



NEWSLETTER OF AHIKS

THE KOMMANDEUR



THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The big news this month is the formation of a new Region. Jerry Schott felt that his Region was getting too large for him to handle effectively. The Executive Committee then voted to form a new region. The new North East Region comprises all the states and provinces north and east of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Ontario, inclusive. So, if you are in one of those states or provinces, you are now in the North East Region. Jerry's Eastern Region now contains all the states formerly in it, except the above. The new Regional Director is Mike Truex. The Executive Committee is convinced that he will do an excellent job. (Note that the Western Region remains unchanged.) The above changes are effective immediately.

Last year, at Origins I, several of us AHIKS members got together on the spur of the moment and had dinner on Saturday night. Although we spent more time looking for a restaurant than eating, it was enjoyable. This year we hope to be more organized. If you will be at Origins II, and would like to attend an informal dinner Saturday 5-to-7ish, drop me a card. It is always pleasant to meet other AHIKS members.

Thanks to the efforts of two members, we now have some new OOB sheets. Nathan Mitchell made up sheets for Fredericksburg, Chattanooga, and Hooker and Lee. Tim Grant made up sheets for Wagram, Battle of Nations, and Marengo. Gene and Robin should have these by now. Thanks, Nathan and Tim.

In January's voting, the membership was overwhelmingly in favor of staggering the election of officers. To make this possible, two of the present officers--Gene Gardner and I--will step down at the end of this year. Also, to relieve the new president of duties and make the job more handleable, a new office will be created: the Secretary. Right now, the Executive Committee describes the job of Secretary as follows: 1) keep the Introductory Booklet up-to-date, 2) send out Intro Booklet to new members, 3) keep Application forms up-to-date and supply RDs with them, 4) keep Introductory Information sheet up-to-date and supply appropriate officers, 5) be in charge of OOB sheet preparation, 6) type for reproduction material for Intro booklet and application forms, and 7) arrange to have the above material printed and distributed. The Secretary, then, should be able to type well. It would be helpful if he had access to a typewriter with a carbon ribbon, but it may well be that AHIKS will have to purchase one. So, the offices that will be up for election at year's end are: President, ICRKmeister, RD East and Secretary. Please start thinking about becoming a candidate.

The Executive Committee has also voted to increase its membership by one. The European Region, it was felt, had too little representation on the Committee for the number of members. As soon as that Region decides who the new member will be, he will be named to the Committee.

To keep you informed, the Executive Committee has been concerned with succession--who would be chairman if the President were unable to perform that function. At the moment, the Committee is discussing forming a new office (Vice President, who would become active only if the President became inactive), or just naming a present officer as Vice Chairman. If you have any suggestions on this, write your RD or me.

In 1976, AHIKS had an attrition of 26 members. Since the first of the year, we have accepted 65 new members, and our current total is about 315. Most of the new members saw the notice in S&T.

In March, while Sue and I were in Britain, we were able to attend the European Region's spring meeting. It was a very enjoyable occasion, and we were able to see some old friends again and meet some members for the first time. Everyone was very hospitable, and we hope we can get to another meeting in the future. We especially enjoyed visiting Henry Radice, Bob Stuart, and Don Turnbull and hope we can repay their generous hospitality over here some time.

May 23, 1976

O.L. DeWitt

DOIN'S

ZOLNIERSKI ZEBRANIE #7
-Mike Truex-

The latest edition of a ZZ in the Jersey area took place on schedule, May 15th. It wasn't exactly SRO (at times it seemed like it, though), but by local standards the turnout was good at twelve members attending.

Among the notables in attendance were: Omar DeWitt, our fearless leader, who finally managed to win a game at my place; Joe Seliga, a proponent of a new die having only the numbers 1-3 on it; John Heydt, retaining his title of "everyone's favorite opponent"; Bill Perry, a firm believer in larger budgets for naval armaments and in keeping the British royal family in France; Larry Ercolino, leader of the new, successful Italian navy (where money is no object); Bruce Townsend, one of our newest members, who is probably still wondering what he got himself into; and yours truly, who could not get anyone to finish a game.

The games played were primarily those of more recent vintage, including some of the newest releases. Games played included: Arnhem, Russian Campaign (AH), The War at Sea, Breitenfeld, 1815, The Waterloo Campaign, Sea Strike, Wooden Ships and Iron Men, Wagram, Kingmaker (AH), Kasserine Pass, and the Battle of the Wilderness. Also presented for the wonderment of those attending (it was only a one-day affair) were La Bataille de la Moskowa and Their Finest Hour. The game of Kingmaker, in its updated version, was the main event game (6 players), and I heard at least one comment of, "I guess calling Parliament wasn't such a good idea after all, was it?"

And so another ZZ passes into history. We had good times and bad, winners and losers, and no one could have left either hungry or thirsty. But as the gathering broke up, the big question in our minds was, "just what are you going to do with those Pictures, Omar?" (**I have this horrible suspicion...**pm)

THE SPRING MEETING 1976 or HOW AHIKS CAME HOME TO ROOST

-John Spence- (Courtesy Euro Region newsletter)

Way back in November 1969, the first regional meeting of the British branch of AHIKS was held in the area of Altrincham under Don Turnbull's guiding hand, and was back in the same area in 1972 with Malcom Watson presiding. For the third time we returned to the same area for the Spring Meeting, descending in force upon the salubrious Ashley Hotel; our capable host once again being the one and only Malcom Watson. How Malcom managed to obtain such marvellous facilities I do not know, you would have thought that rumours would have circulated down the years... Possibly the Watson cigar and associated fog of war induced forgetfulness?

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doin's

It was to this palace that 21 members, 6 guests, 4 wives, 2 children, Slasher and last, but no means least, our President, Omar DeWitt and his wife Sue made their way at various times over that weekend. It was most rewarding to see the large turn out, one of the best for a Spring Meeting on record.

Many of those arriving on the Friday afternoon managed to pay a short visit to SPI (UK) that just happened to be situated 100 yards from the hotel (odd?!) where we were treated to the spectacle of "mine host" subduing an irate lorry driver delivering S&T 54 and other goodies by the simple expedient of producing a dozen or so large men to unload the lorry--just "friends" I think Malcolm called us! After working our fingers to the bone--those who suddenly didn't have something to do elsewhere--Malcolm still had no compunction in taking our hard-earned cash off us!

As with all other meetings that I have attended, little time was lost before gaming was under way, new and old games being put through their paces. The Quad games seemed to go down well with both the Island War and West Wall Quads being hammered by all and sundry throughout the weekend. I felt very sorry for those who tried Okinawa with Malcolm or any of his guests--the fall guy was conned into taking the American and then subjugated in two turns by a foolproof Watson ploy on the first move--better luck next time Robin! Funnily enough no one took on said group at WWI--similar story if they had tried it.

The highlight of the weekend was, of course, Sue and Omar's visit to us. They had put aside a goodly portion of their holiday (or vacation) to be with us and we were only sorry that they had to leave us on Saturday afternoon to fly home. Contact with the British subspecies of the wargaming fraternity en masse did not faze our President at all I am glad to say and in a short speech after lunch on Saturday he emphasised the fact that one of the most important aspects of the Society is the friendships produced by our postal gaming. Omar repeated a point made in the past that these contacts should not be limited to these Isles or even the shores of Europe but that the Society as a whole would benefit from more traffic across the Atlantic--any offers? I would like to thank Omar and Sue very much for putting themselves out in order to come, it was most appreciated. Maybe one day we will see further visits from the US--they will always be most welcome.

Fortified by good food and a most generous liquid gift from Omar to the Society, gaming continued merrily on through Friday evening into the early hours of Saturday. The merriness was so pronounced in a few cases that getting home caused problems! A somewhat subdued group of members met on Saturday morning but once one's mind turned to the pleasures of the board it was surprising what physical ailments got forgotten. D&D was again much in evidence. Fantasy was well to the fore with D&D having some light competition from "Dungeons" itself. It was a game that seemed to attract battle weary gamers on the Saturday night and Sunday morning. Sorcerer also saw the light of day and War of the Wizards made a late entry on Sunday. Empire of the Petal Throne was brought to the meeting, but everyone sheered off this game when the complexity and depth of the game was understood. A multi-commander game of Invasion America took all of Saturday and part of Sunday to complete. It says a lot for this game that none of the players had every met it before, but that after a read-through of the rules we set it up and played with little or no trouble. Other games played included NATO, Battle for Moscow, Tobruk, Fast Carriers, Wooden Ships and Iron Men and Soldiers--in all, a good cross-section of the games now available.

Henry Radice gave his RD address after lunch Saturday in which the state of the Society was itemised. Later that same afternoon there was a further visit to Aladdin's Cave across the carpark, courtesy of Malcolm who kindly opened up especially for the visit. In spite of a further late night, there was plenty of activity on Sunday morning, though possibly the tone of the proceedings had changed somewhat. The smash hit of the day was "Squasp" with four fully grown members crawling all over the floor, and each other, in an effort to pin plastic coloured wasps to their fly swats! I had to leave the still very active meeting at lunch-time with real sorrow that all such very good things have to come to an end. I think I can say that this will be a widespread sentiment of all those there for what was a most successful weekend--possibly the most pleasant and well-attended Spring Meeting to date--let us hope that there are plenty more like it. All our thanks go to Malcolm, not forgetting "Trish, his better half, for his efficient organisation of the weekend and for choosing such a convivial spot--maybe again next year or have we scared you off, Malcolm??

(K)



THE KOMMANDEUR VOLUME 11 NUMBER 3 JUNE 1976

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editorial

AHIKS: 100 years & 10,000 members to go?

One of the ballot items that drew a variety of response was the length of service to which an officer should be limited. To me, the question of length of service also brings to mind questions of how long AHIKS might last, and how many members we might expect. Anyone who has been with this hobby for more than a couple of years knows all too well how easily clubs come and go; AHIKS has--somehow!--managed to survive and thrive far longer than any other club of similar scope. I think the general short-lived nature of wargame clubs may blind us to the possibility of many, many years to come for AHIKS. The hobby seems to have many years before it, and the faults we find in the run-of-the-mill gamer will always provide a function for AHIKS. This leads me to think that our potential future is limitless. Perhaps when the hobby finally matures there will be no need for our Society--or is this just another way of saying almost all gamers will have joined AHIKS?!

Population predictions are always tough prospects, but graphing membership growth for AHIKS does show some interesting results. Projecting the graph along "high" and "low" growth curves shows a range of memberships: at start of 1977, 350-400 members; 1978: 420-530; 1979: 480-630; 1980: 550-?. Even by the conservative yardstick, we'll double membership within four years! In summary, when we think about AHIKS and how to structure its functions, let's keep in mind we must accommodate considerable growth. Perhaps 100 years and 10,000 members is excessive: but 30 years and 3,000 members does not seem so unreasonable!

I have received several inquiries about advertising in the K. I think the revenue, over an appreciable period, would be minimal; since there wouldn't be much profit, I see no reason to bother with it, and I am currently declining such inquiries. However, I will review any publication or organization that will send information. I hope to arrange "review trades", in which a publication/society reviewed here will give us "equal time" in their issue.

Several people have suggested I get an assistant. A good idea, and I appreciate the concern, but it won't work. Offset printing is sensitive to type "weight" (or darkness), which dictates all the typing be done on the same machine. In future, you will notice, I will type all material on my typewriter, even if the author submits it in typed form. The one possibility is an assistant who has a SCM cartridge/carbon ribbon machine with elite type. Anyone?

(K)



ORIGINS II

WARGAMING/MINIATURES
NATIONAL CONVENTION
DATE: JULY 23, 24, and 25, 1976
PLACE: Johns Hopkins Univ., Baltimore, Maryland.

REVIEWS

FAST CARRIERS

-not sure-

Designed by SPI, Fast Carriers is an interesting attempt at simulating carrier warfare. The use of Task Force (TF) markers is the center of the adequately-developed Strategic segment of the game. Search Procedure, the attempt to identify the nature of the TF (does it have carriers, how many, is it a dummy counter?), is elaborate but simple. This basically gives a "hidden" aspect to the game. It does not, however, allow for strategic surprise, something most games lack.

The Operational aspects of the game are also extremely well handled. Each carrier or air base has three aspects its air units may assume. They are either in the Hanger, Arming & Refueling, or on the Flight Deck. A&F, and Flight Deck have limits (maximum number of units), and the carrier or base has a total limit. The Operational phase covers the unit's transition between each of those three "regions" and the air, as well as the totally hidden (done on paper) movement of the air strikes. Then you have other problems. Some air units have low endurance; this, in effect, means a far shorter range. Also, when you reach the TF, you have to roll to see if your strike makes contact, and which of your waves miss the target! You could also find that the TF is a dummy counter--you never know until you make strike contact. You cannot take totally wild stabs in the dark, because the rules forbid you to launch a strike against a TF which has not been searched in a given day, or is not in a "coastal" hex.

Tactically, unfortunately, the game falls apart. It is my belief that the game was designed around the Tactical Abstraction Rule. This is an optional rule for WWII, but mandatory for post-WWII. A friend and I had recently tried a scenario from F.C. where we went seven hours (the game is no shorty) to find out that no matter how much CAP and AA the Americans had, the Japanese Torpedo bombers (Kate) with a movement allowance of 4, would always get through. This was because they were only subjected to one AA and CAP attack before they struck home. US TBDs would undergo two. The second one is crucial because the reduced range makes the AA more effective. The Kates, one the other hand, would outrun the heaviest AA, and only take it on the chin on the way out: who cares after they sink your carrier if it gets shot down! Again, try the Tac Abstraction rules for the WWII scenarios; I do not believe the Tactical version was very well tested.

Other boo boos: a couple of counters, same type of aircraft, had different movement allowances. In this case, I opted for "majority rules". In the case of the Kates, this was a fatal option. Also, after one attempt, I noticed it was mathematically impossible to win the Pearl Harbor Solitaire Scenario. SPI agreed, and changed the victory conditions (should read "D2 or worse"). They also omitted an Oiler in the Midway Scenario (bet you were wondering how the US DDs were going to fight a four-day battle on three days of fuel!). The Soviet subs listed in the OB for Denmark Straights should be changed to match those in the counter mix--SPI did not include extras. There is also NO difference between High Altitude AA and Low Altitude AA, as my B-17s quickly discovered! SPI suggested I make my own modifications. Unfortunately, they neglected to mention how they came up with their figures (I suspect they averaged them).

So, if you can get over NOT using the Tactical Rules, prepare yourself for a LONG game, and have an opponent you can TRUST (a key element in this game), then this game will go over well with you...even if they did ignore all operations between 1943 and 1950!!

(**My apologies to the author of this review: this was forwarded to me without a name on it. Let me know who you are?**-pm)

DESTRUCTION OF SPI CENTER

-John Mansfield-

STOP THAT APPLAUDING!!!! Its only a set of Miniature, D&D and Dippy rules based on our ~~fantasy~~ wildest dreams. Its really a parody of what happens in those halls. The game is good, the layout of the building is exact and the gaming fierce. A must for collectors: 50¢ from Greg Costikyan, 1675 York Ave., NY, NY 10028.

MORE QUAD REVIEWS--AND THE END IS NOT YET IN SIGHT!

-Bill Drakert-

SPI must believe that they have something good going, as the "quad" series continue to pour from their presses. These games are all based on standardized rules with extreme playability. The latest are Blue Gray II (more Civil War) and Island War, a series of WWII Pacific battles.

BGII has exactly the same basic rules as the first BG game. The battles covered are Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Chattanooga and Wilderness. The games are uniformly good, as were their predecessors, and I will comment on each one separately.

Fredericksburg covers the attack by Burnside on Lee of December, 1862. Since the Union has a considerable advantage in strength,

the Confederacy has the advantage of fighting from favorable terrain, and the Union has severe movement constraints--he may only move 15 units each game turn, and some of his units are immobilized for the entire game. These handicaps make it very difficult for the Union to make progress, especially against Marye's Heights where Burnside made his main attack. An additional scenario is provided to simulate Sedgewick's attack on Early during the Chancellorsville campaign of May '63. The game is good and can be modified easily by allowing any "fair" number of Union pieces to move in order to equalize player ability.

Chancellorsville presents an even greater disparity in strength, and in addition the Confederate has no terrain advantage. History knows this as one of Lee's greatest battles. The game designer gives Lee a chance by making Union units Divisions vs Confederate brigades; thus, when exchanges occur the Union is really hurt. In addition, the Union player may not stack units and may move only six units each turn. Victory conditions make a flank march (such as Jackson's) a good plan for the Confederates; the limited ability to respond makes things very bad for the Union.

There is also a Combined Chancellorsville scenario, covering both the Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg maps, and the entire campaign. Leader counters with various capabilities are provided and a wild game can occur. Once again the Union is penalized in movement and stacking. This Combined scenario is to my mind the best of the set.

Chattanooga covers Grant's victory over Bragg in November '63. Once again the odds are evened by limiting Union movement; in addition the Confederate has lots of Artillery, the Union only one mobile unit. Artillery is vital in this game since it can provide all the necessary soak-offs.

Wilderness is also a favorite, a big sprawling meeting engagement. For a change, the Union can move as well as the Confederates, though not as quickly off the roads. All the games I have played look like Union victory--until you figure the score. Points are awarded for destroying enemy strength--but the Confederate gets three victory points for each combat point and the Union, two points. There are also points for geographical objectives, usually ending up in Union control. But, alas for Grant--if he destroys 80 Confederates and loses 80 of his own and takes all his objectives--he loses 240 to 205! Take care as Union to avoid losses! An additional scenario showing slower and more concentrated Union entry is given--and it is actually better for the Union, I think.

All in all, an excellent successor to the first series.

ISLAND WAR is similar to Modern Battles with considerable offensive and defensive firepower rules. Battles covered are Guadalcanal, Saipan, Leyte and Okinawa. Various scenarios are provided for each.

Bloody Ridge covers Guadalcanal for September 11, 1942, to November 2, 1942. A September scenario, an October scenario, and a Campaign Game are provided. The sole objective for the Japanese is to occupy Henderson Field at the end of his player turn--the US has no chance to throw them out, the game is over. In the first scenario, the Japanese are relatively weaker than later, yet they are much closer to the field and have an excellent chance of succeeding. In the October scenario, the Japanese are stronger--but have much further to go. In all the Island war games, the Japanese have the ability to move out of zone of control (unusual in this series) and can double attack strength by making BANZAI attacks which always increase their own losses and always seem to be a poor idea! Guadalcanal is an excellent game: here both the US and Japanese have considerable bombardment strength; (in Saipan and Okinawa all the power is with the Americans--the sole Japanese strategy is survival).

Saipan invasion in June '44: the historical game is too cut and dried. While the victory conditions of eliminating all Japanese by June 15 are hard--the game is relatively flat--there is no way for the Japanese to drive the US out in the historical scenario, and then it is just a matter of time. All the US attacks are at maximum odds! An optional scenario in which the US must choose his beaches vs a hidden Japanese deployment gives the Japanese a much better chance.

Leyte covers the US reentry into the Phillipines from 10/20 through 12/23 in three separate scenarios (but no Campaign Game): The American Assault, the Mountain Barrier, and the Final Collapse. The Japanese are given additional capabilities in fighting from rough or mountainous terrain that make them hard to dislodge. The games are all very fluid at times and the US player has to be very careful to avoid a bloody nose, especially in the Mountain Barrier. The best games of the group.

Okinawa provides various scenarios (Outer Shuri Defenses, Japanese Counterattack, Final Shuri Defenses, Breakout and a Campaign Game). The game is in some ways reminiscent of Saipan: no question of what will happen--just how long will it take. Victory conditions are set to be tough on the Americans, as they are also restricted in not being allowed to apply their offensive firepower in rough terrain. Limited amphibious invasion capabilities for both players add considerable life to some scenarios.

LAW AND ORDER

Tom Oleson

I have been acting as judge for Avalon Hill on Anzio queries about the same length of time I have been AHIKS' judge, which means that I have reviewed hundreds of rules queries. They tend to fall into certain categories:

1. I'd say at least a third of those queries could have been answered by a careful reading of the rules. I'm not referring ambiguous rules; rather, clear rules that just weren't read. No doubt this is partly due to the increasing length and complexity of game rules, and also to the fact that even though a point may be clear, it may be tucked away in an obscure spot.

2. A somewhat smaller category consists of questions about rules that are clear, but not believed! Every game has arbitrary and unrealistic rules, and every game also has rules that while they may be realistic and fair, are inconvenient for your situation in a hotly-contested game! It's surprising how many questions can be answered this way: "Although I may share your distaste for the rule in question, it is clear, and your opponent is right-- sorry!"

3. A small but not insignificant sub-section of the above category involves rules that surely would never make it into any second edition of the game in question--rules so peculiar, albeit clear, that anyone could be excused for doubting, and wanting reassurance. In these days of games beyond counting, unsuccessful ones quickly become orphans, with no one at the publisher interested or informed enough to rectify such errors.

4. These days the errata is hot off the presses almost before the game itself has reached the public, but nonetheless, there is no shortage of genuine ambiguities, and questions about them make up at least a quarter of the letters reaching me. At least half of these questions have been answered before, and the answer can be found by researching the latest errata, or, for older games, the "AHIKS archives". The other half concern new wrinkles, and this is where the "judging" really comes in, whether to ponder carefully the correct answer, try to get a ruling from the publisher, or an informed opinion from one of the many AHIKS experts.

5. A few queries have concerned what one might call questions of gaming etiquette, but these have been extremely few.

Turning to a different matter, I have recieved some comments on the last L&O, among them: a) A suggestion that a sheet of errata be sent out with the ICRK for the game involved. Of course, a few years ago, AHIKS did publish nearly comprehensive errata on a few games. This is a great idea in principle, but I confess myself unequal to the task, and before anyone else volunteers for it, I suggest he acquaint himself with the monumental amount of work involved!!! b) The idea of the Judge having assistants instead of there being several judges for different games. Objection: if the Judge has to allocate queries, this delays the response. Does the assistant reply directly, or through the Judge--again a delay?

K

SPEARHEAD

VOICE FROM THE EAST

Jerry Schott

The East is no longer the same. Effective immediately, the East is split into two sections. I remain as the RD East, and Mike Truex has been elected by the Executive Committee to take over the new North East Region (see Omar's column). I assume Mike will run for office this December so that all of you can vote for him too. The last time I looked (about a month ago), that would leave 65 members in the East, and 75 in the North East. However, if you will all pull out your Funk and Wagnals, you will see that the East is about five times bigger geographically than the NE (East retains Puerto Rico, Africa, Venezuela)--so what if we only got one member in Africa!!

Anyway, the reason the region is splitting is to enable the Regional Directors to better handle the complaints and questions of members and new applicants. Probably very few members in the club realise the impact of the ad in S&T. For weeks, I was running behind in all my mail. The faster I worked the more the mail came in. The postman used to give me dirty looks when I handed him 15 or 20 letters at a time. I used more stamps in the first quarter than I thought I was going to use all year! Now that we got some help, I expect Murphy's law will apply. That is, the rush will be over and both RD's will be sitting around (drinking beer?) waiting for a letter from anybody for weeks and weeks. At least I know that Pete will write me once every two months to remind me of the deadline for the K.

Superman (my affectionate name for my orthodontist, because he likes to bend steel with his bare hands), anyway Superman has informed me that because I look so good in braces, I can keep them on until the end of summer. Maybe some of you think the K

is the wrong place to mention braces? Look! When you are 32 and wear braces, you might just as well brag about them, right?

I just got a copy of AH's latest game Russian Campaign. I tried to solo it twice. The first try lasted 5 turns and the Germans were sitting in Moscow, on top of the Stalin counter. Somehow, the Hitler counter had fallen to the floor, so I declared it a draw. The second time lasted about two turns. The Russians were down to the worker counters, Stalin, and an infantry force equal to the Finnish Army. Anyone having some strategic ideas on what the Russians should do to stay in the game past turn five, please write and let me in on it!

Oh, yes. Pete says that we don't have room in this issue for all the new members to be listed, but we hope to get back to personal introductions next time.

K

OPINIONS

MEL YARWOOD (2/22): For those who haven't heard, watch out for Simulations Design Corporation (I took Conflict magazine). I got a voucher from them after they cancelled the magazine. I chose a game (no cash refund), added a check for the difference and then all I got back was a cancelled check! No game. No response to any of my letters. (**Mel's comments got to me just a bit late for K11/1 and we didn't print any letters in K11/2, but it is a timely missive because I've just seen an ad for SDC and Conflict magazine. Their ad states, "No! Conflict is not dead!" Caution is definitely the order of the day.**-pm)

DAVE MINSER (2/26): In the President's Corner (K11/1), Omar mentioned membership certificates. I don't think that wallet-size ones are needed--I doubt if anybody would ask an AHIKSer for proof of membership!! Maybe a certificate for framing might be desirable; can anyone say how much cost we're looking at? That would be the first step in any decision.

TIM GRANT (2/26): Periodically, I send photocopies of responses to questions I send to the publishers to Tom Oleson. This brings up a suggestion: since AHIKS can't actually make rulings anymore, why not have a section of the K each issue for printing any material that Tom gets from the members along these lines? In my opinion, I would be a real service. I think once the thing got rolling it would be self-generating; i.e., members would be glad to contribute. The section wouldn't have to be big--a half-column would probably suffice. One more suggestion: I would think Tom might have a sizeable backlog of this type of stuff--couldn't it all be printed (maybe on ditto, like the newsletters used to be)? Again, I think this would be a great service. (**It may help to realize that the backlog of past game rulings is more properly calibrated in terms of numbers of file drawers. Every scheme proposed thus far breaks down on one factor: the tremendous number of games in print. We cannot talk in terms of ten or twenty pages of rulings/summaries. We have to talk in terms of three or four HUNDRED pages. The typing job alone is staggering (a lot of the material is hand-written). If you have ever typed a ditto, you would know why I'd say this is not an option, so we are talking some kind of copy service, anywhere from 4¢ to 15¢ per sheet; some games will take many pages. I'd have to comment that the K is a poor vehicle for rulings. We used to do it that way. What you find is that you're cutting up the issue, thumbing thru old issues, trying to get a copy of old issues. Again, with the ungodly number of games in print, we could fill each and every K with the errata and rulings. Perhaps the only practical solution is to have summaries of rulings and errata made up by members who have a thorough familiarity with the game. Copies of these summaries could be made available to members who write in for them. We would never hope to make the list of summaries comprehensive, though. I confess my unhappiness with the situation, and most all the proposed solutions I've seen, including my own. Out of 300-odd members, we ought to have inspiration somewhere!**-pm)

JIM FREDIANI (3/4): What's in a review? Or, what drives one to buy a game? It's almost the same question. The gamer who buys due to the visual appeal of a nifty cover, or just buys out of impulse, or believes the publisher's advertising, can really only blame himself. But if he buys on the recommendation of a review of that game, he will curse that reviewer ten times over! The trouble is, the reviewer isn't trying to be misleading; he gives his interpretation to the best of his ability. How can the reader determine the reviewer's reliability?

I think we can use two measures to answer this question. First, examine the review. Is it general or specific? Does it point out bad as well as good points? Does it discuss the systems employed in the simulation? Second, examine the reviewer. Who is he? A flunky of the company? What else has he reviewed? How did he review the games you already own? Asking yourself these questions will help pin down the validity of the review.

For my personal tastes, the reviews in the K are usually too short, they don't get into the meat of the game: how it works as a game, how it relates with the historical context it is supposed to be simulating. There are, of course, too many games to review, and too little room in the K for this. My idea of a really top-notch reviewer is Richard Berg, probably tops in the field today. And when you buy a game recommended by a good, reliable reviewer, you find it comes out exactly as he evaluates it. Impulse reviews, on the other hand, often contain faults. Like forgetting to mention that without the errata sheet, the game is a DOG (damned obstentuous garbage)! So, be able to tell the difference between the "professional" reviewer, and the casual reviewer; and take the latter with a cup of salt.

JOHN ALSEN (3/8): My opinion on the K is that it should remain a newsletter, at least as its prime function. With the springing up of new companies and the overabundance of new titles on the market, there is a definite need for a forum in which information (news) can be exchanged. Since AHIKS is probably more of a "hard core" wargamers association, we have the talent among us to evaluate new companies and new titles, and pass along well-founded opinions.

TIM GRANT (4/18): On Honorary Memberships: I'm not against them per se, but I think they should be granted for outstanding contributions to AHIKS. The could be proposed by the officers and voted by the members....I don't see why officers should pay dues. They do enough work to more than cover dues....Games playable thru AHIKS: I agree that you have to draw limits somewhere, but I think drawing that line at F&SF is too severe. I think that any sort of legitimate conflict-type of game is admissable (e.g., Sorcerer)....(Tim outlines a method of converting our standard 6-digit ICRK into a 10-digit generator. I believe some work has been done on producing a 10-digit ICRK from the ICRKmeister. I'll hold onto the conversion method until I hear from Gene)... I'd still like to see a regular column in the K devoted to rules Q & A.

HENRY KELLEY (5/4): I'd like to comment on the question of sci-fi and fantasy games. Take Starforce: in spite of the lack of divisions, phalanxes, etc; in spite of the 3-D playing scope, we are still simulating something in playing the game. It's a different type of simulation, but the competition against an opponent remains. I suppose the same would hold true for Sorcerer. D&D is a separate case, though. This is not really a boardgame, but rather requires a monitor to handle the wanderings and the interminable die-rolling. Is D&D a wargame? Perhaps, in a very broad sense, there IS a conflict being simulated. (**If I may add 2¢ here, I think one of Tom Oleson's points is that as we expand the games that the Judge will be expected to cover, we increase the certainty that not only the Judge, but any other member, will know anything about the game. We can "officially" include a game in the AHIKS "blessed list", but if the two opponents with the rules dispute are the only ones in the club who even own a copy of the game, how can we expect to adjudicate differences? In all likelihood, there will be 60 to 75 games published this year. How do we keep track of these new ones AND all the 300-odd old ones, too? A problem.**-pm)



TREASURER

Joe Horne

AHIKS COMBINED 1975 FOURTH QUARTER AND ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Effective balance at beginning of year \$ 289.16
 Effective balance at beginning of quarter 1,118.90

INCOME	QUARTER	YEAR
Dues	\$ 22.00	\$ 1,427.00
Initiation fees	55.00	355.00
European Region	140.00	161.92
Miscellaneous	33.00	107.40
	\$ 250.00	\$ 2,051.32
EXPENSES		
President	\$ 31.87	\$ 148.67
RD East	19.40	166.21
RD West	25.92	125.63
Editor	120.94	327.94
ICRKmeister	6.50	119.23
MCoordinator/Archvst.	4.41	25.15
Treasurer	10.50	48.50
Judge	3.00	23.99
Stationery	13.00	170.13
Miscellaneous	7.20	58.87
	\$ 242.74	\$ 1,214.32

Effective balance at end of quarter and year \$ 1,126.16
 Total postage for year \$ 544.80
 Total printing cost for year (excluding OOB's) \$ 235.90

From the above report it can be seen that AHIKS is in the best shape financially that it's ever been in. The primary reason for this is the larger than expected influx of new members we had last year while the officers were exercising fiscal restraint by staying within their budgets for the most part. This year looks like another banner year for membership expansion but expenses should jump accordingly because the growth is becoming almost too rapid.

The response of the membership in sending their change of addresses has been most gratifying (one member even called me to give me his COA--a very dangerous thing to do since wargamers have a tendency to be rather verbose whenever they get a chance to talk to someone with similar interests). Do keep those cards and letters coming, though; and, if you can afford the phone bill, I'd be happy to talk to any one of the membership.

The following is a list of people who did not choose to remain members of AHIKS this year: M. Boyce, D. Brackman, E. Cato, D. Cordes, W. Dun, F. Deffry, G. Foster, D. Gardner, N. Garrett, B. Grigsby, S. Harper, A. McEvoy, T. Marks, R. Mataka, D. Moyer, K. Polan, J. Reilly, R. Richards, P. Ross, D. Seabolt, G. Smith, S. Stuckemeyer, F. Sweet, M. Tuck, S. Ulberg. Of these, only Harper, Seabolt, Smith, Sweet wrote to give us their reasons for leaving AHIKS. If any member knows any of the rest, we would appreciate knowing why that person did not renew his membership. (**Since a couple of people have asked, we should also mention that G. Kilbride also did not renew.**-pm)



SWAPPE SHOPPE

NEW: never used, or only used 1-2 times; **FAIR:** all pieces included, board has no defects, not unduly worn; **POOR:** less than fair; **wb/nb:** with box/no box (SPI segmented compartments); prices should be "postage included".

For sale: Air Empire, fair, highest bid. Wanted: Bismark, hope for \$10-15 range; Flight of the Goeben, \$10 range.

Carl Benton, 300 N. Kansas, Salina, KS 67401

Want to swap: Yeoman, new, for whatever.

Tim Grant, 8716 Brentshire Walk, St. Louis, MO 63144

For sale, minimum two games per order, all fair: American Revolution, Battle for Germany, Breakout and Pursuit, Combined Arms, Fred the Great, Kampfanzer, NATO, Normandy, Oil War, Punic Wars, RS/WS, Seelowe, Sixth Fleet, Tank, Turning Point, Wolfpack, WWI, WWII, El Alamein, Fall of Rome, Year of Rat, Lost Battles, Combat Command, Scrimmage, Armageddon, DAGC, all nb, \$3; Luftwaffe, R-War, PBlitz, \$4; Jutland, 1914, \$9.

Jerry Schott, 720 Pine Ridge Dr, Plantation, FL 33317

GOING TO BRAZIL! MUST SELL! For Sale: Combined Arms, PAA, DAGC, Fred the Great, ACW, Armageddon, East is Red, Sixth Fleet, CA, Wolfpack, K-panzer, all fair-to-new, nb, \$3; Tank with exp. kit, wb, f-t-n, \$4; WWII, f, wb, \$7; Frigate & Patrol (both), poor, wb, \$9; Battles of Bull Run, ftn, Grand Arme, Sniper, RS/WS, Mech War 77, WWIII, all wb, fair, \$6; PBlitz, 1776, R-War, Outdoor Survival, fair, \$8; Verdun, War of the Wizards, Jerusalem, Blitzkrieg, Triplanetary, fair, \$6; Diplomacy, fair, \$10; Torgau, fair, \$7; Lensman, Empire I, Alien Space, Shiloh, Battle of Helms Deep, fair, \$2-4; sets of: Prestags (all 5), fair, wbs, \$30; Invasions: Seelowe, Op Olympic, Market Garden, fair, wb, \$10; Rand Vol. I, fair, wb, \$10; Vietnam: Dien Bien Phu, 1st Indochina War, Year of the Rat, Battle for Hue, fair, wbs, \$8; rules for Warriors of Mars (\$4), Starguard (\$3). Wanted in trade only: Quads: Island, West Wall, 30 Years, Blue & Gray I & II; rules to D&D supplements Blackmoor, Greyhawk; Ancient period; Medieval (photocopies accepted on all rules).

WRITE TO CONFIRM PRICE AND AVAILABILITY BEFORE SENDING MONEY!!
 John Huber, 2720 N. Frederick Ave, #130, Milwaukee, WI 53211

For sale: T-34, new, nb, \$2; Combined Arms, Sixth Fleet, new, nb, \$5; Grunt, poor, nb, \$2; Wolfpack, Lost Battles, new, nb, \$4.50; Combat Command, fair, nb, includes Tac3, \$4.50; Luftwaffe, new, \$9. Wanted in trade: Spartan, Armageddon, PAA, Sorcerer, Barbarossa, Dreadnought.

AMN Larry Bowie, PSC #1, Box 2302, Peterson Field, CO 80914

For sale or swap: Early Pacific Battles, Flying Tigers, Fast Carriers, Third Reich, Von Manstein's Battles, Starforce, WWIII, Alex the Great, new; Coral Sea, Musket & Pike + Rifle & Saber, Spitfire, WWII, fair; Anzio I, poor. Prefer trades to outright selling.

Jim Frediani, Box 751, Calistoga, CA 94515

For sale: Stalingrad, Midway, Fr' 40, Pleader, Alexander, Tobruk, 1914, Afrika Korps, Frigate, Global War, WWIII, RS/WS, Starforce, Grenadier, Musket & Pike, new, \$6; Gettysburg, new, \$3.

Lynn Moore, 24 Stouffer Place #5, Lawrence, KS 66044



NUTS AND BOLTS

the icrkmeister

This looks to be a great year. I was doing some checking for Omar and found the set requests had jumped a little over 40%! I knew there was a reason for not getting the requests out (beside the fact I had finals and the starting of a new profession, which is still going on). Anyway, what I'm trying to say is I'm still behind on the set requests as this goes to press.

I still get game requests to match games. That's a no-no: set requests for which you do not have an opponent must go to the Match Coordinator!

Here's some statistics from last year. You may find these of interest and possible use.

135 games were SPI. 123 games were AH.
The breakdown is as follows: 12 PBlitz; 11 SGrad; 14 AK; 12 Bulge; 2 R-War; 21 Anzio74; 8 1776; 2 Fr40; 4 DDay; 3 Blitz; 2 Luft; 8 PlDr; 8 WLo; and the balance SPI. Because there are so many SPI games I find it too difficult to break them down. The only two that I did count were 9 WWII and 9 Borodino. Although SPI had more games played, I feel AH is more consistent in the fact that they have more of the same games being played. One sad note, we had 42 cancellations for the year, which means a lot of wasted work for myself (84 write-ups) and the Match Coordinator.

(K)

(**With the communication below, I am delighted to report that Henry Radice, European Regional Director, will be making regular input to the K. I think our members on this continent will find Henry's column always very interesting. For this issue, he has given us a modified version of his regular report to his Region.**)

RANDOM SHOTS

Henry Radice

Both the major events forecast in our last regional newsletter came to pass successfully and gave considerable enjoyment to those involved. Our President and Sue have duly come and gone--on schedule be it noted. They say that they enjoyed their trip, even braving the semi-furnished spare bedroom of the RD's new abode as the first guests. It was both an honour and a pleasure to have Omar and Sue at our Spring Meeting for Friday evening and most of Saturday.

At Hale, Malcolm had made excellent arrangements with one of the best hotels to have the doubtful privilege of accommodating us. It was the largest Spring gathering ever with a total of 21 members, 4 wives, 2 children and 6 guests (one of whom has since joined) plus Omar and Sue making a grand total of 35. Omar asked whether the hotel was the style to which we were accustomed; he was quickly disabused of this idea by the veterans of Tunstall and other nameless hostels. But as David Wood remarked, "Everyone who was at Tunstall always remembers that meeting". Who could ever forget it?? A full account appears earlier in these pages and I must not impinge upon the author's preserves. Two vignettes, however, must be recorded: at dinner on Friday the RD, with a grand gesture, treated all at his table to wine; it was not by his machinations that the cost was divided up and put on the bills of all those concerned in the drinking--apologies all round. Secondly, once more the RD was waylaid at about midnight on his way to bed by the manager and a keen discussion ensued on the subject of Slasher's sleeping quarters; who was that senior member who deserted his RD in his hour of need--no names no packdrill!! It was one of our best meetings and I would like to record a vote of thanks to Malcolm for all the trouble he took to make it such. I would, however, like to deny the rumour that Malcolm is wintering at Cannes on the proceeds of the visit to his Emporium by all and sundry; he is, or was, on a business trip to the States: that is his story and he is sticking to it!!

My own move also was on schedule with no hiccups, and I am now installed in Jersey Avenue. Having had to disgorge all the items provided by a grateful (?) government in my quarter, the house was somewhat sparsely furnished especially in the bedroom areas until mid-May when my father arrived with an abundance of Kit. However, all passing by that "Centre for the Cotswolds" as it is pleased to call itself these days, are welcome and if Omar can brave the spare room so can the "lesser breeds without the law". Hardly had I arrived than the phone rang, rather importantly answered it for the first time in my own house, who was on the other end? Eric Slack--AHIKS strikes first again? Incidentally, all will be glad to hear that his wife continues to make good progress.

Robin Brown has been smitten with that once fashionable complaint of a slipped disc, flat on his back for a month and still not very mobile. However, a new corset is in prospect and he hopes to be able to bend over the games table once more. A letter from Andrew McNeil, of Kingmaker fame, he is now working for Grampian TV in

Aberdeen. He says that the negotiations with Avalon Hill are complete and a revised Kingmaker with improvements and suggestions for optional rules and advance versions should be out shortly. (**It's out.**-pm)

Two more new members brings the Regional strength up to 67. With several inquiries being processed, prospects seem better than at this time a year ago, will we break the 70 barrier this year? This added interest seems to bear out the theory that in difficult economic times people turn more to home amusements and games of all kinds flourish. On the other hand, the growth of face to face groups and clubs all over the country may tend to take away support from a primarily postal play club such as ours. At present, we have not suffered from this, but we may.

Finally, I would like to make it clear that I was NOT a candidate for the Presidency of the Society (see K 11/2, page 2); where those two unsolicited votes came from, your guess is as good as mine!!!

(K)

THE WESTERN FRONT

John Ratzenberger

Ol' Better Late Than Never is at it again. Uncle Sam decided to send me to Tank-Automotive Command for a week at the last minute, so I'm pushing the deadline again. I had been holding off till the last minute anyway hoping to get some member input, but very little showed up during the month. Can't write about what doesn't show up! Unfortunately, the airport bars were too dark to write in, or at least that's a good excuse!

The new members and applications really tailed off this month, leaving me more time to dedicate to my games. I've got about 10 moves from this week, so opponents: be patient. It would also appear from some that did arrive and some that didn't, that the postal service is really hard pressed to do any sort of reasonable job. I was just about to send a follow-up to one guy when his letter (from Las Vegas) arrived after 21 days in the mail!!!

It would appear from a few complaints received that some of you trying to finish up the school year are a little delinquent in your moves. If you are too busy to make a move, at least send your opponent a quick postcard to let him know of the delay and when you'll be back in action.

One highlight of my trip to Detroit was to visit one of the modeling mecca's: the Squadron Shop. If you build models and have a hard time finding what you want, mail order from them; they have about everything. They also have a great selection of books on war, uniforms, equipment, etc. Fifty cents to the following address will get you their catalog: The Squadron Shop, 23500 John R, Hazel Park, MI 48030.

(K)

NORTHEAST REGION: New Kid on the Block
-Mike Truex-

The often-discussed regional split has crept in the window during the night, and now there is yet another RD to pour forth words of wisdom on a bi-monthly basis. Though I succeeded to this office primarily through willingness and availability, I feel it is in the American tradition of obtaining high office without popular election!

One item I would like to bring up at the start is a title for this column. I am open to suggestions, as the newness wears off and we could use an identity of our own choosing. Feel free to drop me a line and I'll try to have something (within reason) ready for the next K.

I'm sorry to say that I don't have any regional news or info to pass on this issue as I have been at the job considerably less than a month. The biggest coming event is, of course, ORIGINS II. A number of members from this area have mentioned their plans (and mine!) to attend and I hope to see many of you there.

By the way, for any of you displaced people in the east who are still wondering what region you fall under, see Omar's column. Memberwise, this about splits the East Region in half, and will ease the burden on Jerry. Those of you in this area will now have me to send you nasties to, and I will do my best to keep everyone happy.

Since this is the smallest region in area, we tend to have more personal contact between members. Though some may disagree, I think this helps promote a stronger organization and I am greatly in favor of members meeting occasionally for FTF play. Such meetings often initiate new PEM matches and strengthen friendships that have developed by mail. That, of course, is what AHIKS is all about. Besides, it's always nice to talk to someone about CRTs, hexes and ZOCs, and not be looked at like we're crazy (wives and families never really understand!).

Speaking of wives and families, it seems that the growing number of wargamers may have its impact on society. There apparently is a tendency for the offspring of wargamers to be of the male gender. I am not too sure how widespread this is, but my limited contacts show 100% results. Even Larry Ercolino came up with a boy (after three girls) after he got involved in wargaming. How about it, Pete? (**Pair of jacks--for openers.**--pm)

My thanks to all those who allowed me to take on this job, and those of you who have already expressed their support. I will do the very best job I possibly can.

(K)

IDEAS

ED WIEGAND (2/18): An idea, apparently known to many "old timers", is clipping the corners of the counters so they fit without overlap on hexes. A fingernail clipper works very well. (**You will find that punching out the counters leaves the corners a little ragged. This causes them to catch on each other. Just barely clipping the corners eases handling.**--pm)

DAVE TURANSKY (3/10): Those of you who have been growing long fingernails in order to get to that stack of units which is completely surrounded might like to know that there is a better way. Ordinary tweezers work quite well. After a few games, you will wonder how you ever got along without them.

PETE MENCONI (6/1): I've tried a number of ways of storing games. Having gone thru file folders, envelopes, matchboxes, etc, I have to admit that the SPI box is nifty. Costly, too. Perhaps I'm just slow, but I finally realized that there is no law that says only one game per box. You can fit four of the SAT games into just one box, stretching out its usefulness. If you get some self-sticking labels, you can cut them to overlap over the raised "stems" in these boxes, allowing you to then mark what goes in the compartment. A variation on this is to use the counter holding frame to provide labels. When you've punched out the counters, you see the frame often has the game title, country labels, other notations. The very top layer of paper on the frame can be peeled off, then cut the words out. A piece of $\frac{1}{2}$ " or wider 3M tape will then hold the word-section onto the divider box, even on the narrow stems. If you do this for a game such as Third Reich, it provides both utility (easier to find pieces) and appearance.

JERRY SCHOTT (3/18): Here is a beaut of an opening move in AK. It often generates disbelief in its legality, so I've also outlined exact movement. Final positions: Rommel O15, 21/5 N17, 21/104 M15, 21/3 N19, Ariete H3, Brescia K5, Pavia K5, Trenta K5, Bologna K3, Savena W3, Supply 1 at O15. The stack on K5 moves: W6 to W10 (4 hex road move), W10 to U10 (Rommel bonus), U10 to T10 (1 hex off-road), to M5 (6 hex road bonus), to K5 (3 hex off road). For Ariete: W6 to W9 (3 hex road), to S9 (4 off road), to Q9 (Rommel), to J3 (7 road), to H3 (2 off road). Rommel goes W6-W10-T10-Q8-O15.

BATTLE OF BRITAIN MADE SIMPLE -Joe Seliga-

The Battle of Britain game by Lou Zocchi is one which lends itself to play by mail because of its limited information aspects and simplicity of play. Movement is incredibly simple, but the game requires kill in planning one's moves. It is a long game and you can spend a considerable amount of time refreshing your memory on the last move by your opponent. It can be made more manageable and consequently more enjoyable by making some playing aids and charts.

First of all, you will have to make a set of counters using numbers for one side and letters for the other side, since the counters supplied with the game don't lend themselves to pbm and its limited intelligence aspects. All of the flights can be seen by both sides, but both players have to discover the makeup of their opponents flights as the game progresses. I color-code the counters according to plane type, using high-lighter felt pens. I keep a running record of the number of planes in each flight on the back of the counter (in pencil to permit changes as losses occur). I also note the plane type on the back along with its veteran status. As I discover the enemy plane types and quantities, I write these on the backs of my opponent's counters. My opponent's counters are all of one color (light pink), since it's a hassle making new counters as the game progresses.

On the movement sheet, I use a black pen to signify those planes which have landed, red to signify planes at low level, and green for those planes at high altitudes. I have made a Movement Point (speed and turns in the air) and Bombing Point table for all planes; a chart showing Bombing Accuracy, and some other charts which will make it easier to enjoy the game:

Plane Availability Chart: Charts listing the airbases permits me to tell at a glance where my ready aircraft are. There is a column for each turn, and as I land planes for reloading and refueling, I put the flight number in black up to the earliest time that they can take off. At that point I put the flight number in green. Planes starting at an airbase are already in green.

Plane Losses Chart: I make up a chart listing all plane types for both sides, their starting quantities and then keep a running tabulation of downed planes from the first combat turn.

Aircraft Availability Chart: I make up a chart listing each plane, the quantity at the start of week 1 in the first column and the total losses for the week in the next column. Subtracting these two columns shows the planes left at week's end by type. The next two columns show $\frac{1}{3}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$ of the planes left at the end of week 1 respectively. The next column shows the reinforcements for week 2. This then gives me the planes available for week 2 which I list in this next column. I then repeat the sequence. When you come to week three, you must add the $\frac{1}{3}$ column from week one to obtain the planes available for week three.

German Bombers: When I'm the British, I make a chart listing the German Bombers showing the total quantity by plane type, which are available at the start of the Move Week and then keep a running account of the number of planes flown to date in the Move Week so that I can determine when to deliver maximum efforts.

British Defence Chart: The last chart shows the number of heavy and light anti-aircraft guns, the presence and type of factories, and a running tabulation of the percent of damage suffered by each city. On this same sheet I also list the anti-aircraft located at each airbase, the base capacity and columns for each type of plane initially located there. As the German, you can use this to keep track of British AA guns and damage to cities.

Now you're almost ready to play. Before the game commences, the British player allocates his factories and then sends a list to the German player (suitably wrapped) and only to be opened at the end of the game. Prior to each Move Week, the German player lists all flights, identifies the number of planes in each flight, the type of plane, signifies those flown by veterans, and the targets of all bomber flights for that Move Week. The British player lists all flights, identifies the number of planes in each flight, what type of planes they are and whether the flight is piloted by veterans. Each player then sends a copy of his identification sheet (suitably wrapped) to his opponent to be opened only at the end of the Move Week. You have to do a little bookkeeping for this game, but I think it's worth it!

(**This is a slightly edited version of Joe's procedure. The full version, plus a sample British Defense Chart, plus--if we can prevail upon Joe--other charts, will be available from Greg Leisner, who is compiling PBM methods and techniques. His address is 2201 N.40th St, Milwaukee, WI 53208**--pm)

(K)

doin's

RON SMITH (3/19): The regular Wednesday Congregation of AHIKS member and other gamers from the Oklahoma City area continues to gain momentum. Latest festivities include several frenzied sessions of the British favorite, Escape from Colditz Castle.

Commandant Jim Strobeck, recently assigned to Colditz after being cashiered from the Gestapo for nastiness, continues to rule with an iron hand. In one recent game, Strobeck thwarted the numerous escape attempts of POW commanders Nathan Mitchell, Mike Salas and Ron Smith with ruthless arrests and well-timed Appels. At one point, only one American remained in play, cowering in the showers, while the rest of the Americans, British, Poles (particularly the Poles) languished in the solitary confinement cells, the solitary confinement annex, or the annex to the annex!

Smith, the ever imperturbable and dapper Limey, was the first to make an escape with a mad dash through the front gate in a commandeer staff car. This early success led to numerous reprisals by the cruel Von Strobeck. All other British escape attempts were smashed instantly. As the Americans, Mike Salas fared slightly better despite the early arrest of three POWs in a vain tunneling effort. The gallant Yank made good one escape with a courageous, well-timed dash through the front gate, easily outracing the pursuing Sgt. Schultz. This success was also met with reprisals of the most barbaric sort. Nathan Mitchell, the Peerless Pole, fooled everybody by sing the same route with success on two different occasions. Out the laundry room window he went, through the wire and across the meadow, running for his life. When capture seemed imminent, Mike, ever the gallant Ally, came to the rescue with the timely play of a German High Command card, forcing the Germans to give up the pursuit and return to the Barracks for inspection.

In the end, as the time limit drew near, teamwork came to the fore. With Americans and Poles running interference, the British escaped through the officer's quarters and ran for the main gate, pursued as always by the diligent Vermacht. Stride for stride they ran. As the British opened their lead and pulled away, all eyes turned to the clock. The Limey rolled the dice: an eight, then a nine, then seven, then twelve. The goal was in sight, the German left gasping far behind; der Englander was only one square away from victory! Then the clock struck the hour and he turned into a pumpkin.

(K)

ideas

TOBRUK P.B.M.

-Mark Saha-

Most experienced gamers have accustomed themselves to the fact that, nowadays, most any game can be played by mail. What is surprising is that every once in a while a game comes along which seems an especially tough nut to crack, and of a sudden the opposite proves true: it's actually simpler and more fun than FTF play! AH's Tobruk is a case in point. You can PBM a ten move firefight scenario with exactly ten mailings. I suggest players start with Firefight C, "Duel of the Best", which pits eight Grants against five Pzkw IIIj Specials. It's a very balanced scenario (although one side or the other usually wins big), and you can build in complexity upon this framework to suit your needs/tastes. What follows are the exceptions, omissions, additions to Second Edition Tobruk rules, for PBM play.

1. All movement and fire is simultaneous. Unlike regular Tobruk FTF fire system, a tank may still fire during the turn in which it has been hit/destroyed. Also, since fire is simultaneous, the FTF game Dueling Rule is not used. It is suggested that the Optional "undulating terrain" (p. 20, rule 4) may be used along with the "best aspect" rule (p. 20, rule 6).

2. Since play is simultaneous, players agree on a mutual weekly or bi-weekly deadline for mailing their moves; ie, every Monday or every other Monday. When writing up your move, the following sequence is observed: a) give the movement and final facing of every AFV that moves. If playing "undulating terrain", denote which of these units are seeking same. It is not necessary to denote "best aspect"; it is your opponent's duty to determine whether he is entitled to a best aspect superior to your final hex facing; b) any of your AFVs which did not move, and do not have firepower hits, may fire. Note each gun that is firing, its target, and whether Initial or Acquired target. When a tank has two weapons, such as the Grant's 37mm and 75mm, denote which weapon is firing at which target. You should list carefully, in column, the sequence in which weapons and vehicles will fire; combat is simultaneous, but this sequence will be followed in assigning dice rolls to each of your shots. Each player should have target and damage rosters for both sides, to verify acquired targets and any possible firepower damage.

The above is a complete move. Players exchange such a move simultaneously. Notice that when you assign fire upon a target, you do not know whether that target will be moving, firing, or already destroyed by one of your other vehicles at the instant of combat. Nor do you know what its facing will be, although "best aspect" may give you a bonus.

Combat resolution is the simplest part. Use Tom Oleson's Hexagonal PBM CRT as described in The General, 11/4, p. 28. When you mail your move, you still need list only one "X most active" stock. Draw a line under every sixth stock, as usual, but assume the stock listing to be a circular drum; ie, go from "Z" right over to "A" and continue until you're back where you started. Using this system, the New York stock exchange listing will yield about 166 "die rolls". If you wish more, you may add the American exchange; simply go from "Z" of NY to "A" of Amer., and then back to NY when Amer. is exhausted. This will yield about 250 "die rolls". (Obviously, you will only need this many in advanced scenarios during very hot exchanges.)

Resolving your opponent's move, use the following procedure.

a) If playing "undulating terrain", resolve in the order listed, using single die rolls, his moving AFVs seeking hull defilade cover. b) Now, following strictly the order of weapons and vehicles listed as firing, resolve each shot fired by a pair of die rolls. c) Anytime a shot scores a hit that gives a "Px" (possible explosion), resolve that possibility IMMEDIATELY using the very next die roll on the stock sequence.

Finally, when sending your next move, be sure to include this stock page so your opponent may check your work and you may check his. There is little probability of error when playing a firefight --which is why I suggest you start there--but if you go into scenarios, a great deal of care must be taken. If your opponent has made an error, I suggest you be given the option--as a substitute for your next move--of declaring the entire previous move void and doing it over. If you have already mailed your next move, the previous move stands.

Comment: James G. Steuard, editor of AFV-G2 magazine, has suggested that the Grant used in "Duel of the Best" is overgunned with regard to the 37mm and underranged with regard to the 75mm. A better approximation would be to use the British 2pdr range and target damage tables for the 37mm; and use the 50mm Long range only for the 75mm, retaining the 75mm's target damage table. If this throws the scenario out of balance, you may simply strike the German use of APCR shot.

I haven't playtested these changes, but rather tend to recommend them. I've played Tobruk a good bit, and it always struck me that the 37mm is a bit of a marvel. It can shoot the tracks off of pretty much any AFV on the board! That just ain't right, by my lights. James Steuard's remarks may be found in Fire & Movement

magazine #1, P. 31. Available for \$1.50 from Fire & Movement, Box 820, La Puente, CA 91474. I'll frankly admit that I have a bit of a spread on Tobruk in that issue, and hope this isn't a cheap shot plug for same. I do think anybody interested in Tobruk will want to see Steuard's comments. Maybe a cheaper route is for Pete to simply ask F&M for permission to reprint same (the Steuard comments, not my stuff). (**I think anyone who plans to play Tobruk should acquire this first issue of F&M. It may even convince you to subscribe, too.**-pm)

(K)

reviews

PORT ARTHUR

-Mike Truex-

Here's a small bit of information on one of the new games from GDW, Port Arthur. The game is fairly smooth in play, and is quite interesting; however, there are a number of questions left unanswered by the rules. Foremost is that regarding supply--though given as unlimited at its source, there is no strength point equivalent given to cover its transfer to the mapboard for use in play. In play, we used a two to one (SP) ratio, which worked fairly well, but a one to one basis might be accurate to the actual situation. The ruling on this point will most likely determine play balance. John Heydt (his game) has written to GDW for answers. I like the game, but recommend waiting a little while to get it.

FAST CARRIERS

-Richard Sylvia-

Four players recently sat down to play the Northern Solomons 1943 Scenario of Fast Carriers. We played the scenario twice. After the first session, we went over the rules and reflected on the results of the first game. Two weeks later we replayed the scenario. We found one bad inaccuracy in the rules. The US torpedo planes were used in recon by putting a fuel tank in the belly where the torpedo would go. The US player should be able to use these planes in search.

There is one heck of a lot of die rolling in the game, which means luck could become an important element. The concept of the game is good, however. When there is an airbase in the scenario, it should not be attacked until after shore bombardment, due to heavy losses by flak and CAP (as we found out). It is recommended that fighters should accompany the first two waves in the attack on any area that could have CAP.

The players came to the conclusion that frustration is finding the enemy's carriers, then having your strongest wave (usually the first or second) completely miss the target, or even the entire strike miss the target. A strike should have at least four waves in it to have a good chance of finding the target. There should be at least two strong waves next to each other. If one of these waves misses the target the remaining should be recalled if the target is strong.

In short, the game turned into a "beat the tables and charts". I did find the game interesting, but there is a lot of luck involved.

(K)

do in's

GREG LEISNER, 2201 N. 40th St, Milwaukee, WI 53208, is compiling PBM procedures for various games. Good example of what we're talking about can be found in the articles by Mark Saha and Joe Seliga. If you've paid your dues in finding a practical procedure for PBMing a game, share it with the rest of us by sending an outline of your method to Greg. In future, I will (**ms/I**-pm) list the games for which a procedure is on file.

CONVENTIONS (info courtesy Signal newsletter, Box 830, CFPO 5056, Bellville, Ontario, CANADA)

JUN 19-20: Chester, PA; apparently, THE miniatures convention; 918 Harry St, Conshohocken, PA 19428, for information.

JUN 25-27: Scottsdale, AZ; computer wargame capital of the world, with regular boardgaming on the side; info: Box 1467, Scottsdale, AZ 85252.

JUL 10-11: Cincinnati Games Con VI; write Games Con, c/o Boardwalk, 1032 Delta Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45208.

OCT 9-10: EUROCON 3; Frankfurt FRG; other details probably later.

DNO MULTICOM GAME PROGRESSES

The DNO game organized by Bill Heim is in full swing, even has a newsletter to keep everyone up-to-date. I believe Fred Helfferich is the monitor. As of early May, they had finished with the July I move. Briefly, Germans at the outskirts of Leningrad, cut the Murmansk rail in/near Finland area, pushing on Riga, encircled Minsk, drive to Dnestr, mopping up western Pripyet Marshes. Since they're at it, they are going to compile a list of Q&A on the rules. Perhaps they will make it available to others?

JOHN RATZENBERGER (5/1): Multi R-War:

Pull the piston rod out of my eyeball
Take the cylinder head from my brain
From the small of my back, take the crankshaft
And assemble the engine again!!

With this little ditty and others running through their minds, the fledgling few, the AHIKS Aces, take to the air, stomachs full of gin and milk to calm their ulcers. Our six pilots are Steve Brooks, Lynn Moore, Tim Grant, Jim McAmis, Alan Gopin and Martin Leith. From the looks of it, there are a few vultures in the game, so watch your tails--from both friend and foe! Each pilot has six aircraft--relatively evenly matched in overall PAR, so my board looks pretty crowded. By next issue, we should have had some blood spilled. (**Oh, goodie, red on blue.**-pm)

FROM THE MATCH COORDINATOR

Dave Turansky

We have had such an influx of new members lately that nearly everyone who has sent me any request has been matched with a new member. Special thanks to Claude Bloodgood who is playing eight new members despite the fact that he himself is a new member! The unusually large number of requests has put a burden on the ICRKMeister; please allow a little extra time for your ICRKs. If you request a non-AH or -SPI game, you should be prepared for delay in processing due to a dearth of requests. Older games also do not have many requests. The most highly requested games are new releases, AH "classics" (Bulge is still highly popular), and all quadrigames.

I do not notify members when their requests have been filled. Sometimes it may take a while. If you do not hear anything in a reasonable length of time, drop me a line. If you wish to cancel any requests, please let me know quickly. Frequently, members ask me to cancel requests for which I have already arranged a match. Of course, the best thing to do is to make sure you want a match in the game you request before you request it. Some games are best played with three players. Games such as Sniper require a monitor who must of necessity be neutral. In 3-way games, each player monitors a game for the other two. If you request such a game, specify that you want a 3-way matchup since some can be played (albeit not as well) with only two players. Also, allow for more time since an additional player must be found.

How many games should one engage in at the same time? Naturally this varies for all of us. If you have a game storage cabinet, you should be able to keep more games going. For some, one or two games is the limit. On the other hand, John Ratzenberger has 25 games going! A lot depends on the game, too. You should have some idea of how a game will convert to PEM before you request a match in that game. My best advice for those with little PEM experience is to play one game solitaire and then evaluate it as best as possible. I really cannot do much on multiplayer matchups. Please check the MONITORS section before sending in your requests. Write directly to the member listed if you are interested in joining his game. The Pacific Diplodeur/Origins West magazine is an in-house publication which is available to AHIKSers for 13¢ (one stamp) per issue. The zine has had some problems in the past but it now appears to be back on a regular schedule. All games openings will be listed in the K. Please give me an order of preference for quads, otherwise you may get a match in any one of the four.

The new member program is designed as a stockpile for members who have recently joined so that they can get some games going without having to wait for a partner. Roughly, if you have joined AHIKS this year and you have three or less games going,

Sniper & Patrol: While Sid Jolly and Bill Drakert (me GM) slink around corners and peer thru windows in Sniper, Lynn Moore and I are stumbling around the terrain of Parrol (Sid GM). Somehow two groups of two looking for a third got together and we have what can only be described as a 2/4-way game or something. This came out of my comments last time about GM's. If anyone else is interested in getting in a si-move with GM, let me know thru the Match Coord, and we'll try to fit you in somewhere. Warning--you're as eligible to be a GM as a player (or both).

you qualify as a new member. Open games followed by an "N" are available to new members ONLY. I need volunteers to keep this going. Standing requests for any number of games of X or Y are always appreciated.

OPEN GAMES: African Campaign (A), Afrika Korps (A),(N), Antietam (AN), Anzio (A), Battle for Germany (AN), Blitzkrieg (AN), DNO/UNO (short version), 1815 (A), Global War, Hooker and Lee (A), Island War Quad, Luftwaffe, Manassas, Moscow Campaign, NATO (A), Panzerarmee Afrika, Russian Campaign (AN), Seelowe (N), Siani (N), Starforce (3-way), Tank (3-way), Torgau (A), WITW/WITE, WWII; two players needed: Sniper, Patrol.

NEW MEMBER REQUESTS: ACW, Borodino, Breitenfeld, Bulge, Chariot (si-move), Dixie, Fast Carriers (!), Korea, Legion, U-boat (A), WS&IM.

MONITORS AVAILABLE:

EARL ANDERSON, 212 E. Earle St, Greenville, SC 29609: Frigate.
JAMES R BROWN, 12992 E. Randolph Pl, Denver, CO 80239: Midway.
WILLIAM CLUMM, RR 1, Amesville, OH 45711; publishes Quendi Khazad Dum monthly, subs 11/\$5; Space Centurions V, Ancient Conquest, Diplomacy, Global War, Kingmaker, Lensman, Sorcerer, Starforce, Downfall of the Lord of the Rings & the Return of the King I, Invasion: America, Russian Civil War, Starlord, Starprobe, Stellar Conquest, Triplanetary, WWII; no game fee for AHIKSers.
RICHARD MAYHEW, 306 First Ave, Radford, VA 24141: Afrika Korps using the game Tobruk to resolve combat.
VIRGIL MUGLER, 1460 Ladd, Edwardsville, IL 62025: DNO.
LARRY FONG, Box 11090, Oakland, CA 94611 and HENRY KELLEY, 6721 6th Ave NW, Seattle, WA 98117; OW/PD, subs 1/13¢ for AHIKSers, from Larry. All delayed games are now underway again. Diplo standbys write to Henry. Considering starting new games, possibly Kingmaker, Frigate, Patrol, others.
PETER DALE, 3577 Derry Rd. E., Apt 809, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada L4T 1B3; (note: not an AHIKSer), Battleplan multiplayer zine. Write for more info.
DAN MCCLURE, 3825 E. Sycamore, Pasadena, CA 91107: Terrible Swift Sword. Proposed multiplayer game with nine Fed and five Confed commanders. First come, first served. Dan says he has done in-depth study on the battle.
SEAN HAYES, 2426 Woodacres Rd, Atlanta, GA 30345: War In The East, Stalingrad scenario. Impressive computerized system (he sent samples of the output) to collate movement, unit status, overruns, attacks, mech moves. Looks like he's got it all together. Four weeks to a game turn. Entry fee \$5 to start with other costs to be determined later. Write Sean for prospectus if interested.

SET REQUEST FORM

USE THE FOLLOWING LETTER CODE. INSERT ANY ORDER, AS MANY LETTERS AS APPLY IN PARENTHESES FOLLOWING EACH GAME REQUEST.

N WILL PLAY NEW MEMBER (LIST NUMBER OF MONTHS THIS IS TO APPLY) **M** MULTIPLAYER GAME REQUEST
E WILL PLAY EUROPEAN OPPONENT (IF AVAILABLE) **C** WILLING TO GAMEMASTER **F** DESIRE FAST GAME ONLY (FOUR DAY REPLY)
A WILL PLAY AREA OPPONENT (IF AVAILABLE) **R** DESIRE TO BE RATED ON THIS SET (IF AVAILABLE)

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

_____ I DESIRE TO BE CARRIED ON PUBLISHED AHIKS RATING LISTS (CHECK IF APPLICABLE)

SEND THIS FORM TO THE MATCH COORDINATOR IF YOU NEED AN OPPONENT. ALREADY GOT A TURKEY LINED UP? SEND IT TO THE ICRKMEISTER.

AHIKS RATINGS

Dave Turansky

If you list an "A" after your game requests, I will try to get you an AREA-rated opponent. The rest is between you and Avalon Hill. Naturally, you should always check with your opponent to insure he is also AREA-rated.

AHIKS ratings will be conducted somewhat similarly to AREA ratings. Initial ratings are being assigned according to previous won/loss records by the following method: for those who have a w/l record with five or more decisions, rating = (win% x 1.75) + (10 points per each win) + (5 points per each draw). If rating is less than 1200, then 1200 is used to start. For those who have less than five decisions, ratings are computed differently (due to the heavy weighting of win%). If less than five games, ratings = 1200 + $\frac{75 \times (\text{number of wins} - \text{number of losses})}{\text{number of draws}}$. You may send me your request to be rated at any time. After September 1, 1976, all members entering the rating system will come in at a rating of 1200. Additional wins and losses received by the ICRKMeister prior to Sep 1 will cause your initial rating to be recomputed according to the above formula. After Sep 1, all games completed by rated members will be rated (this is a change, you do not have to list an "R" after your game requests). The AREA rating chart will be used to compute ratings after Sep 1. In cases where rated members play unrated members, the unrated member is valued at 1400 for computations purposes. I am not sure that this is the fairest way to take unrated players into account, there are several alternatives which are now under discussion. Players who do not complete both games of a set will only be given $\frac{1}{2}$ credit after Sep 1 unless I receive a letter signed by both parties stating that they have agreed to only play one game without switching sides.

If you have any comments, questions, or suggestions on any facet of the rating system, please feel free to write. Once everything has been decided, it will be difficult to change in midstream. Won/loss records have been compiled by the ICRKMeister (thanks, Gene); if you have been given an incorrect record below, let me know and I'll recheck.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| D Burdick (22-0; 1970) | T Grant (0-0; 1200) |
| K Mills (27-1; 1955) | R Greenwell " |
| J Popolis (10-0; 1955) | S Haas " |
| W Hopkins (14-4; 1500) | S Hayes " |
| P Menconi (4-1-1; 1445) | R Jarvis " |
| M Yarwood (12-4; 1435) | R Kinsella " |
| C Benton (2-0; 1350) | J McAmis (0-3-1; 1200) |
| S Brooks (2-0; 1350) | D McClure (0-0; 1200) |
| T Becker (1-0-1; 1300) | R Mayhew " |
| J Ratzenberger (1-0-1; 1300) | D Moore " |
| R Teleucky (1-0; 1275) | F Nau (8-7; 1200) |
| E Aneerson (0-0; 1200) | T Oleson (9-9-1; 1200) |
| R Berg (1-2-1; 1200) | R Shea (0-0; 1200) |
| T Bourne (0-0; 1200) | R Starnik (1-1; 1200) |
| L Bowie (0-0; 1200) | K Thurman " |
| W Carraway (2-2; 1200) | P Truesdell (0-0; 1200) |
| R Cross (0-0; 1200) | M Truex " |
| J Dough " | D Turansky " |

I know that there are loopholes to everything. If you wish to complain about the actions of any member which you feel are attributable to ratings, you should write to me. Members may be liable to expulsion from the ratings system for well-confirmed unethical conduct (**not to mention being dropped from AHIKS?!**-pm). Don't forget to return all used ICRKs to Gene Gardner!

K

SHORT NOTES

Congratulations, if that is, indeed the word, to Alan Youde. The Exec Committee approved the idea of another Euro member on the Comm., and we just got the word that Alan is the man. ---- If you have worked out a PBM procedure for a game, share your ideas with the rest of us strugglers by writing to Greg Leisner, 2201 N. 40th St., Milwaukee, WI 53208: Greg is compiling methods, and I'd hope we will have a list of available items next letter. --- Tom Oleson has a new (updated) Anzio clarification/rules errata sheet out. I believe the new sheets are dated either April or May of 1976. If you have the 1975 pages, he'll fix you up. ---- Another reminder about Tom: his address changes back to 1200 High Ridge Lane, Santa Barbara, CA 93103, on July 1. ---- James Warner, 1100 Averill Ave., San Pedro, CA 90732, is looking for PBM procedures for Wooden Ships and Iron Men. If you've done it, let him know. ---- Congrats and best wishes to John Hulthen out there in Hawaii, who has just started his own law firm. If you break a leg playing DNO, he'll help you sue. ---- Quote from Psychology Today: "Wargamers are nuts" nonono, that's not it. "When we get totally immersed in a sport, or creative act, we lose sense of time and the external world. Instead, we experience flow, the ecstatic feeling that everything is going just right." Sounds familiar. Lessee, here, the guy who sent it to me scribbles in the margin, "applicable to wargaming". Oh, I guess that, too. ---- Well, well three inches to go, and it's only the 7th of the month. If the printer can zap this to me by Friday, you'll be getting it mid-month. New members: I have not included a list of nm's because...we've had so many, I just plain forget who's who and who's new. I hope to have it squared away by next issue. I am sure all the new members will get a copy of the K, but I've been so diligent in posting the new names into the address lists, that I forgot to make note of who has not been listed yet.

NEXT ISSUE

Well, let's see. I've got enough backlog for another two or maybe three pages. Listing of our Archives as soon as Jim and I figure out how much to charge. Every issue, I figure, well this time I can get out from under with only 6-8 pages. You keep on sending, I'll keep on typing. Anyone care to opine on the advisability of doing book reviews? I have a couple, am currently thinking of only printing reviews of good books, that you might want to go look for.



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FIRST CLASS MAIL

Handwritten notes:
77% x 1.75
5325
77
1225
13275
70

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