

# The Kommandeur

Volume 40 Number 6

A Publication of AHIKS

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## IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR! DO YOUR DUES FOR AS LITTLE AS \$7.00

It's time once again, boys, to re-up for another year. But, your Officer Corps has decided it's no longer business as usual for your Society. We have big plans to begin promoting our organization through advertisements and the sponsoring of tournaments. In the long run, this means more services, more opponents, and more opportunities to play the games you want to play, in the format you want to play them. But to make that happen, a modest dues increase is necessary for the coming year. Dues for 2006 will increase to \$10.00 for an e-mail subscription to *The K*, \$16.00 for the print version.

**BUT!** For a limited time, renewals will be offered at a discount. If you renew before February 1, 2006, dues will be only \$7.00 for the e-mail **K**, and \$13.00 for the print **K**. So, as they say, **ACT NOW AND SAVE!**

# 2006 dues are payable now

See page 12.

### From the President

I've noticed, sometimes, that we gamers can be annoying people. If you've ever spent much time with a self-absorbed narcissist that doesn't even know you're in the same room, you know what I'm talking about. I've been that in the past. I watch my middle son do that nowadays. I've listened to the lament from "wargame widows" for years.

Do yourself a favor. If you think you don't do it, have someone videotape you sometime when you don't know it, and you'll see what I mean. Is there a solution? Sure. Put a timer on your computer to let you know every half hour. Get up and ask your sweetheart if there's something you could do for her. Take one night a week off and follow *her* around—do something she wants. Or go the Super

Sleuth route. Once a week (or more often if you can stand it) look around the house and find something that she normally does and do it before she has a chance to do it (or to ask you). Who knows? You might get lucky....

As we move into the holidays, please remember to give yourself a Christmas present: **send in your dues.**

Just for fun, do it now. Don't put it off. Don't take a chance on forgetting. Don't wait for someone to remind you. If you have to, write a check right now, put it into an envelope and put it on fridge with your payday date on it so you'll remember to send it off on time. It's amazing how many of us put this off until the Treasurer is pulling his hair out wondering how many names to send off to the Editor for the first couple of issues of *The K* every year. As we all get older, we all understand the danger of pulling hair...

Pull out a game you've never played. Punch the counters. Set it up. Read the rules. Play a couple turns. Relive the excitement that got you into this hobby in the first place. Consider starting a PBM game with somebody. Go for it!

In all these random thoughts, the theme is the same—break out of your rut and *do something*. Life is too short, brothers. Enjoy those around you. Interact with your fellow humans. I guarantee, if you got a phone call from the doctor telling you that you only had a day to live, you wouldn't spend it ignoring your loved ones or hunkered in your game room.

Of course, this could all just be schmaltz. But that would mean... it's POLKA TIME! ;-) Sorry. Had a Weird Moment there.

Enjoy the Holidays. Enjoy your hobby. But most of all—enjoy your loved ones. You both deserve it.

*El Prez*

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

This is a compilation of information gleaned chiefly from Consimworld (www.consimworld.com) and Web-Grogards (www.grognard.com). The material was correct at time of writing: 27 November 2005.

Alan Poulter

### Another Award

*Games Magazine* gave the Best Historical Simulation Award for 2006 to **Friedrich** from Histogame. If you have not tried this game you should. It has a very simple rules system and uses special playing cards to drive battles. While a detailed historical simulation it is not, it captures the feel of the Seven Years War in Europe, as Prussian forces engage a series of enemies (Russia, Austria, Sweden, and France).

[www.histogame.de/e\\_index.html](http://www.histogame.de/e_index.html)

### NEW BOARD WARGAMES

#### Dan Verssen Games

**Corsair Leader** is a solitaire game in the **Leader** air series and is set in the Pacific during World War Two. It is available in a printable (PDF) download format or can be played using free software (Vassal).

[www.dvg.com](http://www.dvg.com)

#### Fiery Dragon

This company has re-issued three old Microgame Design Group games: **Final Frontier**, a science fiction multi-player economic and military conflict game set during the colonisation of the solar system, **Freikorps**, an alternate history game in which Bolshevik Russian forces conquer Poland in 1920 and advance on Germany, and **Marcher Lords**, on the Welsh struggle against the English in early-medieval times.

[www.fierdragon.com/](http://www.fierdragon.com/)

#### HMS/GRD Games

The **Europa** series lives on! **Wavell's War** is the first **Grand Europa** module for this venerable game series. It contains additional maps and rules for East Africa to allow players to command the entire British Middle Eastern Theatre dur-

ing World War Two. Either just **War in the Desert** or it and **Balkan Front** are required to play.

[www.hmsgrd.com/index.htm](http://www.hmsgrd.com/index.htm)

#### Phalanx Games

**The First World War** by award-winning game designer Ted Raicer is a two to four player game on the entire war at a strategic level. It is much simpler than his previous **Paths of Glory**. [www.phalanxgames.nl/](http://www.phalanxgames.nl/)

#### Sierra Madre Games

**Airships at War, 1914-1941** is an updated and expanded edition of **Luftschiff**, with new rules and better graphics. The game is solitaire and covers battles in the air mainly during World War One involving airships.

[www.sierramadregames.com/](http://www.sierramadregames.com/)

#### West End Games

**Junta**, the classic game of political skulduggery, has just been re-released. Its rules have been given better presentation but they remain unchanged. The board and cards again look better but are the same. Essentially this is a glossier reprint of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.

[www.westendgames.com/](http://www.westendgames.com/)

### NEW MAGAZINE WARGAMES

*Against the Odds* #14 contains **War in the Aegean** on the conflict in the Aegean during 1943 and a bonus mini-game, **Narvik 1940**, on that World War Two operation.

[www.atomagazine.com/](http://www.atomagazine.com/)

*Vae Victis* #65 contains **Frederic II**, a strategic game covering the Seven Years War (1756-1763).

[www.vaevictis.com/](http://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>

*Panzerschreck* #15 contains four games: **Mortain 1944** covers the German offensive in August 1944 and uses a variation of the **Assault On Cherbourg** game system. **Raid On Schweinfurt** is a solitaire game

on the USAAF bombing raids in late 1943 against the Schweinfurt factories in Germany. **Hippodrome** is a multi-player card game on Roman chariot racing. Finally, **North Sea Campaign** is a strategic-level World War One naval game for two players. The first two games have die-cut counters; the last two have counters which have to be cut out.

[www.homestead.com/minden\\_games/](http://www.homestead.com/minden_games/)

*Command and Strategy* #4 contains yet another instalment of the monster game **Pearl Harbor**. It also contains a complete game, **Comrade Koba**, set in Stalin's Russia.

[www.ugg.de/cs/cs1.shtml](http://www.ugg.de/cs/cs1.shtml)

### NEW DTP WARGAMES

New from Canons en Carton, **Dürrenstein 1805** and **Schöngraben 1805** are the latest battles in the Napoleonic **Jours de Gloire** game series. [http://perso.club-internet.fr/fredbey/CeC\\_US.htm](http://perso.club-internet.fr/fredbey/CeC_US.htm)

New from Perry Moore Games is **Die Angelschlacht** on the battle between the 12<sup>th</sup> SS Panzer Division and Canadian forces in 1944. The game is an update of the earlier **Vital Ground** and is available at a discount to owners of this game.

<http://pweb.jps.net/~perrya/>

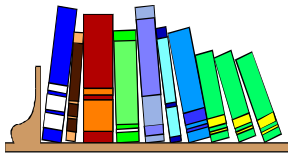
New from Red Sash Games is **Sport of Kings**, the latest in the **Lace Wars** series, and covering all campaigns in the War of the Austrian Succession. It is an enormous game (10 maps, 20 sheets of counters and hefty rulebooks).

<http://redsashgames.com/>

New from Relative Range is **Sun of York**, a two-player card game which covers battles during the Wars of the Roses. Its game system is based on that used by Columbia Games for their **Dixie** and **Eagles** games. [www.relativerange.com/](http://www.relativerange.com/)

**Warplan Dropshot 60** and **Warplan Dropshot 70** from Schutze Games cover hypothetical World Wars that could have happened in the 1960s or 1970s. They follow on from

the earlier game **Warplan Dropshot** which covered the 1950s. Designer is Bruce Costello. [www.geocities.com/schutze\\_games/](http://www.geocities.com/schutze_games/)



## Fassio's Fantastic Four by Mark Fassio

### NEW WEB RESOURCES

#### Free game

##### Espinosa (MMP)

[www.gamersarchive.net/theGamers/archive/espinoza.htm](http://www.gamersarchive.net/theGamers/archive/espinoza.htm)

#### Official Rules

##### Yankees and Rebels (Gio Games)

[www.giogames.it/immagini/Y&Rrules1.1.pdf](http://www.giogames.it/immagini/Y&Rrules1.1.pdf)

#### Errata

##### Operation Kadesh (UGG)

[www.ugg.de/cs/KaddErr.html](http://www.ugg.de/cs/KaddErr.html)

**Warplan Dropshot 60/Warplan Dropshot 70** (Schutze Games) <http://grogard.com/errata1/warplan.doc>

##### Wellington (GMT)

[www.gmtgames.com/wellington/WellyGaffes101605.doc](http://www.gmtgames.com/wellington/WellyGaffes101605.doc)

**Zero (GMT)** [www.gmtgames.com/dfze/Zero%20Errata.pdf](http://www.gmtgames.com/dfze/Zero%20Errata.pdf)

#### Rules Translations

**Blitzkrieg 1940 (HC)** <http://grogard.com/info1/blitzkrieg1940.doc>

★★

## From the Editor

Perhaps I have gone overboard in this issue pointing out that **Your 2006 dues are payable now**. The reason for my enthusiasm is that many members missed that fact in last December's issue, and we were scurrying all year to get them back in the fold. I know from experience that if I don't do something right away, I will soon forget about it. Learn from my mistakes. Some members have paid ahead; that does not lock-in the dues rate, but it does save remembering to pay each year.

I urge you to take a few minutes and fill out the survey and send it

(Continued on page 4)

OK, I admit to using shlocky, attention-grabbing titles to get you to read this review. (Be lucky I didn't call it Dad's Dirty Dozen, or you'd be reading this review 'till Christmas!) These four books were all read in the last 6 to 12 months and sit on my "must-have" shelf that separates them as true classics in their field. Let me share them with you.

The first book, *A Peace to End All Peace*, comes from David Fromkin (ISBN: 0-8050-6884-8). It has 635 pages, numerous maps and photos, and costs \$20. As expected, it is a take-off on events in the MidEast following The War to End All Wars. The essence of the book is that the current problems we are experiencing in the MidEast are not so much a result of the squabbling Arabs but are a direct result from the various treaties and strategic aims (secret and otherwise) of the victorious Western Allies during and after the First World War. The main protagonist was Great Britain, with Lord Kitchener appointing Sir Mark Sykes to work out partitions of the region (owned by the enemy, Ottoman Turkey) via secret protocols with France and Russia during the war. However, after the war, the British changed their views, seeing Bolshevik Russia as a potential menace in the area and France as an undesirable influence in its sphere.

There are also sizeable discussions of the original pro-Zionist plans during the war, followed by the change of government and the new, post-war anti-Zionism that followed.

Fromkin concentrates on the period 1914-1922, as that time frame seems to be when the real mess was created. You think the US has trouble pacifying Iraq now? This book shows you the *déjà vu* of Britain's attempt in the early 1920s to do the same; hopefully our efforts will bear better fruit. In short, the book left me with a grudge against the Western Allies, proclaimed noble ideas of democracy and freedom from "Militaristic Germany," yet had no qualms about the Middle Eastern lands and peoples

they were carving up on maps in London, Paris, and St. Petersburg. To know the past is to understand the present.

My second review is probably "the" classic on World War II, *A War to be Won: Fighting the Second World War*. This book is co-authored by Williamson Murray and Allan Millett. (ISBN: 0-674-00163-X). Murray is a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Defense Analysis, and Millett is a Professor of Military History at Ohio State – my kind of guys! Price is \$35, and well worth it. You get 650 pages, a military appendix, and decent photos. Maps are few and far between, but the ones inside are well-detailed. Truthfully, there are almost no single-volume books that can compare to this one to provide you the "who/what/where/when/why and how" of World War II in a concise, engaging manner. (Did I mention this is a *one*-volume comprehensive volume? Sure I did.) The book covers decisions and aspects of all the combatants and is refreshing in that it doesn't pull punches. If MacArthur screwed up, the authors say so. If the Germans were blinded by British actions in the MidEast during Crusader, it's in here. The authors deal with strategy and operations, and highlight how, over time, the Allies managed to out-plan and out-perform the Axis nations in all areas: planning, logistics, and, ultimately, winning on the battlefield.

Book three is *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History*, by Robert D Kaplan, well-traveled newspaper reporter and journalist. ISBN is 0-679-74981-0. It is a soft-cover book of 286 pages, with no maps and a handful of photos. I found the book an engrossing read that negates the need for maps. It's one of my favorites because, for me, it validates one of my own pet beliefs, that of Primordialism. (As background: I was an Assistant Professor in the Dept. of Social Sciences at West Point for three of my 23 military years. Our course was on International Relations, with three different "lenses," or

theories, of why the world is the way it is. Primordialism basically is the belief in “ancient hatreds,” i.e., these people are the way they are because they carry grudges back to the early years and never forgot nor forgave. The Department pooh-poohed this idea, and I was essentially the nut in the closet for thinking that way.) Kaplan, however, examines primordial views by giving us a narrative of his travels throughout the Balkans in the 80s and 90s and letting the reader see how people view their region and the prism through which they see themselves, and their neighbors. Kaplan provides individual chapters on Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Greece, as well as the view of (and by) the Russians toward the region. Historians remember well the “Big Brother” pan-Slavism that helped inflame the region in the early 1900s. Kaplan covers all this and more in this easy-to-read, informative book. See why, after reading this, that retired General William Odom once remarked that it “might take 20,000 troops a generation” in the region to pacify ancient hatreds and get everyone on the same sheet of music. Gee, didn’t someone just say it might take a decade to do the same in Iraq? The more things change...

My final book is an interesting one: Victor Davis Hanson’s *Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western Power*. (\$16 soft-cover, ISBN 0-385-72038-6). A warning: Hanson has authored other books (which I also enjoyed), but you have to plow your way through the early part of this book, with some parts becoming repetitious to the n<sup>th</sup> power. Hanson is a Professor of Classics at California State, Fresno, and a military historian. He has a sociologist’s “feel” to the early part of this book, and, as I mentioned, you have the occasional desire to set the book down during the early “dry reading parts” and get back to it, oh, sometime during the Second Coming of Christ. Stick with it – once the book “revs up” about a third of the way through, you won’t want to put it down. Hanson’s thesis is best explained by the quote on the book’s back cover: “Looking beyond popular explanations such as geography or

advanced technology, Hanson argues that it is in fact western culture and values...which have consistently produced superior arms and soldiers... demonstrates how armies cannot be separated from the cultures that produce them and explains why an army produced by a free culture will always have the advantage.” Prof Hanson looks at ancient battles, such as Salamis, Cannae, and Tenochtitlan, and continues his thesis to the present era, and makes, in my opinion, a good case for his view. Some may call it ethnocentrism (i.e., the democratic Western peoples will always thrash the automatons from autocratic societies), but the guy backs his views up and provides interesting “factoids” of these battles that I hadn’t read elsewhere.

So there you have it: my four choices for fantastic reading. There are other books on my shelf that are equally riveting. But to understand current problems in the world, the first three books above describe them. Hanson’s book hopefully provides the optimistic view that we will always be able to win the wars that arise from the muck described in the first three, if only because of who we are and what we stand for. Let us hope so, anyway. Happy reading!

★★

(Continued from page 3)

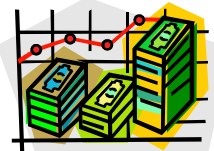
along with your dues. The officers work in the dark for the most part, not knowing what the membership is thinking. Please let us know. You can remove the last page and send in your renewal and survey at the same time.

Keep in mind that, if you give a low rating, things will not change unless you tell us how to improve.

I have just started reading “Roosevelt’s Secret War, FDR and World War II Espionage” by Joseph Persico. Persico writes well and is a fount of information, almost too much information. I did not know that the Duke of Windsor was governor of the Bahamas in 1941 and was pro-Hitler. One has to wonder how WWII would have played out had he still been King.

*Chris*

## Treasury Notes



### Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy

I think most of us come across rules or situations in our games that we either don’t care for, or we think could be better. We are therefore tempted to tinker with the rules, whether it be to put some money under the Free Parking space in **Monopoly** or the more elaborate rules additions and changes for **Eylau** as offered in these pages a few issues back. In the **Third Reich** game I’m involved in, a number of suggestions have been made for improvements in the rules, either to reduce ambiguity, fix things that just don’t seem to work, or to correct what appear to be serious flaws in logic (such as the Kriegsmarine possibly defeating the combined Allied navies even though outnumbered more than 150 to 1).

While I am not adverse to trying to repair what appears to need fixing, care must be exercised when rewriting rules, at several levels. First and foremost, you should consider whether the change will actually add to the game without unduly burdening play. For example, rewriting the attack-effectiveness rule in the **Blue and Grey** series of games to allow units to be disordered, shaken, or routed, all with varying degrees of effectiveness and the ability to rally to the next level, etc., etc., may very well produce a much more realistic simulation of Civil War brigade-level combat. But at what cost? The increase in realism destroys the simple fun of the original game system. Sure, it’s not completely realistic for a unit that suffers a simple retreat to be unable to attack for the rest of the day, or to gain an indirect benefit of sorts from getting to retreat instead of being required to attack even at 1-5 odds. But, hey, those games are fun to play and for the most part reasonably represent history. Why go to such effort to make it a different game?

Similarly, careful consideration must be made to how the rule change might affect game balance. The **Eylau** game mentioned previously features a Russian army of greater total

strength than the French but with fewer units. As originally published, an eight-factor Russian unit was at severe risk in attacking a lowly one-factor unit, because even at 6-1 odds, there is a 1/3 chance of an exchange which would eliminate both units. Although stronger, the Russian army is more brittle than the French in this game because the French army is comprised of more, but generally weaker units. As the burden of attack falls to the Russians after the first two turns of the game, exchange results favor the French over time. But, the article presented a rule allowing an offset of factors in the event of an exchange. Now, that same example exchange would give the Russian seven factors to return from the dead pile. The exchange mitigation rule therefore favors the Russians over the course of the game. Add to that the adoption of a bloodier CRT that removes the possibility of exchanges at greater than 3-1 odds and instead substitutes defender eliminated results, and play balance tips significantly in favor of the Russians, because they can concentrate more easily, plus really pile up the artillery. I'm not so sure the Russians need that much help in what was already a reasonably balanced game. The combination of the exchange mitigation rule with the original combat results table seems to work reasonably well, though, in the games I have played against our esteemed Editor.

Your new rule should be adequately tested before put into play, even if it appears simple and logical to you. For example, over the course of several games of **Panzerblitz**, Al Bowie and I have found that using a +2 direct-fire modifier against units that previously fired out of woods and town hexes (and are thus "spotted," even without adjacent enemy units) works quite well to alleviate the Panzerbush syndrome, regardless of the situation. The rule change seems to have minimal effect on play balance, and in some cases actually improves balance. But, just because it seems to work with your usual opponent, doesn't mean it will work with someone new. Your new opponent may bring new ideas and strategies to the table that you or your gaming group never thought about. So make

sure both you and your opponent have thought it through before implementing any change, because you don't want to play for two years to the halfway point of a long game only to find out the rule doesn't work. Insisting on using the rule change, even if your opponent does not want to do so, is not good gaming etiquette (and the same holds true for insisting on using certain optional rules). Ultimately, the fall back must be the original rules as written, warts and all. Also remember that you probably will not get to use your favorite house rule in tournament play, if you like to do that sort of thing. Plan accordingly.

I should point out that some "semi-official" rules changes have proven faulty over time. For example, an official AHKS ruling from many years ago in **Napoleon's Last Battles** allowed the players to voluntarily leave their units out of command, even if in range of a leader. Because the rules prohibit an out of command unit from attacking and force an automatic retreat instead (as with ineffective units in the **Blue and Grey** games), the clever Prussian Anglo-Allied player could simply leave all of his units in contact with French units out of command, thereby allowing all to conduct a safe one-hex retreat. This avoided the possibility of a low odds AE result, or worse, a low-odds attack that might actually win, leaving the attackers woefully out of position. These command rules ruined an otherwise decent game. Simply requiring all units in an enemy ZOC to attack regardless of command fixes the situation for the most part and was the standard rule adopted when the game system was reworked by Decision Games in the 1990s. The Campaign Game still suffers from impossible victory conditions for the French, but at least now insult is not added to injury by having all the PAA leaders run to the rear and make a better defense for it.

Sometimes they work, sometimes they don't. Our Society, with its diverse membership, offers a great forum for testing and refinement of games, both old and new. These pages can be used to promote and discuss your ideas, for better or worse, gentlemen. Use them.

### Treasurer's Report

Here are the numbers since last time:

#### Checking Balance (9-30-05):

\$6628.12

#### Income:

Dues \$51.00

#### Expenses:

K Printing \$156.86

#### Checking Balance 11-23-05:

\$6522.26

#### Perpetual Fund Balance: \$1229.48

As of this writing, \$409.56 of the money in the checking account remains 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 began the calendar year with a balance of \$6151.48 in the checking account. Assuming a printing expense of about \$160.00 for this issue, we will end up with a net positive income this year of about \$210.00. Roughly half of that amount comes from a few members who overpaid their dues. This represents a growth rate of about 3.4%, roughly equal to the current rate of inflation.

As discussed on the front page, your Officer Corps has plans to begin promoting our organization through advertisements and the sponsoring of tournaments. So, although there is a surplus in the treasury, if we are only barely breaking even right now, there won't be proper resources for those sorts of activities for very long. We therefore agreed that a modest dues increase was warranted this year, to support the Society's plans for the future. In my opinion, our dues still represent a great bargain and would still be so even at twice the price. Great and varied opponents, great and varied games, and six classy issues of *The K* per year. Hundreds of hours of entertainment per year if you want them, all for \$10 or less. What a deal!

Until next time, [Brian Stretcher](#)

## Let's Change the Name of the Avalon Hill Intercontinental Kriegspiel Society (AHIKS) by Roger Eastep

I'm sure that headline is being met by either outrage that someone would suggest changing a name that's endured for decades (longer than any other organization or game company) or, more likely, indifference. In the last issue of *The K*, our president made it clear that he is "adamantly against" a name change. Actually, I think most members, including Chester, agree that the "Avalon Hill Intercontinental Kriegspiel Society" is in fact archaic and, frankly, sort of dumb. So, I believe the main resistance to changing the name of our illustrious organization is with regard to the acronym, "AHIKS." Chester's arguments are that the name itself isn't what's important, it's "AHIKS" that we want to keep. He says, "The gaming public knows who we are after 40 years under 'AHIKS,' and the name doesn't have to mean anything."

In an e-mail response to a message I sent out to the officers last summer, our editor, Omar, agrees. "The subject of a name change came up when I was president in the 70s, when the 'Avalon Hill' was already redundant. The feeling then was that a name change would be confusing. The decision was to keep 'AHIKS' and say that it didn't stand for anything. 'RCA' was kept as a name long after it was no longer the Radio Corporation of America. We can keep 'AHIKS' and say **that** is our name."

Our vice president, Randy Heller, also preferred to keep "AHIKS." A couple of the other officers did feel that the name could be changed.

So, here is the issue put before the membership. And here are my arguments for making a change. Did you ever wear an AHIKS nametag or badge and have someone ask you what AHIKS meant? What did you tell them? "It's the Avalon Hill Intercontinental Kriegspiel Society." Frankly, I'm embarrassed to say that I belong to an organization with a bozo name like that. Sure, it's better

than such names "Aggressor Homeland," "Tactical Hierarchy for the Removal of Undesirables and S.P.E.C.T.E.R.'s Hierarchy (THRUSH)," "Kampfgruppe Von Pannwitz (K.G.V.P.)," "The Third Army of Pennsylvania," "The Good Guys Army of Ohio," etc., all contemporaries of AHIKS. However, it's generally been conceded that the full name of our organization lost its meaning years ago, and that it's really the acronym that's important. But if someone asks you what AHIKS means, do you just say, really nothing, it's the name we use for our society? No, I think most likely you say something like, "well it used to mean yada yada yada, but now we just use the acronym." I'd rather be able to say, it means something that's understandable by today's wargamers, and that I would be proud to have it on my society T-shirt.

Omar's uses the analogy that "AHIKS" has name recognition in the same way as "RCA" has name recognition. I don't agree. "RCA" is an internationally famous tradename, recognized because millions of people have bought and used their products for decades. Even people that have never owned an RCA product know the name because they've seen it advertised in every possible medium. I submit that the only people who know what AHIKS is are a) current members, b) past members, and c) a very few people who have had dealings with AHIKS members to the extent that they may possibly remember what they were told about our organization. Let's not kid ourselves. We're not RCA, and despite anything we could possibly do with our current budget, I doubt we could ever reach a threshold where the acronym could start meaning something to people.

There's another issue related with this that is too large to get into here, but I want to mention it. It does speak directly to why we should or should not change our name. The issue is: what is our vision for our society?

Where do we want to go, what do we want to become? Do we want to increase our membership by substantial numbers, or do we want to remain pretty much as we are? If we have no plans to change or expand, then heck, the best option may be to keep "AHIKS," and if anyone asks us what it stands for, we can tell them to buzz off because we won't care whether they know or not. If we have other, more progressive plans for AHIKS, then I think what our name is, and what it means to potential new members, has some significance.

So, you might ask, if we're going to change our name, what should it be changed to? This is obviously an important question because, if we find something that members really like, it may sway some of the reluctants to agree that a name change might be appropriate. What do I suggest? I really haven't thought much about it, mainly because I think by using the society's brain trust we can probably come up with something better than I would ever think of. Tom Thornsen came up with the suggestion that we change the name to "The Society Formerly Known as AHIKS (TSFKA)." That certainly is catchy. But the acronym is a bit difficult to pronounce.

If you agree, disagree, or even if you don't give a hoot, please send your thoughts, comments, and any name change suggestions to me at [ahiks291@verizon.net](mailto:ahiks291@verizon.net). If enough members feel that it's time to change the AHIKS name, it can be put up for an official vote.

★★

### 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 10. Make checks out to Omar DeWitt.

## The Art of Match Coordinating

I had an article in *The K* about a year ago in which I described how I go about match coordinating. The article also included a survey in which I attempted to get some idea on your preferences with regard to some of the match coordinating procedures. The response from the membership was 100%—100% non-response, that is. That was a disappointment, but I'm not giving up. So, here's the survey again, with some modifications. To encourage participation this time, I'm offering the choice of a FREE GAME, the winner to be chosen at random from the respondents. The games to choose from are Mayfair's **Sheridan's Ride**, TSR's **Fight in the Skies**, or Avalon Hill's **Storm Over Arnhem**. All games are complete and in good condition.

But even if you're not interested in any of the games, please send me your comments, criticisms, suggestions. My goal is to constantly try to improve the match coordinating service, but, without getting feedback, that's pretty difficult to do.

Before doing the survey, it may be useful to look at the match coordinating article from the October 2004 issue of *The K* if you are not sure about my procedures.

The questions are mostly yes or no, but please include any comments, explanations, or suggestions.

The survey is on page 11. If you wish, you may send your reply directly to me.

Roger Eastep

AHIKS Match Coordinator  
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Gaithersburg, MD 20878  
301-208-9354  
[ahiks291@verizon.net](mailto:ahiks291@verizon.net)

### Pick your free game



## Stirrings Become Rumbblings – Further Comments from the New VP

I recently discovered that a member came forward to subtly protest my selection rather than election to the position of VP. Whoever that member may be, I respectfully ask that he contact me so that together we can productively channel his energy into some new projects and activities for the organization. I promise to move forward with any new ideas he may put forth. No negative vibes here. Let's use whatever time we spend on AHIKS in a positive fashion, rather than complaining. Fair enough?

Before I proceed, allow me to once again say that the ideas and suggestions put forth in this column are simply that – my ideas and suggestions. Whether or not they come to fruition will depend on the support they receive from you, the members, and whether or not the officer corps votes to enact them.

In the last issue, I stressed how important I felt a rich treasury is to the organization. It will allow us the flexibility to enact new programs, recruit, advertise, etc. In the past, we seem to have been befuddled as to just what to do with the \$10,000 in our possession. I recall brief discussions about regional get-togethers, sponsoring tournaments, and creating an advertising budget. In fact, I did participate in a New England regional AHIKS meeting at the Groton, CT,

The web version of this issue (in color) is available at our website ([www.angelfire.com/ny4/gmtom/AHIKS.htm](http://www.angelfire.com/ny4/gmtom/AHIKS.htm)).  
User name="AHIKS"  
Password="Ney" (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 Ney.)

If you are not successful with the above address, try:  
[www.angelfire.com/ny4/gmtom/ahiks.htm](http://www.angelfire.com/ny4/gmtom/ahiks.htm)

If you still have trouble accessing the web version, contact Tom at the address on page 10.

Citadel Game Store back in the early 90s. If I remember correctly, we were budgeted for sodas and snacks. A couple of years ago, AHIKS sponsored a **Battle of the Bulge** Theme PBM Tournament. Excitedly, the tournament did manage to recruit a few new members. I think we could have done better with that effort had we advertised the tournament better and provided a more generous prize list. These are a couple of examples of our potential.

In the last issue of *The K*, I invited the membership to come forward with suggestions for any possible hook that might be to our advantage. Growth is what I primarily had in mind. As far as I know, the result has been *nada*. All I can say at this point is that I really believe an organization like ours can move forward as long as we have at least one officer or member with a vision who is willing to take action. Should you remain silent, I will come forward with a proposal or two in my next column.

Happy holidays to all AHIKS members.

Randy Heller



Dear Sarge,

Should I pay my 2006 dues now or wait for them to come looking for me?

Confused

Dear Confused,

Let me put it this way:



Sarge

## Gaming Trends in History (at Least AHIKS' History)

by Andy Johnson

War Games have been identified through most periods of recorded history. And, since most of recorded history is the history of conflict, it seems reasonable that there should be such evidence.

What drew me to wargaming (I'd never make the politically correct team) was a love of history and the desire to see what the facts looked like when placed on a map that was two dimensional in reality but always three dimensions in my imagination.

From the Pharaohs planning to repel invasion to the famous terra cotta army of a Chinese Emperor, we've always been fond of trying to figure out what the other guy would do before he did it. Although in the Chinese case I wondered who he planned to play in the after-life. While Frederick the Great had a molded lead set of his battalions that marched across detailed plaster boards, most of us have to settle for real cardboard (versus the imitation stuff).

Our AHIKS archives go back only to the early 80s, but they do give some insights into trends in our affection for game types. I've broadly categorized the games into the simulation approach: tactical, operational, or strategic; and physical scale: small, medium, or monster. (Remember the joy of finding someone with a garage big enough to actually set up the entire DNO/UNT game?) The categories are arbitrary, but, since I'm writing this, I get to choose. You can argue that we tend to play what the designers offer. That point has valid-

ity, but, if it wasn't selling, it didn't last long in the marketplace.

What I've found is that the approach is cyclical without any particular regard for era or battlefield (land, sea, or air). The table below outlines what my research pulled from our history. My thoughts on what, if anything, that means follow.

These data show that our propensity for small games is a constant throughout our history, with a period of interest for medium-sized operational games that grew through the mid-eighties then tailed off in the mid to late nineties.

Some of the games moved from one category to another depending on the scenario played. For example, there are scenarios for **Squad Leader**, **Panzer Leader**, and **Wooden Ships and Iron Men** that become monster tactical. Likewise, no matter what you played in **Wacht am Rhein** it was still a monster. Anyone playing **Terrible Swift Sword** was usually willing to lead Pickett's Charge personally just to get the game done.

I did not use the actual time to play a game as a factor, as it is difficult to assess in our history. It becomes a function of postal service at the time (or lack thereof) and player behavior rather than just the game complexity.

I did some secondary research on the publication date of games and found that the Small Tactical and Operational categories dates cover all the periods, while the

Monster games hit their peak in the mid to late eighties. The Medium Tactical / Operational games hit a publication peak in the mid eighties to mid nineties and have shown some resurgence with the republication of games like **Bitter Woods** and **Russian Campaign** in the last two to three years.

The data also reflect our respective time for gaming (pre-family or pre-kids) in the periods. I have no demographic data on our membership, but I suspect that many of us grew up (and/or old) in this hobby. I know I did.

The advent of RPG games, computer, and on-line games has also skewed these results. The one-player "shooter" RPG games (**Medal of Honor**, **Doom**, et al) attract the fire-fire-aim mindset without the benefit of understanding the history. While the games are escapist fun (I own both those referenced), they can't bring that sensation of sitting behind the map of Little Round Top as you await the onslaught and imagining what those soldiers saw and felt. I had relatives on both sides at that battle, and the game always brings a connection I cannot explain, but I feel it just the same.

Gaming is not now and never has been about the data, but what enjoyment you derive and perhaps what you learn about history and at times yourself.

May this holiday season bring you a safe respite from the world and, I hope, a new game to enjoy.

★★

Matches Played

	Small Tac	Small Ops	Small Strat	Med Tac	Med Ops	Med Strat	Monst Tac	Monst Ops	Monst Strat
1979-1985	H	L	L	H	M	M	L	M	L
1985-1990	H	M	L	M	H	L	L	L	L
1990-1995	H	H	L	M	H	L	L	M	L
1995-2000	H	H	L	L	M	L	L	L	L
2000-2005	H	H	L	L	L	L	L	L	L

Legend: H= more than 25, M=10-24, L= less than 10



## 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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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
Afrika Korps (AH)	(1312)	Wells M/E
Anzio (AH)	(1269)	Schneider E
Anzio (AH)	(0111)	Oleson
Attack Sub (AH)	(1382)	Massey E
Austerlitz (2nd Ed)	(0036)	Yarwood
Barbarossa to Berlin (GMT)	(1086)	Mitchell E
Battle of Bulge '65 (AH)	(1269)	Schneider E
Battle of Bulge '81 (AH)	(1051)	Heiser M
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
D-Day '77	(1312)	Wells M/E
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
For the People (GMT)	(1086)	Mitchell E
Fortress Europa (AH)	(1051)	Heiser M
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
Guadalcanal (AH)	(1051)	Heiser 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
Panzer Armee Afrika (AH)	(1051)	Heiser M
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)	(1051)	Heiser 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)	Mitchell E
Russian Front (AH)	(0036)	Yarwood M
Stalingrad Pocket II (Gamers)	(1553)	Evenson E
Submarine (AH)	(1468)	Thomas M
Submarine (AH)	(0012)	Jolly E
Tactics II (AH)	(1312)	Wells M/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)

### 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, 2006**

### 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.

## 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

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

**UK:** www.ahiks.co.uk



# SURVEY

So that your officers, who work without pay and pay dues as well can better serve you, please complete this survey and send it in with page 12 and your dues. Circle your responses. Comments are most welcome.

## Rate *The Kommandeur*

Content    Poor Fair Good  
Appearance Poor Fair Good  
Sarge Says    Poor Fair Good

## Multiplayer games

Are you interested in playing

If there are prizes    Yes No

If there are no prizes    Yes No

## Contests

Are you interested in contests within AHIKS

If there are prizes    Yes No

If there are no prizes    Yes No

What game? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to volunteer for an officer's position if it became vacant? Yes No

If "yes," which position?

Should AHIKS change its name?  
Yes No

## Match Coordinating

1. Are the match request lists updated often enough in *The K* and on our web site? Yes or No.

2. Is there any more information you would like on the match request lists? Yes or No. Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

3. When was the last time you requested a match from the MC? Approximate date: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Would you like to receive an acknowledgment when you send in a match request to the MC? Yes or No.

5. Can you usually find a game on the match request list that you're interested in playing? Yes or No.

6. Are you satisfied with the time it takes to match you with an opponent? Yes or No.

7. If the MC has to contact you regarding questions on your match request, do you prefer to be contacted by a) phone, b) e-mail, c) regular mail, d) in person.

8. Do you usually get everything you need for the match from the MC? Yes or No.

9. Please indicate the percentages of the matches *set up by the MC* that you play that are via a) postal mail \_\_\_\_\_%, b) e-mail \_\_\_\_\_%, c) face to face \_\_\_\_\_%.

10. Please indicate the percentages of the matches *set up by the MC* that you play using a) an online dice server \_\_\_\_\_% b) an ICRK \_\_\_\_\_% c) something else \_\_\_\_\_%(please specify).

11. Please indicate the percentages of matches you *play with other AHIKS members* that are a) set up by the AHIKS MC \_\_\_\_\_% b) set up on your own \_\_\_\_\_%.

12. Is the new Match Assignment Form/ICRK (issued in the last couple of years) that you get from the MC a) inadequate b) adequate c) very good with regard to readability and functionality d) so cool with the graphic that you show it to all your friends to impress them.

13. Do you a) exchange ICRKs with your opponent only after both games of the match are completed or b) cut out the columns on the ICRK and send them during the match as soon as all of the numbers in the column have been used?

14. When using the ICRK, do you always choose numbers sequentially in a column without skipping any? Yes or No.

15. Do you have any questions on the use of the ICRKs. Yes or No. (Note: As of a couple of months ago, an instruction sheet was include with every ICRK sent out).

16. Do you find the ICRK Page 2 (table for recording the results of rolls that you choose on your opponent's ICRK) useful? Yes or No.

17. How would you like the ICRK numbers generated?:

- Have the total number of each number equal, i.e., in a 300 set of d6 numbers, there would always be 50 1s, 50 2s, 50 3s, ...
- Have the numbers of 1s, 2s, etc equal on both ICRKs, but not necessarily 50 1s,
- Have the ICRK numbers generated totally randomly, even if that means that you or your opponent may have a slight advantage with regard to die rolls.

18. Do you find the sums for each column of any use? Yes or No.

19. When a match is completed, do you know to send the results to the Ratings Officer, **not** the match coordinator? Yes or No.

Comments:

# Your 2006 dues are payable now.

## 2006 Renewal Form

Send this form or a facsimile plus your dues in US dollars (make check out to "AHIKS") to:

Brian Stretcher, Treasurer  
5282 Dear Path  
Milford, OH 45150-9418

PLEASE PRINT

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Membership # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_@\_\_\_\_\_ ☎ \_\_\_\_\_

Your dues are determined by the method you receive *The Kommandeur*. Check box.

E-mail. Choose  attachment about 500 KB, or  download from the AHIKS web site.  
Cost is \$7 if your letter is postmarked no later than Jan. 31, 2006. **Or \$10.**

Paper copy by regular mail. Cost is \$13 if your letter is postmarked no later than Jan. 31, 2006.  
**Or \$16.**

I wish to donate to the AHIKS Perpetual Fund: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

### Assistance requested

Just before I got this issue ready to go I started thinking that it would be a good idea if I could embed hyperlinks in the text so you could access the sites that Alan gives us just by clicking on the name.

I work in MS Publisher, and in the time I had, I was unable to access the web from my document.

Tom is researching this, but if any of you have any suggestions, I would be glad to hear from you.

I assume that when you do go to a site mention herein that you copy and paste the address, but maybe we can shorten the process.

Can you help?

