

The **K**ommandeur

Volume 38 Number 6

A Publication of AHIKS

December 2003

From the President

At last. The kids are back in school! Thanksgiving will be done by the time you read this and Christmas is upon us (meaning—it's almost over too!). Life is always better when it runs on a schedule. If it wasn't for our calendar, our family wouldn't be able to function. And if Pam and I didn't sit down and do bills together, our meager budget would be toast with a quickness. I know, you're all wondering what the segue is. It's the budget, guys.

Unfortunately, **The K** continues to not go down much in price. It is absolutely our largest expense, and projections right now are that dues would need to go to \$12 for the next year to keep even. I have a vested interest in keeping the dues down to \$6 a year. Not only is it cheap, but... well... it's cheap! Our Editor and our website manager, Tom Thomson, are putting the finishing touches on getting **The K** on the website with a simple security protocol. We would need to keep available a separate dues level for those who don't do the net or would still prefer a paper *Kommandeur*. If it's worth it to you to pay the extra, then it is incumbent upon us to deliver. This is all still in the final stages, so stay tuned.

While we're at it, I hope you have had time to look at the new website. Visit and give us feedback. It is *very* nicely done (thanks, Tom). As more information gets posted it will get better. The MC updates alone are worth the look. Roger has done an amazing job of stepping up. Things are looking good.

On a personal note, my shed is almost done (we finished the electrical work last month for lights and such) which means that work on my **Kursk** game and the **Starship Troopers** redo will be getting into full swing by the end of the year.

(Playtesters for the **SST** redo—the *real* **SST**, not the silly movie trailer thingie—are being sought vigorously right now!) Have you checked out Consimworld lately to read over the folders for these games? Just the stunning counterwork for **SST** is worth the look-see—talk about eye candy! In more mundane items, I am seeking volunteers to help with the by-laws rewrite. Don't be afraid to e-mail me.

That's what's going on in my world. What's going on in yours? I know Randy Heller recently released **Deluxe Bitter Woods** (he also has a folder on Consimworld). AHIKSers are involved in lots of projects for the hobby. I hope you will all take a moment to share with your brothers what irons you have in the fire by dropping a line to Omar for the next **K**. I know there are a number of you out there that like hearing what I've been up to and it's high time I remind you all that the feeling is mutual. What are you up to?

I would like to read from each AHIKSer in the next **K** what you are currently involved in, whether it be design, development, playtesting, publishing, writing, or whatever. If everybody sends in an update, it will help all of us to see what is happening and how we can support each other. This hobby is nothing without networking, and I want AHIKS to be a first-rate society for members of the Society and members of the hobby, so we need to hook up with each other. It all begins when we take advantage of the opportunity presented us bi-monthly in the pages of **The K**—whether we choose to get it by mail (paper) or electronically. A fellow you might recognize named Richard Berg once told me, “If you don't toot your own horn, nobody else will.”

Your Buddy, Chester

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Submarine by PBM or E-Mail

by Albert H. Thomas

This system is playable with hidden movement and torpedoes by just two players. A game master is not needed. Two mailings are needed per turn with the possibility of a few more if there are several escorts searching for a sub. It is unlikely that too many additional mailings will be needed. I have used this system and it works. Using ICRKs, the play is even easier. Each player must have a set of 20 sealed envelopes. Inside each envelope is a slip of paper with a starting ICRK set/#. The players will use these envelopes to resolve those items that do not have an ICRK assigned to them when they are listed in the move. The escort player lists ICRKs for sub player's resolution of sonar, radar searches, and all ASW attacks. All other ICRKs uses are randomly determined by opening sealed envelopes. The sub player will also seal his moves and torpedo launches into an envelope. He puts the turn number and his initials on the outside. This envelope is sent to the escort player each turn. The escort player signs the outside and returns it to the sub player. The sub player keeps these move-plot and torpedo-launch envelopes for the remainder of the game. He will send them to the escort player after the game ends, at which time the escort player opens as many as he wants to, to verify the play of the game.

An important part of the system is the use of the ICRK sealed envelopes and how to determine which envelope to open. The envelope system was first outlined in *The General* Volume 17/4 in an article written by Don Eisan. It was also redone for TRC in *The Kommandeur* Volume 38/2. I'm using sealed envelopes in a small way for this game system. Most of the ICRKs used will be picked by your opponent. Sealed envelopes as stated above are used for surface-fire resolution, sub test depth, torpedo hits, and escort evasion. Inside each envelope will be listed an ICRK column / #. This is a start ICRK, or, in the case of crush-depth resolution, a single ICRK

pick. If listed ICRKs are already used, just go down the ICRK lists until you find an unused one.

At the beginning of the game each player will make up 20 sealed envelopes. Number on the outside 1 to 20. When you open an envelope numbered 1 to 6, move number 7 envelope into the empty slot. This way you will always have six envelopes to use, and players won't have to keep replacing sealed envelopes every turn.

This system is playable with hidden movement and torpedoes by just two players.

The system is such that you are forced to open a specific envelope by the situation on the board that you are resolving. This makes the starting ICRK random and the results of the resolution random. Each hex on the board has a value from 1 to 9. These values are on a chart in volume 38/2 of *The Kommandeur* or 17/4 of *The General*. These values are multiplied by the range to the target. This result is then divided by 6, with the remainder being the number of the envelope to be opened. A remainder of zero opens envelope # 6. Inside the envelope is a starting ICRK for the resolutions. At the end of the game all unopened envelopes are exchanged and the players can verify moves, torpedo launches, hits, etc. There will be quite a number of envelopes so it is not necessary to open and check all of them—just enough to verify that your opponent is resolving items without errors.

I personally have found that the game / system works best as a basic game with all optional rules except # 24.0 and 26.0, and advanced rule #39.0 only for first-turn hits on escort

vessels. Table 40.9 will have to be used for escort evasion against first turn of launch torpedo hits.

Sonar, radar searches and all ASW attacks are resolved by ICRKs that the escort player assigns to his attacks.

I have over 25 charts and playing aids on my hard drive. The drive also has several sheets of information on using this system. If anyone wishes this material and sends me a self-addressed, stamped, legal-size envelope with a 3 ½ floppy disc, I will format it and load all of my **Submarine** files on it and return it to you. Postage in the US is \$0.60, to Canada \$0.85, and Europe \$1.60.

Albert H. Thomas
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[Some specifics of Albert's system can be found (boxed) on pages 2,3, and 8. If you want to try this system out, Albert is looking for a match.—Ed.]

Assigning ICRKs for Attacks, etc.

Surface Fire

ICRKs will be assigned by vessel ID number, or by name in alphabetical order.

Escort players will assign ICRKs to firing escort vessels first, then firing convoy vessels.

Test Depth ICRK

In the case when there is more than one submarine exceeding test depth, assign ICRKs by ID number or by alphabetical order.

Torpedo Hits

ICRKs will be assigned by alphabetical order for those torpedoes that may hit that turn.

Each torpedo may need four ICRKs. The first two, if needed, for escort evasion. The third one for hit resolution and the fourth for damage results, if needed.

ICRKs will be assigned only if *needed*.

Sonar, radar searches, and all ASW attacks are resolved by ICRKs that the escort player assigns to his attacks.

E-Mail, Ciphers

The following is a way that e-mail players may replace the use of sealed envelopes. It can also be used by PBM players to replace some of the sealed envelopes they need to play the game by mail.

Players have three segments that need to be kept hidden: the convoy log, submarine log, and torpedo-launch information. The easiest and most error-free way to do this is with a St Cyr slide rule. The slide is a simple-to-use, multiple-alphabet cipher, which is secure enough for e-mail or PBM play. It would be better to change the *key* each turn. This won't interfere with the game, as the players will exchange the keys during the game or at the end of it. The escort player will have to give the key to the sub player for those turns the convoy moves. At the end of the game the escort player may then decipher enough items to verify the play.

I will go into using the St Cyr rule; however it would be a good idea for players to go to a library and read up on ciphers (Dewey 652.8) for more detailed information. A St Cyr slide is very easy to make by using a 1/16" x 2" sheet of wood and three 1/16" x 1/4" strips. I use basswood. The important thing is to use a computer program to type the alphabet strips and center the letter/number in a 2-unit space so the letters/numbers will line up over each other. This is best done with a spreadsheet program. The slides I make are 15" long. The letters are 16-size font as that size is easier for me to see and line up! I color the center slide **red**. These strips of paper/alphabets are glued to the three strips, the two outside strips are fixed and represent *clear* alphabets and the center one slides and is the ciphered alphabet.

St Cyr Ruler, (Partial).

		A	B	C	D	E	F
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
		1	2	3	4	5	6

1. The top line is one alphabet A to Z, These are *clear* letters.

2. The middle line is on a slide, two alphabets A to Z, A to Z. This is the *cipher* and is red.

3. The bottom line is numbers 1 to 0, 1 to 0, 1 to 6. These are *clear* numbers.

4. In use, the slide is adjusted so that the key letter is under the "A" of the fixed alphabet.

In our example, the key letter is "C."

E is encrypted as "G," F would be "H," and numeral 2 is "D."

5. It is possible that players would have to use a cipher "L" or "N" to indicate that the character following was a letter or number. This is necessary when ciphering submarine movement.

6. The slide is moved for every letter of the clear. That is, every clear letter is ciphered by a *different* alphabet.

Convoy Log

Movement plot is a two-section cipher.

2R would be one section for (2) and one section for (R).

For security's sake I would use two letters for each section.

(Null)(2), and (Null)(R).

The letters may be reversed without changing the meaning.

Index ship Board, Row, Hex #, and heading is also ciphered.

Every item except the Hex # is doubled with a Null.

Torpedo Cipher

This is filled out at time of launch.

Hidden torpedo run is important as it reveals the location of the submarine that launched it.

The whole torpedo run could be hidden if players agree.

Ciphered are: Type, Speed, Heading, Launch turn travel, Launch hex (A, B, C, Z, Y, X).

Launch plot.

Run depth.

The board hex of the launch hex is not necessary as it can be found from the location of the launch sub. The turn number and launch sub are listed in the clear.

All this information is listed as two letters with Nulls included.

Submarine Log

Eight sections for sub movement plots.

These sections will need a prefix letter L or N for what follows—a letter or a number.

Board, Row, Hex #, Heading, Speed, and Depth are doubled for security except depth, which is in three sections.

Book Review

An Army at Dawn

The War in North Africa

by Rick Atkinson

681 pages, maps, photos

© 2002 Published by Henry Holt

I can't recommend this book too highly. It has great maps and many photos, and Atkinson writes exceedingly well. Atkinson not only gives us the large picture but includes details that result in a rich tapestry of the campaign. As the American forces were retreating from Rommel's attacking forces, "Indefatigable Tunisian peddlers stood along the road holding up eggs, tangerines, and tiny gasoline stoves."

Atkinson plays no favorites, and places blame where he believes it is due, from Ike to Anderson to Fredendall to the green US troops.

Two more books are planned on WWII in Europe, and I will be eagerly awaiting them.

Omar DeWitt

Game News from Alan Poulter

This article is a compilation of information gleaned chiefly from Consimworld (www.consimworld.com) and Web-Grognards (www.grognard.com).

NEW GAMES

Avalanche

Tank Battles is the first **Panzer Grenadier** series scenario book with 48 new scenarios. The biggest is on Operation Mars, the 1942 Soviet offensive in front of Moscow.

Great Pacific War is a strategic-level game covering the entire war in the Pacific from December 1941-46, based on the game system used in the Avalanche re-issue of the John Prados design **Third Reich**. Rules are included to link this game with **Third Reich**.

America Triumphant: The Battle of the Bulge is a new game in the **Decisive Battles of WWII** series from designer, Brian Knipple. It is a one-map game with 280 counters.

Based on **Soldier Kings**, **Soldier Emperor** covers the Napoleonic Wars in Europe, 1803-1815. The game has two large hard-mounted game boards and 64 cards plus over 300 pieces. www.avalancheexpress.com

Clash of Arms

Whistling Death is the third card game in designer JD Webster's **WWII Fighting Wings** series. It is on tactical air combat in the Pacific and contains 110 scenarios involving 40 aircraft and ship types.

www.clashofarms.com

Critical Hit

Moments in History's grand tactical simulation of the Battle of Berlin, **Gotterdammerung**, has been re-issued in a 2nd edition. The new edition includes a new map, new counters, new play aids, a new rulebook, and a small map insert covering the fight for the fuhrer bunker.

www.criticalhit.com

Decision Games

Battle Cry of Freedom, by new designer David Smith, is a strategic-level card game on the American Civil War. It takes a very different approach from the ground-breaking **Blue vs. Gray**. In **Blue vs. Gray** players were responsible for the composition of armies and the choice of strategic objectives. In **Battle Cry of Freedom**, players re-fight the historical series of battles and can micro-manage the tactical engagements in each battle. The game also incorporates an immense range of historical events. It has no map and no counters. www.decisiongames.com

Eagle Games

Age of Mythology is a board game based on the computer game of the same name. Players control armies made up of warriors, priests, heroes, and mythical creatures from ancient Greek, Egyptian, and Norse mythology. They explore the world and gather resources, which allow them to create buildings and armies. Special buildings allow players to build new army types and improve the abilities of their units. Battles are resolved with a unique dice and card system. It is intended as a game non-wargamers could play. www.eaglegames.net/

GMT

A World at War is based on the **Advanced Third Reich/Empire of the Rising Sun** game system, which simulates the military, economic, political, diplomatic, research, and production aspects of the Second World War. The game includes many campaigns/scenarios, ranging from the introductory Battle of the Atlantic and Barbarossa scenarios up to separate European and Pacific campaign games and the entire war in Europe and the Pacific.

Ardennes '44: The Battle of the Bulge, designed by Mark Simonitch, features a plethora of special rules covering Night Turns, Determined Defense/Attack Options, Engineer Teams, Traffic Jams, Variable Bridge

Construction, Disengagement, Von Der Heydte's parachute battalion, and Skorseny's 150 Panzer Brigade. It is yet another contender for the best Bulge game.

Medieval, designed by Richard H. Berg, is a card-based game set in 13th century in Europe, Middle East, and North Africa. The cards represent the Powers (e.g. England, the Hapsburgs, etc), various events, and also provide the playing map, that is formed of nineteen Cards, only eight of which start the game in play. The rest of the map cards come into play randomly, but can be removed by the depredations of the Mongols. **Medieval** takes three to five players and includes 110 cards, markers, and play money.

The Great Battles of Alexander, the game that started the **Great Battles of History** series, has been re-issued in an updated and expanded edition. It includes new counters, maps, and scenarios that cover all the major battles from the original game (and the **Juggernaut** module) plus five additional battles. Ownership of this new edition is required to play a new module, **Tyrant**, on the battles of Carthage versus Syracuse, 480-276 B.C. www.gmtgames.com/

L2 Design Group

Bitter Woods, a divisional level game on the Battle of the Bulge, comes out in yet another edition. **Bitter Woods: Deluxe Edition** has a mounted map with enlarged hexes and updated cartography, larger counters, an updated order of battle, additional scenarios, and rules changes and clarifications.

A re-appearance of a classic is the fourth edition of **The Russian Campaign**, a strategic-level game on the Eastern Front in WWII. It has a mounted map, larger counters, new variant counters, new scenarios, an updated order of battle and an updated rules booklet.

www.l2designgroup.com/

Lost Battalion Games

Following on from **Drive on Stalingrad**, **Streets of Stalingrad** is an operational-level card game set on the Eastern Front during WWII. It con-

sists of separate unit decks, for German and Russian infantry, mechanized and tank units, and operations/locations decks, which provide for engagement actions.

It has been supplemented by **384th German Infantry Division**, which is an independent unit deck, and **Operation Uranus** which includes new operations and locations decks and new unit decks for the Soviet 4th Cavalry Corps and the Rumanian 1st Panzer Division.

www.l2designgroup.com/

MMP

Monty's Gamble: Market Garden is an area-movement game based on the **Breakout: Normandy** system. It covers the entire Operation Market Garden campaign and contains one map, two counter sheets, and a 16-page rule book.

For King and Country is an **Advanced Squad Leader** module that contains a complete order of battle for British units along with four mounted maps and 20 revised and updated scenarios.

www.multimanpublishing.com

Phalanx Games

Age of Napoleon 1805–1815, by new designer Renaud Verlaque, is a grand-strategic, two-player game based on the rise and fall of Napoleon. It has a mounted map, 162 large counters, a short rule book and 56 cards. It is intended as a game non-wargamers could play.

See: www.phalanxgames.nl/

UGG

¿Pasarán? is a strategic-level game on the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939, which uses the **Blitzkrieg General** game system. The map is area based; there are rules for production, special terrain, weather, and supply, and 55 option cards for special events. It is for two players but there is a solitaire option. www.ugg.de/

NEW MAGAZINE WARGAMES

Strategy & Tactics issue #217 contains **The Lost Battalion: The Meuse-Argonne Offensive 1918**, an operational-level game on the World

War One battle. Designer is John Desch.

Strategy & Tactics issue #218 contains games on two separate battles **Chancellorsville** and **Plevna**, using the **Empires at War** game system. Designer is Joe Miranda. www.decisiongames.com/

Vae Victis issue #52 contains **La Campagne De France, 1814**, an operational-level game on the Napoleonic campaign. Earlier games using the same game system have been published in *Vae Victis* #41 and #47.

Vae Victis issue #53 contains **Champs de Bataille IV: Asie** on tactical combat in medieval Asia. Earlier games using the same game system have been published in *Vae Victis* #9, #15 and #30. See:

www.vaevictis.com/

Note that *Vae Victis* magazine and games are in French, but rules translations are made available via: <http://grogard.com/vaevict.html>

Against The Odds issue #5 contains **North Wind Rain**, an operational/strategic level game on a hypothetical Japanese attack against the Soviet Far East in WWII. Designer is Mark Stille. www.atomagazine.com/

Alea issue #28 contains **Africa 1859-60: The Last Romantic War**, on three battles of the Spanish-Moroccan war of 1859-60: Castillejos, Wad-Ras and Tetuán.

www.simtacludopress.net/

Note that *Alea* magazine and games are in Spanish, but rules translations are made available via: <http://grogard.com/alea.html>

Six Angles issue #8 contains **Kharkov 1941-43**, an operational-level game on the campaigns for Kharkov. Designer is Mas Yamazaki. www.mas-yamazaki.com/sa8ordereng.html

NEW DESKTOP PUBLISHED WARGAMES

Zulu! is a BSO game from designer Richard Berg on the famous defence of Rorke's Drift. It has no hexes, no squares, no point-to-point areas, and

counters with no ratings or numbers of any sort! British counters represent 4 men, Zulu counters about 25-30 men. <http://members.tripod.com/~RichardHBerg/bso.html>

Khyber Pass Games have released **The Battle of Jassin 1915**, on a battle in East Africa between veteran German Schutztruppen and a mixed force of Indian regular army and Imperial Service troops. The game uses a new tactical combat system for World War One games.

http://216.234.163.39/kpg/kpg_main.html

New from designer Perry Moore is **Gunfight in the Valley of Tears 1973** on an engagement between 20 Israeli Centurion tanks against over 100 Syrian T-62/T-55 tanks! This tactical game covers the three hour battle that ended with an IDF victory. <http://pweb.jps.net/~perrya/>

Schutze Games have released **Cards of War**, a card game themed around WWII and **Fox's Gambit: Gazala**, designed by Paul Rohrbaugh, on the 1942 desert battle.

www.geocities.com/schutze_games/

Designer Roberto Chiavini, under his TCS banner, has released **The Battle of Montebello** on the 1859 battle in the Second Italian War for Independence. E-mail Roberto at: mumaye@libero.it

NEW WEB RESOURCES

As a preview of their forthcoming new **Men of Iron** series on tactical medieval combat, GMT is offering **Agincourt**, a complete game for download: www.gmtgames.com/miv1/sneakpeek.html

Designer Alan Emrich has made available for download, as part of a game-design course he is running, two classic introductory games from SPI, **Napoleon at Waterloo**, at: www.alanemrich.com/PGD/Week_09/PGD_NAW_rules.htm and **Strike Force One** at: www.alanemrich.com/PGD/Week_09/PGD_SF1_rules.htm

The web site for **Ancients**, a previously-published tactical-level game of ancient era combat, now available for download, has moved to:
www.relativerange.com/ancients/

Spanish Fury, Sail!, a complete set of miniatures rules for tactical naval combat 1560-1603, is available for download at:
<http://perfectcaptain.50megs.com/sfsail.html>

Designer David Kershaw has made available for download three games, **Barbarossa Solitaire**, **Imperium Romanum Lite**, and **Saxon Shore**, at: www.kerpob.com/games/

Unofficial 2nd edition rules for **Geronimo** are available at: <http://grognard.com/info1/geronimo.html>

An unofficial Midway variant for **Carrier** is available (as a Word file) at: <http://grognard.com/variants1/carrier.doc>

GENERAL NEWS

Rob Markham Designs for Avalanche

Designer Rob Markham has merged his Rob Markham Designs DTP-effort into Avalanche, so that his future games get the same treatment as standard Avalanche games. Rob Markham is the designer of games like **Soldier Kings**, **Granada**, and **Montcalm and Wolfe**:

"We are thrilled to let Rob take the ball and run with it!" commented Avalanche Press CEO Mike Bennighof. "I've worked on Rob's games for over 15 years, and I know from personal experience that his design work is the best our industry has to offer. Rob's games are known for their accuracy, playability, and most of all fun! How can we go wrong?"

The first Markham Designs products will be **Stonewall: The Battle of Kernstown** and **Greece Preserved: The Battle of Marathon**.

New edition of Axis & Allies

Wizards of the Coast will release a new version of **Axis & Allies** in March 2004, according to a press release:

"The revised **Axis & Allies**, created under the direction of Larry Harris, the game's original designer, will feature more detailed game pieces, a beautifully charted, full-color world map, and updated rules that promise to make play more exciting than ever.

"The redesigned edition of **Axis & Allies** emphasizes the game's dedication to historical detail, including the revamping of play pieces to reflect real-life military vehicles. Now German tanks are shaped like Panther tanks while the U.S. and the U.K. tanks resemble Sherman tanks. Changes to the fighter planes include transforming the U.K. fighters into Spitfires, the U.S. fighters into P-38 Lightnings, and the German fighters into Ju-87 Stukas.

"While retaining **Axis & Allies'** historical flavor and complex strategy, updates to the game's rules—such as new guidelines for weapons development research—help streamline and improve game balance. Other specific additions to the game include new sea zone configurations and even new territories."

New edition of Conquest of the Empire

Eagle Games in a press release announced the signing of an exclusive deal with designer Larry Harris to republish the classic game **Conquest of the Empire** in late 2004. **Conquest of the Empire** was originally published in 1985 as part of Milton Bradley's Game Master Series. It became immensely popular, and second-hand copies continue to be highly sought after.

"The new version of **Conquest of the Empire** will include the original game (with new rules for catapults, and other great optional rules), great artwork by Paul Niemeyer, and entirely new components and rules for scenarios that will include The Expansion of Rome, The Punic Wars, and The Barbarian Invasions of the Empire."

★ ★

The UK region has also gone electronic. You can view their fine newsletter, *The Despatch*, on our website in PDF format. It is one of the options after you access the e-K.

See details in the Editorial on page 8.

Movie Review

by Albert Bowie

"Gods and Generals" is a movie covering the first two years of the Civil War in the eastern, or Virginia, theater, and focusing on the part played by General "Stonewall" Jackson.

When the movie appeared last spring, liberal, politically correct movie reviewers disparaged it (which for me is a kind of recommendation in itself). It is easy to see why liberals hate it. 1) To the politically correct, the Southerners were the equivalent of nineteenth century Nazis; this film, however, tells the story mostly from a Southern perspective, treats Southerners with sympathy and respect, and articulates very well the reasons why they fought. (It gives an equally good and sympathetic account of why the Northerners fought). 2) The film treats Christianity in a respectful and sincere way, instead of the denigrating, condescending fashion Hollywood usually employs.

How good is the movie? For starters, Civil War re-enactors were used to supply the bulk of the troops, so of course the uniforms, weapons, etc. are all very accurate. There is one exception: re-enactors tend to be well-fed, middle-aged men; the actual troops would have been young and thin. But this is a minor quibble. What is portrayed in the movie is accurate: the characters represent real people who say and do the things that the real people actually said and did. On the down side, even four hours are insufficient to cover all the events of that period of the war, nor does the movie try to do so: it shows only parts of three battles: 1st Manassas, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville. Of all the battles that occurred between 1st Manassas and Fredericksburg (Jackson's Valley Campaign, the Seven Days battles around Richmond, 2nd Manassas, Antietam) there is no mention.

Those unfamiliar with the Civil War will, I think, find this movie unintelligible: just a bunch of guys shooting at each other. Those who know something about the war will likely regret the omissions. Perhaps it was overly ambitious to try to portray so many events, even in a movie of this length. If you want to see a good Civil War movie, watch "Glory."

★ ★

A Dialogue on Rules Revision

with Tom Oleson, Craig Besinque, and Mark Simonitch

No one knows more about the wargaming hobby than the membership of AHIKS, to whom I pose a question: is **EuroFront** designer Craig Besinque unique in his approach to the hobby? “No plan survives the first contact with the enemy.” Was it Clausewitz who said it? We all know that no wargame in its original form survives contact with players. However extensive the playtesting, some glitch is discovered and must be corrected, whether by errata or a new edition. The first approach is nearly universal, the second, common. Then there are games like **ASL**, where new scenarios are always added. I have made many long weekend trips to New Denver, BC, to play and playtest **EuroFront** with its designer, and I believe he has a unique approach to his game. There have been errata. There is a revised edition, but there is something more: continual evolution. I am not talking about the several editions of **Anzio**, or **TRC**, or **Bitter Woods**, but *non-stop* updating. On my last visit, it became evident that the Soviets could not properly garrison the Curzon Line while simultaneously preparing for the Winter War. This new issue arose from the introduction of an expanded North Front addition. Craig decided to make a change in the way the Curzon Line boundary is made effective, to solve this newly-revealed problem. **EuroFront** is *always* under revision, hopefully, improvement. This approach has pros and cons. The scope of WW II in Europe is so vast that I welcome Craig's receptiveness to improvements he and others discover. It makes for an ever-better game. On the other hand, not everybody wants a game to keep changing, because that is something new to learn.

You can't please everybody. I prefer Craig's approach, and again ask—is anybody else doing it?

[Tom Oleson](#)

While there is ongoing development to correct glitches uncovered by gamers and make other improvements, much of it is currently driven (as it has been in the past) by the expanding modularity of the Front games. **WF** brought sea rules, etc. **NF** has opened new possibilities and is consequently requiring new rules subsystems and modifications of old ones. IMO, no game system can be expected to handle the broadened scope of additional expansion modules without such modification and alteration.

Secondly, the updating I do is mostly in the background, to be included in errata updates (made semi-annually or so) and updated rulebooks when reprintings occur. For example, what we are doing for **NF** will not become official until it is printed.

...overly-successful strategies that evolve need to be counterbalanced, or play will become stereotyped.

Agreed there have been some system tweaks that are not strictly errata, but needed (IMO) strategic rebalancers. But this really stems from my desire (and Columbia's basic philosophy) that the games should be not just playable, but replayable. This means that overly-successful strategies that evolve need to be counterbalanced, or play will become stereotyped. On this point I may be different.

As far as the argument that some players do not want to be continually re-learning the game goes: these players always have the option to play one ruleset and stick to it. If they do not play a lot of **EuF** they may never encounter the strategy or situation that prompted the update! If they do encounter it, they then have a motivation to deal with learning the updated version. That is why it exists.

[Craig Besinque](#)

I can really relate to Craig's desire to tinker with **EuroFront**. However, there is a limit to what the gaming public will tolerate—you just can't keep changing things. The public will lose interest after a while and won't bother to keep up with the new changes, especially if they follow too closely.

I figure a designer has, at most, three shots to change his game: Once about three months after publication (to patch any glaring errors), about a year later to patch any problems that have surfaced after repeated play (and make official any good house rules). After three years the public may put up with one more change from the designer who wants to polish his puppy—but don't count on it.
[Mark Simonitch](#)

I had the unsettling experience at the Baltimore convention two years ago of coming across a contradiction in the **Anzio** rules on something quite fundamental, which had gone unnoticed for decades. It finally popped up in the championship match. Just goes to show how hard it is to playtest. Be that as it may, it seems to me that games like **Anzio** or **BKN** or **BW** or many others I could cite, which cover a fairly narrow topic, *should* be thoroughly playtested when sold, and—after a few years—should have the glitches all ironed out.

A game like **EuroFront** is different. Although easy to play, the topic is so mammoth, and the permutations so endless, that even as tirelessly dedicated a designer as Craig Besinque can not reasonably be expected to foresee them all. Just as one example, most of the minor powers in the game may wind up on either side. For that reason, I welcome his approach, or as I perceive it to be.

[Tom Oleson](#)

Mark Simonitch has just released his game **Ardennes '44**. See Game News page 4. It can be purchased at Boulder Games for \$34.80. Visit www.bouldergames.com and type in “Ardennes” in the search window. Tom Oleson calls it “state of the art Bulge.”

Submarine PBM

Sequence Sheet

[The terms "stocks" and "ICRKS" are interchangeable in the following.]

Phase 0 Both Players

Position all units so as to reflect the last turn's moves, attacks or the first turn positions.

Phase 1 Movement Plot, Both Players

Movement 7.0

A. Sub Player

- Plots this turn's move.
- Plots the launch/movement of torpedoes to be fired this turn.
- Lists submarines—stock for subs attempting to exceed test depth.
- Seals this information and mails it to escort player.

B. Escort Player

- Plots the move of the convoy three turns in advance.
- Seals this info into envelope.

Phase 2 Surface Gunnery, Both Players

A. Each player lists firing ships, range, and target ship; gunnery factors; die modifications; and stocks.

B. The escort player picks a CTD which will be used to resolve all surface attacks.

Phase 3 Escort Player

Star Shell Firing

Lists firing ship and target hex.

Phase 4 Convoy Movement

Escort Player moves convoy

Phase 5 Movement of Escorts, Searches, ASW Attacks

A. Escort Player: **no** searches

a. Lists escorts' moves. Lists these moves in the order to be followed.

b. Lists hexes attacked, type of attack, and ICRKs.

B. Escort Player: **with** searches

a. Lists escorts' moves.

b. Lists these moves in order.

Lists hexes attacked.

c. Lists searches, ship, die modifications, type of search, stocks.

d. Lists attacks, ICRKS etc.

C. After completing A or B above

a. Pick a CTD even if *no* attacks, searches are planned.

b. Pick a mailing date for next turn's mailing of both sides of Phases 1, 2, 3,

c. Send all move information A, B, C/a from above to the sub player.

d. The next turn's mailing date could be changed because of successful searches.

D. Sub Player

a. On the CTD from C/a resolves all moves, searches in order listed.

b. At the first successful search, he stops the move and returns the info about the search to the escort player. The rest of the turn is voided.

E. Escort Player

Picks up his turn where it was ended by the successful search.

F. Both players repeat c and d above until all escorts have searched, attacked, etc. Several mailings and could be needed before the *phase* is completed. However, more than two mailings is unlikely.

Phase 1-5 Mailing.

A. Mail all envelopes and surface attack/firings to your opponent. This mailing is less the Sub envelope which was sent earlier.

B. Escort player will include the convoy movement for this turn.

C. The date of this mailing is the latest date listed by both players in last turn's Phase 11.

D. At his option the escort player may resolve Phase 2 before going on to Phase 4, 5.

Phase 6 Both Players

Visible subs lost by sonar homing revert to hidden status.

Phase 7 Sub Player

A. Moves all torpedoes launched this turn.

B. Moves all torpedoes on board, in *alphabetical order, because he knows the result of and hits and detonations.*

C. Resolves any torpedo hits. Use 1st listed CTD in Phase 5c.

Phase 8 Sub Player

A. Moves sub(s).

B. Resolves test depth dies. Use last CTD listed in Phase 5/c.

C. Notify escort player that a sub exceeded test depth at the first opportunity.

Phase 9 Sub Player

Resolves ASW attacks. Use last CTD listed in Phase 5/C

Phase 10 Both Players

Visible subs out of visual range or radar depth revert to hidden status.

Phase 11 Both players pick a date for next turn's mailing of Phases 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. See PBM instructions #2.

Phase 12 Both Players send all results, papers, etc. for this turns results etc. to opponent.

Editorial

Please note that my e-mail address is now AHIKSomar@cableone.net. The Juno address is no longer active.

The printer erred with the last issue. It was printed on a paper that turned out to be heavier than the usual paper and thereby increased the postage. Some were sent out with a 37¢ stamp. If any of you had to pay postage due, I apologize. The printer has promised to reimburse AHIKS for the extra postage we did pay.

Our annual dues are rising to a more realistic level. They had been lowered the last few years to decrease our surplus. Dues will rise to \$12.

However, there is a cheaper option. We have devised a way to distribute *The Kommandeur* electronically—an **e-K**. If you chose to receive your *Kommandeur* electronically, your dues will be only \$6 a year. Since editors, and all other Officers, work for no charge, the biggest expense AHIKS has is printing and mailing *The Kommandeur*. The cost is approximately \$2 a copy to print and mail domestically. There will always be a paper *Kommandeur* because a few members do not use the internet. You will choose whichever form you prefer, but do not choose the paper *K* as a favor to the Society because all your dues will then go to the newsletter. That is said not to coerce you, but, if you are uncertain in your decision, keep that in mind.

No one wants to buy a pig in a poke. You can, right this moment, find out what the electronic version of *The Kommandeur* looks like at our web site www.angelfire.com/ny4/gmtom/AHIKS.htm. [**Note:** if you type "angelfire," you will get a porn site.] Type in the user name "AHIKS" and the password "Torch." This issue will appear, in PDF format. You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader to read, download, or print the newsletter, which will be available page by page to make downloading easier. Adobe Reader can be downloaded for free at www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/.

Downloading from our web site, which is run admirably by Tom Thorsen, will be one way to receive

your **e-K**. The other way is to have me send it to you as an e-mail attachment. Since the file will be about 3 MB, your server will have to allow and accommodate files that large; many servers do not. If you choose the **e-K**, I will have to know whether to send you a copy or just let you know it is available at the web site. In either case, I will need your e-mail address.

The advantages of choosing the **e-K** are: it will save the Society money, you will receive it about two weeks earlier, it will have some color, and, since page 12 will not be needed, there may be some extra stuff.

Work on moving the **Perpetual Fund** from its originator, Bruce Monnin, to the aegis of AHIKS should be done in the very near future. Stuart's column, which follows, gives you the opportunity to contribute to it. Contributions are returnable only upon the demise of AHIKS and if you have donated \$10 or more. The Fund will work as an endowment, with the interest going to the general fund and the principal remaining intact. Interest rates are low now, but they will not remain low. As, I hope, an incentive, your Editor will match any contribution you make to the Fund—up to a total of \$300. You may wish to review the article on the Fund in issue 37/4.

Omar DeWitt

Treasurer's Report

Memberships are \$6 and \$12. A \$6 membership entitles you to receive *The Kommandeur* electronically, and a \$12 membership will get you a paper copy. The increasing costs require us to institute these new fees. Hopefully, the \$6 fee will be an economical way of keeping your membership and connection with AHIKS.

This year there will be no separate mailing of dues notices. All 2004 dues (with check made out to "AHIKS") from members within the continental U.S. are to be sent directly to the Treasurer:

Stuart Schoenberger
63-84 Saunders St. Suite 2-J
Rego Park, NY 11374-3102

If your dues are not received by the end of January, you probably will not receive the next *Kommandeur*.

Outside the US, you may still send me your dues and change of address information, or you can send it to your Regional Director. Les Deck is no longer responsible for collecting your dues and keeping the membership list. When you send your dues to the Treasurer please include name, membership number, address, Zip code + 4, telephone number, and e-mail address. We want to be sure our files are up-to-date. If you are opting for the electronic *Kommandeur*, indicate if you want the **e-K** e-mailed as an attachment or if you will download it from the web.

Members who have a credit with the Treasurer will also need to write to pick the mode of delivery of the newsletter and to help update our files.

All members are encouraged to donate to the Perpetual Fund. Even a dollar or two from each member will go far toward increasing the principal of this endowment fund.

Stuart Schoenberger

SURVEY

Since taking over as Editor over a year ago, I have sent out over 200 copies of *The Kommandeur* every two months. It is a bit like dropping 200 pebbles into a deep well. Every once in a while I hear a "plunk," which indicates feedback. For many issues, there are no "plunks."

I would like to know how I am doing and what you like to see in your newsletter, so a survey follows. I would appreciate it very much if you would fill it out. You can cut it out of this issue and mail it to my address below, or you can e-mail me at my address on page 11, and I will send a copy in an e-mail that you can fill in and e-mail back to me.

"1" = uninterested, "5" = very interested

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Game news (Alan Poulter)					
2. Game reviews					
3. Book reviews					
4. Movie reviews					
5. Ouiji Dice TM					
6. Universal CF Counter					
7. Member "Trading Cards"					
8. Game replays					
9. Wargaming history					
10. Play Aids					
11. Bios of fellow members					
12. Upcoming events					
13. Post-Convention news					
14. Game scenarios					
15. Quizzes					
16. AHIKS Regional news					
17. Reports from AHIKS-UK					
18. Editorials					
19. President's column					
20.					
21.					

Please fill in, clip, and mail to:

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If you are choosing the e-K for 2004, circle here **download** or **e-mail attachment** and include your e-mail address.

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This page in the paper *Kommandeur* contains open-match requests. You can get a more up-to-date list from the web site. (If you were not electronically literate, you would not be reading this.)

(Continued from page 12)

Malbion, which is the only magazine in the world with a waiting list.

Armageddon, 6 July. Although crowds of fans packed the airport today, there was no sign of Dewitted arriving for tomorrow's first game. No one seems to know where he is; there are even rumors that he is already on the island somewhere.

Armageddon, 7 July. The World's Championship may not be held! Dewitted is closeted in New York demanding more money. At the moment, he is to get 30% of the \$50 purse. This is a new high—the previous high was \$7.63. Thomas O Blackstone, the umpire, granted Dewitted an extension, although the British contingent demanded he forfeit the first game.

Armageddon, 8 July. The prize money has been doubled and, after an hour's consideration, Dewitted decided to leave for the Canary Islands and the match. The extra \$50 was put up by an anonymous Scottish millionaire, N. Watson.

Armageddon, July 15. Dewitted arrived this morning. After he tied, up his rowboat, he went immediately into Seclusion, an out-of-the-way Botel. Returnbull, however, said there was no hope of the match beginning unless Dewitted made an abject apology to his budgie.

Armageddon, July 16. Dewitted wrote "Sorry" on an adhesive paper in bird seed and sent it to Panzer III, who ate it up. The match begins tomorrow if the airlines

can fly in Dewitted's camp stool in time.

Armageddon, July 17. Returnbull drew red in the **Afrika Korps** game, giving him a slight technical advantage. Returnbull started with the classic Bologna Sandwich opening. Dewitted replied with the rare Limbo Indian defense (all Indian units move to X-62 and stay there behind the Qatara Depression for the entire game). The game lasted 28 ½ minutes before Dewitted kicked the game table across the stage—the traditional indication of resigning. The game was interrupted only once for 25 minutes when Dewitted became annoyed by the sound of the die rattling in the Websterdickenfallentower. The die was eventually wrapped in an old sock to deaden the noise. This, however, slowed the game, since the sock had to be unwrapped after each die roll so the pips could be read.

Armageddon, July 19. Dewitted did not appear for the second game today. He complained bitterly about the cameras and sent a stiff note to the committee on the subject, saying he could not continue the match under the present circumstances. "There are entirely too few cameras covering the match. And, what is worse, most of the cameras that are there are pointed at Returnbull. Either I get more cameras, or the match is off." Because Dewitted failed to appear, the committee gave Returnbull the game by forfeit. He smiled like the Cambridge cat.

Armageddon, July 21. The third game, **Barbarossa**, ended in a tie. Dewitted's fake red beard seems

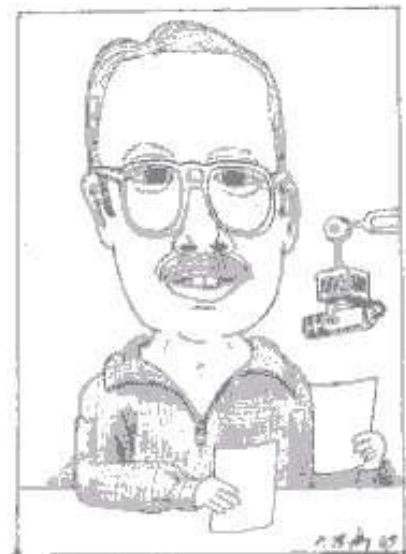
to have put Returnbull off his usual game. Dewitted complained briefly that the lights were reflecting off Returnbull's Nazi helmet. The problem was quickly solved when a member of the audience supplied a pair of panty hose, which were placed over the helmet.

News also leaked out today about Dewitted's 14 points. He demands: 1) a larger tent, 2) air in his bicycle tires, 3) food on days when there are no games, 4) the sandbox all to himself...

Where will it all end????

("Return to Reykjavik" originally appeared in EuRegion's *Albion* under the title "The Wargame Championship of the World" based on an idea of Bob McLaughlin and written by Omar DeWitt. It is reprinted with permission.) ★★

Alan's picture did not arrive in time to accompany his article in the last issue. It is included here.



Alan Murphy, RD Southeast
Self portrait

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The *Kommandeur* (K) is the official newsletter of AHKS, an international society of mature adults who play historical simulation games by mail. AHKS is an organization of amateurs, staffed by volunteers, and is not affiliated with any game company or publisher. Society dues are yearly, prorated quarterly, with a one-time initiation fee. Additional information about current rates is available from the Secretary or the European Regional Director. Subscriptions to the *Kommandeur* are available to non-members at \$1.50 per issue. We do not accept advertising. We do accept "ad trades" on an issue-for-issue basis with other publications and organizations. Direct inquiries to the Editor or the European Regional Director.

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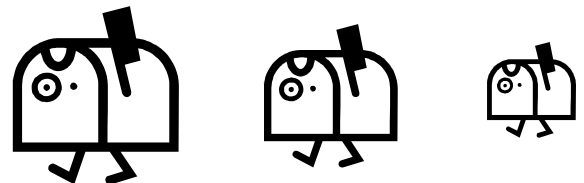
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PUBLICATION DEADLINES

Articles will be accepted at any time though submission of an article does not guarantee its publication. News items will be accepted if received in sufficient time to allow production schedules to be met. **Deadline for next issue: January 31, 2004.**

The **First** World Boardgaming Championship

Surprisingly, it wasn't the last.

The following appeared in *The Kommandeur*, Vol. 7 No. 4, 1973.

It is a strong argument for members sending in articles so there is no room for drivel like this.

For those who may remember, it is a parody of the Bobby Fisher/Boris Spassky chess match that took place in Reykjavik in 1972. "Returnbull," of course is Don Turnbull, Editor of *Albion*, an award-winning gaming magazine of the 60's and 70's. No one seems to know who "Dewitted" is, however.

RETURN TO REYKJAVIK

Garryowen, Montana, 5 Jan. (Neuters). Negotiations began here today on the Banks of the Little Big Horn to determine the site for the World's Board Wargame Championship between U.S. Grand Master O. Dewitted and British Grand Master D. Returnbull. The negotiations were conducted by the Masters' seconds, O. Dewitted II and D. Returnbull II. After four hours of digging, the talks were recessed for lunch with no apparent meeting of mines. The traditional site for board wargames is Berlinville, Argentina, but the U.S. Grand Master wants the site moved to Yorktown, Virginia (his second choice is Bunker Hill). Returnbull favors Quebec, Canada, or the deck of *HMS Nelson* off Cape Trafalgar. The *Nelson* is a submarine. Returnbull normally plays in a wetsuit. This is due mainly to the fact that he is a messy drinker.

Garryowen, 20 Jan. After two weeks of impasse, the site for the board wargame championship was

determined by a die roll. The first 12 games will be played in Armageddon on the Canary Islands; the second 12 in planes at Marathon. A 10-day recess was called before negotiations begin on which games will be played in what order.

Garryowen, 30 Jan. Returnbull's demand for 24 games of **PanzerBlitz** was dismissed out of hand here today, as was Dewitted's plan for 12 games of **Battle-ship** and 12 of **Go To The Head of The Class**.

Garryowen, 4 Feb. Decision was reached today to play one each of every Avalon Hill wargame in print at the time of the match plus enough SPI games to fill out the 24—picked at random from the huge Bingo cage in Edinburgh, Scotland. Still up in the air was the sequence in which the games will be played. One side demands chronological order based on the date of battle; the other side insists on chronological order based on the date of game copyright.

Garryowen, 30 Feb. A compromise has been reached. The 24 games will be played in alphabetical order. The word "the" will be ignored, but "battle" will be taken into consideration. The famous international observer, Aye I Aye, said, "A major curdle is out of the whey!" The match for the Championship of board wargaming will begin at Armageddon in the Canary Islands on 7 July, and the first game will be **Afrika Korps**.

Armageddon, 2 July. D. Returnbull arrived here today with his contingent of British Masters, a box of Dutch Masters, and his budge, Panzer III. (A British



parakeet—it has a stiff upper lip.) Although he had sprinkled the bird with yellow dust, an alert customs man, J K Nono, noticed the falsification, which meant A back 2. Returnbull stormed about claiming he must have his budge. With the match in jeopardy, officials made an exception to the Island's Bird Laws, and Panzer III flew inland. The British Grand Master quickly oriented himself and began establishing a daily routine—visiting the local pubs in alphabetical order.

Armageddon, 4 July. Some of the many followers of this grand pastime know the backgrounds of the great players. Most do not. Dewitted comes from a poor family from the ghettos of Michigan. As a youth, he was always ragged but dirty. He played in the streets and alley (it was a small town) of Balding. It was a tough town; they played hopscotch with real Scots. His first war games were not simulations. Dewitted started playing board wargames in 1959 and rolled his way to the top with his "magic die."

Returnbull comes from a long line of wealthy aristocrats. He was born in a private public house (the Bitt) on the estate, and rarely feels comfortable outside a pub. After his first championship, Returnbull was, of course, known to be Champion at the Bitt. After showing Hugh Hefner how to run a magazine, he started his own, the
(continued on page 10)