

The Kommandeur

Volume 40 Number 5

A Publication of AHIKS

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From the President

What's in a name? In case you've been asleep the past few years, you may want to know that AHIKS has been running more in the traditions of Larry the Cable Guy than the existing Bylaws. It's been "Git-er-Done!" and "Katy-Bar-The-Door," especially in the matter of presidential appointments and getting the other Officers to toe the line.

Responsibility for this situation falls on me, as your Maximum Leader for Life.

It was brought to my attention by one of the faithful in the following e-mail:

"For the heck of it, I was looking through the Bylaws today, and I noted what appears to me to be several things that have been done that are not consistent with them. Examples: Chester decided Bill [secretary] would be responsible for the official roster. The Bylaws specifically state that that's a Match Coordinator responsibility. They also state that the MC will maintain a stock of New Member Guides to send out to new recruits. When I asked about that many months ago, I'm not sure anyone mentioned that that existed in the Bylaws. Another example: the Bylaws state that the President will send out a formal communication on the state of AHIKS at least every six months, preferably bi-monthly, in the form of a newsletter or any other official medium established by the Exec Committee. I haven't seen anything like that [in a long time]. Another example: The President is supposed to notify the membership of a vacancy in the officer corps via the K or any other means available, and call for volunteers. Then, for the volunteers, the President is supposed to put forth a name to the Exec Committee, and the volunteer assumes the duties of the office for the remainder of the

cycle upon two-thirds vote. I know that's how Chester became Vice President before I resigned as President, but I can't really remember that it was done for Randy."

Where do I start? First, this process was *not* done for Randy. By the time that situation had arisen (the realization that no one had heard from the previous VP for nearly a year and could not be currently found), I had just overseen the ending of the position of Regional Director, which was a *very* emotional and drawn-out process. Personally, I just wasn't ready to go through that whole process again of canvassing the membership to find a volunteer.

Unexpectedly, I had a couple of volunteers almost at the same time and went with the man I felt would be the best for the job. Primarily because I know the man to be someone who thinks outside the box and we need some fresh ideas. He has already popped a few out and we will be discussing them next time.

Unfortunately, I was so burned out at the time I did *not* follow protocols and presented the Exec with a *fait accompli*. Nobody complained at the time (I think we were *all* relieved), but a few months later you see what I got.

And rightly so.

I was the one who asked the editor to publish the Bylaws in the K a few years back. I wanted all the Officers to read their duties and (hopefully) inspire them to offer rewrites more in keeping with the duties as they have evolved rather than as how they were written 20 years ago (as in the case of the Regional Directors). I attempted this many moons ago, but have not been able to get back to it and finish it out. Now it appears I need to at least *read* the words for my own good and that of the Society.

The point is *well* made as the e-mail continued:

"My point with regard to the Bylaws is certainly not that I disagree with any of the decisions that Chester has made, but rather that either we need to follow the Bylaws or change them. And I don't think we should be changing them after the fact."

We've been talking about the future of AHIKS, but I'm not sure we really have a handle on the present.

I cannot express enough to you the **ouch** that brought to my conscience. This is probably going to be the most humble *mea culpa* you'll ever get from me. It is also the most heartfelt. My original reply was, "That being said, I also don't think I've done anything contrary to the best interests of the Society. Does this put me in a philosophically weak position? Absolutely. A dozen quotes from Paul spring to mind... Short version is this—I'm up to my ass in alligators dealing with stuff that's infinitely more pressing than redoing the Bylaws so they reflect the current state of reality here in AHIKS rather than being out of date hopelessly. I still intend to get to it, but it's on about the farthest back burner on the stove." I have since delivered the work-in-progress Bylaws to one of the other Officers in the hopes that we will finally get this project completed.

If anybody wants to dig into it, I'll be more than happy to proofread and make suggestions, but for the foreseeable future I'm just going to continue pressing forward getting things done until someone with fresher blood throws his hat in the ring so I can retire. ;-) But in the meantime, I promise to get back to basics.

On another tack, it was suggested that we may want to rethink the Society's name.

"What's happening to the idea of changing the AHIKS name? There were a few e-mails of discussion, but

(Continued on page 3)

Game News from Alan Poulter (grognard@grognard.com)

This is a compilation of information gleaned chiefly from Consimworld (www.consimworld.com) and Web-Grognards (www.grognard.com). The material was correct at time of writing: 13 October 2005.

Alan Poulter

Friedrich Helfferich

From Consimworld comes this sad news story:

"We regret announcing the passing of Friedrich G. Helfferich (1922-2005), renown for his many contributions to the hobby, including his popular reign as editor of *Fire and Movement* magazine. The hobby has lost one of its true legends. His battle with terminal leukaemia is over and he is now resting in peace.

"Dr. Friedrich G. Helfferich died in his home on September 11, 2005."

The Boardgamer

Although *The Boardgamer* magazine is no more, a complete compilation of every issue, special issue, gamer's guide, and all inserts ever produced is now available in PDF format on CD-ROM. Price: \$30 includes worldwide shipping.

www.bright.net/~monninb/

NEW BOARD WARGAMES

Avalanche

Panzer Grenadier: Eastern Front Deluxe Edition is a new and expanded edition of the game that started the **Panzer Grenadier** series. With 112 scenarios, this version covers a vast array of battles featuring platoon-level combat on the Eastern Front, 1941-42, involving German and Soviet forces. It has 660 counters and eight geomorphic mapboards. www.avalanchepress.com/

Columbia Games

The second edition of **Hammer of the Scots** has a new look, including superior artwork for the cards. First edition owners can purchase parts from this edition of the game from Columbia's website.

www.columbiagames.com

Dan Verssen Games

Down in Flames WWI is a "virtual tabletop game," which means it needs free software (Vassal) to play online. This game on World War One aerial combat is the latest in the **Down in Flames** series. A free demo game is available. www.dvg.com

Days of Wonder

The **Memoir '44 Expansion Pack** contains a Terrain Pack with new terrain tiles, an Eastern Front pack with Russian infantry and vehicles, and a Desert/Snow map for Russian Front scenarios.

www.daysofwonder.com/

Eagle Games

Conquest of the Empire is a reprint of the Milton Bradley Game-master edition. The game covers the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. It has two rule sets: one an update of the original rules, the other based on the Warfrog game **Struggle of Empires**. www.eaglegames.net/

GMT

Wellington is an adaptation by designer Mark G. McLaughlin of his award-winning **The Napoleonic Wars** system for the Peninsula War. It is a card-driven strategic/operational game of Wellington's campaign to drive the French from Spain and invade France itself. **Carthage**, from designer Richard Berg, builds on his earlier game **Rise of the Roman Republic**. **Carthage** covers the Punic Wars. **Savannah** is the fourth game in the **American Revolutionary War** series. By series designer Mark Miklos, **Savannah** covers the events from September 10th to October 9th, 1779, as the Franco-American Allies mount their first significant cooperative effort against the British in North America during the Revolutionary War. **Savannah** differs from other **American Revolutionary War** series games as it covers a span of four weeks, so several new rules have been added to the game system. www.gmtgames.com/

Matrix Games

Lock and Load: Band of Heroes

from designer Mark H. Walker takes the award-winning **Lock and Load** tactical land combat series into World War II. It covers the battles of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions during World War II.

www.matrixgames.com/

Multi-Man Publishing

Advanced Squad Leader (ASL) Starter Kit #2 - Guns! expands the infantry focus of **ASL Starter Kit #1** into artillery and anti-tank guns. Its rules are based on those for **ASL Starter Kit #1** but have new rules clearly marked for ease of learning.

www.multimanpublishing.com

Operational Studies Group

Four Lost Battles is a quadrigame on the Dresden Campaign of 1813. Its rules are based on the **Napoleon's Last Battles** series but contain elements from the **Six Days of Glory** series, as well as incorporating deployment cards for extra uncertainty. Designers are Kevin Zucker and Alessandro Fontana.

www.napoleongames.com/

NEW MAGAZINE WARGAMES

Strategy & Tactics #231 contains **French & Indian War**, a Joe Miranda design, covering the conflict between the British and French Empires in North America, 1754-60.

Strategy & Tactics #232 contains **Catherine the Great Solitaire**, another Joe Miranda game design, which is a one-player, strategic-level game covering Catherine's reign, 1762-1796. www.decisiongames.com

Vae Victis #64 contains **Austerlitz 1805 (Partie Nord)** covering the north part of the battle of Austerlitz. When combined with the game from *Vae Victis* #58, the entire Austerlitz battle is covered.

www.vaevictis.com/

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

Against the Odds #13 contains **Bittereinder**, a reprint of designer Hjal-

mar Gerber's game covering the Second Anglo-Boer War.
www.atomagazine.com/

NEW DTP WARGAMES

New from Canons en Carton, **Alésia 52 B.C.** covers the Jurassic Hypothesis variant of the famous Roman/Gaul battle, using rules from *Vae Victis* #21. http://perso.club-internet.fr/fredbey/CeC_US.htm

New from Perry Moore Games is **Slim River: Armor Breakthrough in Malaysia**, which covers a Japanese tank attack against the British in 1942. Formation and chance cards give the game added spice. <http://pweb.jps.net/~perrya/>

Death in the Trenches from Schutze Games covers most of World War I in Europe, including the Near East, at the strategic level. Short rules and chits triggering historical events make this a quick playing but rich game. www.geocities.com/schutze_games/

NEW WEB RESOURCES

General Interest

The Dice Tower (podcasts on games)
www.thedicetower.com/

Jim Dunnigan's "The Complete Wargames Handbook"
www.mataka.org/ebook.php

Free Games

Hard Vacuum (FMG)
www.fatmessiahgames.com/fmg/hv/

Official Rules

Combat Soldiers (Lost Battalion)
www.lostbattalion.com/CombatSoldiers/rules/Combat_Soldiers_rules.pdf

Crusader Rex (Columbia Games)
www.columbiagames.com/resources/3226/3226-crusaderrules.pdf

French and Indian War, *S&T* #231 (DG)
www.grognard.com/info1/frenchindian.doc

Victory in Vietnam II (Schutze Games)
www.grognard.com/info1/viv2.rtf

Errata

Advanced Squad Leader (AH/MMP)
www.multimanpublishing.com/ASL/aslqa.php

Death in the Trenches (Schutze)
www.execpc.com/~talossa/diterrata.html

Fire in the Sky (MMP)
www.grognard.com/errata1/fits.txt

Rules Translations

Alsace 1944, *Vae Victis* #59 (HC)
www.grognard.com/info1/alsace44.doc

Jours de Gloire series (HC)
www.grognard.com/info1/jdgenrules.doc

Nordkapp, *Alea* #29 (Ludopress)
www.grognard.com/info1/nordkapp.rtf

Where the Sun Never Set: The Terrios, 1490-1690, *Alea* #30 (Histopress)
www.grognard.com/info1/wheresun.doc

★★

Back issues available on CD

Back issues of *The Kommandeur* edited by the current editor are available on one CD in PDF format. That includes Vol. 37 No. 2 through the current issue. These are available at cost: \$2 to US addresses, \$3 to other addresses. Send money and requests to me at the address on page 11. Make checks out to Omar DeWitt.

(Continued from page 1)

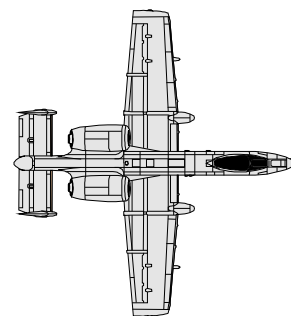
then nothing. I still think it's a good idea, and I'd like to see some action on it. What needs to be done?"

On the subject of changing our name:

I am absolutely against this. The Gaming public knows who we are after 40 years under "AHIKS," and the name doesn't *have* to mean anything. If anybody asks what "AHIKS" means, I always consider it an opportunity to go into our history and demonstrate that we have a noble heritage in this hobby we all love.

For my next column I will be presenting to you our plan for some very high-level, positive name recognition that gives back to the hobby. Stay tuned.

Your Buddy, *Chester*

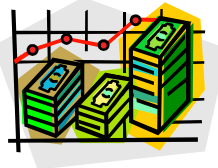


The web version of this issue (in color) is available at our website (www.angelfire.com/ny4/gmtom/AHIKS.htm). User name="AHIKS" Password="Slim" (Both are case sensitive; do not include the quote marks. If you use the Caps Lock to write AHIKS, be sure to take it off for Slim.)

Some people were having trouble with the "hover buttons," whatever they are, and Tom added another address to accommodate them. They should use:
www.angelfire.com/ny4/gmtom/ahiks.htm

If you still have trouble accessing the web version, contact Tom at the address on page 11.

Treasury Notes



Rise and Decline

Last time I mentioned resuming play of the old Avalon Hill version of **Third Reich**. I thought I would take some time this issue and give you an update on my “progress.” For those of you who may be unfamiliar with this game for whatever reason, a brief refresher is in order.

Third Reich, or as the fourth edition is often abbreviated, **3R4**, is a strategic game of WWII in Europe. It covers all the major European fronts on a corps level. Indeed, the map itself, in addition to showing all the major countries and territories, is divided into three specific fronts, West, East, and Mediterranean. Central to the game is the Basic Resource Point, or BRP, which is used as a sort of currency to purchase new units, pay for major offensives, take diplomatic actions, and so forth. Play of each turn begins by making Declarations of War and selecting a primary option on each front, be it offensive, attrition, or pass. Play of the military part of the game is dominated by land combat, with a heavy emphasis on the ability of armor units to make breakthroughs and exploit those breakthroughs; they are allowed secondary movement as the result of combat. Combat is bloody, with every combat ending with the total elimination of one side or the other. Air units provide support to land combat both offensively and defensively and can conduct missions on their own as well. However, air and naval combat is more abstract than the ground combat, all air being generic in nature, and all naval units being generic “fleets.” Fleets can transport ground units, provide supply, and conduct shore bombardment. There are rules that address the special capabilities of the different major powers, Germany, Italy, Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States. There are also rules that allow for construction of U-boats, ASW, use of Murmansk convoys, and a lot of similar chrome. Even by today’s standards, it remains

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a complex game. In some ways, it is perhaps more complex than the ubiquitous, multi-edition **World in Flames**, as a great deal more is abstracted to keep the physical size down to manageable proportions.

3R was redone in 1981 to fix some major flaws in the rules. The map was redone to fix many ambiguities, and there were a lot of rules revisions, many to fix fatal flaws that allowed for perfect and totally ahistorical strategies. The game was reissued by TAHGC in a fourth edition that incorporated a small amount of post-1981 errata. In addition, TAHGC published a “Gamer’s Guide to Third Reich” in 1985 that addressed many additional rules questions that came up in play. That is the state of the game that I am trying to play.

Play is demanding and unforgiving. Unit placement is extremely important, as a single unit out of place can be fatal to a defense. Advanced planning is also extremely necessary. Spur of the moment ideas may work, but laying the groundwork for a solid plan is the real road to success. Successfully executing such a plan can be very rewarding. Flow of the game can follow along historical lines well enough, but there is also room to explore alternative strategies. Generally speaking, on a strategic level, the game works.

But, despite the revisions, the game has flaws. First and foremost, with all the rules changes and clarifications, knowing all the rules is difficult, especially for the inexperienced or the forgetful. There are very important little tidbits in the “Gamer’s Guide,” and assimilating all of those modifications is challenging, especially when a lot of those little changes run contrary to the original rules and contrary to logic and common sense. The rules themselves are frequently contradictory and subject to interpretation and, therefore, invite argument. The strategic warfare system is poor and favors the Axis in the early game. I think the Campaign Game also generally favors the Axis, at least among players with equal ability. It is too easy for the Germans to become an economic juggernaut by mid-game. Even if the Allies can halt Germany’s military expansion,

there are little means by which to bring it down economically to the point where Allied troops are inside Germany in force by mid-1945.

Yet beyond the nostalgia, the game remains fascinating to play. I must admit having a lot of fun playing so far, despite a lot of problems with the rules. And so, I will share with you now the fate of the British in my game.

Fall, 1939. Knowing neither my opponent nor my ally at all, I set up the British defenses conservatively—I don’t want a first turn Sealion on my hands. Significant forces remain in Britain, with screening forces only facing the Italians in Egypt. A small reaction force of armor is set up in Alexandria, if only to cause the Italians some worry. I set up the Polish forces (by rule) as well, and according to tradition: around Warsaw so as to maximize possible German casualties. The French set up effectively so as to prevent a first-turn attempt on Paris, although giving up a Maginot hex. The Germans take their free offensive against Poland, but do not make the expected attack on Warsaw. Instead, they make overwhelming attacks from the north and south against the perimeter outside Warsaw. At this point I am perplexed, because conventional wisdom dictates an immediate German assault on Warsaw the first turn. The Germans take the abandoned Maginot hex in the west, but do little else. The Italians stay out of the war this turn, choosing to build up their land forces only. The Soviets invade Persia and move into their portion of Poland and East Europe. The French manage to retake their Maginot hex, and occupy Luxembourg as well. The Poles do little, as they are all out of supply except for those in Warsaw proper, and so all those outside of Warsaw are eliminated at the end of the Allied turn. The British do little except build up their forces and send some ground forces to France. So far, except for the unusual German attack into Poland, nothing too unusual.

Winter, 1939. Before the turn gets underway, I learn what my opponent intends to do in Poland. The Germans plan to select an attrition option against the Poles, guaranteeing their elimination, which costs no BRPs. He

then plans to use an offensive option to sea transport an armor unit from the west front to a closer port hex (still on the west front), then walk it across the east/west front boundary into an empty Warsaw. Well, the British cry foul, arguing that the Germans are misconstruing the sequence of play by taking their sea move in the west after rolling for their attrition in the east, and violating the spirit if not the letter of the rules prohibiting dissimilar activities across front boundaries. At first the gamemaster supports the German interpretation, but after consultation with outside parties decides the British are correct and that the German plan is illegal. But, having allowed the strategy in past games, and knowing that the German based his strategy on being so allowed, he allows the move to go ahead.

The Axis proceed with their turn. The Italians enter the war and enter Egypt and Tunisia on an attrition option, while the Germans declare war on Belgium and the Netherlands. Poland and the low countries fall, although some German casualties are extracted. The Italian attrition causes a couple of painful losses, if only because there are so few Allied units in the Mediterranean.

By the end of the Axis turn, large forces loom on the French border, in Egypt, and Tunisia. The Russians complete their occupation of East Europe and finish building their forces. More British units are sent to France, and enough to Egypt to prevent any Axis breakthrough to the Suez Canal. The French manage to sea transport an armor unit into Tunis, preventing its capture, and eliminate a handful of Italian replacements in northern Italy, advancing as far as Genoa. France appears secure for the coming Spring.

Spring, 1940. Both side make strategic warfare builds before proceeding with the turn. Continuing with the conservative approach, the Germans act only to clear out northeastern France of its defenders on an offensive option. The Italians take another low-budget attrition in the Mediterranean, although the French incursion into Italy does attract some German attention. The Axis ends the turn with a full complement of air

units in Germany, 40 factors against a combined Allied total of 25, and large armor and airborne assets that threaten both Britain and France. The British then hatch a plan to end the war in North Africa before it really begins. Because the Axis spent a lot of BRPs on their Spring builds and now have less than the Allies, the Allies gain the opportunity to take the initiative in the Summer turn if their BRP total is greater than the Axis total at the beginning of the turn. Adequate British assets exist to land an armored force in Libya and advance on Tobruk from the rear, while French armor takes Tripoli from Tunisia. All Axis forces in North Africa would be put out of supply and eliminated.

The plan requires the cooperation of the French navy, commitment of much of the Royal Navy and Army to the Mediterranean, and a weakening of British forces in France and Britain. It also requires the Italians and Germans to avoid intercepting Allied naval moves out of fear of losses to the French, who are destined to eventually become Vichy anyway. After careful consultation with the French, the plan is put into execution. The French send an additional armored and infantry unit to Tunis, and break through the meager Italian forces there. The British move assets into the Mediterranean. Axis forces do not interfere. Although a combined Allied attrition in the west fails to gain a single hex, the stage is set to take the initiative.

Summer 1940. The Allies seize the initiative and take a double turn. But it is here that the British first have a major problem with a minor afterthought of a rule. The intended invasion site is unoccupied, and the British are informed that it is necessary to pre-designate a supply fleet to carry supply if the British intend to exploit armor off the undefended beach. The British once again cry foul, arguing that it is insane to require a pre-designation of supply to an undefended beach when no such supply is required for a defended beach, and that sending supply to an enemy hex is equally as stupid when the original rules actually provide that it is illegal to trace supply to or through an enemy hex. But, there is

the rule, buried in the *Gamer's Guide*. The gamemaster has to resort to the "because that's what the rule says" in defense of the rule, but there it is. So, the British grudgingly designate fleets from both England and Gibraltar to carry supply to the enemy beach in Libya (the locals wondering, no doubt, why there are a bunch of English sailors throwing supplies at them). This will have repercussions later, but the plan moves forward.

Another Allied attrition in France fails to gain a hex (only a 25% probability of failure over two turns). British armor lands as planned, and advances to the outskirts of Tobruk. Can't get in because of movement limits, but the port is isolated. With Tripoli in French hands, all Axis forces except those in Tobruk itself are out of supply, and will be eliminated at the end of the Axis Summer turn if supply cannot be re-established. The British redeploy some air assets to Egypt to prevent an attack out of Tobruk.

Time for the Axis response. The Axis player announces grandiose plans, declaring an offensive in the west, but an attrition in the Mediterranean. I am informed by the gamemaster that the attrition has a 1/3 chance of re-establishing supply, because another rule buried in the *Gamer's Guide* says that attrition retreats have to be to a controlled hex, a rule contrary to that in the original rules and thus unbeknownst to the British. The Kriegsmarine announces a base change. Since the French president is on vacation, the British order the French navy to intercept. With a 5/6 chance of success, the French navy fails. This is bad. Countering and neutralizing the RAF (although at significant loss), the Germans announce an invasion of the British Isles, one hex south of London itself. The Royal Navy moves to intercept, also with a 5/6 chance of success. That interception attempt fails. The Germans make a 3-1 attack against the beach and are ashore in England. Had both interceptions been successful, there was a significant chance of reducing the Kriegsmarine to a level insufficient to carry the invaders and a small chance of defeating the Kriegsmarine outright.

Had an additional British fleet or two been available, the Germans may not have tried the invasion at all. The Allies take little consolation from the fact that the Mediterranean attrition fails to re-establish supply, and almost all Axis forces in Africa are eliminated.

Fall, 1940. This is where we now stand. The Axis re-took the initiative, taking their own double turn. Following the successful landing, the Axis managed a 2-1 attack against London, using an armor, a paratrooper, and overwhelming air support. No miracle was at hand; London fell without Axis loss. In France, a small Spring hole was used to push armor all around Paris, cutting it off from any hope of supply and allowing a 2-1 attack against Paris as well (still pending as of this writing). There is little hope that either nation will be able to mount a successful counterattack against their respective capitals, making this game all but over.

As I said, this has all been great fun, despite the sometimes painful lessons I have had to learn. Assuming France also falls this turn, we will have to decide whether this one is

still worth pursuing, or whether we should just give the Axis their victory and tee it up again. My thanks to my ally, **Bob Shurdut**, for putting up with my apparently hare-brained plans, our gamemaster, **John Michaelski**, who has had to put up with my arguments and complaints about rolling absolutely terrible dice, and my worthy opponent **Paul Edwards**, who is not an AHKS member but should be.

Treasurer's Report

Here are the numbers since last time:

Starting Checking Account Balance
(8-6-05): \$6656.53

Income:

Dues \$ 188.00

Expenses:

Tournament trophy \$ 50.33

K Printing \$ 166.08

Total Expenses \$ 216.41

Checking Account Balance
as of 10-6-05 **\$ 6628.12**

Perpetual Fund Balance 10-5-05
unchanged at **\$1229.48**

As of this writing, \$409.56 of the money in the checking account is earmarked for the Perpetual Fund, currently held as a certificate of deposit. Those funds cannot be added to the Perpetual Fund until that CD matures. Interest will be reported for the Perpetual Fund upon its maturity.

We continue to be on solid financial ground. I will be making an assessment for the setting of dues for 2006 prior to the next issue, which will contain our dues announcement. I'll start reminding all of you now, so that come April or so of next year you won't be wondering why you haven't received the latest issue of this prestigious publication!

Until next time,

Brian Stretcher

From Paul Pawlak:
Attention down under AHKSers.
A new Aussie online
wargame retailer has just started up in
Melbourne.
Warchest/Games4Gamers
<http://www.warchest.com.au/>

I ordered **Paths of Glory** from them
last month. It cost me \$64.00 all up.
If I had ordered direct from the US, it
would have cost me \$97.00.

12.4 REINFORCEMENTS

Reinforcements may enter at any friendly North, South, East, or West mapboard edge. New units may arrive by ground, rail, sealift, or airlift and count against stacking limits. Reinforcements are fully combat-capable on Turn of entrance.

1569 Bert Schneider, Oro Valley, AZ

There are several books available showing Civil War battlefield photos *Then* and *Now*. Your intrepid editor took a day off from WBC 2005 to revisit the Antietam Battlefield. *The Kommandeur* offers its own version, featuring Snavely's Ford.

THEN (archive photo)



NOW



The highest echelon of Officerdom in AHIKS asked that *The Kommandeur* reprint some of the "Ask Sarge" columns from earlier issues. The following is from Vol. 25, #3.

If you have questions for the Sarge, send them to the editor, and he will forward them to the chevroned sage.

Dear Sarge,

We of the Widowmakers War Game Club have looked through our entire game collection and found the military leaders with the highest ratings of all. They are; Hannibal, Alexander the Great, Peter the also Great, Frederick the also, also Great, Napoleon, Rommel, Wellington, Bobby Lee, plus 2 write-in candidates—Montgomery and Joan of Arc. As an eminent scholar of wartime tactics, which 5 of these 10 would you rather have on your side?

Mojo

Yo Moj,
Who needs leaders with tactical nukes? Get some perspective.
Sarge

Dear Sarge,

I'm really confused! In **Third Reich**, my Russian "ally" made a deal with Italy allowing him to place 3 Russian Infantry units of his surrounding Rome, under the diplomatic agreement/beginning privileges rule 51.31. Well, now I can't hit the soft underbelly because I'm not allowed to attack the guardian Russkis (rule 21.8). In short, I can have anything in Italy but Rome! Russia won't renig 'cause he's in a rocking chair with Germany agreeing to neutrality. What Can I Do?

W. Churchill

Dear Winston,
No problem. Offer him a free soda. While he's out of the room, feed his rulebook to the dog. When he gets back you whip out your first-edition rules and Mussolini is toast!
Sarge

Dear Sarge,

Is it true that the Charge of the Light Brigade failed in part due to dividing the unit into two camps; one thinking the food tasted great and the other thinking it was less filling?

In the Dark

The New VP Begins To Stir

Greetings to all. Yup, Chester twisted my arm to step up to the plate and fill the vacant VP position. I did so with the caveat that it was tied to his tenure. In other words, when his ship flounders, I sink with him. Reminds me of Lord Chelmsford's Chief of Staff somehow.

In the previous **K**, the Prez described me as "gruff." That may surprise some of my cronies who know otherwise. I think what Chester meant to convey is that I don't pull any punches. I am of sound conviction that AHIKS cannot remain stagnant and last the test of time. We need a hook or hooks to attract new members or at least retain our current membership. What that magic hook is I don't know, but I'm certainly giving it some serious thought. If you, the members, can think of one, please share it. Another strong conviction of mine is fiscal responsibility. I believe in maintaining a rich treasury (recall it was once 10G) because that gives us the freedom to sponsor activities, advertise, and otherwise flourish. Not in the least I believe in holding people accountable for their actions and inactions. I would rather a post remain vacant than be filled by someone who is content to do nothing with it.

The above is a start. It gives some idea of what I'm made of. I expect to rub some of you the wrong way during my tenure, which could be brief depending how long the officer corps is willing to put up with me. Do know that I promised the Prez that any future action on my part will first go through him. (I have already been reprimanded for upsetting my first

member.) Other members may find my take-charge attitude, ideas, and energy a refreshing change from the slump we seem to have settled into.

Here's a comment or two on the 20005 WBC:

IMO, the move to Lancaster County was for the better. The new hotel site is bigger, better, and in a beautiful part of the country. There are plenty of eating establishments nearby and tourist sites to visit. Of course, I renewed old friendships and met a few new gamers. I had the pleasure of sharing a room with a good friend, who is also our beloved Prez.

I confess I remain a bit disappointed that a number of fellow AHIKS members I knew were present chose not to attend either the AHIKS business meeting or the Chester Hendrix Invitational Dinner. After all, El Prez traveled all the way from sunny California, in part for these functions. To those who did attend, I tip my hat to you.

As many of you know, the WBC is our con of choice. Perhaps in the future, one of us will come up with an idea to acknowledge it in a fashion other than simple "lip service." The idea of AHIKS financial support was bantered about in the past but did not come to fruition. Perhaps some sort of recognition in The **K** of those AHIKS members who brought home wood could be a start? In any event, I think the WBC will remain the premier gaming con and encourage all AHIKS members to consider attending in the future.

Randy Heller

Dear Darkman,

No. Actually watt occurred was that the Fog of Battle was currently too dim to allow the light brigade to see the cannon fixtures at the Base of the Valley, locally known as the socket. Sorry, I got caught in a rut and couldn't resistor. Ohhh! How revolting! I bet you didn't think I had the capacitor to keep this up. So much for light humor.
Sarge

Dear Sarge,

My **Afrika Korps** opponent has a Rommel HQ unit, so I insisted that he make me a Monty HQ unit. He did but gave it a negative movement factor. What does this mean?

Monty Confused

Dear Monty,

It means that any German units you stack with are useless for the rest of the game. Allied units that get stacked with the Monty unit have to dig in or head for Alexandria (with a 2MP bonus). Sarge

(Continued on page 12)



Book Reviews

Three Quickie Reviews of Popular Histories

by Bill Watkins

My new daughter-in-law gave me Oliver North's "War Stories II Heroism In The Pacific." David McCullough's "1776" and Winston Groom's "1942" seem to have come to me as a selection I forgot to cancel from one of my book clubs.

Whichever it was, I'm glad I forgot to cancel the selection! These are three very enjoyable reads. None of them will go on your reference shelf. They aren't meant as detailed, precise descriptions of battles and campaigns. These are for you to read when you put your current game away, put your feet up, and look for something relaxing.

I hadn't read North's first War Stories book. History Channel has kind of soured me on popular histories. North's book restored my faith. It reads like a 352-page conversation with survivors of some of the deadliest fighting of the war. I am left with a deep impression of the survivors of one of our cruisers floating and floating without hope. I am left with a very deep remembrance of the incredible atrocities committed by the Japanese. North catalogs them without pulling his punches. Even I was horrified. North does a wonderful job of plumbing the emotional depths of this terrible war. I won't forget.

The Revolutionary War holds a special place in my heart. My family supplied one signer of the Declaration, the leaders of the most successful Tory guerrilla band in the mid-states, and the architect and builder of New Jersey's first state house. Sadly, I rarely like histories of the war. McCullough was a pleasant surprise.

McCullough actually starts his story in the fall of 1775. George III is on his way to address Parliament concerning the situation in America. The population of London has turned out almost en masse to show their support for this popular sovereign. That's right: popular!

McCullough also turns our view of the British commanders upside down. He shows through their writings at the time that they were professionals who knew what they were doing. These weren't aristocratic jerks. Their tactics were quite good. Again and again, they surprised Washington, and again and again they were this close to final victory. At least, they thought so. That led to excessive caution. It is very well described.

McCullough barely mentions Congress. His focus is on Washington and the calamities that kept him one short step from ultimate disaster. He also does a good job of describing the interesting personalities around Washington, particularly Greene and Knox.

I did find two problems with the book. First, every gamer will be madened by the lack of useful maps. There are period maps included in the picture section. They are useless for following the action. Second, I never developed much of a picture of Washington the human. Granted, this was the transition period for Washington, from dedicated incompetent to self-taught military genius. However, I never felt I was reading about a real human. I kept picturing the profane, angry commander Howard Fast gave us in "The Fox Hunter."

Aside from those quibbles, I can say the 297 pages went very quickly, and I was disappointed it ended. My \$32.00 was well spent, and I hope McCullough will continue on to 1777!

Which brings us to Winston Groom's "1942." I'm not even finished with this little treasure, but I had to tell you about it!

Again, I assumed I wasn't going to like this. I mean, this is the guy who created Forrest Gump and now I'm supposed to believe he can write history? I can say I was spectacularly wrong again. This is a book that respects the reader. I intend to read everything else he has written.

I should have known. Groom was

a junior officer in Vietnam. We were above average.

Groom understands the military at all levels. His insights are excellent. Of far greater value, he avoids the "taking sides" so common among writers of the first year of WW II. He gives us both sides of the arguments about blame for Pearl Harbor. He points out something I hadn't realized, that Admiral Stark was also discarded in the aftermath.

Thankfully, he gives us all sides of the Philippines fiasco—or series of fiascoes. Groom gives us what I consider the best explanation of how our airplanes were caught on the ground, very close to the great Martin Caidin's explanation. Groom tells you who said what at the time, who he believes and why.

Groom does a wonderful job of explaining things so that a newcomer can understand without drowning in detail. Take his comment on the Goettge raid on Guadalcanal, "One of those cowboy sorts of things that occur all too frequently in war when a hotshot ranking officer decides to get into the action instead of staying where he belongs." Haw!

There is an amazing amount of interesting detail, a lot of which I had not read elsewhere. For instance, the reason Rochefort and his codebreakers were able to break the Japanese traffic and give us our heads-up on Midway was that Doolittle's raid set off an incredible amount of angry radio traffic and recriminations from one Japanese command to the next. Wild.

Minor problems in the book were all indicative of editing by non-historians. Sorry editors, Saratoga was not at Midway. One other complaint is minor, but...Groom, like 95% of the writers I've seen, sort of drops the matter of those Japanese picket boats that caused Doolittle's force to take off a day early. He notes that we could hear warning messages going out from one of the picket boats. What happened? Groom, like that other 95%, notes Doolittle took the defenders by surprise but doesn't make the connection. I've only seen one writer outline what happened. I'd love to think there's a definitive study out there of the Japanese failure. Apparently, the Japanese command got

the message and did the math. They realized the American carriers were a day away from launching and relaxed.

Oh yeah, Groom also pulls no punches in his description of Japanese atrocities. At the exact moment I was reading Groom's description of the murderous Colonel Tsuji, History Channel was telling me Tsuji survived the war and never expressed regret. I will admit that I once became so overwhelmed by these atrocities I told a high-school class that if we had nuked Japan from north to south it would have been little enough punishment. Maybe somebody can write a definitive story of how the Japanese went from people who treated their prisoners so correctly in WW I to murderous thugs less than a generation later. Shrugging it off as a bushido thing doesn't work for me.

It's about 415 pages before you get to those notes you aren't going to read anyway and \$27.50, which I assume is a lot more than I paid whatever book club for this excellent, excellent read. Enjoy!

Armageddon The Battle for Germany, 1944-1945

by Max Hastings

584 pages, photographs, maps

© 2004 \$30 hardcover Knopf

Reviewed by Omar DeWitt

"Armageddon" is an excellent book, and I highly recommend it. The other recent book that I thought was exceptional was also on WWII: Rick Atkinson's "An Army at Dawn."

Hastings covers a multitude of aspects of the conflict and does it in a very readable fashion. He supplements the progress of the armies with many contemporary quotes and detailed descriptions of small conflicts that were typical of the many occurring on that front.

Canadian troops fighting in Europe were all volunteers. If a Canadian soldier did not want to fight, he stayed in Canada. It is easy to see why so many Americans trying to avoid serving in Viet Nam were welcomed up north.

Russian soldiers were allowed a monthly parcel of loot to be sent home. They were assigned to a com-

bat unit and stayed there until killed or the war was over; the only exceptions were women soldiers who got pregnant. In general, Russian soldiers were illiterate, with the manners of their peasant upbringing. When they invaded Prussia, many were resentful of the way the Germans had been living and did their best to destroy the things of that good life. Rape was a perk, and it reached its greatest practice in Prussia.

Throughout the book, Hastings discusses the quality of the fighting men in the conflict. He finds the German soldier the most professional. They were, until near the end, well trained and willing to risk their lives to follow orders. The Russians were willing to attack in very risky situations; for them it was more of a choice to be killed by the Germans or by their officers. Their penal battalions were invaluable in spearheading attacks. The Anglo-American soldiers were very aggressive until they broke out of Normandy. By the end of 1944 it was obvious that the war was won, and they were reluctant to risk their lives when it did not seem necessary. Hastings does not judge this behavior as bad; he says it speaks well that the victors did not have a killing lust to take back home after the war.

Various other aspects of the conflict are covered: POW camps; the German home front (German civilians seemed oblivious to the havoc their nation had set upon the world and were indignant at the Allied bombing and the lack of respect their victors displayed); the peoples of occupied countries (the Dutch suffered particularly more); and the Allied strategic bombing (which accomplished little until the end when they started bombing oil targets).

"It is one of the strangest aspects of the ...campaign that, even as Hitler's armies sank to their knees, they retained psychological dominance on the battlefield. The most baleful consequence of the Bulge was that it reinforced Eisenhower's fears about German counter-threats." One of the consistent German criticisms of the Anglo-Allied advance was that they were overly concerned with their flanks. A German counterattack on their flank would bring most advances to a halt.

Throughout the war, Churchill was concerned with the political alignment of Europe after the war. The U.S. was concerned only with the military results of the war. Roosevelt was always more suspicious of Britain's empire aspirations than with the Soviet Union enlarging its hegemony.

The author spends some time addressing the question of why the Germans fought so tenaciously when the war was obviously lost. Some German generals said it was fear of the Soviet armies. That was probably true on the eastern front, but defense on the western front should have weakened if that argument were true. Other generals said they had given Hitler their personal oath; upholding that oath was more important than saving German lives and infrastructure, apparently. The Soviet treatment of German civilians and soldiers resulted in the Germans fighting harder on that front; they saw little difference between dieing fighting or surrendering.

Hastings has also written "Overlord," which covers the war in Europe prior to "Armageddon."

★★

From The Multicommander Coordinator

A few members have been discussing on the web on how we might run an AHKS tournament. We need to find who is interested.

What commonly played games might be the medium for the tournament?

Can we pick a game and create a modified short version of the game of fewer turns?

Is that even necessary?

What kind of prizes would you want to go for: (a) one free year of AHKS membership, (b) a book, (c) a discount coupon for a game, or (d) something else?

Should it be just PBEM or both PBM and PBEM depending on the players involved?

Please send me an e-mail or drop me a note with your answer to these questions and do it ASAP so that we might have something for the next issue of **The K**.

Bob Johnson

bobjinfl@earthlink.net

10151 SW 97Ct, Ocala, FL 34481

Open Match Requests from Roger Eastep

In requesting matches, it's helpful if you use the Match Request Form available in each issue of *The Kommandeur* or on the AHIKS website:

www.angelfire.com/ny4/gmtom/AHIKS.htm.

Mail the request to me at 16456 Tomahawk Dr., Gaithersburg, MD 20878, or e-mail the equivalent information (including your e-mail address) to me at: ahiks291@verizon.net. When a match is set up, only one of the players should request ICRKs for all players.

If you plan to change or have changed your address, phone number, or e-mail address, please let Secretary Bill Watkins know as soon as possible to avoid delay in the receipt of your *Kommandeur*, ICRKs, and other valuable AHIKS information.

Please send top portion of completed ICRKs to Match Rating Officer Andy Johnson.

Note: this list is updated periodically between issues of *The Kommandeur* at www.angelfire.com/ny4/gmtom/AHIKS.htm.

2nd Fleet	(0826)	Ten Eyck
Adv. Squad Leader (AH)	(1382)	Massey E
Afrika Korps (AH)	(1269)	Schneider E
Anzio (AH)	(1269)	Schneider E
Anzio (AH)	(0111)	Oleson
Attack Sub (AH)	(1382)	Massey E
Austerlitz (2nd Ed)	(0036)	Yarwood
Battle of Bulge '65 (AH)	(1269)	Schneider E
Battle of Bulge '91 Smithsonian	(1566)	Gregory M/E
Battle for Germany (SPI)	(0826)	Ten Eyck
Bitter Woods (AH/MMP/L2)	(0073)	Johnson E
Bitter Woods	(0036)	Yarwood
Blitzkrieg (AH)	(1000)	McPherson
Blue & Gray II (SPI)	(0036)	Yarwood
Borodino	(0036)	Yarwood
Breakout Normandy (AH)	(1413)	Longest
Brothers by My Side	(1394)	Rice M/E
Bull Run (AH)	(1252)	Brooker M
Bull Run (AH)	(1051)	Heiser M
Caesar's Legions	(1269)	Schneider E
Civilization (AH)	(1185)	Ringhoffer M
Diplomacy (AH)	(1210)	Fasio M
Diplomacy (AH)	(1252)	Brooker M
Drive on Paris	(0275)	Scanlon M/E
EastFront (Columbia)	(0044)	DeWitt E
Flattop (AH)	(1430)	Warnick E
Flattop (AH)	(1550)	Duffield
Gettysburg '88 (AH)	(0711)	Leonard E
Gettysburg '88 (AH)	(1527)	Brooks M
Grant Takes Command (AH)	(1075)	Morley E
Guadalcanal (AH)	(1555)	Scott E/M
Invasion Sicily (GMT)	(0225)	Segarra E
Kasserine (GMT)	(0225)	Segarra E
Luftwaffe (AH)	(1269)	Schneider E
Monty's Gamble (MMP)	(1382)	Massey E
Napoleon at War	(0036)	Yarwood M

On to Richmond (AH)	(1075)	Morley E
PanzerBlitz (AH)	(0711)	Leonard E
PanzerBlitz (AH)	(0826)	Ten Eyck
PanzerBlitz (AH)	(1269)	Schneider E
Panzer Leader (AH)	(0711)	Leonard E
Pre-Stags (SPI)	(0817)	Riley E
Red Parachutes (AP)	(0012)	Jolly E
Red Star/White Star (SPI)	(0012)	Jolly E
Richthofen's War (AH)	(1554)	Trosky
Road to Gettysburg (AH)	(1075)	Morley E
Russian Campaign (AH)	(1345)	Scarborough E/M
Russian Campaign (L2)	(1566)	Leonard E
Russian Campaign (L2)	(1566)	Gregory
Russian Campaign (AH or L2)	(1243)	O'Connor ADC2
Russian Campaign (AH)	(1252)	Brooker
Russian Front (AH)	(1086)	Mitchel E
Russian Front (AH)	(0036)	Yarwood M
Stalingrad Pocket II (Gamers)	(1553)	Evenson E
Stonewall's Last Battle (AH)	(1075)	Morley E
Submarine (AH)	(1468)	Thomas M
Submarine (AH)	(0012)	Jolly E
Terrible Swift Sword (SPI)	(0275)	Scanlon
USN (SPI)	(0275)	Scanlon
War and Peace (AH)	(1554)	Trosky

E (member requests e-mail only) **M** (member requests mail only) **E/M** (either OK)

Members willing to volunteer as GM

Achtung! Spitfire—William Lindow 0988

History of World—Jeff Miller 1303

Napoléon (Columbia)—Omar DeWitt 0044

Red Parachutes, Red Star/White Star—Sid Jolly 0012

Standby opponents for new members only

Ron Brooker	1252	Bull Run
Robert Johnson	0073	Russian Campaign, Stalingrad, Stalingrad (Holcombe variant), Bulge-65, -81
John L Kreuz	1333	Bulge-81
Thomas Oleson	0111	Anzio
Rick Rokiewicz	1108	Victory in the Pacific

(Anyone who desires to be listed as standby for new members please inform the MC.)

AHIKS MATCH REQUEST FORM

Complete this form (please print clearly) and send to the **AHIKS Match Coordinator via postal mail or e-mail.**

Name: _____ Member # _____ Date _____.

Address: _____.

Phone: _____ E-Mail _____ @ _____.

PLEASE USE ALL APPLICABLE CODES FOR EACH GAME LISTED

- | | |
|---|--|
| [AR] Will play AREA rated match, only | [FA] Will play FAST opponent, only |
| [G(#)] Will game-master this game with # of players | [M(#)] Desire multi-player match with this # of players |
| [NM] Will play new member | [NR] Request non-AHIKS rated match |
| [VE] Will play by e-mail only | [VB] Will play by either e-mail or postal mail |
| [VP] Will play by postal mail only | [OT] Will play opponents outside US/Canada |
| [IE] Send my match assignment/ICRK by e-mail | [AD] Desire e-mail match using ADC2 |
| [CY] Desire e-mail match using Cyberboard | [YP] Need preprinted OOB (if available) for postal play |
| [IC] Need continuation ICRK for this match number | [I(#)] ICRKs needed with this #-sided die rolls (6, 10, 12, or other) |
| [YE] Need Excel OOB (if available) for e-mail play or game title | |

Game titles (please list in order of preference, **and be sure to include publisher's name and any dates, e.g. Anzio '69 (AH)**)

- #1 _____ Codes _____.
- #2 _____ Codes _____.
- #3 _____ Codes _____.
- #4 _____ Codes _____.

Maximum number of these requested matches that you are willing to start at one time _____

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gmtom/AHIKS.htm

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UK: www.ahiks.co.uk



Dear Sarge,

In a **Battle of Britain** game my German opponent says my Spitfires and Hurricanes have wooden props and he's dropping termites all over Southern England. What do I do?

Malathion hasn't been invented yet.

In Trouble

Dear Trouble,

No problem. Since the Germans hadn't invented weather radar yet, a terrible storm from the North Sea blows them all back to the Calais Coast where they eat up all the communication line poles. Without command control the Luftwaffe heads into the storm and is wiped out. You win.

Wasn't that easy?

Sarge



Dear Sarge,

I bought a used, punched copy of SPI's **Great War In the East** quad. The only problem (and it's a big one) is all the counters from all 4 games were mixed together. It's very difficult to figure out what counter goes with what game! There are no markings on the actual counters to help solve this mess. Do you or one of your readers have a helpful suggestion?

R. Peacock

Dear R.,

You mean besides getting a new name? Not really. How about it guys? Any suggestions?

Sarge

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Send Change of Address notices to William D. Watkins, 918 Bogert Rd., River Edge, NJ 07661-2338. Send the change notice as soon as the new address is known.

Permission must be received in writing from any other company to use their graphics or game-related materials in the *K*.

SUBMISSIONS

AHIKS desires from its membership original submissions of game-related articles, analyses of tactics and strategy, series replays, game reports, reviews of games especially suitable for PBM, book reviews, convention reports, and stories of the military. All submissions should use tasteful language and refrain from non-AHIKS political discussion. All submissions are subject to editing for grammar, clarity, and consistency of style. Columns by the Officer Corps are news items, not articles, and will be published subject to space availability. Please do not submit an article for publication which has also been submitted elsewhere. The preferred format for submitted articles, in order of preference, are: Microsoft's Word, WordPerfect, Wordpad, Notepad; any ASCII type file; typed articles that must be re-typed into the editor's computer; hand-written articles that also must be re-typed into the editor's computer. All submissions can be sent to the editor via either e-mail attachments or regular snail-mail.

Graphics can be in any standardized graphic format or in pen and ink sized to the width of one *K* column or less. The Avalon Hill Game Company and The Gamers, Inc., have granted formal permission to reproduce game-related graphics in articles about their games.

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: November 30, 2005.**

GENERAL INFORMATION

The *Kommandeur (K)* is the official newsletter of AHIKS, an international society of mature adults who play historical simulation games by mail. AHIKS 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.