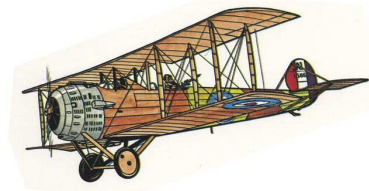


The Kommandeur



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From the President Kenneth Oates

We are all aware of the many and varied depths rules in our hobby can take. My first game ever only had four pages of rules, but a lot of my friends felt it was too complex. It would be interesting to determine just how long a successful game's rules should be. I am thinking slightly under 20 to maybe 32. But I have one that spans three 1½ inch three-ring binders.

Where am I going with this? I feel that the rules I have encountered in my hobby have enhanced my professional abilities in being able to interpret and bring intent to many regulations I come into contact with on a daily basis. The hobby has, for me, provided some experience I would not have expected. And a crossover to my day job.

So I have an advantage in that aspect, and it has been a great boost to me. I would encourage all of us to reflect on how our hobby has influenced us in other areas.

From emails flowing back and forth, it appears we are continuing to increase our numbers, so I extend a welcome to those new members. In addition, the game requests, which is why we exist, appear to be increasing also. Both good trends. Let's get the games on the gaming table, virtual or real.

From my limited exposure, there appear to be a host of games in the pipeline for the coming year, including some shipping this week. These run from a new treatment of ancient Greek warfare (**Hoplite**, by GMT), a monster regimental Gettysburg (**Last Chance of Victory** by MMP), to numerous WWII games (for example **A Spoiled Victory: Dunkirk 1940**, **White Dog Games**). They may be published in fewer numbers, but the mechanics are more varied and add challenges that keep all of these subjects new and fresh.

Enjoy the games, competition, and above all, camaraderie!

Kenneth



From the Editor

This issue starts a new year. We hope you are off to a good start.

As I mentioned in the last issue, Bob Best and I started a game of Turning Point Simulations' **Midway**. There were some delays, such as the holidays, but we finally got started. I had read the rules at least twice and had my units on the board. We notified each other where our task forces were and started searching. Bob, who is more organized than I, was reading ahead to when we actually had combat. He had some questions, so he wrote the game developer. Jim Werbaneth was helpful and sent Bob to the errata site. Bob had more questions and was put on hold. Bob said he wasn't sure about the game. I sat down to try out a combat sequence. I got as far as CAP and got stuck. There is a design showing that CAP can be one, two, three, or four. Nowhere in the rules could I find any information on this. Each carrier has one unit of fighters. In real life, some fighters went with the bombers and some flew CAP. After some time of turning pages in the rule booklet, I gave up. There are several rule problems, as I mentioned last time. Bob thought that giving up was a good idea, although he believed there was a good game hiding somewhere in the box. My suggestion is: don't buy the game until the rules are completely rewritten.

Bob and I are now trying **Hell's Gate**, a game by Philip Sabin. Professor Sabin believes in simple rules, so Bob and I are expecting no problems. The game covers the Korsun Pocket. There are only 39 hexes, so we shouldn't get lost. The counters in the boxed version are almost ⅓ of an inch thick. They are laser cut and the top of my counter sheet has some carbon on it. The armored counters are ⅛ of an inch bigger than the infantry counters. We will keep you informed.

My copy of *Battles* magazine #9 arrived at the end of December, many months late. Their masthead now reads "The most delayed magazine since Gutenberg." I'm not sure what they are alluding to; I don't think Gutenberg published many magazines. The editors always do a good job. The reviews are well written (with the occasional grammatical error), the color photos are done well, and there is always a game. If you are in no hurry and have the money, I recommend that you check it out.

Brian Stretcher's momentous task of writing up his multi-player game is finished with the last installment in this edition. As he explains in his article, it is not just a replay of the ships moving and firing. We are let in on the sword-swinging action as well as the dice results. The next issue of *The Kommandeur* will be much smaller!

Chris

Secretary's Notes Bob Best



Today is Thursday, January 23, 2014. It's been a very busy time for me since the last issue of *The K*. Just before Christmas, arctic storms hit the Reno/Lake Tahoe area in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California. Record cold temperatures broke several water pipes in our condo association complex at ski hill. Unfortunately we were one of three condos in the 130-unit complex that was flooded by freezing water. After nine days of water damage mitigation, the condo was finally dried out but it looks like we are still going to lose our oak hardwood floor and have to repair interior walls that were damaged by the freezing water. The good thing is that the insurance company will cover it all. The bad thing is that it has been time consuming and somewhat frustrating dealing with all of the players in this little "game of life." This has left me with precious little time to enjoy my gaming hobbies. While this is a relatively minor event compared with some of things you must be suffering through this winter with all of the storms hitting the nation, it certainly gives me a deeper appreciation for what you are going through. I do hope that each of you can get through this very cold snowy winter ok without any problems and if you do have problems they are minor ones.

I would like to send "good wishes" to our Match Coordinator Duncan Rice and his family. Duncan's mother and mother-in-law were both hospitalized this past week. At last word from Duncan, both of them had been released from the hospital and are doing better at home. I wish them both well and hope they both have a speedy recovery. Because Duncan and his wife are spending time with both families helping out while their respective mothers recuperate, his time to process game match requests may be limited. AHIKS members might experience some game matching delays until things are back to normal in the Rice family household. Duncan, we hope all goes well for you and your family.

This is the start of a new year here at AHIKS, our 49th year of continuous operation and as such, it is part of my Secretary duties to report on the status of AHIKS. So, here goes, our membership continues to grow steadily. As of today, we have 385 members in the society. A year ago the total membership stood at 339, that's 46 new members who have joined AHIKS during 2013. That shows a 14% growth over the past year. For comparison purposes, 35 years ago on July 15, 1979, AHIKS had 478 members.

During 2013 our Match Coordinator made 76 game matches. I don't have the figures for 2012 but I believe this is also up significantly. Predominately, it was Avalon Hill games that were matched during 2013 with a sprinkling of other companies also represented. If you go to the AHIKS forum and check the Match Coordinator's Section you can view all of the game matches made for 2013. I believe that the games actually being played by our members are quite a lot higher than the 76 game matches would suggest. I personally am playing five games right now and only one of them was arranged through the Match Coordinator. From talking with other members, it appears they are also involved in multiple games, many of which were arranged outside of the MC.

Since this is my New Year status report for AHIKS, I thought I would share a few interesting AHIKS related details that I discovered when I found my AHIKS membership package among some old game files. I joined AHIKS back in 1978.

There was some discussion awhile back about what the "I" in AHIKS stands for. Some say "International" others have said "Intercontinental." Well, my membership package from way back when I joined AHIKS has the "The Avalon Hill Intercontinental Kriegspiel Society" as the header on the introduction page. A set of crossed rifles on the left and crossed cannons on the right bracket the name. So it looks like Intercontinental is correct. For those that may not know, "Kriegspiel" means "wargame" in German.



The package also seems to clear up the meaning of the "3-66" that appears on our Logo. The society was founded March 14, 1966. So the "3-66" that looks like combat and movement factors on a game counter probably represent the month and year AHIKS was founded. The founding date comes from the "Brief History" document included with my membership package. I say "probably" here, because "back in 1966 when dirt was still young here at AHIKS" I was just a young "whipper-snapper" who was not a member yet and was not in on that decision! ☺

Yeah, Omar, I can hear you laughing as you read this! ☺ While I was not technically a member when the "young dirt" was being spread here at AHIKS, I know our esteemed Editor drove the truck that dumped that dirt! ☺ Uhhh, your ID number is 44, right Omar? ☺ So, Omar, you can probably tell you us for sure if this is true! Feel free to insert your comments here if you like! [Sounds good.]

The AHIKS Facebook page has expanded to 56 members. Duncan has been announcing game match requests from members there so if you are looking for a game match the AHIKS Facebook page is a good place to check out. If you are a Facebook user and you wish to join us on Facebook, simply search for "AHIKS" (no quotes) on your personal Facebook page. To join simply click the "join the group" button after searching for AHIKS, and one of the AHIKS administrators will approve your membership.

On the Gaming Front

The two games we had playing on the AHIKS forum during most of 2013 have ended now. Charles Marshall and Bert Schneider finished up **Alexander the Great** before the holidays. It looks like they had a fun time, and I enjoyed their commentary as the battle unfolded. If you wish to see the game in its entirety, go to the AHIKS forum, and you will find it under the "Featured On-Line Game" item on the main menu.

Our second game was Paul Pearson's **Flight Leader** game. It was set during the Vietnam War. US Navy F-8s, A-4s and A-6s were pitted against two Vietnamese Peoples Air Force MiG-17 fighters in a scenario based on a U.S. Navy raid on the thermal power plant in Hanoi that occurred on 19 May 1967. John Trosky and I each piloted a MiG-17 fighter. Our pilots were two Russian "Advisors" who were assisting the VPAF. Bob Dowery, Todd Fowler, and Cory Wells flew U.S. Navy F-8 Crusader fighter jets and escorted the A-4 Skyhawk and the A-6A Intruder attack plane flown by the game master (Paul). The mission briefings below were given to each side separately.

Alpha Force (U.S. Navy) Mission Preview 19 May 1967

U.S. Navy A-4 Skyhawks, carrying the then new AGM-62 Wall-eye smart bomb, were sent to hit the thermal power plant in Hanoi. The Skyhawks were escorted by F-8E Crusaders. There was a pre-strike diversion carried out by A-6 Intruders.

I (Paul) will be flying one A-4, Alpha Flight #3, using the Advanced Game rules for loaded aircraft. I'll enter from the SE and exit NW. Todd and Bob D. will be Alpha Flight #1 escorting in Alpha 1A/161 and Alpha 2A/162. Successfully exiting the A-4 is the primary mission.

I (Paul) will also be flying one clean A-6, Alpha Flight #4, from the diversion force. Alpha 1D/111 will enter from the SW and exit SE. Cory will be Alpha Flight #2, entering from the SW as Alpha 1B/163.

With the A-4 heading "downtown," you can expect to encounter opposition. Most likely, a MiG-17 or MiG-21 CAP. In actual engagements the MiG-21s encountered have been carrying heat seeking missiles, along with their internal cannons. The MiG-17s encountered have been guns only. Both MiGs are smaller than the F-8. In a dogfight, the MiG-21 is an even match for the F-8. Their turn radii are effectively identical, as are their acceleration profiles. The MiG-17 turn radius is actually better than the F-8 turn radius. However the F-8 accelerates better, is supersonic capable, and can reach mach 1.5. The MiG-17 is subsonic.

Your F-8s will carry 4HN missiles in addition to their cannons.

Bravo Force (Vietnamese People's Air Force) Mission Preview 19 May 1967 An airfield near Hanoi

You will be Bravo Flight #1, a true MiG-17C/J-4, two element flight, Bravo 1A/821 and Bravo 2A/822. You will enter and exit the NW mapboard edge. You started with a CAP mission, but there has been enough activity today that your priority has become preventing any enemy aircraft from reaching Hanoi (i.e. exiting off the NW mapboard edge).

Unfortunately, your superiors elected to load the Atolls (Air-to-Air Missiles) on the MiG-21s stationed at your airfield. Your MiG-17s are armed with their internal cannons only.

Intelligence reports confirm that U.S. F-4s, F-8s, and A-6s have been in your area today. SA-2s have already downed one F-4, and one A-6.

With that briefing the game got started. This might seem a little one sided as two sub-sonic gun-armed MiG-17s go up against three supersonic missile and gun armed F-8s, but this is an accurate depiction of how aerial combat occurred in the air-war against North Vietnam. VPAF aircraft picked the time and place to attack U.S. aircraft. They were generally outnumbered and out gunned. They used hit-and-run tactics that John and I tried to employ here. We decided to stay together and attack the closest group trying to exit an aircraft toward Hanoi. In the final analysis we chose wrong and the A-4 got through to Hanoi.

The situation set up by Paul was quite accurate and everyone was up for a real-life type scenario. I was able to down the A-6 Intruder early in the game while John engaged Cory's F-8. Bob D. and Todd were out of position and took a few turns to close. After some air combat maneuvering Cory was able to hold off our two MiG-17s until help arrived. Realizing that we had lost the initiative, John and I decided to disengage. In the process I managed to get John's MiG shot down...while he was on vacation in Europe! Sorry John! ☹ The A-4 escorted by Bob D. and Todd exited the map and my MiG-17 escaped off the board before the three F-8s could bring it down. The U.S. Navy pilots won on points, and I congratulate them on a *great game!*

Paul did an *outstanding* job of game mastering the encounter, and he gave an exceptional post mission de-briefing as well. Just like a real-life debrief after a "Red Flag" exercise! Thanks Paul for a *really fun time!* I hope to fly with you again soon.

I must apologize to Paul, as I did not have a chance to keep up with my narrative that I was posting as we went into the holidays. Life got busy for me during the holidays and then I got bogged down dealing with our flooded condo. Sorry, Paul, that I didn't get to finish the story and I didn't properly respond to the final debriefing.

The scenario was really an interesting one, and, if you have an interest in air games in general or **Flight Leader** specifically, it is worth a look. Paul used Vassal to run out the turns and Vassal files are posted on-line in the game so you can walk through it if you are a Vassal user. Paul posted a narrative as well, so you do not have to be a Vassal user to enjoy the game. Paul's game is posted in the On-Line games section of the main menu in the AHIKS Forum. It's well worth reviewing!

There are no active games being played on the forum as I write this. Anyone interested in playing a game can do so by going to the forum, logging in, and starting a game thread. I'm sure we would all like to see some new games being played. Step up and give it a try. You might enjoy it!

For those of you who purchased Steve Dixon's **Picket Duty** game or for anyone interested in the Kamikaze battles around Okinawa during WWII, you might be interested in the campaign game Steve is now running at his website. You can find the campaign at <http://www.skdgaming.com/picketcamp.htm>. **Picket Duty** is a solitaire game that puts the player in command of a Fletcher Class Destroyer assigned to one of the radar picket stations guarding the invasion fleet at Okinawa between March and June 1945. Your job is to provide early warning of air raids against the fleet and to survive numerous Kamikaze attacks while performing your radar picket duty. The game is easy to learn and play and there is a lot of tense excitement as you determine how to distribute your ship's anti-aircraft fire to best advantage and control damage to your ship from Kamikazes that have penetrated your screen. This campaign is similar to the one Steve ran for his solo **B-29 Superfortress** game a couple of years back. That campaign game was called 30th Bomb Wing and ran for over a year. Each player runs his own solitaire **Picket Duty** game and posts the action to Steve's website. There are 16 players in the game and lots of interesting action reports. Steve gamemasters the action and provides commentary. We have a waiting list of players, so if you are interested be sure and sign up at the website. I am captaining USS Dunlap at radar picket station 14. I plan to post my after-action reports on the AHIKS forum as I did with the 30th Bomb Wing campaign game.

For those who own **Picket Duty**, Legion Wargames has posted errata and clarifications for the game as downloadable .pdf files. Additions to two hypothetical scenarios included with the game now have printable ship layouts for the USS Dunlap, a 1935 class destroyer and USS La Prade, a John C. Butler class destroyer escort. The two hypothetical scenarios give the player a chance to try their skill with a ship less heavily armed than the Fletcher Class Destroyer regularly used in the game. You can find the errata and the two scenario upgrades here: http://www.skdgaming.com/pd_errata.htm

So, how do I use the Forum and other AHIKS "Member Only" services?

I'm often asked, "How do I get signed up for the members only section, or the dice roller or the on-line forum section of the AHIKS website? Also, I'm asked how to get a log-in ID."

The website's "members only" section is password protected. The "members only" section also contains our online die roller (which is also password protected). The *Kommandeur* (K Newsletter), OOBs, links, Unit Counter Pool (to replace lost parts), and other information for our members can also be found there. To access the "members only" side of our website, the dice roller, and also our on-line forum, you will need a user name and a password that you will create and send to the AHIKS Webmaster, Charles Marshall, at wm@ahiks.com. To get set up, follow the instructions below.

Pick a word for your user name and another for your password that meet the criteria set out below. The user name and password will be the same for the "members only" section, dice roller, and the on-line forum. Your user name can be anything you come up with, but we ask that your password be a minimum of 9 mixed-case characters and a combination of letters and numbers. Both your user name and password will be case sensitive. To get set up, simply send an email to our Webmaster at the address above with your requested user name and password. Please, include your name and member ID number in the request email you send to Charles as well. You can use the *same* User ID and Password for all three sections if you wish.

After you have your user name and password set up, go to the AHIKS home page at <http://www.ahiks.com>. On the left side of the home page you will see "members only enter here." By clicking your mouse cursor here you can enter the members only section of the website. You will be prompted for your user name and password. The dice roller can be found on the menu after you enter the member's only section. The on-line forum entry point can be found on the right side of the AHIKS home page where it says "AHIKS Forum." That's all there is to it.

The next question I frequently get asked is "How do I request a game match and where can I find game match listings?"

Duncan Rice is our Match Coordinator. His email address is mc@ahiks.com. You can request game matches for games you would like to play from Duncan. *The K* contains a current listing of game matches being requested by our members. If you check the Facebook page and also the AHIKS forum, you will find game match requests that Duncan has posted. Look them over and just contact Duncan if you wish to be paired up for a game. If you already have an opponent and want to play a recorded match, just contact Duncan and let him know so he can get you set up. Be sure to send Duncan your name and ID number (and your opponent's name and ID number) when requesting games from the Match Coordinator. It's as easy as that.

Meet the Member

We have two Meet-the-Member profiles again this month for publication. Our first new-member profile is from Joel Ramsey, #1762. Joel writes:

Born: May 3, 1947, Dothan, AL (still reside there)
 Profession: Recently retired civil defense attorney.
 Background: 5th generation Alabamian. Educated at The Citadel (2 years) and University of Alabama (BA '69, JD '72). Married 44 years to a Dothan girl; 3 children and 5 grandchildren. Luckiest guy I know; only military experience was 2 years in an Army Re-

serve QM unit. Presently split my time between Dothan and PC, FL. Political and religious liberal, social conservative.
 1st Wargame: AH **Chancellorsville** (Christmas gift 1962?); I wore it out. I am an original subscriber to Avalon Hill's *The General* magazine. (I still have Vol. #1, Issue #1.)
 Other Interests: University of Alabama football, military history and fiction, genealogy, and Monty Python.
 Number of wargames: 200+ (not counting magazine games), mostly ACW and WWII. Favorite games: **House Divided** (GDW) and **Axis & Allies**
 Most memorable gaming experience: Winning the **House Divided** Tournament at the 1982 Origins.
 Pet peeve: People who don't appreciate my "puckish" sense of humor and/or take me too seriously.

Well, Joel, welcome to AHIKS and thank you for introducing yourself to the membership.

I would like to welcome new member Larry Levandowski, #1754, to AHIKS. Larry writes:

Larry Levandowski # 1754

Forum Name: larizona

Game Collection Link: http://www.boardgamegeek.com/collection/user/Number_41

I am a long time gamer, having first picked up a copy of AH's **Luftwaffe** in 1972 as a kid. I was away from gaming for a while, then took a detour into WWII and Napoleonic miniatures but recently started playing board games again. I have a large collection of games, but find it hard to get out and play face-to-face. You can see my collection of games at the link above. I am interested in playing pretty much anything, from relatively simple games such as **Afrika Korps** to complex ones such as ASL, and GMT's **1914 Twilight in the East**. I am a bit of a computer geek so will tend towards Vassal, Cyberboard, Zun Tsu, but could be talked into "old school" PBM. I am a casual gamer, playing more for the pleasure of playing than winning. I am also comfortable with a fast or slow game pace and appreciate players who have good communication on when they are planning to return their turns. I am located in the Washington, D.C., area (Springfield, VA), and would also be up for face-to-face games with any players in my area.

Thank you, Larry, for introducing yourself to the membership, and welcome to AHIKS!

If you would like to introduce yourself to the membership, you can send me your member's profile at my email address listed on page 12. I would encourage anyone who has not sent in a profile to please do so. Step up and introduce yourself to the membership. We would all like to get to know you.

New AHIKS Members

We have had a considerable number of new members in the past two months. I would like to introduce and welcome our latest group of new members who have joined AHIKS since the last issue of *The K*.

William E. Dahle	# 1749	South Jordan, UT
Kevin D. Keatts	# 1750	Clarkston, WA
Erling Hedkvist	# 1751	West Hollywood, CA
Brian M. Lucid	# 1752	Mountain House, CA
Daniel Axelos	# 1753	Hamburg, Germany
Larry P. Levandowski	# 1754	Springfield, VA
Tyler Dobson	# 1755	Orange Park, FL
Michael Wilding	# 1756	Old Tappan, NJ
Jose Galvez	# 1757	Tarragona, Spain
Joe McCabe	# 1758	Hamilton, UK
Brian Marsh	# 1759	Acworth, GA

Ronald Kanagy # 1760 Freeland, MD
 William Marcy # 1761 Buffalo, NY
 Joel W. Ramsey # 1762 Panama City, FL
 Brian C. Jarvis # 1763 Halifax, Nova Scotia
 Justin Overton # 1764 Mansfield TX

Gentleman, *welcome* to AHIKS!

Change of Address

And lastly, 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 the newsletter and your game requests are uninterrupted.

Until next time, Happy Gaming to you all!



Anzio⁷ Continues from Tom Oleson

AHIKSer Mike Scott and I continue with our 7th edition **Anzio** game intended to keep pace with the historical chronology, so we are now winding up January. As Germans, I was unable to construct the Gustav Line in its historical position, and therefore will lose the Cassino scenario, but Mike let slip that he didn't choose it. I would probably also lose the Rome scenario (one of many), but my guess is that he went for the campaign game. This failure was part bad luck, part bad play, but, fortunately for me, Mike has also had some bad luck as he slogs laboriously forward. The front line is only a bit north of its historical position.

From the Bench by Lee Massey

Greetings fellow gamers! It has been quiet here on the bench so please send me any rules questions if you have some! I can't answer questions about game components though.

I would like to say a little bit about the new COIN series from GMT. The COIN series is short for COunter-INsurgency. There have been 3 games released so far in the series and the 4th is in production. You can find out more information about these games on the GMT website. If you don't have the link, just google it!

There is also a page for the games on BGG. The titles of the first three games are **Andean Abyss** (Colombia), **Cuba Libre** (Cuba of course), and **A Distant Plain** (Afghanistan). The fourth game in the series is **Fire in the Lake** which is set in Vietnam in the 60s. Volko Ruhnke is the head honcho for the series. Brain Train and Mark Herman are two of the designers in the series. The games are not too hard to learn, but they do require some thought and strategy.

Happy Gaming,

Game Review *Revised*

Battle for Moscow review revised
 by Omar DeWitt

Last year I reviewed the game **Battle for Moscow**, designed by Frank Chadwick and published by Victory Point Games.

I was not very impressed with the game, saying the Germans could never win.

Mark Fassio read the article and thought the Germans did have a chance to win the game. So we decided to play a game, with Mark as the Germans, of course.

Although the Germans can set up as desired on the marked hexes, all the Russian units are the same. I received Mark's setup and combat sheet, then the die roll results arrived, followed by his movement sheet. After I had resolved the combat and moved his units, I sat there stunned. He had units two hexes from Moscow! How could that happen? Hadn't he read my review!?! Eventually, I realized that superior general-ship could produce different results. Arghh!

I made my first move. Mark made his second move...and captured Moscow!! **Well.** He had made a 1-1 attack and earned an exchange, so there was a half-strength unit in Moscow. The Russians were able to attack and eliminate the unit and retake Moscow. Even so...

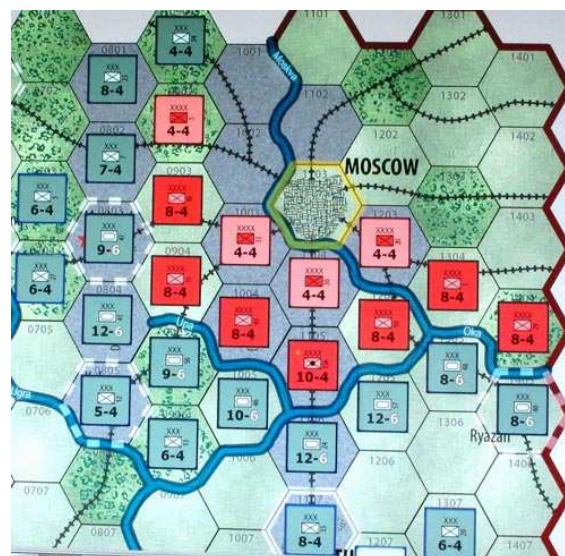
Two mud turns slowed the Germans down, the Russians built up strength. The final result was the Russians holding Moscow but no other city. That made the game a draw.

But it was an exciting game.

In the original Russian setup, there is one hex, if cleared of its defender, that allows the Germans through the Russian lines. That hex can be attacked at best at 2-1. The 2-1 odds have two "no effect" results which leaves the door closed for the Germans. There are two DRs, which are great, and two Exchanges, which are OK.

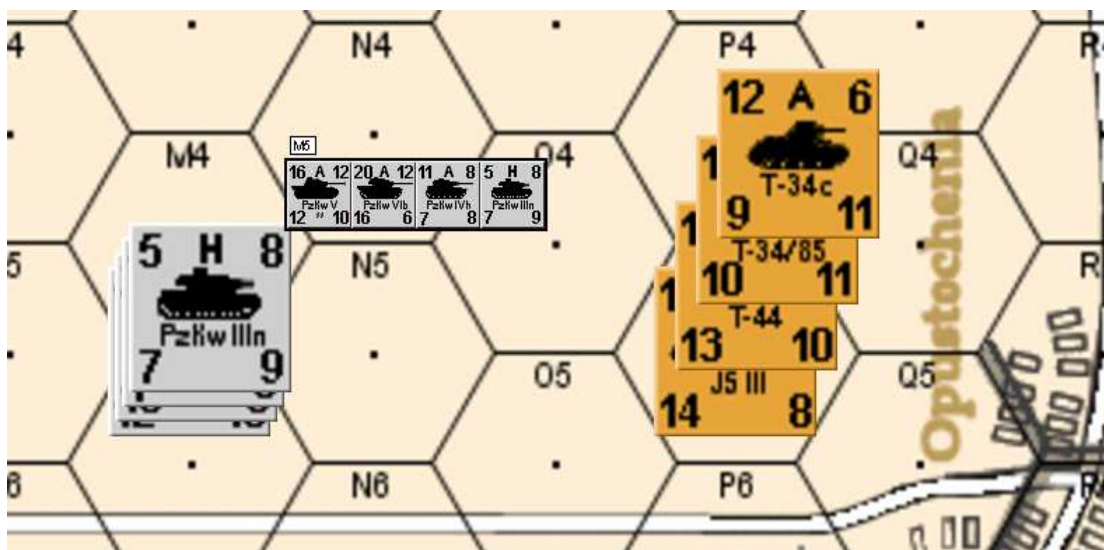
In the second game, with me as the Germans, the Russians suffered another DR on the crucial hex, and the Germans flooded through to surround the Russian left flank. The results of that game were the same as the first. The Russians were a bit stouter than mine, but the game was again a draw.

Mark has won as the Germans, but not winning the crucial battle on Turn 1 makes a big difference. There *is* a good game here.



Not All Clicks Are Equal: The Mouse In Vassal by Pete Menconi

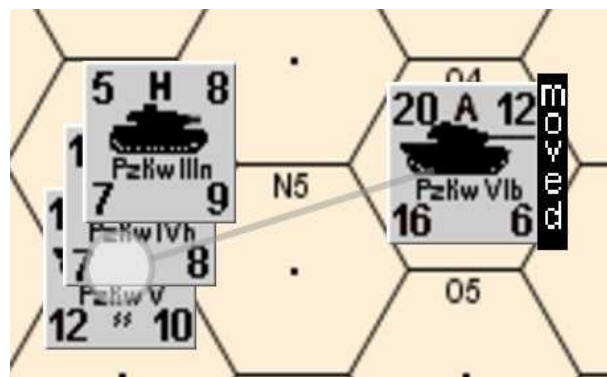
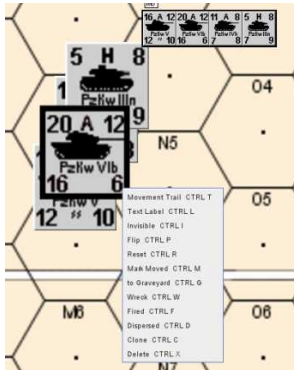
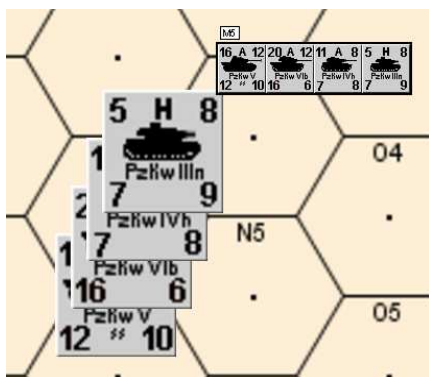
Something I notice with players new to the Vassal system is that manipulating the mouse around the counters can be frustrating. The Vassal tutorials cover pretty much everything, but they don't give emphasis to what's most important in the process of play. Pulling info on a stack of counters is one of the most essential skills to make game play easy. Here we see two stacks of counters, in two modes:



On the left we see the standard “collapsed” stack; to the right, the “opened” stack. The left side counters also have a “flyover” horizontal display of the units in the stack: this pops up when you place the cursor over the stack (it does the same flyover display whether the stack is collapsed or open). You “open” and “collapse” the stack display by double clicking on the stack.

The flyover display has a few characteristics common to all Vassal games: the units are displayed with the top unit on the right, descending in order top/bottom = right/left. The location of the flyover icons is determined by the position of your mouse cursor: the flyover icon display occurs above and to the right of your cursor (so if you get in the habit of moving your cursor to the upper right of the stack, the flyover won't hide the top unit in the stack). The size of the flyover icon is fixed and does not change with the magnification of the map/units. In the view above, I've got the basic map/unit mag at 250%, pretty big; the flyover size doesn't change, and usually (at the typical 50% map mag) the flyover is bigger than the units in the stack. (The flyover icon size is programmable, and thus may vary from one module/game to another. And, yes, you can change it, but that's another story.)

Now, most of the time you view the details of the unit stack so you can decide what to do with them. After the decision, getting to the unit you want to use might be a bit frustrating, and this is where I see new players spreading units all over the map to get to them. It's a bit more subtle, but not that hard, to get to each unit, no matter how deep into the stack. You start by opening the stack (left diagram below), then right click on the visible portion of the desired unit (in the middle diagram below, the selected unit is the 3rd from the top). The right click brings up the flyover menu of unit actions. Note that it also draws a bold border around the unit, indicating it is selected. Once that unit is selected, you can pick from the menu (middle diagram) or just click/drag the unit to a new position (right diagram).



With a little practice, stack manipulation becomes easy.



Unit Counter Pool News

from Brian Laskey

I didn't have an end-of-year column, but I hope the Holidays went well for you all. I also hope that those of you who are being affected by the winter weather are getting through it okay. I wish to apologize for any slight delays in responding to inquiries during the pre-holiday crunch time, but I did my best given the time of year with everything going on.

On the UCP front, I'd like to thank Chris Harding and Harold McPhearson for their donations, and as always I appreciate their time and expense to send those items along. If I have missed someone there please let me know, and I will certainly fix that in the next column. There is also a correction to the UCP counter list: the listing for **Desert Storm Expansion** counters is incorrect. They are actually counters for the **Gulf Strike: Desert Shield** component from *The General* and *not* for the expansion. I would like to thank Ralph Ferrari for bringing that to my attention.

For the benefit of new members, and as a reminder to the others, please include your AHIKS number and mailing address with any inquiries to the UCP. I only have names and AHIKS numbers in order to confirm your current membership so including that info will help speed up the process if I have what you need.

Last but not least, the UCP is always accepting donations, and they do help as several members have been helped out recently with needed items. But some have not, though in two cases I was able to color copy the needed counters from my own game and include blank counters.

Whenever possible I will try and help devise a solution.

On a curiosity note, the requests of late have been for some of the older games such as **Third Reich**, **Russian Campaign**, and **Turning Point Stalingrad**. It is nice to see they are still going strong. BTW, a member is in need of a copy of the rules to **Turning Point Stalingrad**. If anyone can help on that please let me know.

Be of Good Cheer!

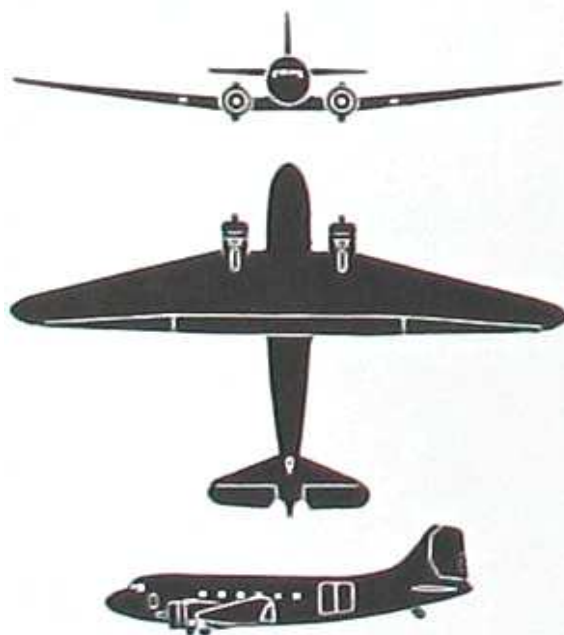


What does your editor do in his spare time?
Italian light tank Carro Armato L6/40

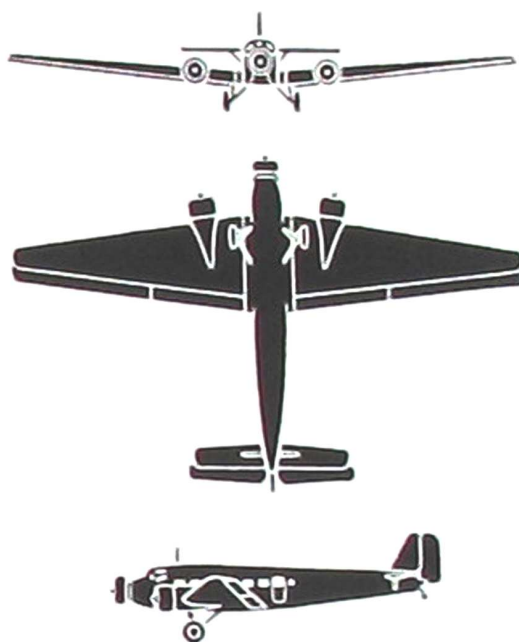
Identify That Plane!

In this issue there are five WWII airplanes to be identified. The answers are on page 32.

The plane below is
#1



#2



Treasury Notes

Brian Stretcher



EDR's Conclusion and Acknowledgments

The final installment of the **Wooden Ships & Iron Men** replay is presented elsewhere in this issue; I hope you enjoy it. My original intent was to offer the membership something above and beyond the typical replay or after-action-report, which I know some of you don't particularly care for, based on comments past. But there is more to this replay than who-moves-where and what the neutral commentator thinks. This one includes a story to make the replay come to life which, I suspect, is the reason why many if not most of us play these games: the sense of being there, in command, pursuing history ("You are there! Can you...?"). Otherwise, these are mere games, and the likes of **Scrabble** or **Monopoly** should satisfy our gaming urges.

There are several people to thank in getting this replay to print. First, my thanks to our esteemed Secretary, Bob Best, who not only provided much of the incentive to play this game in a quasi role-playing fashion, having run a **Richtofen's's War** game online in a similar fashion, but who also provided a great deal of the story text which you can enjoy, including the interludes of Clyde Smyth and Smedley Pope, and the excellent postscript which is offered at the end of the replay. Bob also had all of the email messages I sent to him during the course of the game, and so I was better able to piece back together the game and story line than I otherwise would have been able to after my desktop computer, on which all my game files were stored, died. Alas, there was at one time much more to Santiago's story, but my memory could not reproduce it all. My additional thanks to those other players who had at least some of their player-specific information saved, including Michael Scott and Tom Thorsen. This information also helped me rebuild the story, particularly as to which events happened on what turns. Once again, extreme thanks to Charles Marshall, who not only played through most of the game, but provided the excellent maps even when he didn't really have the time to do so, and continued to do so after he left the game as a player. Finally, I can't leave out Omar, who had to piece and format all that I sent him into something coherent for you to read. Considering that much of what is offered was copied, pasted, and edited from forum postings, and I know from dealing with it myself how that produces some rather funky formatting, Omar's patience in reformatting the monster for publication is greatly appreciated.

Only one thing I regret in putting this replay together: that I was not able to offer more comments from the players themselves, as the old Series Replay articles from *The General* once did. Bob, for example, sent me a ton of stuff in addition to what he saved. Some of what I had was incorporated into the body of the replay or the story line, but to include separate comments from the players as well would have made the replay horrendously long. For those players who still have a story to tell, therefore, let me suggest that you put your game logs together to tell your story in a separate article for *The K*.

Now, if you haven't already read the replay in its entirety, I suggest you do so!

Can't figure out what to do with some Christmas money?

For the first time in many years, I got a gift of money to use as I wished for Christmas, in the form of a prepaid \$75 Visa Debit card. Woo hoo! It having been years since I actually purchased a new wargame (**Bitter Victory** from Avalanche Press being the last title I bought, some 3-5 years ago), I decided that it was time to take the plunge once again.

But where to start, living in a town in which there are no game stores? I first decided to try shopping online. Bob Best had mentioned in a previous **K** article that he was enjoying *The Gamers' Bastogne*, so I decided to look and see if I could find it and how much it was. It took me a while to find it, since apparently *The Gamers* do not exist as an independent entity anymore, but their games can be found on the MultiMan Press website. I found it there for \$42. But I was offput by the price, my budget being limited, and I didn't want all of my mighty \$75 to be eaten up by one game plus shipping.

I therefore went looking at Decision Games' website, knowing that they have (relatively) recently relaunched the folio-sized wargame and a set of mini-games that look interesting, many of which are remakes of old SPI titles. Those old SPI games are PBM friendly, and for the most part DG has handled remakes with friendly hands, even if at times some of their changes and fixes cause more harm than good. Plenty of titles there for \$20 or less, including some Ancient, Medieval, Mexican-American War, and World War I titles that look intriguing. Here, however, the issue was shipping. I have long thought, and continue to think, that DG's shipping charges are outrageous. According to the website, you can get up to two folios or up to three mini-games for the flat rate of \$7, which is imminently reasonable. But, go any step beyond that and it jumps to a flat-rate of \$16, as it is for any boxed title. I am not one to pay more for shipping than it would cost me to buy an actual game, and you can't tell me that you couldn't slip a mini-game in with a couple of folios for the same flat rate envelope price. I could find no combinations of folios and mini-games that would get me close to \$68 plus \$7 shipping.

OK then. I didn't know what there might be in Asheville, about an hour away from where I live, so I decided to see if there were any stores that carry wargames there. Indeed, I found a couple of them, and I could see some historical titles, including some of those DG folios I was looking at in some of the photos on the store websites. I decided to go to the closest one, *The Wyvern's Tale*. Having to take the Prius into Asheville for some routine maintenance anyway, my trip to the wargame store was set!

No problem finding the place, as it was just a little way off the interstate. First problem, however, is that the store didn't open until noon, so I had to go kill 30 minutes before it opened. They did open on time, however. Then I went in to look around, asking the clerk where the historical games were located. They had some, mostly very new titles, but not a whole lot, just a few short shelves worth. Most of the store was dedicated to Euro games, miniatures, and RPG-type games. Most of the wargames were also very expensive, on the order of \$50, \$70, or even over \$100. They did have one of the DG Folios I had looked at, **Pedregal**, for \$18. So I snatched it up. This is a battle fought near Mexico City in 1847. It looks nice, and I may review the game in a future issue, but not here. All I will say is that the game system is not your father's **Blue and Grey**,

even if it is the same scale. But there was nothing else new in my price or complexity range on the new game shelf. What they did have in another part of the store, however, was a clearance shelf! Here I found several wargames, amongst other things, at 50% off the store's prices, which were usually less than the MSRP to start with. I picked up a couple of Avalanche Press titles for cheap: **Queen of the Celts** for \$16 (tactical Rome vs. Britons) and **Red Vengeance** (end of WWII on the east front) for \$8. It's these clearance items, or used items sometimes, and the pleasure brought in looking for such deals that make going to a store that sells wargames a worthwhile experience. Three games, and I still have some \$30 to spend!

I therefore returned to my online search for something to buy. During my search, I learned some interesting things. Surprisingly, at least to me, several wargame titles can be found through Amazon, although the prices vary quite a bit, at slightly below, or even significantly more than MSRP prices. Several of the DG folio titles were listed there, for example, but at least one of the folio games that DG listed as in-stock on their website for \$20 was offered for \$32 plus shipping. So beware if you ever look for games on Amazon; check the MSRP prices on the company websites first to compare. I found some other wargame distributors as I was looking at Amazon, however, and so now know that there are multiple online sources to go to look for games, some of them which also offer clearance on overstocked items. Some of the DG folio titles can be found for as little as \$13. I almost went for a copy of **Acre**, a Medieval Crusaders vs. Saladin battle, but decided to continue looking.

Having learned that if I look hard enough maybe I can find a better price than those offered on the publishers' websites, I decided to try looking for **Bastogne** once again. I searched by title. Warning, however; unless you want travel information for the actual town of Bastogne, one needs to be a little more specific, and so I searched **Bastogne: Screaming Eagles under Siege**. I found the game this way offered by wargamesdepot.com for \$32, a very reasonable price. Wargamesdepot.com had a plethora of titles offered at decent prices, with reasonable shipping (less than \$7 for one item). Because wargamesdepot.com is a NC company, I had to pay sales tax, but I still got the game shipped to my house for a little less than the MSRP. I was a little concerned that it might take weeks to arrive, having never dealt with this company, but it was just a few short days. Turns out that the wargamesdepot.com mailing address is in Marshall, NC, about the same distance from Asheville that my town of Brevard is, just on the northern side. I was very happy with the ordering and shipping experience.

All in all, this wargame shopping experience was somewhat new for me, since I haven't gone to a store for several years, and it has probably been decades since I ordered a game through the mail. Those of you who still reside near a store well-stocked with historical titles are lucky. For the rest of us, we may have to travel or search online a bit until we are able to

find what we want at a reasonable price. And, Decision Games might want to address their direct-mail shipping prices, as they have been off-putting for years. Picky grognards like me aren't going to shell out \$16 for shipping for a few folio games that could be sent Priority Mail for about 1/3 of that. They might see a little uptick in direct-mail sales if they did.

I hope everyone got what they wanted over the holidays, and that everyone has a great 2014!

Treasurer's Report

We have a new checking account! I am happy to report that I found a local credit union that offered a 0.35% interest rate on a free Money Market Checking Account so long as a minimum balance of \$1,000 is maintained. This is seven times the rate we were getting in Ohio, and this is a checking rather than a savings account. Seven times nothing is still pretty much nothing, but I no longer have to reimburse myself after personally issuing checks for AHKS expenses. Should we ever drop below \$1,000, the interest rate goes down to the standard 0.1%. The only other stipulation is that we are limited to no more than three processed checks per month for there to be no service charge per check. Since we barely need to write three checks a year, this presents no challenge for us. Once again, I found the right bank for us through an online search; it is no longer necessary to go door-to-door to find the best deal.

As you all know by now, there is no longer any separation between the Operating and Perpetual Fund monies. This is largely the after-effect of the abysmal interest rates offered by banks. The best savings account rate I could find was the 0.1% mentioned above, so we are better off having all of our money in a single account until the day that interest rates on savings accounts or short term CDs are better than those offered on checking accounts. Nevertheless, I do maintain all of the records past, and they are offered regularly here, so we do have information on what the Perpetual Fund balance should be should we again decide to have separate accounts and want to do an accounting separate from an arbitrary split. Your contributions, however, are still quite welcome.

Here are the numbers since last time:

Total balance, 11-29-13:	\$ 9,605.83
Interest income on closing Ohio account:	0.37
Interest, 12-31-13	2.68
Paper K dues 2014:	75.00
PF and other Contributions:	67.60
Richard Cottrell postage expenses	-22.60
Duncan Rice MC expenses 2013	-59.03

Total balance 1-30-14: \$ 9,669.45

Until next time!



Book Review from Tom Oleson

I first went briefly to Mexico in 1962, later, by then fluent in Spanish, lived there 2 ½ years, roaming the country from end to end, sampling the delights of Cancun, Chetumal, and Chihuahua.

"**A Wicked War**" by Amy Greenberg examines the U.S. invasion of Mexico in 1846. The war concluded in 1848 with the annexation of what is now the American Southwest, rounded out in 1854 with the Gadsden Purchase. Our experiences with Mexico and Mexicans—here and there—have been positive, although I recall chatting with a high government official at a cocktail party, who rebuked me "for stealing half of *our* country." I emphasize the "our" because he was proud of his pure Castillian ancestry. So whom did they steal it from?

The emphasis of this book is more political than military, although there is enough of the latter to provide context.

Several times the Mexicans had the advantage but failed to pursue it. Many here wanted to annex all of Mexico, but even then, they worried about the Mexicans who would come with it. There was much opposition here to the war, on moral and practical grounds, but little dissent from the notion that the Mexicans were an inferior race, expressed in terms which would be unthinkable today.

When General Winfield Scott ruled the capital he had conquered, some wealthy Mexicans offered him \$1,250,000 to become president of the country, as a prelude to complete annexation. General Santa Anna had been president 11 separate and non-consecutive times between 1833 and 1855; the political turmoil there being the primary reason for their defeat.

A "must-read" for anybody interested in the history of both countries. Fascinating insights into what has changed and what has not changed in this country since then, too complex to easily summarize. Mexico then, Iraq yesterday, Afghanistan today, and tomorrow...?

Anybody aware of any games on this subject?

Several, most of them mine.

There is **Halls Of Montezuma**, covering the entire war, by Fox and Welker, from GMT.

There is **Vera Cruz**, by me (rather old, like 30 years), covering Scott's invasion.

There are two games covering virtually all of the battles: **Gringo** and **Battles Of the Gringos**, both by me, from GMT. Despite a fairly high level of detail, they are really good playing games because the battles themselves are so interesting (and surprisingly balanced, except for 1 or 2).

I would say that with the above you would get a complete boardgame picture of what I have always felt was a land-grab floating the Manifest Destiny banner.

Richard H. Berg



From the Match Coordinator

Duncan Rice

It's been a great month for AHIKS. The MC office has put out seventeen match assignments in one month. And they didn't all belong to Jeff Miller or me. We average roughly six a month and this is by far a record since I've had the temporary duty for almost three years. I might have a backlog at times due to real life issues. I have two match assignments to get out and a number of my own game turns to keep me busy! Because there has been a lot of activity on the match request list I encourage everyone to take a good look at it. See if I have removed anything that I should not have and let me know if there is anything to be added. Mistakes were likely made in the landslide of assignments and requests. Remember that the match request list depends on good communication from you guys. Better yet, pick up the gauntlet and play something.

I put out a call for interest in any kind of AHIKS tournament in the last issue. There was only one general response. Should someone mention something they would like to do, I will gladly pursue it. However, I'll put my own hope of regular tournaments on the shelf for now.

Costs will be going up for the match coordinator's office this year because of Canada Postal rates. Letter post from Canada to the U.S.A. is the bulk of MC costs and this will affect us. After some discussion with the executive, it has been decided to keep the MC office with me in Canada. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact us.

AHIKS member Martin Hogan and I got together to play **Blood and Bridges**, part of Lock n' Load Publishing's World at War series. World at War is a platoon level mid 1980s Cold-War-gone-hot system. I love it! But I must acknowledge that it isn't for everyone. Some players might not enjoy the possibility of a random event throwing a sabot into their war-fighting machine, and I know some people don't like chit pull activation systems. For myself, both of these things are enjoyable. The limited chance of a random event adds friction, and, while not completely turning the game, it can certainly give both sides pause. I find that chit pull activation adds another level to planning, risk assessment, and opportunity cost. It increases the tension. I have only two complaints about the physical game presentation. The rules are a bit fiddly but this can be resolved using common sense and the FAQ on ConsimWorld. Also, the counter information is a bit challenging for my 48-year-old eyes. The combat system took me a bit of getting used to. I had the same problem with **Conflict of Heroes**. It was a big change from ASL for me. But I very much enjoyed the game. Enough that I ordered another game in the WaW system and am pestering Martin for a rubber match in the hopes of meeting more than once a year. And not just because schnitzel from his grandmother's recipe was supplied.



Open Match Requests from Duncan Rice

1776 AH	Bill Scanlan (0275) EV	Shiloh DG	Mike Kettman (1067) EP
1914 AH	Mike Kettman (1067)	Squad Leader AH	Melvin Yarwood (36) P
Adv Third Reich AH	Nacho Fernandez (1745) EVS	Stalin's War GMT	Mark Sturdivant (1747)
Afrika Korps AH	Brian Britton (1603) ZV	Stalingrad AH	Kevin Keatts (1750) EFV
Afrika Korps AH	Anders Hench (1724) C	Stones River Decision Games	Mel Yarwood (36) P
Afrika Korps AH	Bob Jones (1548) P	Supreme Commander,	
Amateurs to Arms CoAG	Rod Coffey (1493)	WWII in Europe GMT	Mike Kettman V
Anzio AH	Melvin Yarwood (36) P	Tamburlaine The Great SPI	Albert Bowie (299)
Anzio AH	Greg Dilbeck (1363) P	Titan AH	William Marcy (1761) PEV
Anzio 4 ed	William Marcy (1761) VEX	Twilight Struggle GMT	Mark Sturdivant (1747)
Barbarossa to Berlin GMT	Mark Sturdivant (1747)	Twilight Struggle GMT	Chris Hancock (565)
Barbarossa: Crimea GMT	Mark Sturdivant (1747)	Victory in the Pacific AH	Lee Blake Massey (1382) EV
Battles for the Ardennes SPI	Thomas Ten Eyck (0826) EP	War Between the States DG	Harold McPherson EP
Battle Fleet Mars SPI	Tony Arena 1652 C	War in the Ice SPI	Grailing Jones (1732) E
Bitter Woods AH	Melvin Yarwood (36) P	War at Sea AH	Tom Walsh (1427) P
Bitter Woods L2	Art Dohrman (1551) EFLV	Washington's War GMT	Shannon McNamara (1639)
Blitzkrieg '65 AH	William Dahle (1749) E	Waterloo AH	Brian Britton (1603) ZV
Blitzkrieg AH	William Marcy (1761) VEX	Waterloo AH	Anders Hench (1724)
Blue and Grey I, II	Melvin Yarwood (36) P	Wellington GMT	Mark Sturdivant (1747)
Borodino SPI	Melvin Yarwood (36) P	Winter War SPI	Kevin Keatts (1750) EF
Breakout Normandy AH	Chris Hancock (565) EV	Wooden Ships + Iron Men AH	Bob Herbst (1442) E
Bulge '65 AH	Michael Paul (1578) P		
Bulge '81 AH	William Marcy 1761 VEX		
Chalons DG	Albert Bowie (299)		
Chancellorsville '74 AH	Charles Marshal (1573) E		
Central America VG	Dan Carey (1716) VE		
Combat Commander: Pacific GMT	Lee Massey (1382) VE		
The Civil War VG	Shannon McNamara (1639)		
The Civil War AH	Larry Levandowski (1754) VZ		
D Day AH	Kevin Keatts (1750) EFV		
D Day 65 AH	Anders Hench (1724) C		
D Day 77 AH	Tom Walsh (1427) P		
The Dark Valley GMT	Mike Kettman 1067 V		
Decision in the Pacific 42 GDW	Melvin Yarwood (36) P		
Eurofront 2 Columbia	Pete Menconi (146) V		
Eurofront Columbia	Tom Oleson (111) FtF (WA.)		
Fading Glory GMT	Mike Kettman (1067) EP		
Flight Leader '86 AH	Paul Pearson (1638) EPV		
Fortress Stalingrad S&T	Chris Harding (1591) E		
Frayser's Farm Decision Games	Mel Yarwood (36) P		
Frederick the Great AH	Martin Svensson (1466) V		
Golden Horde: Kulikovo ATO	Albert Bowie (299) E		
Hell's Highway	Thomas Ten Eyck (0826) EP		
Korean War VG	Thomas Thorsen (0470) EV		
Leipzig Decision Games	Mel Yarwood (36) P		
Midway AH	William Marcy (1761) PEV		
Napoleon Against Europe Hexasim	Mike Kettman 1067 V		
Napoleon at War SPI	Melvin Yarwood (36) P		
Panzer GMT	Martin Hogan (1704) V		
Roads to Leningrad GMT	Mark Sturdivant (1747)		
Roads to Moscow GMT	Mark Sturdivant (1747)		
Russia Besieged L2	Michael Paul (1578) P		
Russia Besieged L2	Victory Huguet (1707) C		
Russian Campaign AH	Greg Dilbeck (1363) P		
Russian Campaign L2	Harold McPherson (1000) EP		
Russian Campaign AH or L2	Bob Jones (1548) A		
Russian Campaign AH	Larry Levandowski 1754 V		
Russian Front AH	Melvin Yarwood (36) P		
Russian Front AH	Mike Kettman (1607)		

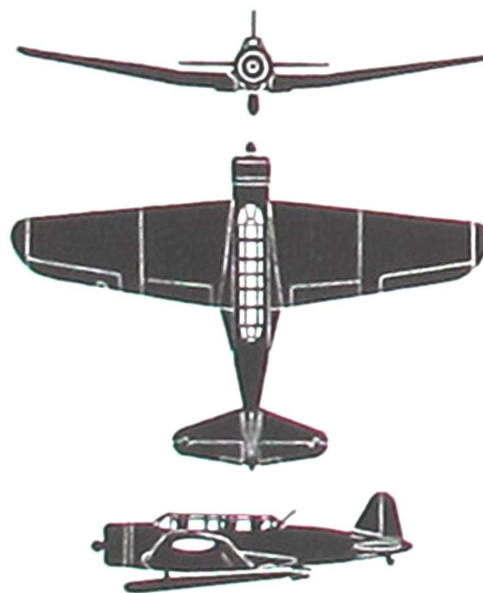
Match Codes

A: ADC2	P: Postal Mail
C: Cyberboard	S: Slow Play
E: Email	T: A.C.T.S..
F: Fast Play	V: V.A.S.S.A.L.
G: Will Gamemaster	X: Non-rated Game
L: Learning Game	Z: Zuntzu

Match Coordinator

To accept one of the listed matches or have a new match listed, email to: MC@AHKS.COM

#3



Book Review

A Guide to the Battles of the American Revolution

by Theodore Savas and David Dameron

Savas Beatie

©2006, 2010

360 pages, maps, photographs, paper \$20

Reviewed by Omar DeWitt

This book is comprised of most of the battles of the revolution. For each battle, the date is given, commanders are listed, time of day is given as are the weather conditions. Force numbers are also given. The "perspectives" of both sides are written out, which include recent action and plans for the current action. The terrain of the battle is explained, and then the fight is described. There are no real details given, just the general action, so the Battle of Yorktown takes up only 2½ pages. The casualties are listed and the "Outcome/Impact" is given. At the end of each battle, the modern status of the field is described.

So this really is a guide and not a history. It is well done, with a map for each battle. It is made abundantly clear that without the aid of the French, the revolution probably would not have been won. Those of you living in the East might well get something valuable out of the book.

★★

Any Multiplayer Interest?

I am looking to see who (and how many) might be interested in the following multiplayer titles: **After the Holocaust** (SPI), using Cyberboard; **Kingmaker** (AH), using Vassal; **Republic of Rome** (AH), using Vassal or ACTS; **Imperium Romanum II** (WEG), using Vassal. Of these, I would probably only play the one (maybe two) that received the most interest. There's already one sign-up, Mike Kettman, for **Kingmaker**.

In addition, I wondered if there is any interest in **Gunslinger** (AH) and/or **Gladiator** (AH), both using Vassal. These can be played 2-player (though **Gladiator** is more suited than **Gunslinger**) but can have multiple players either in single games and/or over the course of a continuing campaign where your character(s) can advance or diminish in skill/ability. I would be willing to play either or both in addition to the single contest of one of the above games.

Tony Arena #1652 JulianTA@aol.com

★★

As AHIKS strives to keep costs and dues down, there is something you can do to help. Our Perpetual Fund, started by Bruce Monnin and Frederick Kraus, can always use more donations. The interest from the Fund helps the Society. A few dollars from you could help AHIKS become totally self sustaining. Give it some thought. Send Brian Stretcher a couple of dollars. Especially since there are no dues this year.

Brian Stretcher 73 Kalvi Court, Brevard, NC 28712

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PUBLICATION DEADLINES

Articles will be accepted at any time though submission of an article does not guarantee its publication. News items will be accepted if received in sufficient time to allow production schedules to be met.

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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. 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.

WOODEN SHIPS & IRON MEN El Diablo Rojo Part 3 from Brian Stretcher

Turn 19

Crabbe sinks on a roll of 6 to start the turn, but Neville does not explode. Minerva turns slowly to starboard, allowing herself to drift away from Bellatrix as she turns. Bellatrix attempts to close distance on Minerva, while Narcissa turns to port into the wind, bringing a fresh broadside to bear. Hermione moves towards the doomed Neville, which drifts towards the beach. Luna inches forward to deal with the nearby gunboats, while wary of Severus. Nymphadora and Pomphrey pivot at anchor to defend themselves against the gunboats. Fleur has to guess at Severus' move to avoid fouling, and vice versa. She manages a turn to port before colliding with Severus, and the two ships are fouled. Sirius, meanwhile, moves forward quickly and positions herself due north of the two fouled ships, and Magini makes best speed possible due north under full sail to rejoin her Spanish comrades.

Both Severus and Fleur attempt to grapple each other. Severus grapples Fleur, but Fleur misses Severus. No matter unless and until Fleur wishes to ungrapple, as one is as good as the other, plus the ships are fouled anyway. Boarding parties are formed on both ships. Minerva fires at Narcissa's hull, which takes damage along with some crew. Narcissa answers, scoring minor damage against Minerva's hull. Luna opts to fire both broadsides, one at Severus' rigging, and the other at the hull of the nearby gunboat. A lucky round of shot lands amidst a group of men massed on the deck of Severus, and many go down. Severus also loses some rigging. Sirius engages Luna, however, so Severus can focus on Fleur, and scores a critical hit; Luna's port broadside is partially obscured by fallen rigging. Luna also knocks out another gunboat, which, along with her comrades, have targeted the merchantmen. Some crew goes down on Nymphadora, and Moody's hull collects a few holes. But the merchantmen also score substantial damage against the gunboats. The fort fires on Hermione and some additional rigging goes down.

Fleur and Severus are now locked in mortal combat, but Bellatrix actually rakes Fleur's hull to begin the fight. At range, however, Fleur's crew is unscathed and she suffers only a gun hit. Severus blasts away with grape and her bow chaser, but because of poor modifiers (due to committing crew sections to boarding parties), does no damage to Fleur's crew either.

Large numbers of men swarm across the decks of Severus and Fleur. All can hear the clash of steel and small arms fire, but the fighting is too confused to make out any details from a distance. On board the two ships, however, it becomes fairly obvious that Fleur's crew is at a disadvantage. The battle rages across both decks and will carry over into turn 20, as neither ship gains a decisive advantage.

Only Magini ends the turn at full sail.

NEUTRAL COMMENTARY: Not knowing where the other ship is going, Fleur and Severus collide, and then they foul. That Fleur fails her grappling attempt only has bearing if and when the ships want to disengage, as it would require a separate attempt. Of course, Delacoeur does not know that Severus has 50% more crew squares than normal, despite my clues that she appears to have more men on deck than usual, and he may be emboldened somewhat from picking up more crew squares from the longboats. Although green in quality, they do add some melee strength. Don Diego is disappointed that his grape

has no effect on Fleur, but the negative modifiers from grape itself and the crew sections committed to boarding parties make it impotent in this instance. Don Diego could have brought the battle to a quicker conclusion, perhaps, if he simply committed everything to an offensive boarding party, especially since Fleur did not commit all her crew sections either. But mathematically, Fleur does not have much of a long-term chance unless Luna attempts to come to her aid. Elsewhere, the battles rage on.

The bells of Puerto Abierto fell silent, but there was still much activity along the dockyards of the port as Hermione loomed closer. Bales and barrels were stacked, and a gun was pushed into position along the port's seawall. A man on horseback rode quickly along the ridge road toward the fort. Santiago continued his attempts to persuade Umbridge to order the British to cease fire against the Spanish so the merchantmen might still be taken into port, but the British remained resistant to his efforts.

The real drama, however, was unfolding further north. As Fleur and Severus maneuvered to gain advantage, the ships came too close and collided. The collision caused both ships to lean into each other as they tried to veer away, entangling the rigging. Both ships quickly attempted to grapple the other, with Severus succeeding. The recently rescued crewmen were quickly pressed to join the fight on Fleur, and Delacoeur was reasonably confident of success given his crew's size. Little did he know, however, that Severus' deck was teeming with experienced and motivated fighters.

Don Diego gave the order to board Fleur! He realized then that Sharryah was no longer on deck. He looked up, and saw her and some of her men up in the rigging. They swung across to Fleur, dropping into the mass of men already struggling on deck. Some of Fleur's crew had also managed to find its way onto Severus, and the boarding parties clashed across the two ships! Total numbers involved in the fighting were about even. Severus' crew's experience and elan bolstered them, however, and their losses were less than the enemy's. But the outcome was still in doubt. Don Diego tried to catch a glimpse of Sharryah in the fighting, but he could not quite make his way to her. At one point, she appeared about 10 yards away from him, behind a small group of struggling men. She had lost her hat, hair



Sharryah

flowing in the breeze through her thrusts and parries. She looked at Don Diego and smiled, sword flashing to cut a man down. But he was momentarily taken aback from what must have been a trick of the morning sun: Sharryah's eyes appeared to glow a deep red, and for an instant he swore she had fangs among her otherwise perfectly aligned teeth! He was forced to look away to parry a thrust from an English marine, but quickly dispatched his foe. He glanced back at Sharryah. Catching her eyes again, they appeared their normal dark brown, and he noted nothing unusual as she gritted her teeth to parry a blow from another British officer. He lost sight of her behind the men again.

Captain Delacoeur quickly realized he was in for the fight of his life, if not for his life. He was not far from the woman in black, who fought like a demon. Momentarily, her eyes appeared to flash an unholy red! A man of science, Delacoeur dismissed this as nothing other than "seeing the elephant" in his first frigate command, or some strange effect of the light. But he was unnerved nonetheless. For perhaps the first time in his life, he felt the cold stab of real fear...

Turn 20

Neville does not explode, and continues drifting in to the beach. Fleur attempts to unfoul, but fails. Minerva stands her ground, now contending with both Bellatrix and Narcissa. Bellatrix charges in closer, while Narcissa holds to blast away. Hermione, rather than turning to help against Narcissa, instead turns to port in an attempt to assist the stricken Neville. Nymphadora and Pomphrey remain at anchor to fight off the gunboats. Luna, however, decides to tack against the wind, leaving the merchantmen on their own, in hopes of further engaging Severus. Moody and Lupin make starboard turns to begin their

runs into port. Sirius counters Luna's move by holding, keeping range and therefore her gunnery superiority. Magini finishes her northward movement and turns to starboard to catch the wind. Fleur and Severus remain locked in combat.

Realizing the danger (too late?) Delacoeur attempts to ungrapple and is successful on a roll of "1." But the ships remain fouled, so melee between Fleur and Severus continues. But the fire phase comes first.

Minerva fires on Bellatrix. Bellatrix's rigging is shredded, and some hangs over the starboard side, obscuring the guns (critical hit). But Bellatrix returns the favor, jointly with Narcissa. Minerva's hull is holed, and another mast goes down. This time it does not break away cleanly, but hangs over her port broadside. Unless she clears that mast quickly, Minerva is in trouble!

Hermione turns her attention to the gunboats at WW28, doing minimal damage. Fleur and Severus pound away at each other, but Fleur's fire is ineffective and Severus only manages a crew hit with additional chainshot, both suffering from significant negative fire modifiers. More importantly, a second broadside comes from Bellatrix to rake Fleur, damaging her hull and some additional crew. Sirius attempts a long range shot at Luna, but misses. The melee on board Fleur and Severus continues. Between the crew losses sustained by the fire from both enemy ships and bad luck in the following melee, the noble crew of Fleur is overwhelmed. Fleur and Captain Delacoeur are captured by Severus! Magini remains at full sail.

NEUTRAL COMMENTARY: The additional crew hits courtesy of Bellatrix are enough to tip the balance in Don Diego's favor, and Fleur surrenders. Note that Severus was using chainshot to avoid hull and gun hits against Fleur, in anticipation of victory, but Bellatrix was not so kind. Minerva is out of action for the moment because of the fallen mast, and is likely to get pummeled by both French SOL's next turn, especially as Hermione has taken herself out of the fight by heading in towards the beach. Luna is too far north for the time being to do anything except attempt to engage Sirius, although she too has to be concerned about being overwhelmed by the Spanish ships working in tandem. The British, in effect, are scattered and can no longer support each other.

With a ring of clashing steel, Don Diego parried the English officer's sword through st to the right. The Englishman made a vicious backhand slash aimed at Don Diego's head, but ducking quickly Don Diego stepped forward and ran the Englishman through with his blade, his foe's slash creating an opening. Yanking the blade free, the Englishman sank to his knees and fell face first onto the deck. Don Diego spun around to engage his next attacker, but quickly saw there were no more threats coming from the English. They had started to lay down their weapons. "Are you alright, Captain?" asked Robert Bettis who was standing over another fallen English sailor with his bloody sword in hand. He pointed the blade at Don Diego's left shoulder. Looking down, Don Diego saw he had a bloody slash that had opened his tunic up near the top of the shoulder, his blouse red with blood. But the wound seemed to have stopped bleeding. Mostly.

"Just a scratch, my friend!" replied Don Diego. "Come, we have work to do! Do you have the flags?"

"As always, Captain," said Robert, as he started to pull the two flags from his blouse.



Turn 20



Fleur

“Good,” replied Don Diego. “Then get them hoisted immediately.”

“Aye Captain!” replied Robert, as he started to head toward the jack staff.

Don Diego caught him by the arm. “Robert... also a message to Bellatrix to cease fire immediately.

She has harmed too many of our crew already!”

“Right away, Captain,” says Robert as he continues toward the jack staff.

As Don Diego looked around, he saw prisoners being rounded up by his crew. Men down on the deck were being checked and segregated into the wounded needing medical attention, and the less fortunate who no longer required any help at all. Several parties of heavily armed Red Devil crewmen were climbing down hatches and companionways to round up any Englishmen left below deck. Don Diego spied Lieutenant Rodriguez directing the round up of prisoners. “Rafael... get a count of prisoners and get them below.”

“Aye Cap’n,” replied Lt. Rodriguez as he turns to the guards. “You heard the Captain. Get them moving!”

Don Diego moved toward the bridge of the Fleur. He saw Sharryah holding Fleur’s Captain at sword point. Several heavily armed Red Devil crewmen were also on the bridge taking control of the prisoners.

“Ahhh... Sharryah, there you are! Great work,” he said as he walked up to her. “Has our good Captain here told you anything?”

Don Diego looked at the English Captain and saluted him with his sword. He clicked his heels and said, “Captain, permit me to introduce myself. I am Captain Don Diego Rodrigo Garcia del Mar, of the Spanish frigate Severus, and your ship is now mine! Your wounded will be treated, but the rest of your crew will be confined. I would hope you would cooperate to avoid any further needless bloodshed.”

The English Captain, a young man, probably in his mid-to late 20s, replied. “I am Captain Stephen Delacoeur, commanding His Majesty’s Ship Fleur. You seem to have me at a bit of a disadvantage, sir. I trust my crew shall be treated well.”

On top of Punta Esperanza, Colonel Santiago felt some sadness at seeing the now crippled Minerva. “I wish you well, my friend,” he thought to himself. Noting that Fleur was now in the hands of friendly forces, he quickly assessed the situation. There still remained the opportunity to bring in the English merchantmen while the Men of War were otherwise occupied, if he could somehow convince them to stop shooting at his gunboats. He decided, therefore, to make one more attempt at diplomacy.

Turn 21

The wind does not change, for the seventh time, and Neville does not explode. Minerva’s mast is also not cut free. Severus and Fleur successfully unfoul. However, they remain grappled until at least after movement, per the sequence of play

At this point, Charles stepped down as Captain of Hermione, due to time pressures. Mike Scott transfers his captaincy from the now captured Fleur to Hermione. Charles

agreed to continue to post our maps, so long as he had time to do so. Visible from the fort, the following flags are run up, in this order from top to bottom: black, yellow, white, green. The gunboats run up the same flags in response.

Clive Smithe and Smedley Pope were still on watch in the crow’s nest of Moody. Moody was holding just off of the beach on the Spanish Coast. So far all was mostly quiet for them, apart from a brief scrape with some Spanish gunboats, while the main action was between the British men-of-war and the Spanish and French capital ships. Smedley was looking through his glass at the fierce battle going on between Fleur and that Spanish ship flying the Red Devil flag. The two ships were obviously grappled and possibly fouled. Smedley could see crewmen swarming over the rail onto the deck of Fleur.

“Will you look at that, Clive!” said Smedley. “I think that Red Devil bugger is going to take them Brit gobs on Fleur!”

Clive was looking through his glass also. He nudged Smedley.

“Look there at the jack staff! Ain’t that the Spanish flag being raised ... and that bleedin’ Red Devil flag too!”

“You’re right Clive, I think that bugger did do it! He took that navy ship!”

“I sure hope our Cap’n knows what he’s doing here. We could sure be in a peck of trouble if he don’t,” said Smedley shaking his head.

“Look there, Smedley! More signal flags are going up! Say ... they’s be in plain language too,” said Clive.

“Tell me what they say, Clive, so we can relay it down to the Cap’n!”

“Message to British ship Luna: Cease firing, run in your guns and you will be permitted to leave the area.”

“Message to Spanish garrison Commander: Can you vouch safe for East India Ships? If yes then no harm will come to them.”

“Message to Bellatrix: Cease firing on Fleur and Severus. Spanish hold Fleur.”

Minerva allows herself to drift this turn, in an effort to maintain distance from the French warships. Hermione, recognizing Minerva’s distress, begins a turn to the north to assist. Luna continues north, attempting to keep Sirius from moving in front of her. Sirius, however, isn’t interested in closing the range to Luna, preferring to maintain her long-range gunnery advantage, and so moves ahead just enough to keep her distance. Bellatrix seeks to take advantage of Minerva’s immobility, and moves to rake her from astern, but some gunboats accidentally impose themselves between Minerva and Bellatrix’s forward guns, failing to account for Minerva’s drifting. Narcissa is content to drift with Minerva and maintain fire. Severus and Fleur remain grappled until after the movement phase, and so drift this turn instead.

Meanwhile, the gunboat commanders engage in further discussions with whatever English captains are willing to listen. Seeing their plight, Nymphadora and Pomphrey cut anchor, while Moody and Lupin continue to head in towards the port. Neville can only continue to drift towards the beach. Severus and Fleur voluntarily ungrapple. They will be able to move normally next turn. Hermione fires at Narcissa’s rigging (hull ordered, but at 7 hexes only rigging can be targeted). Having limited rigging squares, she loses a section again, but this time it falls cleanly. She also suffers some minor hull damage. Both Bellatrix and Narcissa target Minerva’s hull. Minerva

suffers heavy damage from the joint fire, chunks of wood flying from her hull, men blown into the water and down on deck. More guns are out as well. Moody and Lupin raise full sails. Magini remains at full sail. All other ships are at battle sail heading into Turn 22.

NEUTRAL COMMENTARY: Hermione struggles mightily to get back into the battle, but it is most likely too late for Minerva, which sustains heavy damage; Minerva cannot reply in turn. The merchantmen wisely listen to the gunboat crews, not wanting to become captives of the French or anyone else. Signal flags were meant to be relatively obvious, the black/yellow meaning "fire at all only if fired upon, and white/green meaning "do not fire on merchantmen." OK, I was largely conversing with myself, but I did try to keep things historically and situationally reasonable, and eventually some of the British commanders did leave the gunboats alone.

A column of Spanish light cavalry appeared on the road approaching the town of Puerto Abierto from the southwest, coming down the mountain, quickly. It looked like about 500 troopers. They were closer than Santiago realized when he sent out his riders, as they have arrived sooner than expected. The Colonel breathed a sigh of relief, even if it no longer seemed that the British would be making a landing. At least he would have the strength to withstand any French bullying, should they defeat or drive the British off.

Don Diego made preparations to secure Fleur and return to the ship. His plan was to leave Fleur in command of his first officer, Robert Bettis. This did not sit well with Sharryah.

"What? The ship is rightfully mine!" she asserted. "It was I who captured her captain, was it not? The code dictates that Fleur is mine! Or, do you not trust me, my Captain? I am not going to Spain, that is for certain. I would sail for the West Indies, where we can enjoy many nights under the stars together. Think about it, Don Diego. We would both be free! Free to live our lives as we choose, out from under the heels of royal indulgence!"

Don Diego was firm, however. "We can do all that you say from the safe confines of Severus and my command, Sharryah! Trust you or not, command of a frigate is far different than commanding a civilian ship, even one of sleek design and loyal crew. And there are the prisoners to consider. Neither of us are free to roam away as we please, at least for now!"

Sharryah did not look wholly convinced, especially as she still held her sword in her right hand, as if prepared for further combat.

"Please, my love," Don Diego said as he extended his hand. "Trust in me and my experience. You were brilliant in combat, and you deserve this ship. But the way to the Caribbean is long and difficult. Besides, we have many nights to enjoy the voyage, do we not? That could prove difficult if we are separated by storm or if we have to run from a superior force. Do you not agree?"

With those words, Sharryah's shoulders dropped just a little, and she put away her sword. Her eyes still flashed with anger, however, right before she looked away from Don Diego's eyes.

"I will trust in you, Don Diego."

Then she turned and looked piercingly back into his eyes. "Do not disappoint me!"

A fiery one she is indeed, thought Don Diego. That was why he loved her.

"Take my hand, and let us return to Severus...together," Don



Minerva

Diego said softly. Then, he immediately reverted to master and commander: "The battle is not yet won, is it, lads? Mr. Bettis! Release the grapple, and prepare to separate ships! Take good care of Fleur, my friend, and if we separate, rendezvous at the usual place in three months! Understood?"

"Aye-Aye, Captain!" answered Bettis.

Turn 22

Minerva fails to cut her mast loose on a roll of "3."

An unusual, large flag is run up the main staff at the top of Punta Esperanza. It is a large, lime-green flag. As the wind takes the banner, a single word in all capital letters can be seen. It says only: "PARLEZ." Other flags also appear at the fort, in the following sequence: red yellow blue yellow white green. On board Bellatrix, Sublieutenant Renou was standing at the bridge rail next to Senior Lieutenant Bordeaux. Renou had the megaphone in his hands as he was carefully watching the Spanish frigate Severus and the captured British frigate Fleur start to make sail, separate, and turn to starboard to pass down the port side of Bellatrix. Bordeaux was looking at Severus through his glass. A raven-haired beauty was standing next to the Spanish Captain. She was holding her hat and shaking out her long dark hair, causing her full bosom to wiggle invitingly in her tight white blouse. Despite the nearby din of battle, he let out an audible sigh.

"What a man that Spanish Captain must be to have such a comely wench standing by his side," muttered Bordeaux to Lieutenant Renou.

"What was that...Lieutenant?" growled a voice from behind them on the bridge.

"Ahhh... I was just saying to Lt Renou that the Spaniard seems to be hailing us, Captain LaStrange" stammered Bordeaux, " but I cannot make out what he is saying; can you make it out, Mr. Renou?"

Renou stifled a chuckle as he cupped his ear to try and make out the words coming from the Severus' bridge between broadsides: "... seaward... Commander... with... ships... deliver cargo..."

"I cannot make it out either, Captain, just a few words."

Back on the bridge of the Severus, the raven-haired wench smiled brightly and waved a white handkerchief at the men on the Bellatrix. Some of the crewmen stopped their work as they admired her stunning beauty while the two ships passed.

“Keep your eyes on your work and your head in the battle, you dogs, before you lose it!” barked Bordeaux, in a feeble attempt to save face.

“This is humiliating, Don Diego,” snarled Sharryah through a forced smile. “I feel like I’m prostituting myself! Disgusting!”

“I know, my dear,” responded the Captain. “But we need to convince them we are one big happy fleet for just a few minutes longer. Once we are clear of LaStrange’s guns, we can do as we please.”

Mast trailing, Minerva holds, helpless against the two French ships. Bellatrix and Narcissa both hold their positions as well, content to pummel Captain Umbridge aboard Minerva. Hermione continues her port turn, pulling herself into the wind, but with her damage and wind attitude cannot make good progress back into the battle. Luna desperately claws her way north, while Sirius remains wary and still refuses to close with her. Fleur and Severus separate, Fleur turning to the south, while Severus turns southeast. Magini also makes a turn to the southeast, as if to present Luna with a juicy target. The English mer-

chantmen make all possible speed towards Puerto Abierto now, herded by the gunboats. Neville has almost drifted her way to the beach. Not getting Santiago’s message, Narcissa fires at Minerva’s hull, and additional crew go down. In response, the nearby Spanish gunboats fire at Narcissa. Those shots fall largely in front of Narcissa’s bow. Following combat, Nymphadora and Pomphrey go to full sail. Other ships at full sail include Magini, Moody, and Lupin.

NEUTRAL COMMENTARY: Most players get the message sent by Colonel Santiago from the fort, i.e. perhaps it is time to discuss the matter in a more civilized fashion. Captain Mal-Foudre and Narcissa, however, have to be reminded not to kick a man while he’s down. Luna and Sirius continue to play cat and mouse. Hermione still struggles to get back into the fight.

Cavalry moved through the streets near the docks of Puerto Abierto. Some men dismounted. There was additional activity among the docks as well, as some of the hastily erected barricades were pulled away.

“Get that mast cleared away,” roared Umbridge, “Now, for God’s sake!” Men lay about Minerva, some dead, some dying, the deck slick with blood. Rigging lay strewn about, guns wrecked as well as men. Smoke from powder hung in the air, stinging eyes and throats.

“Clear that gun, there, and get those men below! You, there! Get up and back to your station! We will still do our duty and fight, by God, if for no other reason than we are Englishmen!”

Turn 23

Neville doesn’t explode. Minerva manages to clear the fallen mast! The “Parlez” flag still flies from the fort.

Jean Bettis, commanding Sirius and taking the fort’s instructions seriously (not to mention hoping to get out of the area unscathed), hailed Luna. A request was made to stand down and cease hostilities. Luna replied with another biblical citation of defiance.

“Hold your fire as we pass, lads,” ordered Bettis, “but be alert. Anyone sees but a fizzle from the deck of that ship, diplomacy be damned and let loose!”

Regaining her limited turning ability and righting herself, Minerva turns to starboard to protect her stern from a rake by Bellatrix, although in doing so she presents a bow rake to Narcissa. Bellatrix moves in for the kill, while Narcissa allows herself to drift a hex closer, then drops anchor(!). Hermione has to turn to starboard to regain the wind, and nicely achieves a raking position against Narcissa, only to have gunboats get in the way. Luna at last turns northeast, into a good wind attitude, but having been with the wind, Sirius is now far enough north of her to maintain distance as they pass. After Fleur moves out of the way of Severus, both ships turn south, also catching the good wind off their starboard side. Magini turns to follow, ever reluctant to get too distant from her master. Neville at long last drifts on to the beach, while the other merchantmen now stampede towards port.

Ignoring directions from the Spanish and the request from Sirius, Luna fires on Sirius. A split second later, and before Luna’s balls can strike, Sirius’ side similarly erupts in smoke as she returns fire. Luna’s shot falls short, however, and Sirius is undamaged. Luna, however, takes further damage to her rigging. Magini also fires at Luna, but does no significant damage.



Turn 22

No longer helpless, Minerva fires on Bellatrix, raking her from bow to stern. Bellatrix takes heavy damage to her rigging and a mast falls, but cleanly. Considerable rigging hangs over the starboard side (critical hit). Damage would have been worse, but many of Minerva's guns are now out of action.

MalFoudre hesitates, briefly considering the Spanish warning, but only for a few moments. She in turn rakes Minerva. Colonel Santiago also fires on Minerva, his clear warning ignored. Taking combined raking fire and plunging fire from the fort, large chunks are blown from Minerva's hull, and she loses additional rigging as well.

Following combat, Magini drops full sail, while Fleur and Severus both raise full sail.



Severus

NEUTRAL COMMENTARY: The British Captains are definitely an independent and defiant lot; they refused Spanish instructions and ignored signals from non-player characters that the game should wind down and victory be assessed. Note that the sequence of fire combat described was for story and entertainment purposes only, since all combat is actually simultaneous. Bellatrix was significantly damaged by Minerva's fire, but Minerva was in turn devastated. I felt obligated to have Santiago rejoin the fray, as the British ignored his clear signals that the game could end peacefully, and could see no excuses for him to vacillate further. British choices forced the Spanish to act against them at inopportune times in this game, when they would have been happy to simply buzz around and look busy. I am close to calling the game at this point, but I want to see 1) if Hermione can have any success against the French before Minerva strikes; 2) although she has dithered away her position, whether Luna can come to grips with Sirius; and 3) whether Don Diego decides to go for another prize or make good his escape.

Neville drifted into the beach and got caught in the surf. She slowly leaned over towards port. Her crew clambered off and started to wade ashore. Don Diego was heard to mutter "Oh... Damn it..." as he saw the grayish-white puffs of smoke billow up from the port side guns of Luna, followed quickly by answering fire from Sirius. More thunder was heard from Bellatrix and the Fort. Clearly the British were not going to roll over at this point, and LaStrange appeared to have the upper hand. Don Diego turned to the Officer of the Deck: "Raise full sail!"

Minerva shuddered under Umbridge's feet from the blow dealt by Narcissa. He went down as he was struck by falling

rigging, a blow to the head knocking him unconscious.

"Captain down!" the acting first officer cried, the original first officer already dead. A few crewmen rushed to pull the pile of debris off their Captain.

Umbridge was out for only a few moments. "Get this blasted stuff off me!" he bellowed, as he wiped blood out of his eyes. "And get to back to your guns! Maintain fire!"

He paused a moment, then looked at his first officer, clearly still dazed. "Help me up then, son. And see to the horses, would you, and tell Martha I'll be down in a moment."

With help, Captain Umbridge wobbly regained his feet. His first officer had to grab the Captain under the arm as he stumbled.

Slamming his fists against the gun wall, Colonel Santiago was frustrated beyond belief. Despite facing overwhelming odds, and being almost begged to stand down by himself and his gunboat commanders, Umbridge continued to fight! The merchant Captains apparently understood. Was there no reasoning with the English military mind? He put his head down for a moment, ran his hand over his face, then looked up over the battle below.

"Major," he said grimly, "continue to bring in the merchant ships. Pull the "Parlez" flag down and signal the fleet to engage the English men-of-war at will. Then," he hesitated only momentarily, "fire our guns at the English warships below, and keep firing until they mercifully surrender."

Turn 24

For Turn 24, the wind still does not change. In eight tries, the GM has yet to even hit the number to see if the wind might change! The "Parlez" flag comes down. Only the Spanish flag flies from the main staff. Other flags also appear above the fort: Red Red Blue White Gold White White White. Minerva holds position, stuck between the two French SOLs and also having little ability to move, being down to one mast. Bellatrix moves in still closer, while Narcissa lies at anchor, awaiting the anchoring modifier. Hermione still struggles against the wind, and now the gunboats, to get into the battle with the French ships. Sirius moves ahead slowly, hoping to line up a shot against Luna so she can make her escape off the north edge. Luna complies by similarly inching forward while turning to pursue. Severus, Fleur, and Magini begin making their way earnestly for the south edge of the map, west of Punta Esperanza. The merchantmen begin entering the port (exiting the south edge of the map). And the gunboats move to engage the British as they can, including pursuing Luna

Minerva fires her remaining guns at Bellatrix's rigging, but scores no significant damage; her gun numbers are no longer enough to deal real damage. But the fire from both Bellatrix and Narcissa is devastating. Minerva's remaining mast falls, leaving her dead in the water (another critical hit is scored). The fort adds insult to injury by firing on Minerva as well. There are now gaping holes in Minerva's hull, her fire is sporadic, and she lists noticeably to starboard. There are few remaining crewman on the upper deck. Hermione still struggles to find position to fire, while the gunboats pursue her like angry bees, scoring some crew damage.

Luna gets off a shot at Sirius with her bow chaser, but inflicts no visible damage. Sirius' return fire, however, manages to bring down Luna's first mast (largely due to cumulated damage and a critical hit this turn).

Sirius now goes to full sail, as does Magini.

Neutral commentary: This is just about it. Minerva won't last another turn, as she is soon to lose her remaining hull squares, even if Hermione prevents her from striking by immobility this turn. Sirius gets lucky and Luna loses a mast, meaning that Sirius can now safely go to full sail and make her escape (at least until Luna can make repairs). It is clear that the Spanish run for the edges of the map, with nothing available to catch the fast ships heading south. But, at least the merchantmen have started making it to port, one of the British victory conditions. I think we will play one more turn, and see how things go.

Neville's crew was rounded up by Spanish cavalry, and escorted away from the stricken hulk on the beach. There was no open hostility towards the merchantmen as they entered Puerto Abierto. Indeed, the dock crews guided them in and assisted with tying up. Best to get them in as quickly as possible to secure their goods, lest they be confiscated by the French. It was all done under the watchful eyes of Spanish cavalry.

The crew of Sirius cheered wildly when Luna's mast falls. "That's it boys! We've done it! Spread sail, and let's make for the long way home!"

Fragments, both wood and metal, swept the deck of Minerva, whizzing through the air. Having gathered his senses to a measurable extent, Umbridge yelled over the din, "Return fire! With everything!! Throw things at them if you have to, lads!"

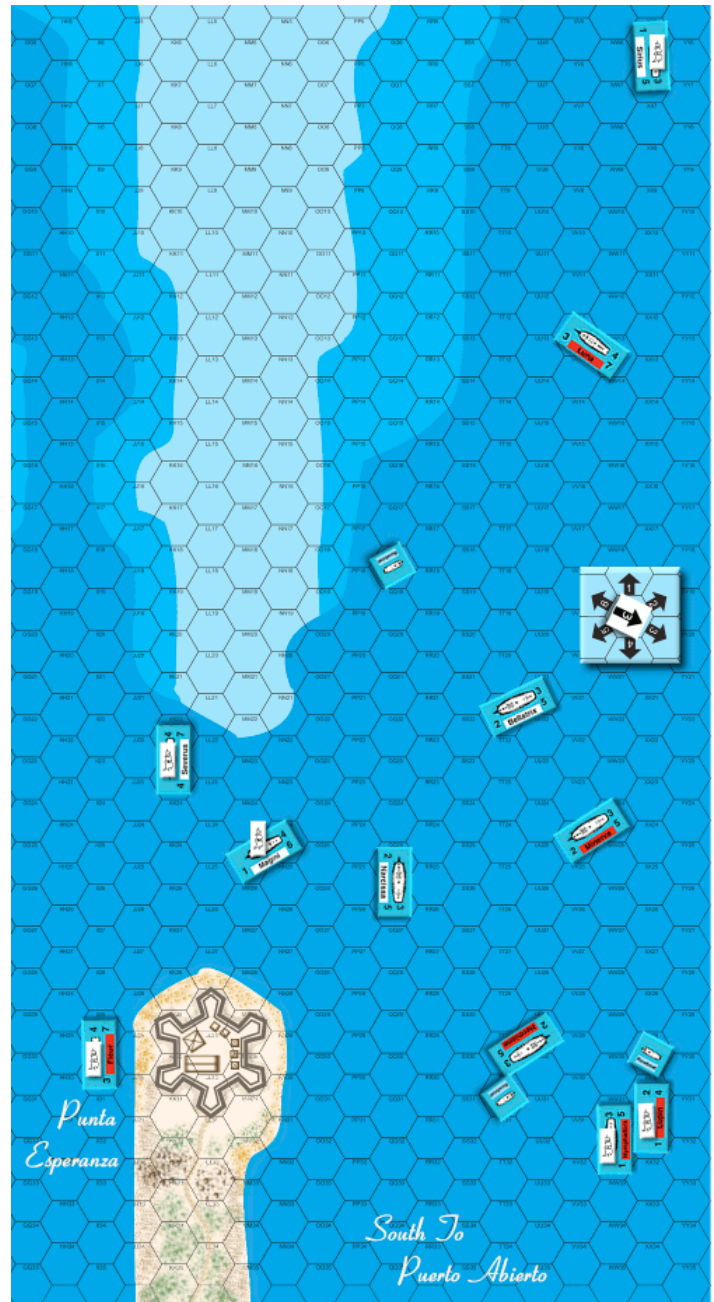
Turn 25

The turn begins with little ceremony or communication, as the game plays itself out. Minerva can do nothing but drift. Bellatrix is content to sit, but Narcissa cuts anchor in anticipation of dealing with Hermione (not knowing the game is about to end). Hermione continues her slow turning, this time to starboard to catch the wind. Pomphrey and Moody make it into port. Sirius moves away from Luna, as far as she can, ending heading north. Luna can do nothing in her current attitude but turn and watch, so she turns into the wind for one last parting shot at Sirius. Severus, Fleur, and Magini continue to head south.

Luna fires broadsides at both Sirius and the pursuing gunboats, but at range and with the limited number of guns on a frigate misses both. Hermione is finally in position and fires at Narcissa's hull. The shot is reasonably placed and holes appear in Narcissa's side. There is some crew down as well. The gunboats pursuing Luna fire and miss, as do some of the gunboats firing at Hermione. But the gunboats are swarming now, and Hermione's hull and rigging are hit. Her second mast is lost, but falls cleanly. The fort adds its fire against Hermione as well, and additional rigging goes down.

But it is the fire of sisters Bellatrix and Narcissa that proves decisive this turn:

Following the lead of Bellatrix, Narcissa's side once more erupted in fire. Enjoying the stability granted by anchoring, her fire tore the length of Minerva, shredding the remnants of her beaten hull. There was a small explosion amidships as Narcissa's shot touched off some powder, blowing a gun and its remaining crew into the water. Minerva lay helpless, unable to reply in return, her starboard side smashed and obscured by fallen rigging. Captain Umbridge, barely recovered from the blow from falling rigging a few minutes before, fell to the deck again, this time his arm shattered. A junior officer, one of the



Turn 25

few remaining on deck, came to his aid. Captain Umbridge tried to lift his head, but could barely manage. He grabbed the officer's coat with a bloody hand.

"What's left to hit them with, lad? Tell me!"

The young man, still in his teens, looked around, and swallowed hard, the grit, grime, and blood of combat streaking his cheeks. Overcome with emotion, the man replied. "There's nothing left, sir. Nothing!"

"Aye...that's it then." Unbridge lay his head back down. "Pull down the colours. Do what you can to save the ship." Umbridge then let the boy go, and closed his eyes to rest. Hull broken, rigging gone, more than half the crew dead or incapacitated, and her captain down, Minerva struck her colours.

NEUTRAL COMMENTARY: With that, the game is called. Minerva is out, and although Hermione's hull, guns, and crew are relatively intact, she has less than a rigging section left, she is being swarmed by a bunch of angry Spanish bees (gunboats and the fort), and soon will be facing two French SOL's alone;

in a few turns she will be forced to surrender by immobility if nothing else. Luna could turn to assist, but she is not without her own problems, and she is no match for the French SOLs, even if she could get close enough to dink away at them while swatting at gunboats. Meanwhile, Severus and her entourage are clearly making a break for it, and no ships can possibly pursue, since no other ships can raise full sail to give chase. Pursuit would be against the wind in any event. None of the other ships can even move against the wind, and as we well know, the wind has long since decided that it doesn't want to change direction (wind change number was 5, so I expected some changes over time). Since I know each side's basic victory conditions and the individual victory conditions as well, there is no reason to continue further.

The French/Spanish side clearly came out on top, as there can be no dispute that the Royal Navy was militarily defeated: although most of the East India Company merchantmen made it into port, the blockade was broken and the relieving force taken. Only Luna will escape to report the encounter to the Admiralty. The English may think the deck (no pun intended) was stacked against them, since the Spanish port forces joined the French against them, and their forces were otherwise balanced. However, from a neutral perspective, the British defeat was primarily the result of poorer communication, just as it was in the practice game. The British squandered the opportunity to crush the French while Narcissa was crippled. Poor Minerva was left to face two ships on her own, deserted by Luna in part, but in reality Luna by herself probably would have been more of a hindrance than a help against the French SOLs. More importantly Hermione was at first slow to come up, and then sailed past the action, allowing the French to doubleteam Minerva. By the time she turned around, it was too late. And, the British failed to recognize the clues I was feeding them about the nature of the Spanish port forces. They were not initially hostile, despite some initial tensions following first contact. The Spanish forces were designed to minimally impact the game. The Spanish attempted to relay such to the British, repeatedly. But, the British forced them to fight, even after they escorted the merchantmen into port and requested a truce to parley. *C'est la guerre!*

Just a word again about the general situation at this time. Recall that Minerva and Luna were the original British blockading force. They had an understanding with the local Spanish

authorities; British ships in and out for the benefit of the Empire, plenty of incentive for the locals to allow the Empire to fill the local coffers and keep the townspeople happy. But no French or Spanish warships in or out. Puerto Abierto (abierto means "open" in Spanish, so "Open Port") was a place for bustling but discreet trade, contrary to the imposition of Napoleon's Continental System. The scenario was set in the tumultuous time of March 1808, the same month that French troops began seizing control of most of Spain as the Spanish puppet king, Charles IV, and his government became exceedingly unpopular with the Spanish people. This (fictitious) part of Spain, however, was still under the control of Spanish, not French forces. So the Spanish were intended to be politically unreliable, as the French would soon learn historically. And, having been at sea, the knowledge of most of the ship captains was a little behind that of the local populace.

Hermione and Fleur arrived to relieve Minerva and Luna, bringing a small group of somewhat ineptly-captained merchantmen to conduct business with the Spanish with them. Unfortunately, a combined French/Spanish force arrived off of Punta Esperanza (Point Hope) at the same time, throwing the locals into a temporary tizzy, thinking "invasion" rather than trade. It took a while for the locals to recognize the southern forces as French and Spanish and to decide that the British (or French) were not trying to capture the port with boatloads of marines. The experienced captains and crews of Bellatrix and Narcissa were escorting Severus and Magini to the port to deliver special cargo from the Moroccan kingdom of El Sid (fictitious) at the request of the Spanish government, with orders to defeat any blockading force and make port. Sirius and Crabbe were prizes taken by the French and Spanish during the voyage to Puerto Abierto. The point totals for the ships on each side were very close. No one knew the loyalty or strength of the local Spanish forces to start the game.

While there were a number of underlying personal issues and objectives as well (and a big one which was accidentally revealed to the wrong captain at the beginning of the game) that is covered in the full story, that was the general strategic situation faced by the sides at the beginning of the game. What was very interesting for me to watch was the caution most players exercised when we started and for several turns thereafter, not quite understanding the complete strategic or tactical picture. That would not have happened if we simply lined ships up and started shooting. Indeed, I had to goad some of the players into action at first, but once the fighting started it couldn't be effectively stopped.

Regarding the personal victory conditions, for the most part these were pretty loose. Captains Lovegood and Delacoeur, for example, merely needed to survive the game and acquit themselves well. Lovegood managed to survive with his ship intact and, under the circumstances that played out, did the best amongst the British commanders. But, Delacoeur scored some brownie points for rescuing the men in the longboat at great risk, even if he did lose his ship. Umbridge needed only to survive the game in order to meet his victory condition of "peaceful retirement." While he lost his ship, he did about as well as could have been done under the circumstances. Granger, however, was tasked with revenge against a reddish frigate, and I did everything I could to convince Granger that Severus was the ship that took his wife and so encourage Granger to break ranks to seek revenge, but he would not take the bait. Correct to maintain discipline, but he ignored his personal victory con-



Nymphé and Cleopatre

ditions, and then took himself out of the battle with the SOLs to boot. I expected at least an attempt to come to grips with Don Diego. Of course, the British were also tasked with keeping the French/Spanish out of Puerto Abierto while getting the merchantmen in. They succeeded in keeping the French busy long enough for the merchantmen to make it into port but at too high a cost.

On the French/Spanish side, MalFoudre, as with several of the British captains, merely had to do his duty and acquit himself well in order to satisfy his personal victory conditions; had he defied LaStrange and assisted Don Diego a bit, so much the better. LaStrange had the significant tasks of delivering cargo of an unknown nature, which turned out to be Sharryah, and defeating the British blockading force. Delivering the cargo would have required Severus making port, and Don Diego had the choice to return to Spain (as a local hero) if he had so chosen; it was one of his possible victory conditions. But, LaStrange was also supposed to take Don Diego into custody upon arrival in Spain. This was supposed to remain a secret, but a message from LaStrange to MalFoudre was sent to Don Diego instead before the game even began. And so Don Diego's suspicions of LaStrange were confirmed before play even started. It was an easy choice for Don Diego to make for the Caribbean, once he had satisfied his other victory condition, which was to seize and make off with at least one prize. This made things easy for me, as this was the more interesting way for Don Diego to go; I did not have to resort to using Sharryah's charms to convince him to make for the Caribbean. Actually having nothing to do with game play, had Don Diego made port in the game, the story line would have ended with him evading French justice and making good his escape, although I do not know whether Sharryah would have joined him or not. A similar Hollywoodesque ending to the story would have resulted had the British succeeded in capturing Don Diego. As I told the players, the story did not drive the game, but the game drove the story. Only matters beyond game play were subject to my whims.

I had one player recognize and report on the origin of the ship names used in the game. All of the ship names were from the names of lesser characters (some not so lesser) from the Harry Potter series of books and movies, as were the names of most of the ship captains: (Delores) Umbridge, (Hermione) Granger, (Luna) Lovegood, (Fleur) Delacoeur, (Bellatrix) LaStrange, (Severus) Snape, and (Sirius) Black. Malfoudre was a twist on (Narcissa) "Malfoy." (Professor) Lupin, (Mad-Eye) Moody, (Madame) Pomphrey, Nymphadora (Tonks) are some more. I forget Crabbe's first name, and Magini was a shape-shifting horcrux snake in the books. There was only the vaguest connection between the ship names and the situation. For example, in the Potter series, there was a question for a long time which side Severus Snape was on. Fitting for our game as well. I gave the French side the names of the mostly dark characters and the British the good guys, mainly because the bad guys had less English-sounding names. It wouldn't surprise me, however, if there were actual ships with the same names; there was indeed a Hermione, as you will see it listed in one of the scenarios included in the game.

Aftermath

According to History: By the time of our battle, French troops had already crossed the Pyrenees into Spain in force, under the command of Marshal Murat. Charles IV, king of

Spain, did not quite know what to do, as he had actually requested that Napoleon intervene to solve the troubles of the Spanish Royal Family. Charles was soon persuaded to leave Madrid and head for Cadiz, prior to transferring his government to South America. But the royal party didn't make it, as news of Charles' leaving leaked, and they were stopped by an angry mob and blockaded in the palace in Aranjuez on March 17, two days after our battle. French troops entered Madrid on March 24, greeted by cheering crowds. The Spanish populace believed the French Army on its way to the Barbary Coast, and were pleased to be rid of the King. But their elation didn't last. The Spanish people did not appreciate the French for long. Napoleon failed to appreciate how independent the Spanish people were of their government; he misjudged the extent of their pride, the tenacity of their faith, and their loyalty to some of the Royal Family, Ferdinand in particular. As early as April 1, a rising took place against the French troops in Madrid, which was easily put down. However, there was another on May 2, after Napoleon ordered the arrest of the rest of the Royal Family. Then the usual happened; martial law, executions, and the inevitable growing resistance. By the middle of June, every province was arming against the French, and the junta of Seville appealed through the governor of Gibraltar for British assistance. By the end of June the British Cabinet had decided to send Sir Arthur Wellesley and an army to aid the Spanish, and it was not long before the Royal Navy was using its power to influence events in Spain. In mid-July, French naval shipping in Cadiz was seized in a well-executed British operation. In early August, the Duke of Wellington landed in Portugal with 9,000 men, soon to be followed by more. It was the beginning of a very long war in Spain with ultimate French defeat.

El Diablo Rojo: No significant French ground forces were near Puerto Abierto at the time of our game. In addition to the port garrison and the cavalry seen during the game, there was a Spanish infantry division within two hours of the city, on its way in heed of the initial warning of invasion. As the situation in Spain was unclear at the time, and the French remained nominal allies, this division turned back after a rider from Puerto Abierto met them and told them that the situation there was well in hand, with no British troops on shore and several British ships captured. The port was pretty much left to its own devices after the battle, in Santiago's capable hands.

Commodore George Umbridge was in and out of consciousness for several days after his arm was shattered. Minerva drifted in towards shore and was gently beached there shortly after striking (she was just a few hexes from the edge of the map). There, the healthy members of the battle weary crew and Minerva's officers were taken into custody, and the wounded were tended to. Most were moved to the hospital on the outskirts of town. It was touch and go for a while, and Umbridge lost his arm, but he did ultimately recover. While some of his officers were paroled, he remained a convalescing guest of the Spanish until shortly after Lord Wellington landed his army in Portugal the following August. He returned to England in September, 1808, where he was acquitted for losing Minerva following the court martial. Soon thereafter, he followed through on his plan to retire to his horse farm in Cornwall. Minerva sat on the beach for several weeks, until some ambitious Spaniards managed to get her afloat. She was towed out into the harbor, but between the stress of the pounding surf coupled with the beating her already rotting hull had taken at

the hands of the French, she started taking on large amounts of water between the beach and the dock. There she simply sank, settling straight down into the soft mud of the harbor, her poop deck just awash by the surf.

Commodore Reginald Granger and Hermione continued to fight for a few more minutes, but with Minerva gone, rigging shredded, and surrounded by hostiles, Hermione soon struck her colors as well, and her crew was taken into custody. Uninjured, Granger became involved in a tug of war between Henri LaStrange, commodore of the French squadron, and Colonel Joachim Santiago, commander of the garrison at Puerto Abierto. Ultimately Colonel Santiago prevailed because of the political situation. Granger and some of his men, assisted by some locals, escaped from Puerto Abierto on a moonless night and made way to Gibraltar. Granger survived the court martial, but only barely, his family name having significant pull with the Admiralty. Granger attributed the loss of both Hermione and Minerva to insubordination by the captains of Luna and Fleur. Granger was eventually given command of a 38-gun frigate and sent to patrol the waters near the British Caribbean colony at Kingston. He still searches for the red ship he believes took his wife. Hermione remained in Spanish hands, serving as a floating battery, until she was returned to the British in 1809.

Captain Artemus Lovegood was the only Royal Navy captain at the battle of Punta Esperanza to remain in command of his ship. After losing a mast, Luna could make no headway at all against the wind, although it wasn't for lack of trying. Sirius, however, continued to get smaller and smaller, heading further and further out to sea. Looking back to Minerva and Hermione, Captain Lovegood realized there was nothing he could do to help them and attempting to do so would mean his ship as well. So, he inched away from the battle, making repairs, and beating against the wind until he found enough sail to start making headway away from Puerto Abierto. Once clear of any potential pursuers, and with Sirius long out of sight, he turned south for Gibraltar to report the defeat of the squadron. Lovegood went on to a successful career, commanding other frigates and SOL's in the service, assisting in the blockades of several European ports until he was sent west to patrol American waters during the War of 1812.

Captain Stephen Delacoeur remained a prisoner on board Severus for a time. He was treated well there, essentially a guest of Don Diego and his crew. He grew to respect Don Diego, as the captain of Severus complimented him for his compassion, waiting to pick up the survivors from the original crew of Sirius at great risk to his own ship. Don Diego found his crew's bravery remarkable, as despite overwhelming odds when both Severus and Bellatrix were working over his ship they put up a good fight. Delacoeur was also enamored of the Captain's woman, Sharyah, whom he found had an almost hypnotic presence. He thought he might be able to stare into her dark eyes forever. Delacoeur and most of his crew were put off and left with the authorities in the Canary Islands. The American and Irish crewmembers were offered the opportunity to serve under Don Diego and most of them accepted that offer, appreciating Don Diego's generous hospitality. After several months essentially marooned there, Delacoeur and what was left of his crew were shipped out in dribs and drabs by ships heading out from the Canaries to god-knows where. Delacoeur didn't make it back to England until almost Christmas. With the aid of testimony from his crew and the original crew of Sirius,

Delacoeur survived his court martial as well. But, shortly thereafter he left the service anyway, convinced he would make a better businessman than a ship captain. His family was not without money, and he had this little fascination with a newfangled thing called a "steam engine."

Commodore Henri LaStrange, while succeeding in his primary mission of defeating the blockading force, ended the battle bitter that Don Diego had gotten away without facing Imperial justice. He was mostly just angry. He failed to recognize the bravery of the junior commander of Crabbe, who had sacrificed both his ship and himself so that Narcissa could make repairs and return to the fight against Minerva. He was angry that he failed to deliver his cargo, although he never knew quite what it was. He was angry that the merchantmen made it into port, and the locals would not turn them, their crews, or their contents over. His anger turned to rudeness towards his Spanish hosts in Puerto Abierto, including Colonel Santiago, whom he viewed simply as another insolent Spaniard. He became even angrier when he learned that Granger had made it out of port right under his nose, aided by the Spanish, when Granger should have been locked in his brig. Nevertheless, LaStrange did not act against the Spanish, appreciating the sensitive political situation in Spain as it developed; he did not want to face an angry mob, or Santiago's guns, and there were no French troops anywhere nearby to bolster his authority. Bellatrix and Narcissa made use of Puerto Abierto's remoteness and hastily made repairs before the British might return, seeking blood, or their Spanish hosts turned on them. Hearing rumors that the Spanish might try and seize their ships, both ships slipped silently out of port one moonless night and headed north. Eventually, LaStrange and Malfoudre made it to Bordeaux, slipping past the blockade with a favorable wind. There Bellatrix and Narcissa sat, for the rest of the war. Given the situation in Spain and his apparent triumph over the British, LaStrange's failure to deliver his cargo or Don Diego was recognized as moot and quickly forgotten.

Captain Malfoudre was commended for his role in the battle of Punta Esperanza, although he deferred to the great sacrifice made by Crabbe and her captain. He was also secretly pleased that Don Diego had made good his escape, and envied the freedom he no doubt enjoyed. Malfoudre continued to serve honorably if uneventfully, as there was little a French naval officer could do bottled up in port. He left the service when Napoleon abdicated in 1814, and headed east for adventure in and around the French possessions in Southeast Asia.

Sirius continued north, pulling slowly but steadily away from the lagging Luna. She cruised off the coast of Portugal for about a week, seeing no sail on the horizon. Provisions were getting low, however, and there was only so much they could pick up from the poor villages along the coast, so Jean Bettis turned east and made for the Azores, prior to continuing to the Caribbean. On June 20, 1808, he was sitting in a bar in Tortuga, when who should come in smelling like a rotten fish and accompanied by a beautiful, raven-haired woman...?

Severus, Fleur, and Magini made good their escape to the south. While temporarily adequate, the ships' stores were depleted from their voyages, and so Don Diego could not head directly to the Caribbean without re-provisioning. They could not risk contact with heavy warships out of Cadiz or Gibraltar. And, now having both crews from Fleur and Sirius to feed, they were going to go through rations fast. With Magini in front, the little fleet made port in Casablanca for a few days.

After transferring Sharryah's belongings to Severus, Severus and Fleur set sail for the Canary Islands, leaving Magini and all of Sharryah's bodyguard behind except Cherif. They deposited the British crew and Captain Delacoeur there. Don Diego learned enough about the political situation in Spain to know that the Englishmen would be safe there. He offered to keep any that were willing to serve under him, his offer readily accepted by the American crewmen and the Papist Irishmen among Fleur's crew, plus a handful of probably ne'er-do-well Englishmen, just the kind of crewmen he liked to whip into shape. After two weeks, they set sail. Next stop, Tortuga!

Epilogue

It had been some eight months since the Battle of Punta Esperanza, and Sharryah and Don Diego were safe in his haven at an undisclosed location in the Caribbean. He had been requested to return to service at the behest of the local Spanish governors, but he had been making excuses for some time now. He was enjoying his quiet life with Sharryah, simple, but comfortable. British and French naval forces in the Caribbean were busy with each other, and not looking for Spanish privateers. The ships were hidden in a cove on the island, they had good company, and life was sweet and uneventful. But Sharryah was restless. Don Diego would sometimes find her high on the overlook behind their modest house, looking wistfully out to sea, sometimes with a spyglass, sometimes not. He would find her there all times of day and night. Sometimes he would have to beg her to come in at night. Their passion remained, but she seemed uninterested in family and farming. Her temper, at times, grew short. She listened to the wild old tales of glory days told by Bettis and his shipmates with a gleam in her eye. Don Diego shouldn't have been surprised when it happened. Returning to the island on Severus after meeting with the local governor, he found Fleur gone. He ran home, while his crew searched the horizon for signs of sail. There he found a note. "My Dearest Don Diego, "It is not without greatest regret that I must take my leave of you and our life here on this island. It has been a great adventure, but I long for more. I cannot allow myself to be bound by domesticity; something compels me to the openness of the sea, to struggle, to live hard and fast. I do not yearn to grow fat and old, children playing at my feet, at least not yet. I have therefore taken Fleur to live an adventure on my own. I did tell you, my love, that she was mine. Consider that debt paid.

"Fear not, for Cherif is with me, and we have some crew to work the ship, and hope to pick up more soon. The Americans want to see home, and have come with us, and the Irish, of course, simply want to fight anything and anyone that they can! I long to see the untamed shores, and, as you have often said, there are still plenty of Spanish ships that carry gold in the warm waters of the Caribbean. While you cannot take them, my dear Captain, I have no such obligation to Spain. "Have no doubt that I still love you, passionately, deeply, and truly, and that I always will. It is my hope that you love me enough to let me go. "We will meet again, my love, of that I am sure. Maybe on your island, maybe in a distant port, or maybe in a chance meeting at sea. Until then, I bid you a fond farewell. "With all my heart, "Sharryah" January 18, 1810, somewhere off the coast of modern-day Belize "Don Diego!" Yells Mr. Bettis. "Sail sighted, 270 degrees, to port! Might be a man-o-war!"

Don Diego takes the glass. Sure enough, sails just over the western horizon, running parallel to Severus. He can't make out

the hull, but the rigging suggests a British frigate. Sails look a bit odd, though, especially in the orange light of the early morning sun. Don Diego realizes that the sun might make it difficult for Severus to be seen right now, so he decides to match speed for awhile, while running in a little closer. "Alter course, heading 3-2-0. Let's run in on her a bit." About mid-morning, the ships are only about five miles apart. Don Diego can see the ship clearly through the glass. Definitely looks like a British warship, except for the color. "What do you make of that, Bettis? Why does the ship look so dark, even in this light?"

Bettis takes the glass. "Hmm, Cap'n. Almost looks like the ship's painted black. And black sails, too! Making a good 8 knots, from the water off her bow. She's a fine sailer, that one! And she has to have seen us by now!" Indeed, with those words, the black ship suddenly makes an abrupt, hard turn to port, leaning way over as she turns, almost a 60-degree angle. "She's turnin', Cap'n! What in blazes...oh my! Here, take a look, sir!. She's raisin' her colors!" Bettis hands the glass back to Don Diego, and he peers intently through the eyepiece. He sees it, and he knows. The colors? A black bird, wings outstretched, claws clutching crossed cutlasses, on a field of solid sky blue. And the name across the stern, clear for all to see in blood red letters...RAVEN!

"Beat to Quarters, Mr. Bettis! *Now!!*"

Postscript

December, 1962. Bridgeport, Ohio.

The big Buick Roadmaster rolled slowly to a stop. Bobby looked out the rear side window at a rundown old brick building between the Ohio River and North Main Street. Bobby was bored; he was tired of traveling and anxious to get back to Columbus to see Jimmy's sister. Bobby and his family were staying with relatives in Columbus, Ohio. The Hamilton's son, Jimmy, was an Air Force pilot who flew B-52 bombers from Travis Air Force base near their home in California. Jimmy had come to visit and spent some leave time with Bobby's parents last year. Bobby wanted to be an Air Force pilot too and hoped to get an appointment to the Air Force Academy after high school. They had just come down the hill from Wheeling Heights there in Bridgeport. They had looked at Bobby's mother's old home overlooking the Ohio River where she had grown up as a kid before coming to California. Bobby tiredly shifted positions and tuned into his parent's conversation when he saw his mother looking at him expectantly.

"Uhhh... what did you say?" he stammered.

"I said, did you see the faded sign painted there on the side of building? It says Bettis Cooperage Company! That was my maiden name before I was married to your Father, you know, and it was your Great-Great-Grandfather Jean Bettis along with his brother Robert who started the business," she replied.

"I knew that," snapped Bobby in a somewhat irritated voice as he glanced toward the building.

Bobby's mom continued. "Jean and Robert were in the shipping business in New Orleans when they decided to go into barrel making. They had a lot of holdings in New Orleans and a number of cooperage factories up and down the Ohio River." Bobby scrunched further down in the seat and continued to stare out the window.

"Leave him be, Marge," said his dad, chuckling. "He's got

other things on his mind besides visiting family history sites." Bobby turned red and screwed up his face into a disgusted look as he continued to stare out the window of the car. His thoughts turned to last night. Jimmy's sister was a very pretty girl with long raven hair. She was a senior in high school and 3 years older than Bobby. She seemed very self-assured. He had been watching her covertly across the room while the two families talked and had drinks in the drawing room at the Hamilton home in Columbus. He saw her bend down and whisper something to her mother. Then they both looked in his direction. Bobby squirmed in his seat as he remembered the awkward feeling he had as they had both smiled at him and then the Hamilton girl had started walking toward him. Bobby's palms were moist and his stomach anxious just like in the big games when he played frosh football this past season in high school.

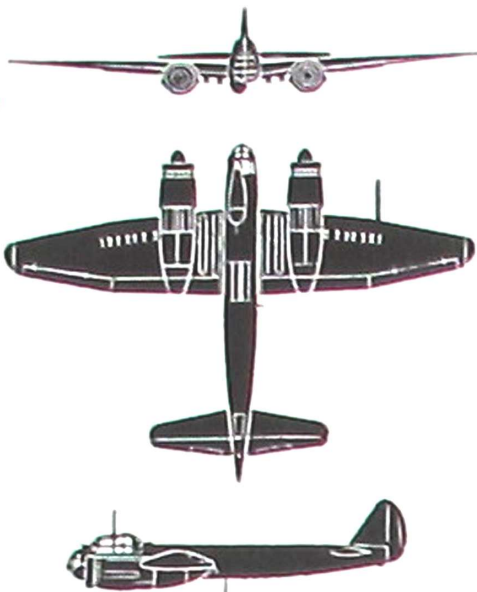
Then she was standing over him. "You look a little bored! I just got a new Bobby Vinton album. Mom says we can go upstairs to the library and put it on the phonograph if you want to." She held out her hand with a coy look on her face. Bobby jumped to his feet bumping the chair, almost knocking it over. "Ahhh... yeah. I'd like that," he stammered. She smiled and took him by the hand and they walked out of the drawing room, but not before Bobby's dad winked at him with a big smile on his face as they passed. Back in the car, Bobby's mom looked at his dad and they both smiled. "Yes, I suppose he does have lots on his mind," she said and smiled. They had both seen the slight smear of red lipstick on Bobby's face when the two had returned to the drawing room later that evening. Bobby continued looking out the window, his cheeks really red as he pretended he hadn't heard them. His thoughts returned to last evening. The library was on the third floor. It was a large room with a fireplace and there was a hi-fi set in the corner. Jimmy's sister went over to the phonograph and put on the Bobby Vinton album. The strains of "Mr. Lonely" began playing softly through the room. She stepped right up to him and said, "Would you like to dance?" There was a flash to her dark eyes as she moved into his arms. Bobby was nervous, and as they took the first few dance steps together, she snuggled closer to him after

taking a few turns around the floor. She stopped and looked up into his eyes, then she kissed him...a very adult kiss. When they parted she looked up into his eyes with an arched eyebrow and with a very amused look, she said, "Your palms are sweating. I'm sure that couldn't have been your first kiss." It was his first kiss, but Bobby was not going to admit it. "Of course not!" he said, trying to get control of butterflies in his stomach. He took a breath and glanced around the room. He saw the painting hanging over the fireplace. The painting showed a strong man with Spanish heritage and a beautiful, raven-haired woman in a wedding gown. She looked remarkably like the girl there in the room with him. To give himself a moment to get composed, Bobby asked, "Who is that in the painting?" She glanced over her shoulder, then turned back to him. "Oh, that is my Great-Great-Grandmother and Grandfather on their wedding day. Their daughter married your Great-Great-Grandfather Jean Bettis' son and that is how we became related. My Great-Great Grandmother and father were in the shipping business and were friends with Jean Bettis and his brother Robert. They were all friends who lived in New Orleans where they imported stuff from overseas."

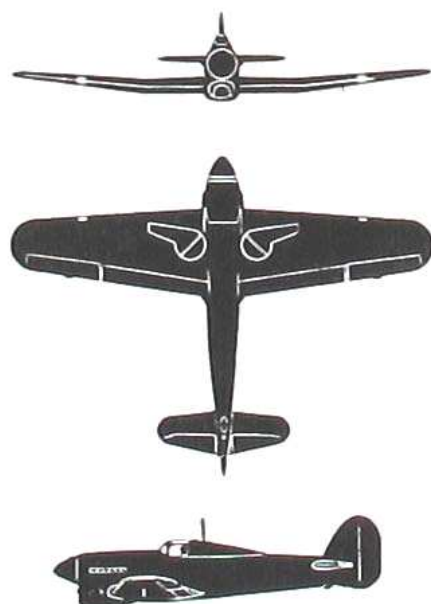
She turned back to him with a knowing smile. "I was named after her you know. Her name was Sharryah." Then she reached up and pulled Bobby's head toward hers, her hand on the back of his neck. Just as their lips met, Bobby glanced at the painting hanging over the fireplace. The hair on the back of his neck stood up as a shiver raced up and down his spine. In the dim light of the library, Bobby swore that for a brief second, the woman's eyes in the painting appeared to almost glow a deep red, and her canines were noticeably longer than the rest of what were otherwise perfectly aligned teeth. He blinked and looked again. The eyes in the painting were back to their normal dark brown. The momentary shiver of fear turned to one of eager anticipation. Bobby closed his eyes and enjoyed his second adult kiss.

★★

#4



#5



Game News

Most of the following information comes from
www.Consimworld.com. OD

GAMES

Academy Games

Fief: France 1429 by Uwe Eickert is a reprint of the original French game with improved rules, graphics, and the big Academy-style mounted board. **Fief** is a game of dynastic ambition, where players assume the roles of nobles in the 15th century Kingdom of France.

<http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/617871702/fief-france-1429>



Avalanche Press

Second World War at Sea: Torpedo Boats

Between 1923 and 1945, the German Navy built a series of small destroyers called "torpedo boats." They served as escorts, but often sailed with the cruisers and battleships in the role of fleet destroyers. A number of them appear in **Arctic Convoy** and **Bismarck**, on the small square pieces we use for minor warships.

Torpedo Boats is a set of 70 "long" pieces portraying every German torpedo boat that saw service in World War II, plus some that weren't completed, like the big 1941 Type boats. The pieces themselves are made with the same scorchless technology as our ultra-thick ones but are about the same thickness as **The Kaiser's Navy** (to make them blend in easier with **Arctic Convoy** and **Bismarck**) with no scorching or ash residue. All seven classes of torpedo boats built by the Germans are represented.

This enhancement to your gaming fun can't be purchased: it's only available to members of our Gold Club, free when you purchase the new **Second World War at Sea: Horn of Africa** game.

Second World War at Sea: Horn of Africa

Thousands of miles from the major theaters of World War II, small British and Italian squadrons struggled to control the entrance to the Red Sea. Cut off from their bases in Europe, the Italian Red Sea Flotilla did its best to close off this vital route leading from India and Australia to the Suez Canal.

Horn of Africa takes players to this little-known theatre of the Second World War, the battles between the Royal Navy's Red Sea Force and the Regia Marina's Red Sea Flotilla during the East African Campaign of 1940-1941. Ten battle and 15 operational scenarios depict the major actions of the campaign, along with a number of hypothetical situations that examine possible British intervention in the Second Italo-Abyssinian War of

1935-1936, as well as the use of ships on both sides not historically available but which with better preparation in the 1930s or even on the eve of war could have been present.

Horn of Africa is a *complete* boxed game in the Second World War at Sea series. There are 40 "long" ship pieces and 60 square pieces representing small warships, transports, aircraft, and markers needed for play. These include the complete Red Sea Flotilla and Red Sea Force, plus some unusual ships planned but never built (or never re-built) by both the Royal Navy and the Regia Marina.

The operational map depicts the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, including all the major ports and airbases (such as they were) of 1940-42. The tactical map is a generic blue field of hexagons, used to resolve surface combat. There, ships maneuver and fight using their gunnery and torpedo factors. Each player rolls a number of dice according to the ship's capabilities, hitting on a result of 6. Gunnery and torpedo damage tables give the results: Ships can suffer damage to engines, hull, or armament. Air attacks are resolved in similar fashion. The combat systems yield results rapidly but in a historically accurate fashion, giving a good balance. \$45

<http://www.avalancheexpress.com/>



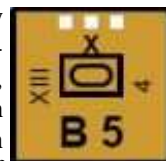
Chris Harding Simulations

Battle of Gettysburg: The First Day is a highly-playable simulation covering the first day of the battle. The game features chit-pull Formation Activation (Divisions for the Confederates, Corps for the Union), in which each formation may then may Fire, Move, and Final Fire with Defensive Fire occurring at the completion of Movement.

The game covers the fighting on the 1st of July 1863. Each turn of **Battle for Gettysburg** equals roughly one hour. One hex equals 250 yards. Unit counters represent brigades (for Infantry and Cavalry) and Regiments for Artillery. One step of strength equals about 300 men or 6-7 guns.

<http://users.sa.chariot.net.au/~topkat/home%20page/>

<http://talk.consismworld.com/WebX?14@@.1dd727c4/131>



Clash of Arms

La Bataille de la Moscowa, La Grande Armee before the gates of Moscow. Not much information. \$165

<http://www.clashofarms.com/LaBatMoscowa.html>

Compass Games

Breaking the Chains (BtC) simulates a hypothetical future military conflict over the South China and East China Seas around the year 2021. Conflicting claims of sovereignty have roiled those "near seas" since the Cold War. After decades of patient diplomacy, Beijing's new navy could offer military options for finally asserting sovereignty over prizes within the First Island Chain. **BtC** presumes that China comes to blows with a Southeast Asian country in a conflict that could expand to possibly include Australia, India, Japan, and the United States.

Two or more people play **BtC** with two reference cards, dice, and about 350 counters on a 22" X 34" map where each hex spans about 70 nautical miles (80 land miles) and each turn represents one day of real time. Specialized chit play simulates black ops, cyber warfare and various political developments.

BtC is solitaire friendly. The naval operations which dominate play are based on a roll-to-evade model rather than search-to-find model. Finally, the special chits that govern black ops can be played at random to further enable solo game play. http://compassgames.com/show/product/breaking_the_chains



Consim Press

The Hunters: German U-Boats at War, 1939-43 (second printing) is a solitaire tactical-level game placing you in command of a German U-boat during WWII. Those familiar with the classic Avalon Hill game **B-17: Queen of the Skies**, will come to enjoy the same type of gaming experience of the German U-boat War. All major U-boat models are accounted for with every level of detail including period of service, armaments, crew make-up, damage capacity, and more. Price: \$40.

<http://www.consimpress.com/the-hunters/>



Critical Hit ASL

Mamayev Kurgan, Stalingrad, Russia, 14 September 1942: The fighting for Stalingrad was now deep into the heart of the city. The German 51st Corps had reached the lower slopes of the most dominant natural landmark in the city, the ancient Tartar burial mound known as Mamayev Kurgan. The exhausted remnants of the Soviet 9th Motorized Brigade and 269th NKVD Regiment had fallen back to these heights. They were soon reinforced in fighting for this important position. The NKVD defenders bolstered morale through whatever draconian measures were felt necessary to hold these vital heights. Despite heroic efforts, the overwhelming mass and momentum of the German attackers, supported by a softening up by artillery and Stukas, drove through to seize the summit and hold it, however tenuously.

Welcome to **Mamayev Kurgan II**, same great map, more counters, back in limited edition since the first edition sold out. The new edition brings things to where they belong with the full color, 3-hole punched rules and more counters than before. An upgrade kit for previous owners is also available while supplies last—as long as the page is up for ordering you can get a copy. \$50

Note: Ownership of the modules providing Germans and Russians is required to play.

Dan Verssen Games

The Battle For Stalingrad puts you in the rubble-strewn streets as the German forces fight through one block of the city after another. The only hope for both sides is to secure the city before they run out of blood and food. As the game unfolds, you'll see one section of the city after another ground into rubble by your ceaseless fighting. As the city deteriorates, the amount of supplies generated for your men decreases. Supplies are the lifeblood of your army. Without them, you cannot move or attack, and you'll suffer higher casualties in combat. In the end, you'll be scrambling through the ruins, as much in search of food as the enemy. \$40 <http://www.dvg.com/.sc/ms/dd/ee/36/Battle%20For%20Stalingrad>

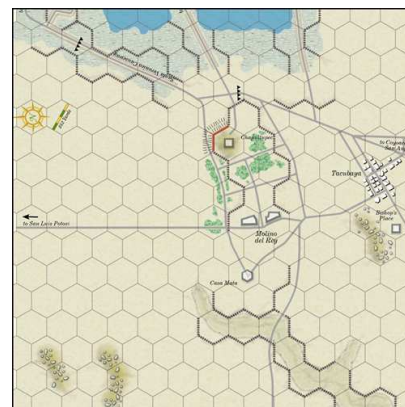


Decision Games

RAF, a second printing of John Butterfield's award winning game in which players can solo as the British or the Germans or can play head-to-head. There are three complete games. One is: **RAF: Lion**, which puts you in control of British Fighter Command, responding to German raids. The game's unique card system generates targets and forces, which may remain hidden until after you commit your squadrons. Your foe is no mindless system: the Luftwaffe has priorities and a strategy. Scenarios range from one raid day, taking an hour to complete, to the full campaign, playable in 12 hours. \$80 <https://shop.decisiongames.com/ProductDetails.asp?ProductCode=1019>



Molino Del Rey: Gateway to Mexico City In August 1847, Winfield Scott's U.S. Army was at the gates of Mexico City after a string of victories over Santa Anna. However, Scott paused to negotiate. Both sides used the delay to regroup, but when Scott heard a rumor that the Mexicans were casting cannon (true) at Molino del Rey (false), he resolved to take the place. The Mexicans saw it coming and prepared their defenses. The result was a narrow but costly American win that left the city's defenses intact. A quicker victory might have pushed into the city and ended the war. \$10



<http://shop.decisiongames.com/ProductDetails.asp?ProductCode=1710>

Fifth Column Games

Where There is Discord— War in the South Atlantic (3rd Printing) At 16.28 hours on the afternoon of Saturday, 1 May 1982, an AIM-9L Sidewinder missile fired from the Sea Harrier of Royal Naval Air Squadron Flight Lieutenant Paul Barton struck the Mirage III of Lieutenant Carlos Perona of Fuerza Aerea, Argentina, destroying it on impact. The Falkland/Malvinas War had begun in earnest.

In this solitaire military simulation boardgame, you have the opportunity to recreate those fateful summer days, commanding the British Task Force as it attempts to defend itself from concerted attacks by Argentine air and naval forces and mount a successful amphibious landing on the disputed islands.

Modeled closely on historical events, you will confront issues including variable rules of engagement, surveillance and intelligence gathering, submarine warfare, Argentine carrier and surface fleet operations, the Exocet missile threat, third-party operational support and interference, fleet logistics, supply interdiction, and uncooperative weather.

http://www.nobleknight.com/ProductDetailSearch.asp_Q_ProductID_E_2147538553_A_InventoryID_E_2148051974

Flying Buffalo Games

A reprint of the old favorite.

<http://www.flyingbuffalo.com/ace.htm>



Game Production Workshop

Auspicious Beginning is a game on the battle for Sicily, 1943. The module is designed to be an introduction to the Operational Combat Model System, allowing the gamer to experience the system and see the components of the entire game series. The only description of the game is a photo of some of the components. \$30 <http://gpwgames.com/ocms.htm>

GMT Games

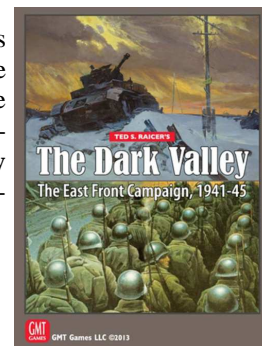
1914, Offensive à outrance by Michael Resch covers the initial campaigns on the Western Front in WWI fought in Belgium, France, and Germany during the first months of World War One. \$115. <http://www.gmtgames.com/p-415-1914-offensive-outrance.aspx>



The Dark Valley is a new game from award-winning designer Ted Raicer, focusing on the entire East Front campaign in World War II. The game components feature a beautiful map from Mark Mahaffey. **The Dark Valley** is designed to be playable and exciting, modeling the tension of the campaign ele-

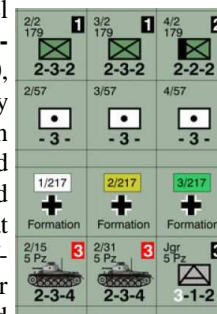
gantly and simply. The game also plays very well in solitaire mode due to the underlying chit-pull system. From the German blitzkrieg in 1941 to the blazing ruins of Berlin, **The Dark Valley** provides a truly new look at this much-gamed theater. Price: \$59.

<http://www.gmtgames.com/p-352-the-dark-valley.aspx>

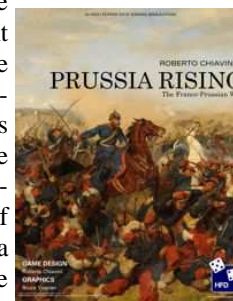


High Flying Dice Games

The latest entry in the Blood and Steel Series — **L'Audace! The Battle of Abbeville** — portrays the May 28-29, 1940, counter attack by the 4th DCR (led by Charles DeGaulle) against the German bridgehead at Abbeville. The French hoped to link back up with their British allies and isolated countrymen who were defending at Dunkirk. The Germans were caught off-guard here and fended off the French after some heavy and costly fighting. Designed by Roberto Chiavini. <http://www.hfdgames.com/>



Prussia Rising, The Franco-Prussian War 1870-1871 is a simple and playable simulation of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. Variant Rules for Leaders, Interception, and the famous "Death Ride" can be added to further enhance play as players move units such as infantry and cavalry, which are rated green, regular, or veteran, in a point-to-point game battling for control of France. The game is intended more as a game than an historical simulation. Game Design: Roberto Chiavini \$12



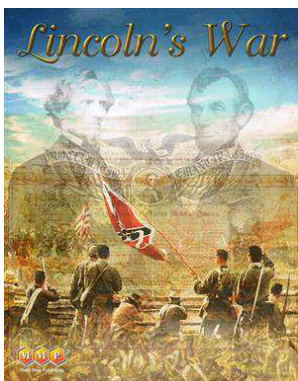
Matrix Games

Panzer Corps is out on Ipad. **Panzer Corps Wehrmacht** is an award-winning turn-based strategy game. Brought to fruition by a team of experts and a community of hundreds of fans, **Panzer Corps Wehrmacht** has evolved into the ultimate strategy classic. Set in World War II, it puts players in the general's tent in charge of the Axis armies, across 26 scenarios in one large campaign tree, carrying core forces through the war. This core force can gain experience and upgrade to new weaponry as it becomes available. With over 400 unit types, divided into 19 unit classes there is a huge amount to explore. All the 10 Grand Campaigns, Afrika Korps, and Allied Corps are also available as In-App Purchases.

In **Battle Academy: Fortress Metz** you play the forces of the U.S. 3rd Army as it tries to encircle Metz and cause the city to capitulate. Ten missions based on historical situations will test your skills as a commander. From the early attacks of the newly created, but raw, Panzer Brigades to the desperate attempts by the US infantry and engineers to take the forts, **Battle Academy: Fortress Metz** offers the player a wide diversity of missions. **Battle Academy: Fortress Metz** is an add-on for **Battle Academy** and requires **Battle Academy** to play. <http://www.matrixgames.com/>

Multiman Publishers

Lincoln's War reflects the fickle nature of politics and its influence on military policy-making during the American Civil War. **Lincoln's War** is a card-driven game using cards to activate generals, but in **Lincoln's War**, activation numbers are also political currency or PC. PC not only activates generals but promotes worthy commanders, purchases war material, forces indecisive commanders to act, and represents support for the war. A decisive PC point spread is an advantage in winning the game but driving an opponent to 0 PC (and 0 Congressional support) at the end of a turn will ensure victory, even in the face of defeat.



Unique features include a diceless combat system, seditious characters, and immobilization tokens. The combat system requires players to husband resources and congressional political support to ensure victory. Seditious characters oppose their respective Presidents' handling of the war and sooner or later will erode a president's vital political support. Immobilization tokens reflect damage in the form of casualties, as well as hesitation, confusion and even insubordination. Designed by John Poniske. \$80 <http://www.multimanpublishing.com/tabid/58/CategoryID/2/ProductID/88/Default.aspx>

Revolution Games

Gazala: The Cauldron simulates the mobile portions of the battle of Gazala south of Tobruk between May 27 and June 14, 1942. An Axis attack was met by a furious Allied counter-attack which then developed into a grinding battle of attrition and maneuver that finally ended in massive Axis victory. The game comes with an 22 x 17" map, 176 counters, and a 12 page rule booklet. Price: \$30.

288/13 90 Light	288/14 90 Light	Antank 90 Light
167-30	165-30	24-6-24
2/1 15 Panzer	8/2 15 Panzer	Antank 15 Panzer
1512-24	1512-24	20-6-24
104/1 21 Panzer	104/2 21 Panzer	104/3 21 Panzer
14-7-30	14-7-30	14-7-30
5/1 21 Panzer	5/2 21 Panzer	5/3 21 Panzer
5-4-24	10-8-24	5-4-24
46/1 Tricette	46/2 Tricette	46/1 Tricette
4-6-24	4-6-24	4-6-24

The Society of Ancients

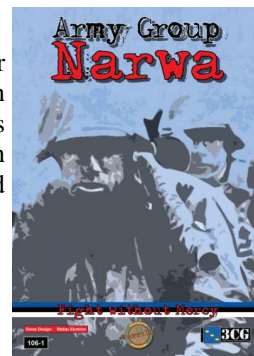
Empire: the Macedonian and Punic Wars, 350-150 BC, by Philip Sabin (reprint). Using simple mechanisms to capture the broad sweep of history, the game simulates the 200 years from the rise of Philip II of Macedon to the establishment of Roman hegemony in the west. Price: £7.50. <http://societyofancientsnews.blogspot.jp/2014/01/empire-reprint-available.html>

Taktyka i Strategia

This Polish company has games with English rules. There are several on the German invasion of 1939, which might be interesting. You can check them out at: <http://taktykaistrategia.pl/forum/index.php> and <http://boardgamegeek.com/boardgamepublisher/6912/taktyka-i-strategia>

Three Crowns Game Productions

Army Group Narwa is a two-player game covering the intense fighting in Estonia 1944. The Soviet objective is clear: to quickly seize Estonia to push Finland out of the war. Designed and developed by Stefan Ekström. <http://www.3cg.se/narwa.html>



White Dog Games

Vietnam Solitaire Special Edition is an area-movement, strategy game. Beside the Original and Special Edition campaign games that cover the entire war, three scenarios are provided: Tet 1968, The Fall of South Vietnam, and The Easter Offensive. In addition, there is a two-player variant. Optional rules are available for Ruff-Puffs and Limited B-52 Effectiveness in Laos and Cambodia. Political Points are used to raise and move troops and conduct some combats. Prices start at \$26 for the Folio Edition. <http://www.whitedoggames.com/#!vietnam-solitaire/cboi>

SEQUENCE OF PLAY

- Roll for Trail Counters
- Attack Trail Areas
- Raise/Move US/ARVN Forces
- US/ARVN Combat
- Place NVA/VC Units
- Insurgency Combat
- NVA/VC Offensive
- AirCav Redeployment
- Score Victory Check and Events Roll

POLITICAL EVENTS CHART

Modified Die Roll Effects for Next Turn

1 or less	Play as normal
2	No B 52 attacks
3	No Green Beret attacks
4	No B 52s or B 52 attacks
5	No US/AirCav Ground Units
6	Remove 1 US Unit

POLITICAL POINTS COST CHART

Raise ARVN, RVN or ANZAC	(H) 1
Raise US Inf., Mar. or Armor	(H) 2
Raise US AirCav	(H) 2
Move US Inf. Mar. to New Region	(H) 1
B 52 Attack	(H) 2
Green Beret Attack	(H) 1
Nasabun Attack	(H) 1
Each ARVN Eliminated	+1
Each US Eliminated	+2
Region Control at End of Turn:	
NVA/VC	+2
US	-1

RECORD TRACK

1 (1963)	2 (1964)	3 (1965)	4 (1966)
5 (1967)	6 (1968)	7 (1969)	8 (1970)
9 (1971)	10 (1972)	11 (1973)	12 (1974)
13 (1975)	14 (1976)	15 (1977)	16 (1978)

VIETNAM SOLITAIRE SPECIAL EDITION

Worthington Games

Band of Brothers: Ghost Panzer is a fast playing game of squad level combat in WWII. It covers the exploits of the German 11th Panzer Division in Russia from 1941 to 1943. The rules are very simple with very few exceptions to remember and yet the game is meant to be all encompassing and will include infantry, tanks, and artillery. Preorder Price still available: \$45 <http://www.worthingtongames.com/>



Victory Point Games

Hell's Gate is a simulation game of the Battle of the Korsun Pocket in Ukraine, during January and February of 1944. Two players direct the German and Soviet forces. The simulation is also easily playable solitaire for those who wish to study the dynamics involved. Designed by Philip Sabin. \$19 or 26. [Bob Best and I will be playing this game and will let you know our opinions.]

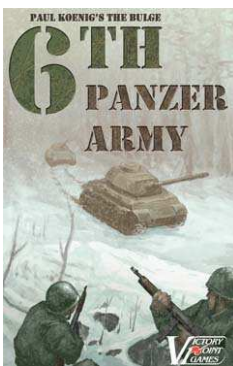
Sign of the Pagan from Richard Berg portrays the most famous battle of one of history's most feared figures – Attila the Hun. It is considered by some to be the battle that saved Western Europe from the Huns and, for the most part, put an end to Attila's wide-sweeping drives for loot.



The Battle of the Catalaunian Fields was fought as the age of the Roman West faded away and the Dark Ages began. As Attila's Huns and their Germanic barbarian allies moved into Western Europe, leaving a trail of pillage and destruction behind and threats of more violence to come, the remnants of the Western Roman Empire joined with their former enemies, the mighty Visigoth tribe, to stop the deadly invasion. \$17 or \$22

Paul Koenig's The Bulge: 6th Panzer Army. Designer Paul Koenig invites you to the first 3½ days of the German 1944 winter offensive known as "The Battle of the Bulge." In this first game of a new series, 6th Panzer Army takes you to the northern sector of this famous salient.

Using a fresh take on the venerable wargaming system presented in the D-Day and Market-Garden series, Battle of the Bulge authority and game developer Randy Heller has brought Paul's system up in scale to handle the larger operations in this campaign and provides the great (but manageable!) gaming "chrome" that wargamers so enjoy when exploring history using a "paper time machine" like **Paul Koenig's The Bulge: 6th Panzer Army.** [Your editor has purchased this game.]



AHIKS member Paul Koenig has several games available through Victory Point Games. There are three D-Day games, including **American Beaches Omaha and Utah Beaches: 6-8 June 1944.** There are three Market Garden games, including

Paul Koenig's Market Garden: Eindhoven. There is also a Fortress Europe game. Check them out:

[http://victorypointgames.com/details.php?prodId=262.](http://victorypointgames.com/details.php?prodId=262)

His personal website is <http://www.paulkoeniggames.com/>

Cuba: The Splendid Little War, from designer Javier Garcia de Gabiola, is a two-player simulation of the third War of Cuban Independence (1895-1898). Gameplay represents the main insurgency and counterinsurgency operations that took place, and players must make key strategic decisions to achieve their objectives while balancing their resources and preventing their opponent from doing the same.

There are event cards that help and hinder both players; disease, ambushes, assassinations, and the reactions of the American press and government. Steamships, railroads, telegraphs were all common, but there were no radios, almost no automobiles, and no airplanes. \$23, \$34

<http://victorypointgames.com/details.php?prodId=259>

Wargame Vault

2WW: The War in Europe from One Small Step (PDF \$10) is a grand-strategic game utilizing armies or army groups, air forces, and fleets. The game covers the entire conflict in Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. There are two players or sides in the game. Small in size, big in scope, the game is playable in an evening, yet has enough depth to satisfy most grognards. From the war in the desert, to the battle in the Atlantic, it's all here. Also included is a Vassal module for online play.

A print version of the game will be made available in the future. Purchasers of the online print and play version will be eligible for a discount on purchase for the fully printed version of the game.



Der Kessel: Stalingrad Solitaire from One Small Step (PDF \$10) is a solitaire game simulating the last weeks of the encircled German 6th Army in the pocket German troops nicknamed "The Cauldron" that formed in and to the west of Stalingrad when Soviet troops broke through the Wehrmacht's front lines in December 1942.

You represent General von Paulus. All actions of the Soviet commander Zhukov and subordinate units are strictly controlled by the game rules. As von Paulus, you must do your best to save the trapped army in the Cauldron while at the same time cooperating with the high command (OKW) to preserve

the integrity of the entire southern front in Russia. Each turn you perform various types of actions within the pocket. Die rolls and rules determine the strategic situation and strategy employed by Army Group South outside the pocket, specifically in terms of the commitment levels of the Luftwaffe and General Hoth's relief force.

The game includes one 11" x 17" map depicting the region containing the Stalingrad pocket and various playing aids, a sheet of counters, a set of 25 event cards, and rules. Each turn represents one to five days, depending on the level of activity. The entire mapboard represents territory approximately 35 by 65 miles. http://www.wargamevault.com/product/124880/Der-Kessel-Stalingrad-Solitaire?manufacturers_id=4712

MAGAZINES

Ares Magazine is a new bi-monthly science fiction magazine that includes a selection of short fiction along with a stand-alone, playable board game in each issue. [Still looking for backers.] <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1488075951/ares-magazine>

Modern War #9 features the insert game, **War by Television: Kosovo 1999**. This "what-if" simulation looks at What If the U.S. and NATO had invaded Serbia in the late summer or early autumn of 1999 to settle the Kosovo crisis. <http://shop.strategyandtacticspress.com/ProductDetails.asp?ProductCode=MW009>



MOVES Online is a resource to supplement your gameplay and includes After Action Reports, Design Notes, Previews, Variants, Optional rules, and Scenarios for Decision Games and S&T Press games. You'll find new articles added regularly including the most recent game releases, in addition to previous releases and future games. Current articles cover games as far back as the past three years. <http://shop.decisiongames.com/SearchResults.asp?Cat=74>

No Quarter is 16 pages longer in #52. It includes new columns, expanded content (including the first in a series of multi-issue articles), and new looks and takes on old favorites, including the popular Modeling & Painting Challenge. \$8 http://www.nobleknight.com/ProductDetailSearch.asp_Q_ProductID_E_2147539103_A_InventoryID_E_2148055061



Paper Wars #78 features the insert game, **Rockets Red Glare**, a two-player game simulating the War of 1812 in North America on the strategic and operational levels. The entire war is covered in quarterly turns corresponding to seasons, with strategic level play occurring on a map of the United States' east and gulf coasts, as well as some interior areas and the associated coastal seas. Game design by Stephen Newberg. Price: \$34.95. <http://compassgames.com/show/magazine>

Simulacrum #32 (2013) is the sporadically published zine (PDF format) of board wargame collecting, accumulating, and hoarding. This issue features in-depth coverage on the chronology of board wargames, a board wargaming dictionary, and the insert Print-n-Play game, **Panzergruppe Afrika**, by John Kula. Price: \$5 for PDF download (order direct from kula@telus.net). Or you can obtain this issue along with *all* issues of *Simulacrum* on a CD for \$40, which includes postage to North America. <http://www3.telus.net/simulacrum/main.htm>

Strategy & Tactics #285 features **Duel on the Steppe**, a simulation of the Winter Campaign in the Ukraine, from January 29 to March 17, 1943, known as Operation Star and Gallop, in which the Soviets arrayed their incredible numerical advantage against some of the best units in the German army. Price: \$30.00




Vae Victis #114 December 2013
Includes the game **The Battle Of Paris, 1814 Twilight Eagle**. € 14.95 <http://vaevictis.histoireetcollections.com/publication/3233/vaevictis-114-decembre-2013.html>

World at War #34 is a special edition featuring the insert game, **British Guards Armour**, part of the Famous Divisions series. It brings tactics to an operational simulation and recreates four battles from 1944-45: Operations Goodwood and Veritable, Bonninghardt Ridge, and Joe's Bridge. <http://shop.strategyandtacticspress.com/ProductDetails.asp?ProductCode=WW34>



Upcoming Events



Feb. 6-9, Warwick, RI

TEMPLECON

<http://www.templecon.org/14/>

Feb. 7-9, Victoria, British Columbia

GOTTA CON 2014

<http://www.gottacon.com/>

Feb. 7-9, Kalamazoo, MI

MARMALADE DOG 19

<http://www.marmaladedog.org/>

Feb. 14-17, San Ramon, CA

DUNDRA CON 38

<http://www.dundracon.com/index.php>

Feb. 14-16, St. Paul, MN

CON OF THE NORTH

<http://www.conofthenorth.org>

Feb. 14-17, Los Angeles, CA

STRATEGICON: ORCCON

<http://www.strategicon.net>

Feb. 15-16, Auckland, New Zealand

BATTLECRY CONVENTION 2014

<http://www.battlecry.co.nz/>

Feb. 21-23, Houston, TX

OWLCON 33

<http://owlcon.com/>

Feb. 21-23, Iowa City, Iowa

GAMICON

<http://www.gamicon.org/>

Feb. 26 - March 2, Charlottesville, VA

PREZCON

COLUMBIA CON

www.prezcon.com

March 1-2, Kenosha, WI

MIDWEST OPEN 2014

AREA1@ATT.net

Glenn Petroski has been running this **Victory in the Pacific** tournament for over 20 years. It has a good turnout.

March 6-9, Lancaster, PA

COLD WARS

<http://www.coldwars.org/>

Mar. 7-9, Austin, TX

SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST

<http://sxsw.com/trade-shows/gaming>

Mar. 14-16, Stamford, CT

CONNCON

<http://www.conncon.com/>

Mar. 14-16, Rye Brooke, NY

LUNACON

<http://2014.lunacon.org/>

Mar. 14-16, Butler (Pittsburgh), PA

COSCON

<http://www.circleofwords.com/main/page.php?6>

Mar. 20-23, Portland, OR

GAMESTORM

<http://gamestorm.org/>

Mar. 21-23, Oklahoma City, OK

TWISTERCON

<http://www.twistercon.com/>

Mar. 21-23, Cincinnati, OH

CINCYCON

<http://www.cincycon.org/index.html>

Mar. 28-30, Montpelier, OH

CAESARCON

<http://www.caesarcon.com/>

Mar. 28-30, Layton, UT

SALTCON

<http://www.saltcon.com/>

Mar. 28-30, Sacramento, CA

CONQUEST SAC

<http://www.conquestsac.com/>

Mar. 29-30, Irving, TX

T.A.B.L.E.

<http://www.roll2play.com/table/>

Apr. 4-6, San Antonio, TX

CHIMAERA CON 2014

<http://www.chimaeracon.com/>

April 4-6, Vancouver, BC Canada

TRUMPETER SALUTE

<http://www.trumpetersalute.com/>

Apr. 4-6, Honolulu, HI

KAWAII KON

<http://www.kawaiikon.com/>

Apr. 4-6, Omaha, NE

PRETZCON

<http://www.pretzcon.org/>

Apr. 11-13, Boston, MA

PAX EAST

<http://east.paxsite.com/>

Apr. 12-13, Brookfield, WI
MIDWEST GAMING CLASSIC
<http://www.midwestgamingclassic.com/>

April 25-27, St. Charles, IL
LITTLE WARS
<http://www.hmgsmidwest.com/>

May 25-31, Tempe, AZ
CONSIMWORLD EXPO
<http://expo.consimworld.com/>

Good sources for information on all kinds of conventions are the Steve Jackson game site: <http://sjgames.com/con> and the Columbia Game site: <http://columbiagames.com/convention/conventions.shtml>



Airplane ID answers

- #1 U.S. Transport C-47 “Skytrain”
- #2 German Troop Transport Junkers JU 52/3 M
- #3 Japanese Torpedo Bomber Mitsubishi Type 97
“Kate”
- #4 German Dive Bomber Junkers JU-88A-1
- #5 British Fighter “Typhoon”