS titled 'Finetuning Antietam'. Basically he panned the game, and suggested major revisions to the rules for corps commitment and victory determination. I disagree with virtually everything that Mr. Kemper has to say. The game is fine as it is, or at most requires only fine tuning as suggested in his title, NOT the major revisions Mr Kemper suggests in the body of his article.

In AGOB the games' length, and to some extent victory, is determined by occupation of morale hexes. The USA morale starts at 15 and decreases by 1 every game turn. By capturing certain hexes the USA gains morale points, and loses them if the CSA captures other hexes. The game ends if USA moral ever reaches 30 or drops to 0. Depending on when morale reaches 0 to 30 either player may have his victory points multiplied by 2 or 3. If the game ends prior to turn 10 it is an automatic victory for one or the other. Except for this special case victory is determined by accumulated VPs, which one receives for destroying enemy units.





Mr Kemper feels that the use of morale hexes is unnecessary and biases the game in favour of the USA. He states that 20 of the hexes that the USA needs are "IN FRONT" of CSA initial positions. Of those 20, 2 are occupied by the CSA, 8 are dubiously "in front", and more than half cannot be reached by the USA before the CSA. To occupy all of the hexes that can be reached in turn 1 will require a disorganized 'Banzai' charge, with at least some units in column. Fine. The USA has charged forward in a mad rush and occupy all of these hexes: are they not well on their way to an automatic victory? Not quite. To qualify they must still be there after 2 rounds of CSA fire and a melee phase. This is unlikely as at least half of these are exposed positions at point blank range. Such pointless casualties will certainly contribute to the CSA victory. OK, OK, but with 5-6 turns of heavy fighting the USA will capture the 15 hexes needed to win, right? Possibly, but by this point they will need 5-6 more hexes, and if getting those takes 4 turns they will actually need 9-10 hexes. Anyone who has played the game will know that it doesn't take many turns of heavy fighting to burn out a USA corps, and by this point the USA's concern will be saving I Corps from being obliterated.

But why have morale hexes at all? Is Mr Kemper not correct in saying that the point of Antietam was to destroy the Army of Northern Virginia (ANV), not capture terrain? Should the battle not go on until dusk regardless? And why "morale hexes"? Is USA morale not covered by the division/corps withdrawal rules? All of the above are true as far as they go. The fact is, the morale hexes are a mechanic for ending this monster game a bit early, once it is clear who the ultimate victor will be. They are a basic measure of how well the USA army is doing, and reflect the morale of G.B. McClellan, not his troops. If the USA attack had stalled early "Ol Siege Gun McC" would have called a halt and waited for the big guns to come up. Had there been a successful CSA counterattack G.B. would have struck his tent and returned to Washington. And if there had been tremendous progress in the early attacks he might even have ordered the rest of the USA forces into the fray. Remember that for the most part VP's determine victory, not morale. If the USA capture ground at too high a price, they will still lose. If they capture very little terrain, but inflict high casualties, they will still win.

But, insists Mr Kemper, these morale hexes force one to "attack through the same ten hexes game after game" leaving "no room for innovative tactics". If you look at the morale hexes you will find that they represent most of the defensible terrain on the board. In essence Mr Kemper wants the ANV to have the option of abandoning the woods and high ground and go stand in the open flat. An innovative tactic to be sure, but one shouldn't have to play it out to know the conclusion. With Mr. Kemper's revisions the USA would have the option of abandoning the high ground to the north, which the CSA would immediately occupy giving a shorter line on superior terrain. Depending on where the USA I Corps goes the CSA may also cut off and destroy it. Again, very innovative. Hooker would never have allowed I Corps to become completely detached from the main army without something covering his rear north of Miller's cornfield.

If Mr. Kemper finds himself attacking through the same ten hexes every game, it shows an appalling lack of imagination. The USA isn't obliged to win by turn 10. When the game starts they have 15 turns in which to capture morale hexes anywhere on the board. At any point they only need enough morale points to keep the game going. If the USA player wants a quick automatic victory he will have to use historical tactics and hope for the best. I prefer to go slowly and methodically, seeing nothing wrong with eliminating the ANV in the last turn. With this overall strategy the USA is free to explore a wide range of alternative and innovative tactics.

Mr Kemper's other gripe concerns the mechanics used for USA Corps commitment, which he maintains are unnecessary, unwieldy, and favour the USA. Corps commitment is accomplished by drawing chits from cups (I recommend old film canisters). I will grant that it is cumbersome, but it provides a great deal of excitement with a broad range of realistic possibilities. Mr Kemper's suggested revisions heavily favour the CSA and add a great deal of predictability (ie. boredom). As it is, the CSA is never sure where and when the next attack will come, and the USA has only a rough idea. The CSA uncertainty reflects the rather independent (ie. insubordinate and incompetent) Corps commanders and G.B.'s own dithering.

From Kemper's article one is lead to believe that if the USA ever has 3 corps active at the same time it will be all over for the CSA. Against incompetent CSA play this is certainly true. Although not actually stated, it is implied that 3 corps represent an overwhelming force. In fact a force of 3 corps is about the same size as the ANV on defence in good terrain in a game system that favours the defender. As well, a number of USA Corps require several turns to get into play; ample time for the CSA to adjust.

The mechanics of commitment make it possible for the USA to commit 4 or more corps at about the same time, but how often does this happen? A few calculations give the following numbers: 6 commitments by turn 5, about once every 83,000 games; 4 corps by turn 5, once every 75 games. What about pro-CSA balance? Only USA I Corps committed by turn 18, once every 15,000 games; until turn 8, once every 5,300 games. Thus the game can be grossly unbalanced, but it is a rare event. When it does occur, just pack it in and start again (Lee was betting with the odds, but conceivably G.B. might have done it right that day). The small chance of these rare events is well worth the uncertainty and excitement that the system generates.

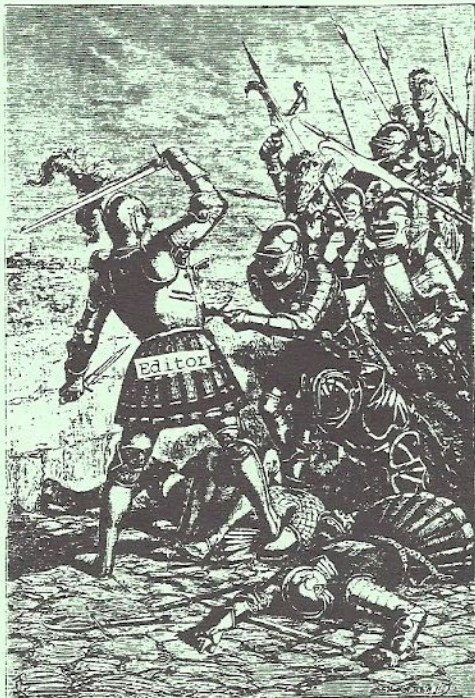
Mr Kemper's rules revisions will have several effects; they will: 1) favour the USA, ii) make the game more predictable and dull, iii) eliminate several important historical constraints, and iv) ensure that every game lasts a very long time. If you feel the game is unbalanced and requires some fine tuning, by all means do so. Try adding or subtracting a blank from the USA commitment cups. Change the level of morale required to end the game by a couple of points. Do not use the major changes suggested by Mr Kemper.

I would add that I am planning a series of articles on AGOB. In them I hope to cover a number of advantages that the CSA has, and some of the novel tactics that both sides can employ. When it is all over I hope that you will agree with me that the game is pretty much fine the way it is.

[Your Editor has a small problem and this is an excellent opportunity to address it. I will be the first to admit that A: I don't and never will own AGOB and B: have no idea what Mike and his friend were discussing in these two articles. Given these confessions I must admit that I loved them to death just by inferences I draw from my general knowledge of games and my scanty knowledge of Civil War subjects. I will continue to print these literary gems and trust that Mike and his buddy know what they are talking about. I'm not really worried about it because I know if they mess up somebody is going to catch them and write me a rebuttal (which I will also print). The point is that I have no idea who NOT THE DESIGNER is. He didn't sign his article. As the Editor I would like to request a few things from those of you who write material for the K. Nothing elaborate, I like to keep it as simple as possible! There are four simple rules.

- 1- type whenever possible.
- 2- double-space whenever possible.
- 3- indicate which issue of the K the article is for next to the title.
- 4- type or print your name at the end of the article

I realize that #3 may not always work out, but at least it will give me an idea of how far behind I am! I apologize in advance to those of you who expect more complexity out of the machinations at the top executive levels, but I am personally allergic to complexity.ed]



Loyal Editor withstands first all - out attack on editorial policies. News Item.

THE BARRAGE

My first order of business is to apologize for not having this column in the last issue of the 'K'. Poor planning on my part!

Now on to current business. I have acted on a complaint of non-compliance lodged against a member of our conference. Despite attempts to contact him there has been no response. I suspect the member may have left AHKS.

I also received a letter from Jim Burnett, he wrote to inform me of SECON'86 - July 25-27. The place: World's Fair Holiday Inn at Knoxville, Tn. Events: Boardgaming, miniatures, role playing, dealer's area & seminars. It is being sponsored by Atlanticon and the Knoxville Game Board. Depending on when you read this, I hope you will attend or have attended this convention. I would like to see more of our conventions being held in facilities such as SECON '86 will be. Not only is it extremely convient, but it also provides an attractive alternative to anyone who may accompany you.

Back in Feb, a good friend of mine, Kevin McCarthy (R.D., North Central Con.) came to visit. It has been over a year since I moved to Florida and away from our weekly meetings. We reminisced the past, discussed the future and gamed. It was a quality time well spent.

One of our major discussions, concerned the changes taking place in AHKS. Events usually evolve rather slowly here, but lately it has been just the opposite! The changes in personnel, procedures and the rewrite, should have a positive effect. But none more so than the updating of the membership guide. I hope that the ratings will finally be brought to stage one were they belong! [The ratings don't necessarily deserve stage one, but they certainly deserve to be heard! I hope by the end of the year to get the ratings (top 20 or 50?) to start appearing every other issue with some comments on them by our faithful M&SO who works so hard to keep them up to date yet only gets yelled at for it! ed] And, that we abolish the current practice of cancelling matches with no adjustment in points. [I am volunteering Arthur to make a report on this. Please send your thoughts on the matter to him, if you DISAGREE. If Arthur doesn't hear anything from you then we can safely assume that most everybody agrees with Arthur. I do! ed]

The column, 'Interior Lines', issue 21-3 sums it all up!

Mr. Editor, please drop that crossword puzzle! [No! I won't do it and you can't make me without a big write in campaign!ed] If I want to play crosswords, I'll visit the local bookstore and buy a magazine full of 'em.[This is one of the reasons I enjoyed this one- I don't really care for them more than one at a time myself.ed] I waited two months for our newsletter. Two months to find out whats going on in my club and here is an entire page devoted to a "word game"! [An interesting choice of "words". You were expecting maybe a video? Also, there was MORE than a page devoted to it! The answers took up a quarter page, so there!ed] I have nothing against the game or the people who play them.[Then why are you complaining?ed] Its just that I feel the space could be put to better use.[That's a legitamate answer but I need specifics.ed]

Take, for instance, the Baseball League.[What Baseball League?ed] I understand that one is forming.[You mean you don't know?ed] Well, if that is a fact now, I GUESS it must be in operation! [Let me get this straight, you're guessing about something you don't know about which is a fact?ed] That's the point, Mr. Editor, I shouldn't have to guess.[Why am I wishing you had taken your own advice?ed]

If there is an activity under way in AHKS, such as the baseball league why doesn't it have it's own column? [First off, maybe because they didn't ASK for one. Second off, who ARE they?ed] Something to keep us informed and announce the standings.[Am I misinforming myself that you are actually interested in this Baseball League, but that you just never contacted THEM?ed] This should become a matter of procedure.[please clarify.ed] When a new activity is formed within AHKS it will be granted space in the newsletter.[Somehow I get the impression you think I have given the thumb to the Baseball League. Let me spell it out for you Arthur- I HAVEN'T EVEN HEARD FROM THESE GUYS!ed]

I still feel you're doing a fine job with the 'K'. [This is the part I have been waiting for!ed] But, Mr Editor, I think we can make better use of the space and in a more informative manner! [I have to apologize for chewing up the tail end of Arthur's column like this, but after all, he DID chew me first! I respect Art's point of view on this subject and I recall seeing the same kind of discussion going on back and forth amongst the GENERAL readership about once a year everytime they run an article on anything BUT a "wargame". The funniest thing about THIS argument is that if the GENERAL had run an article on a (shudder) Baseball League, they wouldn't have heard the end of it for YEARS! Now that I am sitting on the other side of the Editor's desk, I am seeing this question in a whole new light. I would LOVE to print something on the Baseball League. But I can only print what I get! It just so happens that one of the things I 'got' was a fun little crossword puzzle, and specifically made BY a wargamer FOR wargamers! Should I have sent it back with a rejection slip? I have had an opportunity to talk to about a half dozen of the guys and ask them about it, and so far everybody I have talked to loved the thing! I don't want to break my back patting myself, but I put a LOT of work into making that little puzzle look good so you could enjoy it. I don't expect to be running them very often (I may never get another one), but I do believe this was the FIRST wargaming crossword puzzle ever published and I was proud to nab that little distinction for the K. I think Mike Kaulbars, the author, deserves a big thank you. And unless I receive some vast bulk of nasty mail, if I get another one, I'm going to print it too. Albeit, not very soon! I don't plan to make these a steady diet, and certainly not more than one a year (unless I get a vast bulk of FAVORABLE mail). I'd like to get some postcards from the membership on their feelings about this. And while you're at it, you might send some congratulatory ones to Art, he has finally provided me with my first controversy! This is a controversy, right Art? I mean you did get mad at me for printing the puzzle right? Art, tell me I didn't just make a fool of myself! Mister Editor]

That's what I think, how about you?

Art Dempsey



WHAT NEXT

DEAR EVERYBODY,

I have asked you all here to discuss what AHIKS is to do with excess of funds that we currently enjoy. I've already let my ideas be known to our beloved Prez Ed, but I thought I may pester all of you. I will also mail a copy of this to JDB and CEH so they know what kind of subversion I am up-to. It seems to me that the area where we are most deficient is pbm sheets.

One of the services we supposedly offer is pbm sheets, yet the number of Appendix E tells you that our members are playing quite a few of the 1,200 (1,500?) games that are out there, yet we offer sheets for only a few, and not even the most popular ones. [I might have to take exception with that, Mike!ed]

The problem stems (I believe) from our policy of only having sheets made up if it can all fit on a single standard sized AHIKS pbm sheet. This sheet was/is designed so that 10 moves can be played/sheet. When formulated this policy meant that AHIKS members did not have to go to the game companies and buy sheets that wasted space and cost alot. AHIKS offered an inexpensive, functional alternative.

That was in the days when unit density was low and all the information you needed was location. Now unit densities are very high, and a given unit must have its location, facing, current strength, formation, etc. noted with it. As a consequence most members who want a pbm sheet get a piece of lined paper. This lined paper can be drawn up in a couple of minutes [HAH! I drew those lined sheets! Try a couple of hours!ed].

The real work of a pbm sheet takes hours (ie. the units), and the member has to do it himself, no matter how many people have already done it. Ah you say (do you?), but we cannot afford to mail out pads of sheets so that members can play a full game of Third Reich or DNO. Yes (I agree), but who says we have to supply all of the sheets? Could we not send both members in a match one (1) single master copy, to be photocopied by them for use, or offer "pads" at cost? Is it so terrible to save them hours of work and insist that they spend a couple of dollars at the photocopier (which they do ANYWAY, but with their own sheets they spent hours making). There are numerous pbm sheets out there, all tested and worthy. We have not accepted them because of our multi-move policy [this is only partly true. Another reason is that many of the forms extant need to be cleaned up physically so that they are worth printing. ed] That policy was well meant, but is now archaic, and impedes good service to the members. I say we chuck it. At a minimum we should offer sheets for the games listed in appendix E of the MG (ie. the 30 most popular). [On the surface, I agree, but some of these games just don't HAVE printable originals to work from. ed]

To implement the above we simply ask members to submit their home grown sheets. If the sheet has been play tested in a game we could immediatly run off 100 (1,000? 10,000?/). If not we could retain it on a probationary basis, sending members photocopies (at 10 cents a throw) and asking them to evaluate the sheet as they play (if they choose to use it). And so on. [AHIKS is now officially soliciting such forms. In order to make sure all you first time graphic artists out there understand all the fun fine points of making up one of these gems I am reprinting elsewhere in this issue an article titled WORDS FROM YOUR FRIENDLY PRINTER. At that time AHIKS was thinking in terms of cost, but Mike's excellent idea of supplying one-time forms solves this problem for us! We will be starting up a #1000 series of our own for this. The idea will be that pre-printed forms with FOUR numbers (after all, we might break 100 some day) will be sent to members having matches using these forms with the understanding that the OOB form they are sent will be the ONLY one they are sent for that match. It will be Member's responsibility for the rest of the match xerox copies for himself. This way the club can provide a valuable service without going overboard financially.ed]

The other area that needs to be improved is the Judge. Do we have an errate bank? Do we want one? Do we need more coordination of experts? Ideas?

Thank you all for listening. Let the powers that be know how you feel. Talk to members, ask your mother etc. One last point, would who ever is responsible for such things please send me more MSO sheets, I'm almost out.

MIKE KAULBARS, RD CANADA

WORDS FROM YOUR FRIENDLY PRINTER

Those of you who read the Match Coordinator's column know we have pre-printed OoBs for a number of our more popular PBM titles. I'd like to explain the nuts and bolts of how so that any of you out there can contribute if you get the urge.

The first thing to do is make a COMPLETE list of units (whether they are actually represented by counters or not) by unit designation AND combat strength. You can break these up by any method you want, but try for a system that reflects how you identify the pieces while playing FTF. For example in LONGEST DAY, all units are divided up and listed by divisional designations while all others are divided by unit type (armor, infantry, etc). Under these headings, units may be listed according to combat strength (as in RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN, 10-8 at the top of the list and 2-7 at the bottom), sub listed by designation when strengths are equal (1st Inf, before 59th Inf, etc) There are lots of ways to do it - the trick is to NOT MISS ANY UNITS! Those of you who have used the ANZIO sheets have found out about this! What happened with ANZIO was that I used the STEP REDUCTION ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS, unaware there were counters which didn't appear there and which were labeled differently! There are new ANZIO sheets available now that fix these problems.

Another thing to take into consideration is which units have step reduction capability. On all the forms I've put together, I've added a little box next to those units for each turn, so you can show their current status in any form you like. A small number to show how many steps remain (or have been lost) or fill in the box to show the unit's at half strength. Just be sure your opponent knows how you're marking things!

After you've decided on how to construct your OoB and what information will be needed on the sheets, type out this information on a BLANK piece of paper. Don't use blank OoB forms because all typewriters don't match up exactly and I want the information to be as neat as possible. As you finish typing each designation, before you start on another, type an UNDERLINE MARK, then hit your bar space to get you to the opposite side of the paper and type another UNDERLINE MARK. When you get through typing, these marks will be your guides for drawing lines so all the information is separated on the page.

Finally, RECHECK YOUR INFORMATION to make sure you didn't miss any units. If this sounds like a lot of work - you're right! It's a TON of work for each page, let alone finish up the whole game. It's also a source of pride when it's done!

The objective is to provide solid workable forms for those games which are played by the greatest number of members.

As the unofficial printer for AHIKS, I have strived to put out the best in quality - we deserve it! I would like to hear if any one out there has a practical suggestion for PANZERBLITZ. I would also like to hear from anyone who has a problem with any of the preprinted forms - like ANZIO, so I can rectify it immediately. I'd also like to know if you think they're worth the effort - a postcard would do!

Comments/suggestions should be sent to *

Chester E. Hendrix, Editor
1054 Lewis Oak Road
Gridley, CA 95948



MORE OF THE SAME

I've noticed over the past couple of years a lot of concern expressed in various and sundry hobby periodicals over the perceived decline in the hobby, and the apparently real decline in sales experienced by some manufacturers.

An examination of the growth of the wargame hobby over the last decade will show that there were several episodes of "decline" in the hobby. As a matter of fact a study of ANY field of human endeavour will show that steady growth is the exception, not the rule. Normal growth comes in spurts, with temporary retrenchments, recessions, and decline. In the middle sixties after the near bankruptcy of Avalon Hill, and again a few years ago when SPI died, we saw similar declines in the hobby.

Most Wargamers are Baby Boomers. In the 70's we were all young, unattached and filled with the energy that enables one to stay awake for 3 days playing Drang Nach Osten. We had the energy to juggle six, seven, or eight games by mail at a time. We didn't really care if we had to cut out and glue our own counters, that the map was black and white, and that the designer only explained half the rules needed to play the game.

Just look at the average quality of the games being published now! They are simply beautiful to look at, with extensive, thought out and play tested rules. (Your Editor and about half the people I know would take immediate exception to this statement. While games today may be better graphically and physically, and perhaps as a rule 'better thought out', I have to wonder if the rules are truly play-tested. I know personally of some examples where the rules are barely tested at all, and that nominally. In this day of pre-errataed rules I am more frustrated than ever when I open a NEW game only to find that there are NO errata in it. The first thing I think of is what I am going to have to go through to get my hands on the errata that I KNOW is going to surface sooner or later. Will I have to buy which issue of what magazine or will I just have to plunk more money to the publisher? I don't know about YOU, but that kind of thing makes me mad. There is NO excuse, especially since there are legions of dedicated gamers who would foam at the mouth to get an opportunity to help make a game come out worth playing just for a free copy when it gets published- in the old days they used to call that working for peanuts, but now we call it gratuities- and maybe their name mentioned in the credits. Can you think of any other products in the market place where you would willingly plunk down \$20+ knowing that you have a 95% chance of having to shell out an additional \$5 for the new rule book just so you can keep your new item current? I would like some response from the membership on this one! ed)

It used to be that if you wanted a first rate game, you had to buy Avalon Hill. Only their games matched the quality standards set by the giants like Parker Brothers and Milton Bradley (And admit it, that's who we really were comparing our hobby products with, the "real" game companies.)

Look at the games that are out now. Look at the outstanding quality of not just Avalon Hill, but GDW, West End, TSR, Nova, and a host of others. In most every case MB and PB et al are outshown. Sure, players don't have the time they used to, but now the drive all through the hobby is not quantity of time spent, but quality. If all you can spend a month on gaming is eight hours, make it a quality eight hours. That is the approach more and more people take these days.

New people come into the hobby every day, a little bit more organization into local clubs, a steady flow of support from the game producers and an upbeat attitude about the hobby will do wonders for generating the enthusiasm that will carry people through years of enjoyable association with the hobby.

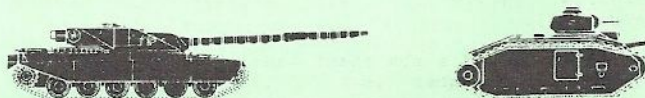
I came close to suffering PBM Burnout, and a good friend of mine, who got me into PBM play in the first place has burned out. I think in nearly every case it comes from playing too many games at once, exacerbated usually by an inability to leave the games in progress set up. For virtually anybody in this hobby there is

a breaking point where the amount of "work" involved in gaming is not compensated for in "play". I define "work" to mean things like setting up, reading rules, moving pieces on the board, filling out OOB ad nauseum. There is a lot of "work" involved in all gaming, with even more involved in PBM. This has to be rewarded with "play", the fun of deciding strategy, gambling on odds, enjoying the suspense and socializing with people of like interests. When the work exceeds the play boredom sets in, gaming becomes a drudgery and the gamers start watching "Dallas" instead of doing that move that has sat on his desk for two weeks.

The lesson is to pace yourself. Very few of us have the resources to do everything we would like, whether it is travel, work, play games, make love, see Shakespearian plays, skydive, etc. etc. etc.

The days of explosive, faddish growth are over and that is not a negative thing. Indeed it was an inevitable occurrence for I'm sure everybody realized that only a finite amount of the 3 1/2 Billion humans on this planet would ever be interested in such a thing as Wargaming. It is a special hobby, appealing to an inherently narrow group of people. Now we enter a period of steady growth in my view. We will see the hobby mature even more, get better organized, break new ground in game techniques and continue to attract the thoughtful, intelligent type of person it has always appealed to. I'm looking forward to it.

SETH OWEN



BATTLE REPORT

The smoke has risen and the dust has settled and the "last battle" is now history. We had a pretty good turnout; about 30 gamers showed up over the 3 days, including some non-members.

On Friday, Matt Perna was three minutes late, but I didn't hold that against him. People kept coming in until almost quitting time. We did get the JUNTA game in. I came in a close second, which is the only position that counts when Bill Perry is playing. Tom Holtz, Bob Hahn, and Tom Bourne also joined in on the back stabbing.

Saturday, Ben Miller demonstrated why he likes GDW's OPERATION MARKET- GARDEN by whipping his host. Regular John Heydt put some computer games on our Apples. Joe Seliga, another old campaigner, made one of his rare appearances.

CIVILIZATION started from scratch, with Kevin Murray and his elephant chorus from Africa taking on Steve List and several other friends. Richard Berg made a cameo appearance. Bill Wiesing spent his time involved in ASL. Stuart Schoenberger and Tom Thorsen showed up, and Forrest Jerome left his cliff dwelling in New York to join us in the Garden State. Former president Bill Watkins was there with a car that worked, for a change. Ron Smith flew in from Texas (is that a state?) John Malaska and Bob Wielgus rounded out our crew.

Someone left two computer games: CASTLE WOLFENSTIEN and RETURN OF HERACLES/ARCHON. The owner can get them back by sending me postage.

A couple of members mentioned that they might host a get-together next year. They'll wait until I leave the area! I hope they do, because it is always good to get together with good gamers.

It's been fun, guys.

FOR SALE: Most of the issues of MOVES and S&T (with games). Also some choice games. Send stamped envelope to Omar DeWitt, 3007 Jane Circle, Rio Rancho, NM 87124

CANNON FODDER

SILLY RULES AND ODD SITUATIONS

This is the first of what I hope will be a regular column. The intent is to bring to light, for the enjoyment of all, some of the rules slips that have made it to production. This will differ from an errata column in that the faux pas must lead to a situation that is ridiculous, or at least mildly humorous. To participate simply write to me with your favorite silly rule and a description of the situations it causes. I'll fire the opening salvo...

It is the first turn of a game of A GLEAM OF BARONETS. The Union player has decided not to activate Hookers I Corp on turn 1, preferring to try to activate II, IX, and XII Corps. He reasons that this is a good strategy as Hooker can be quickly activated once a McCl'n chit is drawn, and the result would be a devastating, coordinated attack by 4 corps. Should the CSA choose to attack Hooker, well...all the better as it means that Hooker is activated for free.

Puzzled (and a bit worried) the CSA player consults rule 29.7 and makes an interesting discovery. Unlike most Union corps, Hooker is activated ONLY if fired upon, and not if simply approached by CSA units. Seizing the opportunity 3 CSA divisions rush forward. Unconcerned, blue ranks go about their business as the CSA regiments surround them. Gunners admire the precision of the crews unlimbering directly in front of them...preparing to rapid fire. Stonewall himself starts the attack himself with a pistol shot, after placing the end of the barrel against Meade's temple. Volley after volley pours into the enfiladed blue ranks, rebel yells echo as the pride of the South rushes in to melee the devastated Union troops. After the smoke is cleared a few Union strength points are still seen to be alive. Unconcerned, the Rebs calmly go about looting and reloading; they know they still have a defensive fire phase before the Union can fire a shot. Naturally this will give them the 14 morale point hexes necessary to end the game as well.

This silly situation can be avoided if players agree that Hooker is activated if any CSA unit comes within 4 (3?..2?) hexes of a unit of Hooker's Corps.

So there you have it folks! Do you know any good silly rules? Why not share them with the rest of AHIKS? Just write to me and we'll get them into the K (I'll even give you credit for it).

Mike Kaulbars

THE MATCH COORDINATOR

II. OPEN REQUEST MATCH:

Afrika Korps (393), Air Force (NM-ONLY), Air Assault On Crete (1011), Alexander the Great (975), Anzio (396), American Civil War (SPI)(336), Armor (1119), Assault On Leningrad(926), Brietenfeld(511), Bulge-81(393), Circus Maximus (1102), Custer's Luck (326), CV (959), D-Day 77 (885), Devil's Den (253), Divine Right (216), Empires of the Middle Ages *(1116), Fast Attack Boats (326), Frederick the Great (511), GI ANVIL (ASL) (888), Guns of August (136), Gunslinger * (multi) (251), Hell's Highway (826), Jackson at the Crossroads (238), Kursk (1011), Lutzen (511), Modern Battles Quad (305), Napoleon At Bay * (1116), Nordlingen (511) (967), O'Connor's Offensive (253), Operation Konrad (369), Operation Market Garden (253), Prestags (817), Rocroi (511), Russian Front(A 519), South Mountain (WE) (253), Speed Circuit * (multi) (251), Stalingrad (1014), Stars & Bars (253), Stellar Conquest: Will GM (519), Struggle of Nations * (1116), Task Force (1028), The Kaiser's Battle (413), Thirty Year's War Quad (511), Up Scope (1074), Waterloo (885),

III. NEW MEMBER CODE #:

G. Schwartz 1127
W. Wkittal 1128
S. Harris 1129

In the event you do not know your code number, contact me.

Les Deck, MC 6/1/86

MATCH REQUEST FORM

CODE# _____ PHONE# _____ DATE _____

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____

TO REQUEST MATCHES: USE THIS FORMAT —
INSERT ON THE NUMBERED LINES THE GAME TITLE(S).
INCLUDE THE LETTER CODES (IN PARENTHESIS) LISTED
BELOW THAT APPLY. IF YOU PLACE MORE THAN ONE GAME A
LINE, YOU WILL BE MATCHED WITH THE FIRST OPPONENT
AVAILABLE WITH ONE OF THOSE GAMES AND ANY OTHERS
ON THAT LINE WILL BE IGNORED.

USE THESE LETTER CODES TO ASSIST MC

- (A) DESIRE A.R.E.A. OPPONENT (IF AVAILABLE)
- (F) DESIRE FAST OPPONENT (7 DAY REPLY) (IF AVAILABLE)
- (G) WILL GAME MASTER THIS GAME WITH # _____ PLAYERS.
- (M) DESIRE MULTI-PLAYER MATCH: # _____ PLAYERS DESIRED.
- (N) WILL PLAY NEW MEMBER.
- (O) WILL PLAY OPPONENTS OUTSIDE USA/CAN.
- (X) ICRKS (CHECK ONE) NEED: 1-6 1-10 2-12 OTHER (SPECIFY _____)
- (Y) NEED PREPRINTED OOB #'s _____ (INSERT OOB # OR GAME TITLE)
- (Z) NEED CONTINUATION ICRK FOR PRESENT TITLE _____ & ICRK # _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

() MY ADDRESS/PHONE HAS CHANGED. ATTACH NEW INFORMATION AND SEND TO MC, SECTY. AND TREAS.

A REPLY ON RATINGS

Over a year ago I had received a match in DRIVE ON WASHINGTON, the 1864 battle on the Monocacy River near Washington recreated in the Great Battles of the ACW series. Playing the Confederate, I had finally alerted each division, massed at the site of the ford and was about one turn away from its discovery. The game was just getting interesting after several months of play. At that point my opponent communicated that he would like to drop the game. A lot of time and energy had gone into the game, only to be frustrated by the drop. If this had been an isolated incident, it might not be so bad. But several other games have either been dropped, or just never completed after substantial work had been done developing systems for untried units, etc. [Were these shared with the Judge?]

I can be faulted for not being more demanding. My patience kept me from contacting their RD. But in the past several years I have had one satisfying match and 3-4 frustrating ones like the above. I've experienced some burnout (from pursuing a doctoral program and work and family schedules), but the above incidents have also contributed.

What does this have to do with ratings? In reading Kevin McCarthy's comments, it struck me that ratings should in some way include something on follow through on matches: consistency. Some part of the rating should reflect how many matches have been completed, how many dropped by that player's request, etc. or a percentage figure. Then a player could request a rating [match?ed] based on an opponent's consistency and be guaranteed of a satisfying match. Perhaps players with a low consistency rating would eventually face expulsion, or would find themselves just not getting opponents. This would give a greater incentive to completing matches. [While I can understand the frustrations which generated this article, I can't help think that there are other problems to iron out also. For example, if I am playing a game and it becomes obvious after only a few turns that I have blown it horribly I damn sure don't want to carry on for another 20 turns just to end the game! Once I'm down I like to be let up for another try, not have my face rubbed in the dirt. How do we resolve this aspect? One thing I remember hearing consistently somewhere is that if you hang on till the game's end you might just pull it out. While I am not

a great believer in this I am willing to concede the point to those with more experience. Perhaps a *Must be willing to play through* clause should be specified when filling out match requests, not unlike the *Hard core option*. Comments? ed]

David Grant



FOR SALE: Peoples War Games DUEL FOR KHARKOV, Mint condition, never used, with TWO complete sets of unpunched counter sheets. \$22.50 post paid. Send SASE with order. Randy Heller, 4442 Paradise Knoll, Castro Valley, Ca. 94546

Stuart J. Schoeberger, 430 Ocean Pkwy - 30, Brooklyn, N.Y., 11218 is searching for good people to contact Drew Davis Box 31275, Antla, Georgia, 30332 for an exciting multi player game called Age of Exploitation, involving conquest of the New World, piracy, trade, commerce, farming and manufacturing, war of religion, struggler for supremacy, etc. Spain, England, Portugal, Mendukeo, and other diverse positions still open. Multi-player games open in Machraudli and Rail Baron - contact the Rail Commissioner, 339 9th St. Neerch, Wisconsin. Largest of rare games, Mejarar dmireture being pruned from personal collection. Large SSAE & \$2. refunded on order. Searching for a square gridded (or rectangle) Invasion of France '40 game with a map of Switzerland (1980's release) by Tenn. Outfit (Name is as desirable). S.J. Schoeberger, 240 Stephen St. No. Bellmory, N.Y. 11710

Wanted: GDW's PHARSALUS, AH's CAESAR- ALESIA, SPI's LEE MOVES NORTH and A MIGHTY FORTRESS. Please send price and condition. Also FOR SALE: Yaquinto's CLOSI ASSAULT. Very good condition. \$425. Price includes shipping by UPS. Paul Fretheim, R. 1, Box 84 B, Northport, MI 49670.

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AHIKS KOMMANDEUR

Chester E. Hendrix, Editor

1054 Lewis Oak Road

Gridley, CA 95948

(916) 846-2703



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NEWSLETTER OF
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