

The Kommandeur



Volume 45 Number 5

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From the President Charles Marshall

Hello everyone! I hope you all had a great summer and with it some great wargaming fun! I managed to get a few turns in myself but not as many as I'd like. Oh well!

I don't have much to mention this time around other than to proudly say that we're adding new members to our rolls almost weekly. That's great! I'd like to extend a warm welcome to all new members and invite all members, new and old alike, to sign up for our online forum, dedicated die roller, and map-based social network, all of which can be found at www.ahiks.com.

We have an upgrade to the dedicated die roller in the works, and it could very possibly be available to you by the time you read this. Here are the changes that you'll see in our "Die Roller Version 2":

When you log on you'll see the page that says "Choose a game to play:" and it will list any games you currently have entered into the system along with their associated die roll histories. Below that you will see an entry box to create a new game. That should all be familiar but the new option is the link labeled "Default Settings". Clicking there will take you to a "sample" roll; it looks just like a single roll from the roller page but setting "Number of Dice," "Type of Dice," "Total (Yes or No)," and "Modifier" will create a user default that will appear the next time you go to the roller page. You will also be able to apply this default roll to any number of rolls (up to 10). Here's a screenshot of this idea:

User Defaults:

Number of Dice 1	Type of dice: 6 sided	Total the dice? Yes: <input type="radio"/> No: <input checked="" type="radio"/>	Modifier: +0
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How many rolls would you like your default settings to be applied to? 1

Submit

So, in other words, if you find yourself rolling 2 six-siders to get a totaled result three times per turn then you would set Number of Dice to "2," Type of Dice to "6 sided" and Total the Dice? to "Yes". You would then apply the defaults to 3 rolls. Now the next time you opened your roller page, the first three rolls would already be filled in for you like this:

Recipients (email addresses separated by commas): Email Subject Line:

Roll 1: Comments: (Max. [50] characters, please!)

Number of Dice 2	Type of dice: 6 sided	Total the dice? Yes: <input checked="" type="radio"/> No: <input type="radio"/>	Modifier: +0
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Roll 2: Comments: (Max. [50] characters, please!)

Number of Dice 2	Type of dice: 6 sided	Total the dice? Yes: <input checked="" type="radio"/> No: <input type="radio"/>	Modifier: +0
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Roll 3: Comments: (Max. [50] characters, please!)

Number of Dice 2	Type of dice: 6 sided	Total the dice? Yes: <input checked="" type="radio"/> No: <input type="radio"/>	Modifier: +0
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(Continued on page 9)

Game News

This is a compilation of information gleaned chiefly from Consimworld (<http://www.consimworld.com>), Web-Grognards (<http://www.grognard.com>) and Boardgamegeek (<http://www.boardgamegeek.com>). Material correct at time of writing: 31 September 2010.

Alan Poulter

grognard@grognard.com

SAD NEWS

What follows is the obituary of Charles Roberts, from The Baltimore Sun:

"Charles Swann Roberts, an author and co-founder of publishing company Barnard, Roberts and Co. Inc. known for his extensive histories of the Pennsylvania Railroad, died Aug. 20 from complications of emphysema and pneumonia at St. Agnes Hospital.

"The Halethorpe resident was 80.

"Mr. Roberts, whose father and grandfather were veteran B&O railroaders, was born in Baltimore and raised in Catonsville. He was also a great-great nephew of Charles Swann Roberts, who was president of the B&O from 1848 to 1853. Mr. Roberts caught "railroad fever" in his childhood.

"In 1948, he enlisted in the Army and, after being discharged in 1952, he joined the Maryland National Guard.

"In 1958, he founded Avalon Hill Co., a Baltimore game publishing company that specialized in war and other mental combat games such as "D-Day," "Stalingrad," "Battle of the Bulge," "Gettysburg" and "Victory in the Pacific."

"He later expanded the line of board games to include such rail-related board games "Rail Baron," "Dispatcher," and "B&O/C&O."

"The company, which he sold to Parker Brothers in the early 1960s, took its name from Mr. Roberts' home in an old Avalon iron mill on Gun Hill Road, overlooking the B&O's historic Old Main Line."

NEW BOARD WARGAMES

Critical Hit

There are a slew of new ASL-compatible packs in the Afrikakorps series: **El Alamein**, **Benghazi**, **Bitter Enders**, **Second Time Around**, **Operation Torch** and **Combined Arms**. <http://www.criticalhit.com/>

The Kommandeur

Dan Verssen Games

Guns Blazing is the second game in the **Down In Flames** series and contains 55 more types of aircraft, new campaigns, and action cards. <http://www.dvg.com>

Decision Games

Decision Games has announces a new product line, the **DG Folio** series. Eighteen are new games, others are re-developed reissues of past folio games. One is: **Chalons: the Fate of Europe**, a battle in 274 between the Romans and the Gauls. **Marengo: Morning Defeat, Afternoon Victory**, and **Leipzig: Napoleon Encircled** are both on Napoleonic battles.

Chickamauga: River of Death; Stones River: Turning Point in Tennessee; Frayzer's Farm: Wasted Opportunity; and Shiloh: Grant Surprised are all American Civil War engagements.

Arnhem: the Farthest Bridge; Cauldron: Battle for Gazala; Kasserine: Baptism of Fire; Saipan: Conquest of the Marianas; Bastogne: a Desperate Defence; Aachen: First to Fall; Crusader: Battle for Tobruk; and Patton's First Victory: Tunisia are all World War Two engagements.

Naktong Bulge: Breaking the Perimeter and **Golan: the Last Syrian Offensive** were actual modern battles while **Showdown: the Coming Indo-Pakistani War** and **DMZ: the Next Korean War** are hypothetical modern battles.

<http://www.decisiongames.com>

GMT

Germantown, 1777 is the 7th game in Mark Miklos' **Battles of the American Revolution** series. It covers the battle outside of Philadelphia.

Normandy '44 is a two, three, or four-player, regimental level game of the D-Day landings on June 6th and the following battles in Normandy. Designer is Mark Simonitch. <http://www.gmtgames.com/>

Grognard Sims

Pacific Islands Campaign: Iwo Jima is the third game in **Pacific War** game series. <http://www.grognardsims.com/>

Hasbro

Axis & Allies Europe 2010 Anniversary Edition is a limited run of **Axis & Allies Europe 1940**, which includes France and Italy, tactical bombers, mechanized infantry, and new rules for neutral nations, naval and air bases, and convoy disruption. <http://www.hasbro.com>

Hexasim

Marne 1918: Friedensturm, on the last German offensive of World War One, is out again as a reprint. <http://www.hexasim.com>

L2

Grand Fleet is a strategic game on control of the North Sea and surrounding areas of the British and German home waters during the First World War. <http://www.l2designgroup.com/>

Legion Wargames

Saipan & Tinian is the first game in the Island War Series, battalion level games focusing on ground combat between Allied and Imperial Japanese forces on one of the many Pacific Islands during World War Two. <http://www.legionwargames.com/>

MMP

King Philip's War covers the 1675-1676 war between the English colonists and a loose alliance of New England Indian tribes led by King Philip. <http://www.multimanpublishing.com>

Pacific Rim Publishing

Across the Pacific portrays the entire Pacific War in five-month turns with units ranging from armies to regiments, air fleets to destroyer flotillas. Designer is Michael Myers. <http://www.justplain.com/>

Pangendre

This new company starts off with a big game, **The Second World War**, which uses three maps and four sheets of units to cover the entire war at grand strategic level. <http://www.pangendre.com/>

Petroglyph Games

Panzer General: Russian Assault is a sequel to **Panzer General: Allied Assault**. It uses a mix of cards and miniatures to cover World War Two tactical combat. <http://www.petroglyphgames.com/>

Pratzen Editions

La Bataille de Leipzig is the sixth game in the **Vive l'Empereur series** and covers the famous Napoleonic battle. <http://didier-rouy.webs.com/>

Victory Point Games

Target: Leningrad is the third and final game in Frank Chadwick's **Campaigns in Russia** series and used an improved **Battle for Moscow** system. **Ottoman Sunset: the Great War in the East, 1914-1918**, is the sixth game in the **States of Siege** series and covers the decline of the Turkish Empire. <http://www.victorypointgames.com/>

Worthington Games

Red Poppies covers World War One tactical combat at the regimental level. **Anzio/Cassino**, designed by Mike Rinella, is the first game in the quick playing Command Series. <http://www.worthingtongames.com/>

NEW MAGAZINE WARGAMES

Strategy & Tactics #264 contains **Shiloh**, designed by Paul Koenig. **World at War #14** contains **Invasion Pearl Harbor** designed by Adrian McGrath and Chris Smith. <http://www.decisiongames.com> **Against the Odds #30** contains **Lash of the Turk** on the threat to Christian Europe by Suleiman the Magnificent, Turkey's greatest sultan. <http://www.atomagazine.com> **Vae Victis #94** contains **Cedar Creek 1864** on the American Civil War battle. <http://www.vaevictis.com> Note that *Vae Victis* magazine and games are in French but rules translations are made available via: <http://roggnard.com/vaevict.html>

NEW DTP WARGAMES**CHS**

Murray River is a new game on the 1834 battle in Western Australia between a British force and aborigines. Email: topkat@chariot.net.au

Red Sash Games

Remember Limerick! is the seventh game in the **Lace Wars** series and covers the Nine Years War, sometimes called the War of the League of Augsburg. <http://redsashgames.com/>

Schutze Games

New is the **Russo-Georgian war of 2008**, from designer: Bruce Costello. http://sites.google.com/site/schutzegames/rg_war

White Dog Games

Under the North Star is a game on the Finnish Civil War of 1918, from designer Dennis L. Bishop.

Battles for a Continent is a tactical game on two Seven Years War (French and Indian War) battles fought outside the gates of Quebec City: **The Plains of Abraham (1759)** and **Sainte-Foy (1760)**. Included is a separate bonus game: **Braddock's Defeat: The Battle of the Monongahela**. <http://whitedoggames.com>

NEW WEB RESOURCES**Errata**

Battle for Normandy (GMT) http://www.boardgamegeek.com/file/download/664jg9ut2q/BFN-errata_FAQ-07-15-10.pdf
Field Commander: Rommel (DVG) http://www.boardgamegeek.com/file/download/68jouzaznd/FC_Rommel_FAQ_v2.0.pdf
Grand Fleet (L2) http://www.boardgamegeek.com/file/download/6ntp880ehw/Grand_Fleet_Rules_Updates.doc
Guelphs and Ghibellines (RSG) http://www.boardgamegeek.com/file/download/63vduxbahx/Guelphs_FAQv1.pdf
Julius Caesar (CG) http://www.boardgamegeek.com/file/download/67sdfp6vv/JC_clarificationsv1.4.pdf
Normandy '44 (GMT) http://www.boardgamegeek.com/file/download/6odfs6erzr/N44_Q%26A-1.pdf
Zulus on the Ramparts (VPG) http://www.boardgamegeek.com/file/download/661m5vrroc/Zulu_FAQ_040810%5B1%5D.pdf

★★

From the Editor

As you saw from Alan Poulter's Game News, **Charles S. Roberts** died August 20, 2010. We all owe Mr. Roberts a great deal, since he is the originator of our hobby. I had brief meetings with him many years ago and accepted the first Charles Roberts award for Don Turnbull from him. At one time he said he was working on a new type of board wargame but gave no details on it. Whether anything was written down or it was just ideas he was thinking about, I don't know. But what a man to involve so many thousands over 60 years! Not only game players, but companies. A brilliant accomplishment.

Our trip to the Mediterranean was created and run by The National World War II Museum in New Orleans, LA. It doesn't really matter, but Road Scholar (formerly Elderhostel) did not make that clear in their brochures. Sue and I plan to take a trip this fall to visit that museum and the National Museum of the Pacific War. I was unaware of this before, but the WWII Museum has an annual wargame convention in August. I will put info in the Upcoming Events column.

The trip was good, but after 65 years, there is little to see of the original battle sites. Malta shows no signs of the incredible bombing it received. In Sicily there were maybe a dozen pill boxes still standing in the fields. In Italy the town of San Pietro remains in ruins on the side of a hill, but one needs an active imagination to make much of that. Monte Casino, rebuilt, was larger than I imagined it and much more "glorious." I will include the text of the trip, mostly in the web version of the newsletter.

There was a lot of material for this issue, and the web version will be larger than the paper copy. If you have internet access, I suggest you take a look at it. SnavellyFord is the password.



The web version of this issue is available at our website (www.AHIKS.com). User name = "AHIKS"
 Password = "SnavellyFord" (Both are case sensitive; do not include the quote marks; there is no space between y and F. If you use the Caps Lock to write AHIKS, be sure to take it off for SnavellyFord.)

If you still have trouble accessing the web version, contact Tom Thorsen or Charles Marshall at the addresses on page 12.

How the ICRKs Are Generated

by Paul Qualtieri

I have developed automated Microsoft Word and Excel documents, which I will pass along to the next MC, that generate the match assignment and each player's ICRK by my entering only AHIKS ID numbers, the match number, and the game title in my master Excel spreadsheet. The documents complete themselves when opened by virtue of imbedded macro programming. I save them as PDF files and per player preference distribute them via email or snail mail, with copies of each saved in my master file.

I currently have spreadsheets set up and can generate the following ICRK types:

- 1: (1) six sided die, "d6" (1...6)
- 2: (1) ten sided die, "d10" (0...9) or (1...10)
- 3: (2) six sided dice summed, "2d6+" (2...12)
- 4: (2) six sided dice not summed "2d6-" (2,2-2,3...6,5-6,6)
- 5: Percentile die roll, "d100" (0...99) or (1...100)

1, 2 and 5 are distributions where each outcome is equally likely. For example, in theory 100 rolls of a d10 should produce 10% (10) of each of each number. However, because the numbers are randomly produced there are seldom instances where there are equal numbers of each potential result. The observation does arise that deviations in the average value of the ICRK numbers might influence the game and perhaps there should be an equal number of each roll.

We don't want equal result ICRKs. If there were an equal number of each result, the ICRK would not be a random number sheet simulating die rolling, and it is possible, like counting cards in blackjack, to know the "value" of the remaining ICRK. Assume "6" is a "bad" result. If I know I've used most of the "bad" results already, I can be more aggressive in my attacks since my odds of getting a "6" have decreased. Watch the movie "21" to get a fuller explanation of card counting as it applies to an equal distribution ICRK, and it's a decent movie as well.

A deck of cards is mathematically no different than a d13 ICRK with 4

values of each of the 13 results in it. If I have drawn 4 kings from a deck without replacement I know for sure I won't get another and can base decisions on that fact. If there were an unknown number of kings any analysis has to account for that variable.

In any case, in practice, I don't know how many of each die roll is on your ICRK. I prevent any conscious or subconscious influence by hitting the Excel recalculation button (F9) a number of times equal to the minute's value on my computer's clock to generate a new set of random numbers for each ICRK. You get that number set regardless of its content.

For example, if I am making a match assignment at 7:19 am on a Saturday morning and it is time to generate the ICRK, I hit the Excel recalculation button 19 times and use that 19th generated random number set to complete the ICRK. I don't check for content until the paperwork is finalized as PDF, and I only proof the player/game information and that the document is complete.

The probability of a column of 10 results in a d6 ICRK containing all of

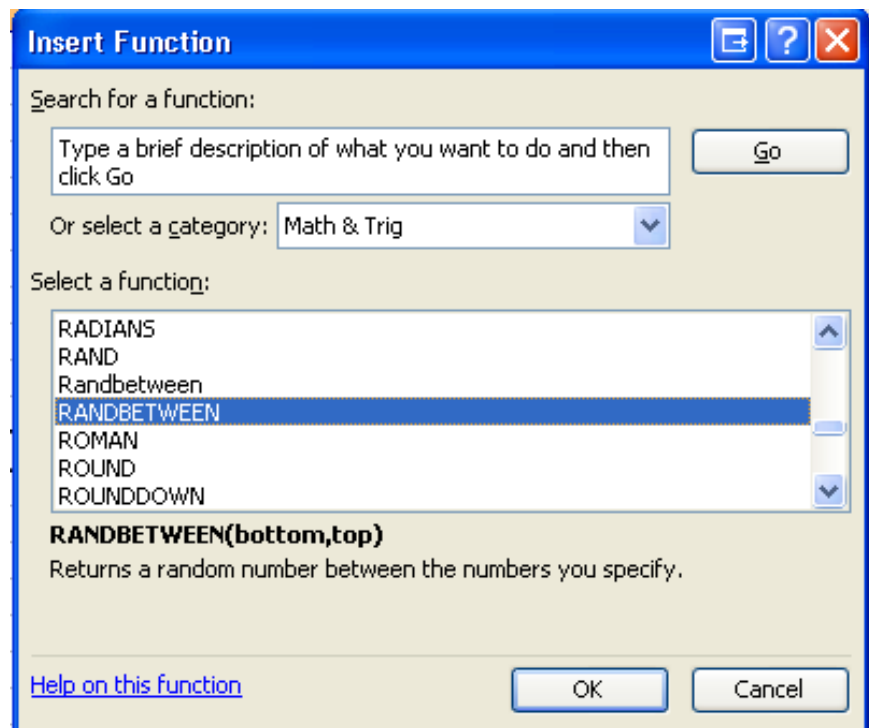
one particular number is a not very likely; 1 in 60,466,176. On the other hand, the odds of a column not containing a particular number are 1 in 6. So while you will see columns without any of those precious 1s you desire, you won't see a column of just 1s.

The Excel command to generate the random numbers is: **RANDBETWEEN** located in the Math and Trig Function drop-down menu.

The program will then prompt for a lower limit and an upper limit. Even through the function is titled **RANDBETWEEN** it includes the "betweens" as results. Therefore the choices for a six sided die are 1 for the lower and 6 for the upper.

The results are very close to random. A sequence of d6 rolls should average 3.5. I have run tests averaging 10,000 d6 rolls in the spreadsheet, and the average is within a few tenths of a percent of 3.5. As it takes a large number of trials, each number on an ICRK is considered a trial, to get the sample mean equal to the population mean, it will probably not be the case for any ICRK to average 3.5. They should however be close enough that the luck factor will be the same as in a face-to-face game. Which is, after all, the desired outcome.

★★



Open Match Requests from Paul Qualtieri

1776	AH	Bob Herbst (1442)	GCAW	MMP	Clyde Longest (1413) LX
1870		Sidney Jolly (12) GN	GCACW	AH,MMP	Gary Guyton (1015) CDEI/NLV
1914	AH	John Trosky (1554) UNV	Gettysburg '88	AH	Paul Heiser (1051) UM
A Victory Lost	MMP	Ed O'Connor (1243) E	Golden Horde: Kulikovo	ATO	Albert Bowie (299) NE
Advanced 3R	AH	Paul Warnick (1430) C	Invasion America	SPI	Lee Massey (1382) C
Afrika Korps	AH	Greg Dilbeck (1363) UFN	Jutland	AH	John Trosky (1554) U
Afrika Korps	AH	Paul Heiser (1051) UN	Kutuzov		Barry Roy (1596) CV
Afrika Korps	AH	Sid Driver (1567) D	Luftwaffe	AH	John Trosky (1554) EU
Afrika Korps	AH	Brian Britton ELNV	Midway	Avl	Mel Yarwood (36) U
Afrika Korps	AH	Steve Sutherland (1604)AENSV	Midway	GDW	Bill Scanlan (275) ENU
American Revolution	SPI	Omar DeWitt (44)	Montys D-Day	S&T	Chris Harding NE
Anzio	AH	Melvin Yarwood (36) AN	Napoleon at War	SPI	Melvin Yarwood (36) AN
Anzio	AH	Tim Brittain (1582) NV	Napoleons Last Bttls	SPI	Melvin Yarwood (36) AN
Anzio revised map/6th ed	AH	Tom Oleson (111)	Napoleons Triumph 1		Barry Roy (1596) V
ASLSK 1	MMP	Barry Roy (1596) V	NATO	VG	Kevin Reid (1315) E
Battles for Ardennes	SPI	Tom TenEyck (826) NV	Panzer Gruppe Guderian		Steve Sutherland (1604) LV
Bitter Woods	AH	Melvin Yarwood (36) AN	Panzer Leader	AH	Peter Bertram (0790) V
Bitter Woods	AH	Greg Dilbeck (1363) UFN	Panzerblitz	AH	Richard Passow (1453) ESL
Blue & Gray I-II	PI	Melvin Yarwood (36) AN	Paths of Glory	AH	Thomas Scarborough (1345) WT
Breakout Normandy	AH	Clyde Longest (1413) CEINVV	Paths of Glory	AH	Clyde Longest (1413) LX
Breitenfeld	SPI	Richard Passow (1453) ES	Red Parachutes	Avl	Sidney Jolly (12) GN
Breitenfeld	SPI	Mark White (842) FNO	Red Star / White Star	SPI	Sidney Jolly (12) GN
Bulge '65/'81	AH	Bob Johnson (73) EM	Richthofen's War	AH	John Trosky (1554) EU
Bulge '65/'81	AH	Tim Brittain (1582) NV	Rommel In The Desert		Pete Menconi (146) INV
Bull Run	AH	Bob Herbst (1442)	Russia Beseiged	L2	Martin Svensson (1466) ED
Bull Run	AH	Ron Brooker (1252) U	Russian Campaign	AH	Bob Johnson (73) EM
Caucasus	GMT	Chris Hancock (565) V	Russian Campaign	AH	Paul Heiser (1051) U
Chickamauga	SPI	Joe Angiolillo (412) AN	Russian Campaign	AH	Ron Brooker (1252) U
D-Day '61	AH	Brian Britton ELNV	Russian Campaign	AH	Tim Brittain (1582) NV
D-Day 77	AH	Sid Driver (1567) D	Russian Front	AH	Mitch Swartz (1595) EV
D-Day 77	AH	Greg Dilbeck (1363) UFN	Stalingrad	AH	Sid Driver (1567) D
Destruction of			Stalingrad	AH	Joe Angiolillo (412) AN
Army Group Center	S&T	Chris Harding NE	Stalingrad	AH	Brian Britton ELNV
Diplomacy	AH	Bob Herbst (1442)	Stalingrad	AH	Steve Sutherland (1604) AENSV
Downtown	GMT	Paul Qualtieri (757) CN	Stalingrad Holcombe	AH	Bob Johnson (73) EM
Drive on Paris	Gamers	Bill Scanlan (275) E	SOPAC	Avl	Graeme Dandy (916) E
Eurofront2		Pete Menconi (146) INV	Sword and the Stars	SPI	Sidney Jolly (12) GN
For The People		Barry Roy (1596) CVT	Tamburlaine the Great	SPI	Albert Bowie (299) NE
Fortress Stalingrad	S&T	Chris Harding NE	Thunder at Crossroads	Gamers	Steve Sutherland (1604) AENSV
			Twilight Struggle	GMT	Lee Massey (1382) C
			Victory in the Pacific	AH	Rick Roksiewicz (1108)
			Vietnam	VG	Kevin Reid (1315) E
			War and Peace	AH	Tim Brittain (1582) NB
			Waterloo	AH	Paul Heiser (1051) UM
			Waterloo	AH	Joe Angiolillo (412) ANO
			Waterloo	AH	Brian Britton ELNV
			We The People	AH	Clyde Longest (1413) LX
			Wilderness War	GMT	Gary Guyton (1015) CDEI/NLV

Match Codes

A:Area Rated Only
 C:Cyberboard
 D:ADC2
 E:Email
 F:Fast Play Desired
 G:Will Gamemaster this Game
 I: Will teach in "L" game
 L:Learning Game Requested
 M:Will Play New Member Only
 N:New Member OK
 O: US Only
 P:Phone
 S:Slow Play Desired
 T:Acts
 U:Snail Mail
 V:Vassal
 W:Warhorse
 X:Non-rated Match

Match Coordinator

To accept one of the listed matches or have a new match listed contact

Paul Qualtieri
 114 Barrington Court
 Summerville, SC 29485
 Paul@pdqsc.com

Secretary's Notes Bob Best

Today is September 24, 2010, and summer has faded here in the West. We had a very mild summer here this year. There were only a handful of days where the temperatures reached the triple digits. The weatherman is predicting rain here this coming weekend. It looks like fall is coming early this year. With the rains coming, we will be having more indoor active time again. So it looks like a good time to pull out those old wargame classics that you haven't played in awhile and get yourself signed up for a new game with an AHIKS member. We have a number of new and returning former members who are looking for opponents. Let me introduce our new members since last issue.

David Bobchin # 1594 is a new member from Brooklyn, NY.
 Mitch Schwartz # 1595 is a new member from Medway, MA
 Michael Mitchell # 1086 is a returning member from Marietta, GA
 Barry Roy # 1596 is a new member from Montclair, NJ
 Carl Paradis # 1597 is a new member from Quebec, Canada
 Bill Krasner # 1598 is a new member from Sandy, OR
 Joe Angiolillo # 412 is a returning member from Punta Gorda, FL
 Peter Bertram #790 is a returning member from Duluth, GA
 Ramon Ruiz-Ocana #1599 is a new member from Madrid, Spain
 Steven LaPierre # 1600 is a new member from Berwick, ME
 Joe Grills # 748 is a returning member from Westerly, RI
 Michael Kettman # 1067 is a returning member from Grayslake, IL
 Mark White # 842 is a returning member from Exeter, NH
 Gary Guyton # 1015 is a returning member from Newberg, OR
 Steve Elliott # 1601 is a new member from Germantown, TN
 John Culp # 1602 is a new member from Gillette, WY
 Brian Britton # 1603 is a new member from Lexington, KY
 Chuck Sutherland # 1604 is a new member from Danville, VA

Looks like we have several new members who are looking for opponents. Gentlemen, *welcome* to AHIKS!

I have just finished updating the current roster for 2010. As of January 26, 2010, I reported that AHIKS had 199 members. During the past 9 months we have had 25 new members join the ranks of AHIKS. Of these 25 members 9 were returning former AHIKS members. We also lost 2 members during the same time period. Membership in AHIKS stands at 222 as of today. This is about an 11.6% increase in the last 9 months.

Here are a few interesting statistics for those of you that like this sort of thing. I have compiled a view of the Average AHIKS player below:

Of the last 37 members that have joined AHIKS since 10/23/2008, 12 have been former members. Returning members are given their old ID number if we can locate it when they rejoin. Of these 37 new members, 30 gave information on their application about total years that they have been playing wargames. That figure adds up to 960 years or, for our "average player," that is 32 years playing wargames. For the 37 new members, the least amount of experience was 2 years and the most amount of experience was 51 years.

Of the 37 new members, 31 gave their age. The youngest was 25 and the oldest was 71. The average age for our "average player" is 50.8 years old.

These statistics may vary from the general AHIKS membership as I do not have the information to do the entire organization, but

this is a sample from our newest members. Now you can see where you fit into the "AHIKS Average Player" profile! ☺

One of the things that seems to have increased membership is an automated membership application form that was just installed on the AHIKS website. Our President Charles Marshall did all of the programming and testing to get this application up and running. Prospective members can now sign up on line and the application is sent directly to me for processing. Other things mentioned by new members included interest in the new AHIKS website and a desire to find good opponents to play games with.

The AH **Submarine** game being mastered by Paul Qualtieri our Match Coordinator is still in progress on the AHIKS forum. The action continues to be hot and heavy as at least 2 Allied ships have been sunk from Convoy HX-229, and the escorts are frantically searching for the U-Boats. Stop by the forum and view the exploits of U-128 as she attacks ships in Convoy HX-229 during March 1943, it's *great fun!* ☺

If you have a change of address or get a new email address please contact me at the address listed on page 12, so that we can update the membership roster. As the Secretary, I will update the roster and forward your new information to the Editor and the Match Coordinator to make sure your subscription to AHIKS is uninterrupted.

I hope everyone has enjoyed a *great* summer and that you all have a fantastic fall!

Until next time, happy gaming to you all! ☺



Carlo D'Este

Carlo D'Este on the Battle Prior to the Kasserine Pass

During our trip I recorded everything I heard on a new Olympus digital recorder. The recorder filled up about halfway through the trip, and I transferred the data to my computer. The following is the first part, recorded on the way to Kasserine Pass. When I tried to type out the rest of the material, I found I had only six seconds of several hours talk. I had done something wrong in the download. I have the second half of the trip on the recorder and will transcribe that. O.D.

The hasty defense of Kern's Crossroad [on Highway 13 about 10 miles NW of Sidi bou Zid], really was just a stopgap measure that lasted merely a matter of hours. If it was really clear as the situation began to unfold that there was no way that we could hold the Sidi bou Zid sector or that we could hold Kern's Crossroad. The city here was really the next stop of the German march of the 5th Panzer Army to the west. So on the night of the 16th—I think Rick Atkinson [in his book "An Army at Dawn"] has a wonderful description of what happened here and he says that "Not since AD 647, when the caliph's soldiers burned Sbeitla and put its Byzantine inhabitants to the sword, had the little town suffered a night like that of February 16-17."

As the Germans began to draw near, it was clear that the town was going to have to be evacuated. And you know what happens when we yell "Fire!" in a crowded theater. You know, people began running and screaming for the exits. And that's pretty much what happened here. They blew one of the ammo dumps and when that blew, it was a signal that they thought the Germans were here. People began firing their weapons. They were shooting at nothing. It was the old fire drill. There was an American 77th evacuation hospital based here. It had about 600 patients. Barely on a moment's notice they had to take these patients dressed in whatever they were dressed in—field clothing, blankets, in anything they could find—and they just shoved them into trucks and hustle them out of town. It was a chaotic situation. As Rick Atkinson says, the patients were swaddled in army blankets. With hooded lanterns. There was hardly any light to see by. One GI surgeon summed it up pretty well. The retreat, he said, is a ghastly word. He said Americans never retreat. They withdraw. That's what we did on that night.

We tried to find out where everyone went. We know they didn't go toward Kasserine Pass where we are headed right now. The only other two roads out of the town; one goes to Sbeitla and we know they didn't go that way, so the chances are that the bulk of the evacuation of this city took place on the road to Karowan that we came down this morning.

Really, by the next morning the city was pretty well empty. When the Germans got here, there were no Americans left on the 17th of February. And this is all a lead-in to what we're going to talk about at Kasserine Pass. So this was really the last stop on the American march backwards that took place during those grim days of 1943. And they culminated at Kasserine Pass. And we're going to be there probably in another half hour. We'll pick up the story there as to what happened as a result of Sidi bou Zid and the evacuation of this city.

There was a battle here earlier in the Tunisian campaign. We took the city from the Germans some 6 or 8 weeks before this particular incident. But by the time the Germans got back here there was really nothing to fight for. It wasn't so much as a battle raging in the streets of the town or anything of that nature. We were out of here and done. There wasn't any need for the Germans to try to destroy the city.

★★

August 12-14, 2011 New Orleans, LA
HEAT OF BATTLE V
<http://www.nationalww2museum.org/calendar/educational-wargaming-at-the.html>

A good source for information on all kinds of conventions is the Steve Jackson game site:
<http://sjgames.com/con>

★★

Upcoming Events

Oct. 22-24, Charleston, WV
CHARCON
<http://www.charcon.org/>

Oct. 22-24, Rolla, MO
COGCON 19
<http://www.cogcongaming.com/>

Oct. 22-24, Secaucus, NJ
THE WARSTORE WEEKEND
<http://www.thewarstoreweekend.com/>

Nov. 5-7, West Chester, PA
MECHANICON 2010
<http://www.themechanicon.com/1/>

Nov. 5-7, Fort Wayne, Indiana
PENTACON XXVI
<http://www.pentacongames.com/>

Nov. 5-7, Fairlee, Vermont
CARNAGE THE 13TH
<http://www.carnagecon.com/>

Nov. 6, Hamilton, Ontario
HAMMERCON II
<http://www.hammercon.ca/>

Nov. 12-14, Ann Arbor, MI
U-CON GAMING CONVENTION
<http://www.ucon-gaming.org/>

Nov. 12-14, Pittsburgh, PA
GASPCON XI
<http://warhorn.net/gaspccon-xi/>

Nov. 12-14, Erie, PA
ERIE DAYS OF GAMING
<http://www.riedog.com/index.html>

Nov. 12-14, Vancouver, Canada
BOTTOCON
DuncanR@telus.net

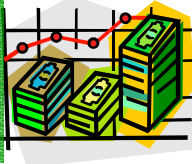
Nov. 17-21, Irving, TX
BGG.CON 2010
<http://www.boardgamegeek.com/bggcon>

April 30, May 1, 2011 Kenosha, WI
MIDWEST OPEN 2011
AREA1@ATT.net

August 1-7, 2011 Lancaster, PA
WBC
<http://www.boardgamers.org/>

Treasury Notes

Brian Stretcher



Who are we and why are we here?

After looking through last issue's Game News, I got to wondering who still buys all of these games, and, perhaps even more importantly, who actually plays them? Perhaps I am well behind the times (my children often accuse me of being Amish), but it has been some 2-3 years since I last purchased a wargame, **Bitter Victory**, a \$20 game from Avalanche Press on the invasion of Sicily. Although I have read the rules, and it looks interesting, I have never played the thing. The most recently published game I am currently playing remains the 2004 edition of **Paths of Glory**. Most of what I play, and what I have been playing for a long time, are games that have been long out of print.

Along similar lines, I went to the only remaining (to my knowledge) local game store here in Cincinnati last week, my last trip there ending in the purchase I described above. Although there were lots of Euro games (and yes, some of those looked interesting), there were relatively few historical wargames available for purchase. A decent selection of Avalanche Press games still, and GMT, but just a smattering of others. Now, I like the look of these games, but almost all were titles I had never heard of. Worse yet were the incredible price tags. There were few for under \$40, the majority being \$60 or more. Considering my well-reported lack of playing time, it is simply impossible to justify the expense for a game that is highly unlikely to ever get played. I had to laugh when I saw Ted Raicer's monster game on WWI at \$90. May be a great game, but there is no way I could find the time to even set it up, let alone play it. I still have not set up that \$14 copy of **Drang Nach Osten** that I bought in the early '80s.

Many moons ago, I used to practically drool over new games: waiting for that precious order to arrive in the mail, or making the trip to the local game store to peruse the vast selection. No more. While I still love that new game smell, I see very little published these days that appeals to me at all, especially for the price. Either well-

The Kommandeur

trodden subject matter (yay, another Barbarossa game), or obscure battles of limited interest. Maybe I'm just cheap. But having to take out a second mortgage to buy a game that may never get played is ridiculous, especially when I already have a closet full of close to 500 titles. A lot of those don't get played either, but a lot of them have.

So, short of a member survey to find out what we collectively still buy and play, I was hoping to hear from some of you about your recent purchases and play experiences. Is there anyone out there in this organization that still regularly buys new games? And if you do, have you found anyone to play those with you? Is there anything out there these days that is really good and would work by mail or email? This is not just an idle question, but actually one that goes to what AHIKS is all about. Are we, or will we ever become, a wargame club that plays the new, cutting edge games? Or, are we the wargame equivalent of vintage car collectors? And, which do we want to be, or does it matter? Personally, it wouldn't matter which we are or might be, but it might be nice to know.

I want to know what you're playing and buying, if anything. Send me your comments on this subject, by email or regular mail, and I will compile the responses for next issue. I'm looking for honest answers. Let me know if you wish me to use your name, and I'll give credit where it's due. But, I do need a name attached to your comments so that I can verify you as a member.

Mini-Review: "West Dickens Avenue"

For whatever reason, I rarely read military history of anything after WWII. Recently, however, I had the opportunity to read *West Dickens Avenue: A Marine at Khe Sanh*, by John Corbett, published in 2003. A nice and quick read. With refreshingly simple prose in almost a diary format, it gives a clear picture of what it was like to live through the siege of Khe Sanh. There is little discussion of the base's strategic importance, why it was being attacked by the NVA, or anything more than what the author was told when he was

there. Nevertheless, it is a refreshing and candid view of the fighting from the viewpoint of one man who was there. Photos taken by the author are included. Recommended for easy historical reading, but the book says a lot about Vietnam and its aftermath in its relatively few words.

Treasurer's Report

Just some ordinary expenses to report this time:

Starting Checking Balance 8-13-10:	\$ 1,611.53
Income:	
Dues and contributions:	\$0
Expenses:	
K July/Aug printing	\$ 84.18
Transfer to Perpetual Fund	\$0
Checking Balance as of 10-1-10:	\$ 1,527.35
Perpetual Fund Balance, 8-13-10:	\$ 2,980.72
Interest Income reported:	\$0
Contributions transferred from checking:	\$0
Perpetual Fund Balance 10-1-10:	\$ 2,980.72
Operating funds in CD, 8-13-10:	\$ 5,790.49
Interest Income reported:	\$0
Operating funds in CD, 10-1-10:	\$ 5,790.49
Total balance in CD, 10-1-10:	\$ 8,771.21
Total Treasury, 10-1-10:	\$ 10,298.56

Next issue will be the dues issue plus the end of the year report. We should have interest to report. Hard to imagine almost another year gone by!

★★

12.4 REINFORCEMENTS

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

1599 Ramon Ruiz-Ocana, Madrid, Spain
 1600 Steven LaPierre, Berwick, ME
 1601 Steve Elliott, Germantown, TN
 1602 John Culp, Gillette, WY
 1603 Brian Britton, Lexington, KY
 1604 Chuck Sutherland, Danville, VA

The Mediterranean 2010

by Omar DeWitt

Tunis is no longer the city where Charles Boyer would say, "Take me to the Kasbah," while the locals swirled by in long clothing and turbans. It essentially looks like any other city in the world: lots of people and cars, all in a hurry.

At passport control in Tunis, the officer asked if I, Omar, spoke Arabic. Alas, I said, no.

Sue had arranged for us to be picked up and driven to the hotel. Our driver, a PhD who taught English, had a "DeWitt" sign. He spoke excellent English, having studied in Britain and received his PhD at Brown. Picking up foreigners was not his usual job; he was filling in for a relative. Outside the airport, it was hot and humid; it had been worse yesterday, he said. His car had no air conditioning, so we were quite warm when we got to the hotel. There was no trouble checking in; the three of us were given a cool orange juice. Our room was air conditioned, but the hotel was not.

We went for a short walk around the neighborhood. There were a lot of people about. The men looked pretty much the same, but the women had a variety of dress. Some looked the same as women in the U.S., some were wearing headscarves and robes, some were in shorts, although Sue figured they were not locals. We saw one man wearing shorts. One or two men were wearing robes. Tunisians are not terribly neat, and there was all sorts of debris on the streets.

One man we passed was squatting on the sidewalk next to a bathroom scale. There was a sign on the scale reading 100, so we assumed for 1 dinar one could weigh himself. Money was a little hard to figure out since it went to five digits.

Some of the shops were open, but many were closed because Ramadan was a day or two from being over. People who observe the month-long Ramadan do not eat during the daylight hours, and apparently shopping is not practiced either. Chairs and tables of the sidewalk cafes were stacked by the curb. Twenty minutes of walking was enough for us, and we went back to our hot and humid hotel.

At next morning's breakfast buffet a group of Americans were finishing

(Continued from page 1)

All you would need to do is label the rolls in the Comments field and you're done! Of course, you can reset your defaults at any time.

The second big change is that when you first create a game you'll have the option of adding your opponent to your game. You will also be able to add (or delete) players as the game progresses. Here's a sample screenshot:



Any players appearing in your player list will automatically appear in your list of email recipients and those players will also be able to see the die roll history of all rolls submitted in this game. No need to manually type your opponent's email address in the recipient's list every time you make a roll!

Finally, the results page will list *all* of the information selected from the roll page: Number of Dice, Type of Dice, Totaled (or not), and the modified (if any) result.

We've also had some suggestions to allow users to delete old games from the system but unfortunately those didn't make it in under the deadline for this version, but that is something we can implement in the future. For now, I'll be happy to do the administration for you. Just send me an email letting me know which game you are through with and I'll take care of it.

I hope these changes will make our dedicated die roller a more user friendly, efficient, and powerful online tool for your gaming enjoyment.

Until next time, Happy Wargaming everybody!

★★

up; they were on a trip to just Tunisia. From what we saw of Tunisia, they weren't going to see much of interest. The breakfast was of mostly familiar items: prunes with pits as large as the meat, scrambled eggs, chicken, rolls, coffee, some fruit, yogurt, some bite-sized sweet breads.

We decided to get a few dinars. I got the passport and went into the bank, which was just off the hotel lobby. The wooden counters were all about four feet high, the clerks were all sitting down, and all we could see were a few foreheads and sets of eyes. There were no signs to tell who was who. I stood behind a man standing next to an exchange board. After a while a male clerk asked if he could help, and I said "Change." He then pointed across the room, where I stood behind the only other customer in the bank, a woman wearing a shawl over her head. The clerk eventually finished with the woman, and I handed him a twenty dollar bill. After some rummaging around he com-

pleted the transaction (without asking for my passport), and we were on our way. The exchange was about 1.5 dinars to the dollar.

The English-speaking tourist bureau was relatively small with a desk running diagonally across the room. There were four women sitting behind the desk. There were two more sitting at the ends of the desk. They all watched us as we came in. I asked what there was that we could do that day, and they had two suggestions: Carthage and Medina. We were given brochures for each spot, but they had no other suggestions.

For a short time we stood around outside. Wondering what the six women were doing now.

On the way to the Medina (Medina means city; here it meant old city) we ran into the Road Scholar troop from the airport. We chatted with a couple from Florida, the husband was overweight and another man was *really* overweight. He was puffing to get to

(Continued on page 12)

The VP's Corner by Bert Schneider

Methods of playing wargames from afar

"Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity." (George S. Patton) I'm going to take the advice of "Old Blood and Guts" and share with you a couple of different methods to simulate battle (play wargames). I have personally played wargames via these methods:

- 1) Face to face
- 2) Play by mail (using Stock Market for a die roller—decades ago!)
- 3) Play by mail (using the AHIKS ICRK random number generator sheets as a die roller)
- 4) Play by email (using an Excel spreadsheet)
- 5) Play by email (using CyberBoard)
- 6) Play by email (using VASSAL)

For the purposes of keeping this article short, I will be discussing only the last two methods of play. There are other methods that I will not cover in this article, since I have not tried these:

- 1) Solitaire (self explanatory—please don't email moves back to yourself—not worth the hassle!)
- 2) Aide de Camp (computer aid to play games with) <http://www.hpssims.com/pages/products/adc2/ADC2-Main.html>
- 3) ZunTzu (another computer aid—but will allow you to play on line in real time) <http://www.zuntzu.com/>

I've even heard of people playing wargames using miniatures and cameras and emailing the photos of their setup to their opponent (seems like a lot of work to me).

Games I'm playing now:

- Battle of the Bulge '64** with Charles Marshall, U.S. [Cyber Board]
- The Longest Day** (Scenario 1) with Jeff Miller, Allies [VASSAL]
- Russian Campaign** (L2 Version) with Dave Turansky, Axis [VASSAL]

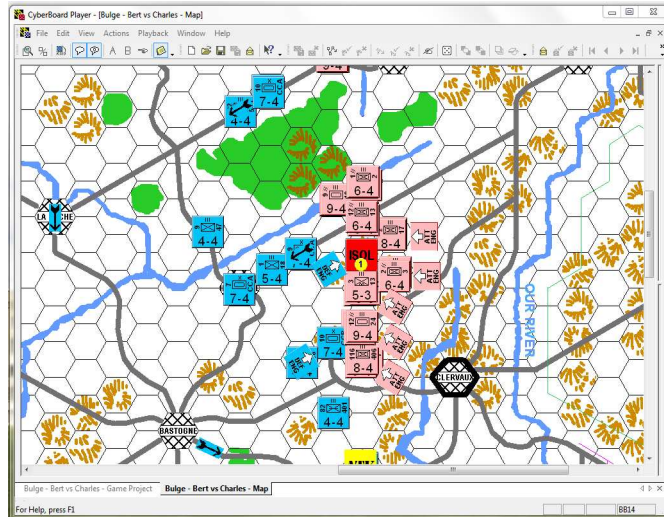
CyberBoard

Software: [//cyberboard.brainiac.com/](http://cyberboard.brainiac.com/)
Modules: [www.limeyyankgames.co.uk;](http://www.limeyyankgames.co.uk/)
[//zappa.brainiac.com/yankeeap/pbem.htm](http://zappa.brainiac.com/yankeeap/pbem.htm)

Description: CyberBoard is an online Play By EMail (PBEM) game system

that runs on a personal computer. Created by Dale Larson, CyberBoard has two components, a design module and a play module, allowing users to design game modules and then record and exchange moves via email. CyberBoard is not an artificial opponent. It provides no artificial intelligence capability. Several websites offer readymade game modules for downloading, mostly wargames.

Pros: Easy to capture moves. Doesn't require having a mapboard set up with counters (but I prefer to have my game set up).



Cons: Can only see a small section of the entire map at one time with any kind of decent resolution. Requires too many steps and files to keep track of moves. Counters don't "snap" to individual hexes. Selecting a particular counter is really tricky. Offers only two zoom scales (full size and half size).

Vassal

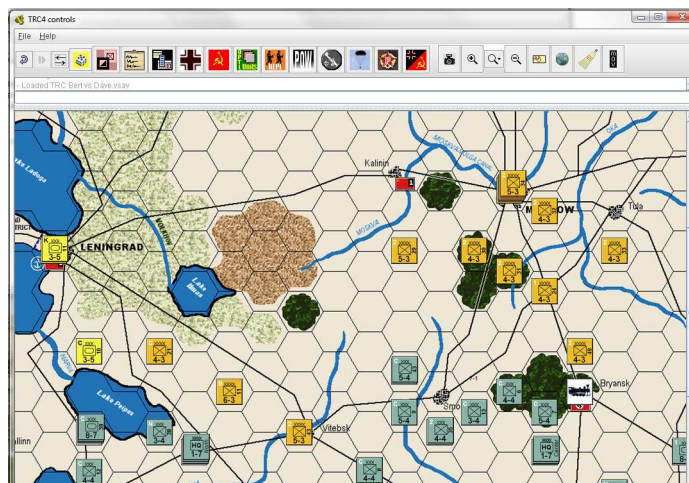
Software: [//www.vassalengine.org/](http://www.vassalengine.org/)

Modules: [//www.vassalengine.org/wiki/Category:Modules](http://www.vassalengine.org/wiki/Category:Modules)

Description: Vassal is a game engine for building and playing online adaptations of board games and card games. Play live on the Internet or by email. Vassal runs on all platforms and is free, open-source software.

Pros: Very professional, crisp clean graphics. Easy to use. Simple file structure organization. Has a built in die roller. Allows you to zoom in and out to just about any kind of scale. Doesn't require having a mapboard set up with counters (but I prefer to have my game set up).

Cons: Requires a more powerful computer than CyberBoard.



Summary

Out of all the methods of playing wargames, I think the method I find the most helpful and easy to use is VASSAL. I would not waste your time with CyberBoard. However, sometimes the simplicity of

using just a spreadsheet can do the job just as well. Especially for a simple game, like **Afrika Korps!**

As usual, if you have any comments or feedback, please feel free to email me at bertnpeggy@comcast.net

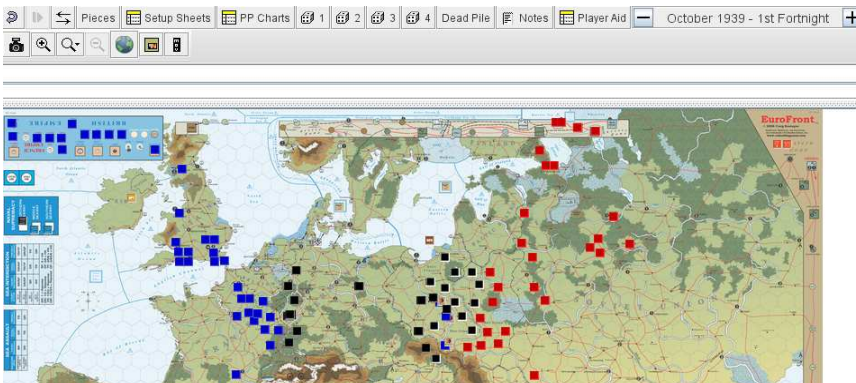


The Vassal Without Hassle Is the Thing To Take Wing*

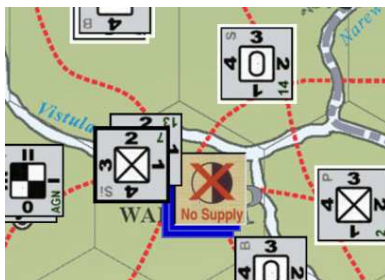
by Pete Menconi

“Vassal” is a computer display engine that has been adapted to hundreds of board games. It is a graphic tool that allows minimal record keeping (no more unit rosters in the mail!) and allows you to play the game on-screen, including die rolls. For those with even minimal computer skills (guilty!), this thing is slick. For more about the history of the “engine,” here is the basic entry web site: <http://www.vassalengine.org/>. The day of the game board being stowed somewhere with the counters on it is closing.

Let’s look at a Vassal game display and show the extremes of view available: that will orient the reader. The excerpts below are taken from Craig Besinque’s **EuroFront2**, a large block game that was previously impossible to play by anything but FTF (big, hidden units, blocks: all the obstacles).



The view above is a partial-height map (full width displayed, which is 64”) showing the 1939 start; the view below is the detail available (Germans are in Warsaw). In play, you can adjust the screen view for whatever detail you need.



The V-engine (a generic display tool) is apparently built with a lot of flexibility, and then the author for each “module” (an individual board game) fixes the parameters such as maps,

counters, time frame, setup charts, etc. From the larger diagram you can see the control icons for a number of game functions; these are common but individualized to each game. If you hover your cursor over a unit, and right click, you get a series of choices of things you can do. For example, in a block game, you can rotate the counter (adding or subtracting strength). In **Anzio**, you can step reduce or build up a counter (each counter is actually the whole family of steps). (*No more* searching for sub counters!!)

As you move a unit, it leaves a faint blue trail behind it so you and your opponent can follow the path. When you’re done moving, you can click off all the trails, and then resolve combat with the built-in die rolling feature (for **EuroFront**’s

reductions, whatever the active player has done. The opponent then starts a new log, etc.

The resulting exchanged computer file is about 30k in size, which is easily handled. (Since the module is resident on both computers, the big hunks of info—the map, the counter data, etc—is already stored; only the unit location and status is being exchanged.)

What does this do? For starters my back won’t be going out so easily since I don’t have to lean across a 46” wide board. The typical LCD display on computer monitors gives lots of light, so no more squinting. You hover over a stack of units, and the computer inserts a large scale window that shows all the units in the stack (*no more knocking stacks over!*). There are about 900 games already converted (I think they have almost every old AH game), including Tom Oleson’s **Italia** version of **Anzio**. The Vassal site also allows simulplay between players. As noted above, no more unit rosters.

The nice thing is to have a good LCD monitor. I have a 27” with the 9:5 ratio: perfect for most games, but already I’m thinking of how nice a larger one will be... How about the north wall of the den, dear?

*And a tip of the hat to Danny Kaye (“The vessel with the pestle...”)

★★

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: Nov. 30, 2010.**

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Kommandeur (**K**) is the official newsletter of AHIKS, an international society of mature adults who play historical simulation games by email and mail. AHIKS is an organization of amateurs, staffed by volunteers, and is not affiliated with any game company or publisher. Society dues are yearly. Additional information about current rates is available from the Treasurer. Subscriptions to *The Kommandeur* are available to non-members at \$5 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.

(Continued from page 9)

the elevator. It did not look like a very lively group.

The streets were packed with people getting ready to end Ramadan. The end of Ramadan is similar to our Christmas; gifts are exchanged. We went up a street named Kasbah. The entire afternoon was an experience getting through a press of people. The street was about five feet wide. If anyone stopped... The people either had urgent business somewhere or were just standing looking around. The street was simply shops. There were two main types of shops, those selling shoes and those selling jeans. Watches, cheap jewelry, too. I was wearing my Tilley hat, so I was obviously a foreigner. Many of the shop keepers spoke a little English, but they took us for Canadians or Germans. Not many from the U.S. visit, apparently. It had rained while we were resting, and the "street" was wet with some puddles. I bought a magnet to hang on our refrigerator of a small, painted door.

By supreme good fortune we found a supermarket. It was full of people, too. We bought candy bars, nuts, and water; all prepackaged. It wasn't always easy to see what anything cost because one had to knock off the last three or four numbers to get the price in dinars. The checkout girl was a bit

surly and kept asking for more than the 20 dinars I had given her. I finally figured it was because she did not want to make change, because we walked out with almost 15 dinars.

Our Tunis guide was Munir [Moo near], and he introduced himself and talked briefly about our time in Tunis. That day was the last one of Ramadan. He said the next day was like Boxing Day in Britain; all the stores would be closed and very few people would be out. The day after that would be a little more active. Sue and I decided that it was fortunate that we had visited the Medina when we did—despite the crowds.

With the exception of grilled tomatoes, the breakfast was the same.

At ten our group gathered for our walk in the Medina. The two fat men did not join us.

We stopped at the "city" gate, which is all there was, the walls of the city had come down long ago;

with the coming of gunpowder, city walls were no longer of any value. Kasbah means fortress and was at the top of the rise/hill; the city was below with the cleaner businesses closer to the religious house at the center. Cleaner businesses were like clothing makers; far away were the slaughter houses and tanneries.



Tunis. Last day of Ramadan.

The walk through the Medina was much different than yesterday. Only a few people were out and a couple of shops were open.

Lunch was in a private home, but it was much different from most private

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homes. The entrance was through a low door set in a much larger spade-shaped door. Inside there were steps down to the dining area and up to the sitting



Tunis. The day after Ramadan.

area where a nice breeze was coming in an open window. The space over the dining area went up two stories. Lunch was very nice; dishes of various kinds were available, with olives and tuna fish of course. The woman living there was single, although her eleven siblings had children. An English-speaking niece was present who was 22 and attending business school. She wanted to open a spa at a small hotel when she graduated. The woman did not speak English but Lila spoke French and translated for us.

The next morning's activity was visiting a Museum to see, mostly, mosaics. Tunis has more ancient mosaics than any other country. The display was attractive and interesting. There was even an attractive mosaic bath .

The visit to Carthage was a bit of a disappointment. There is little of the city left. The Romans destroyed the city in 149 BC and rebuilt it starting in 29 BC. Around 200 AD it reached its cultural height. Since then it has been invaded by many groups. It is an interesting site, on the heights overlooking the Mediterranean and the Gulf of Tunis inlet. The day was pleasant, lots of sun with a cooling breeze. There were other visitors, but it was not crowded. Vendors were selling mosaics, and I was interested, but I did not want to carry one home—too heavy.

We boarded our ship in the afternoon, joining some 80 other passen-

gers. We had the buffet breakfast on board as the ship came into the harbor at Sousse. The sun was out; it was cool. Two busses left at 0823 on the Kasserine trip. We stopped first at Sbeitla to visit the ruins of Sufeitula, a large Roman town. Most of it was a few standing columns and the remains of walls about two feet high. The main city center was still in reasonably better shape. Three temples to Minerva, Jupiter, and Juno are still in fairly good condition. Most cities had a temple to only one god, with niches inside to the other gods, but this city was rich enough from olive



The Sufeitula temples

oil to build three temples. The stone was attractive in the sunlight. We visited a bath where the mosaic floor was still intact, although most of the floor had been recently restored. Over time, Christians had taken over some of the buildings, and we saw a baptismal site. The Christians often destroyed the old temples unless they changed them over to churches, rigorously following the first commandment.

As it turned out, this visit to Kasserine Pass was misnamed. We drove to the city of Kasserine and visited the dedication site, which was about 20 miles from the Pass. Carlo D'Este spoke on the battle, an embarrassing

defeat for the U.S. Army. Rommel's biggest problem was his fellow German, Arnim, who did not give Rommel all of the force he was supposed to.

The Pass, which was about 800 yards wide in 1943, is now about two miles wide, probably due to mining. The dedication site is about 20 ft by 40, surrounded by a cast iron fence. Inside is a cement arch over a stone saying in English and Arabic what it is. We were told that no one knows where the monument came from, who put it up. I had expected to get to the Pass itself, but I had no idea what I would see. Nothing, probably.

It was a long bus ride back to the ship. Tunis gave us a gift of thanks as we got on the ship: a road map of the country and a small decorated item to hang on the wall.

We will continue to Malta next issue.



Kasserine monument. The pass is in the background.

The plaque reads:
 Kasserine Pass and Sbiba Gap Battle Monument
 19-22 February 1943
 In Honor of all Those Who Fought for Freedom
 2006-05-15

Flattop© Decision in '43, The Philippines Scenario, After Action Report

by Andy Johnson

This is a continuation of the article started in issue 45/3.

GM Comments

USN. There were multiple exchanges within the team on the approach and final strategy. The team seemed actively engaged in discussing their plans and strategy. The USN has an advantage in that several of the players have participated together in prior games and are familiar with each other and their styles of play. The CinC has positioned much of his search aircraft force at off-board fields. This will delay their reaching possible enemy locations until later in the daylight hours of Day 1 than he may realize.

IJN. Mark and Dave swapped roles, with Mark becoming the IJN CinC late in the planning phase. Mark has some definite ideas on how to use the land-based resources and how the strike forces will deploy. Not much feedback, pro or con, from his team. While Mark's plan seems quite workable, it has some risks by order-

ing his Carrier TF's into range of the US bases. He apparently feels the combination of his land based CAP and the TF's own CAP will minimize this risk.

Game Play

Day 1. 15 May 1943. 0100-0500 USN

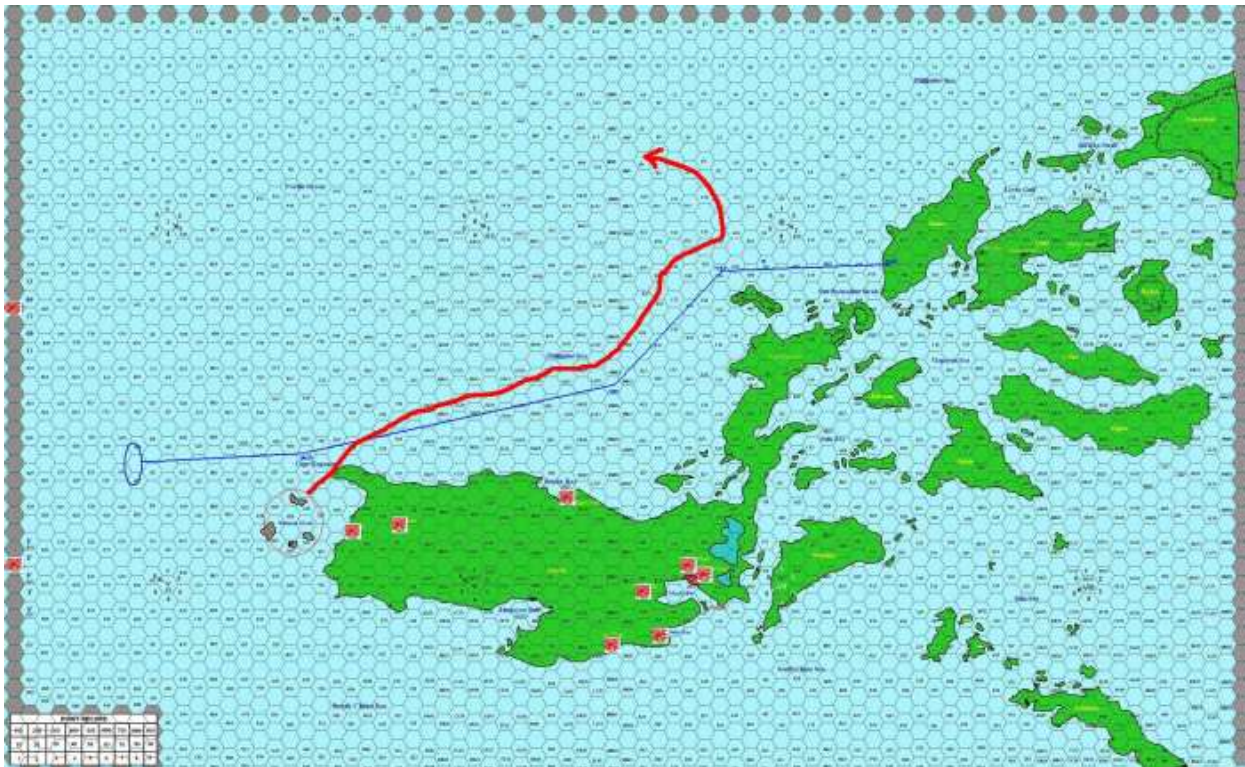
Two of the USN CV Task Groups A & B (TFs 11, 12 and TFs 23, 24) position themselves far to east and south of Luzon in Sector 4, hidden in cloud banks, and begin slowly moving north. Task Group C (TFs 21, 22) is in the far southwest of Sector 8. All TF commanders busy themselves with preparing aircraft for various search and ASW roles. The CinC launches multiple search missions from his land and AV based resources. The 4 USN subs are positioned to watch the major approach routes in sectors 3, 4, 6, and 7. The CinC's battleship and transport groups (TF 41, 42, 43) begin their slow progress through sector 4.

IJN

The invasion Task Group B (TF 14, 15, 17) positions itself north of Luzon well hidden in cloud cover. TF 18 under CinC control also positions itself North of Luzon. The two Fast Attack Task Groups A (TF 5, 6, 8) and C (TF 2, 3, 9) position themselves north east of Luzon also screened by cloud cover. At 0500 Fast Attack Task Group C begins moving south while the Fast Attack Task Group A remains to the north, north east of Luzon. The CinC prepares and launches multiple search missions from his on- and off-board land based resources. He also begins transferring some aircraft assets to on-board airfields. His sub placement covers the major sea passages in the southern Philippine chain.

GM Comments

The USN has positioned itself generally in accordance with their CinC's plan. The USN off-shore bases have a lot of striking power that the CinC has not yet marshaled. No real surprises with their deployment or initial actions. The CinC begins sending regular intelligence reports to his TF commanders. As noted above, the CinC has now realized his search aircraft are taking too long to reach effective target territory and begins repositioning his assets.



On the IJN side there appears to be a communication breakdown between Commanders A & C. At 0030 Commander C separates one of his TFs ahead of the other two and begins heading due south. Meanwhile, Commander A is also heading south but is not following the same track as Commander C. By 0500 there is now a 40nm separation between the groups, and they are out of blinker communication range. Mutual CAP support will be a problem.

Day 1. 15 May 1943 0600-0900 USN

Task Groups A & B remain hidden in sector 3 and continue moving north. They launch a variety of search patterns. Task Group C begins moving north, north east under cloud cover. The invasion force continues its progress north through sector 4. The CinC's search aircraft begin reaching the edge of the potential target areas.

IJN

At 0700 the CinC's search aircraft make the first spotting, finding a USN TF with 7+ capital ships in 4-BB-15, but it contains no CVs. At 0800 the 0700 spotting is reconfirmed and now in 4-DD-15. Task Group A continues operating in the sector 5 row O while Task Group C continues south at high speed. Two of Task Group C's split TFs which are operating 20nm miles behind the third TF. By 0900 Task Group C is now 80nm south of Task Group A. The CinC prepares CAP patrols to support Task Groups A & C (which he believes are still together.)

GM Comments

The IJN gets an early spotting report of an obvious invasion TF. But the CinC hasn't notified his TF commanders or launched any strike aircraft. I can't really query as to why, but it is curious. He also doesn't know that his two Task Group commanders have separated, which is exactly what he did not want them to do.

To be continued



What Are the Odds?

A probability tool to test tactics and strategy

by Pete Menconi

In most games (at least those based on random die rolls), “crunch time” comes down to a very few key battles. The difference between “smart” and “lucky” is how often success can be repeated. Good strategy gives a statistically repeatable chance of success. The tool for predicting the success involves the use of fractional or “partial units.” Another way of saying it might be to use an analog analysis rather than a digital one.

Let's set up a situation, using Craig Besinque's **EuroFront2** as a model: German units attempting to break through a Polish defensive line. The Germans are using one armor and three infantry units, supported by a HQ and air strike, against a Polish 3-strength defender. There are no defensive or offensive bonuses in this situation. The key German purpose (strategy) is to eliminate the defender in the *first* blitz phase, allowing movement into inner Poland (and isolating it) in the *second* phase. Failure to clear the defender's hex in the first phase would be a great setback to the attacker. (While the defender will be eliminated in the second phase, the Poles would then have the opportunity to patch the line before a hole could be exploited.)

So, what are the odds? The analysis has to follow the resolution of combat in the hex, which has three steps: air strike, defending fire, attacking fire. Each of these steps has multiple possible outcomes which complicates the analysis. For example, the air strike might have anything from zero to three “hits” (air strike strength of 3 derives from the HQ-III strength, and at this time in the game hits are scored on die rolls of 4-5-6, a 50% chance). The way to treat this is to look at the average expectation of the strike: 3 times 50%, or 1.5 hits.

How to use this? We treat the defender as going to the next step with an average strength of 1.5 (3 - 1.5 = 1.5). Now, this defender (infantry) hits on a

die roll of 6 (a 1/6 chance), so the average expectation of the defensive fire is $1.5/6 = 0.25$ hits. Hits are applied to the largest attacking unit, the armor, so the armor goes into the next analytical step at a strength of $(4 - 0.25 = 3.75)$.

In the attacker's phase, armor hits on die rolls of 5 and 6, infantry on die roll of 6 only, so here are the expected hits for each unit type:

Armor: $3.75 \times 1/3 = 1.25$; **Infantry** (use sum of all unit strengths): $9 \times 1/6 = 1.5$

Does the defender survive? We have hits in sequence: (air) 1.5; (armor) 1.25; (infantry) 1.5, for a total average expectation of 4.25, calculated by the “partial unit” method. On average, the attack works. Is this accurate?

Broadly, yes. For the purpose and simplicity desired, it works rather well. It is not rigorous in its treatment of outcomes because it treats a partial unit as still participating in the process, whereas in reality partial doesn't count for units. More detailed analysis of situations shows that the “partial unit” method gives a number very close to the detailed version (roughly within 5% of the hit number).

The more detailed analysis (which involves a line for every outcome on a spreadsheet) can give a “percent success” figure once “success” is defined (the number of expected hits is a function of how many attackers and defenders, but the number of hits required to accomplish a specific desire varies separately from the total hits possible, and this variance makes percent calculations a bit hazy).

The more rigorous calculation of the above Poland case shows the expected hits as 4.71 (vs.4.25) and the chance of success (3 or more hits) as 88.7%. The greater success rate accentuates the difference between the quick “partial unit” method and the rigorous method because there is a greater chance of partial defenders being eliminated (and their fractional contribution being reduced).

As an approximation, if the partial unit method shows that you can get 50% more hits than you need, you are somewhere about 90% success rate. Of course, if the partial unit method shows hits equal to the minimum needed, that's going to be 50% success rate; we can kind of interpolate between those two points for rough percentages.

★★