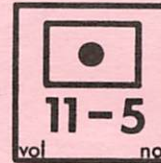


THE KOMMANDEUR

NEWSLETTER OF AHIKS



THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

For personal reasons, Gene Gardner has found it necessary to step down from his post as ICRKMeister. During his almost five years in that office, Gene has spent much effort for the Society, and he has shown deep personal concern for his fellow members. I am sure you all will join me in thanking Gene for his contribution to AHIKS and in wishing him well in the future.

Carl Benton is willing to take over as ICRKMeister, and you can consider him acting-ICRKMeister until the Executive Committee has time to officially appoint him. This office will be up for election at the end of the year. Carl will be a candidate, but anyone else who wishes is welcome to run. In the meantime, our sincere thanks go to Carl for being available on such short notice.

There is always the possibility of a President of AHIKS being unable to continue in that office for any number of reasons. Since that office is fairly important, the Executive Committee decided to designate one officer as Vice Chairman of the Committee. The office chosen was that of the Treasurer. So, as of now, Joe Horne will take over if the need arises. The Executive Committee is a little larger now. The Committee voted to include the Match Coordinator on the Exec.

Greg Leisner is still working on a revision of the PBM section of the Intro Booklet, but things have not been developing rapidly over the summer. If you have suggestions or wish to help, please write him.

The grid coordinate section of the Intro Booklet is being updated. Chuck Burke has volunteered his services to get it retyped. Our thanks to him.

In the works currently, but not likely to see completion for some time, is the development of a logo design for the Society. If any of you have any suggestions, we'd like to see them.

Current membership is about 350. Our efforts to keep the name of AHIKS visible in the wargaming world (and to encourage qualified gamers to become members) are continuing. A short notice about AHIKS will appear with an article of mine in issue #4 of FIRE & MOVEMENT. In the GENERAL, Vol. 13, #3 (I believe), the AH Philosophy section will consist of an article on AHIKS written by me; I mention this since I doubt that any author will be credited.

The November issue of the European Region Newsletter will be sent out to all members. Henry Radice always does a good job on his newsletter; so we can all look forward to an extra bonus.

Every election time we plead for volunteers to run for office. So far, our cries have brought very little response. To repeat, the following offices are up for election: President, Judge, Eastern RD, Northeastern RD, ICRKMeister, and Secretary. We especially need someone to run for Secretary. Isn't it your turn to help the Society?

September 25, 1976

Omar DeWitt



DOIN'S

WESTERN WEEKEND

-Ron Smith-

The AHIKS West Mini-Con was held at Norman, OK as scheduled. The meet was a definite delight. Total recorded attendance was sixteen, of whom five were active AHIKS members (Ron Smith, Nathan Mitchell, and John Michaelski, the Oklahomans; and John Ratzenberger and Carl Benton, The Kansans).

Gaming was fast and furious, mostly furious, with numerous bloody rounds of Kingmaker and Russian Civil War. In the former it was Plague in Shrewsbury that sealed the Yorkist fate, while in RCW assassination was taking its toll. In FTF play, Afrika Korps, D-Day, Field Marshall, Battle of the Nations, and the North African Quads were highly popular. Yours truly once again claimed the Buttin Awringer Trophy for overcommitted reserves and undermanned flanks, while John Ratzenberger was honored for Best Performance as a Canadian for his gallant defense in the marathon multi-player Invasion America.

In all the Con lasted three days (August 13, 14, 15) with heavy action and great good times in evidence. Special thanks goes to Emmalyn Smith, a very gracious war-widow, who provided sandwiches, cake, and lemonade for all comers on Saturday.

Both the fellowship and the quality of play were excellent, and I heartily endorse the Mini-Con idea. There are many geographical areas in both East and West that would support such a gathering. The experience is well worth the effort.

Since the convention, interest in the Nathan Mitchell Wednesday night gaming sessions has increased. On several occasions we have had two FTF and two multi-player games in progress simultaneously. Further interest has been spurred by the revival of Ancient Conquest. If you liked Kingmaker, but thought it too tame; if you tried Russian Civil War, but thirsted for more bloodshed; then Ancient Conquest is the game for you. You have not suffered the agony of defeat until you have drawn a "Attacker Smote" at two-to-one!

I DID IT IN BURMA

-Bob Fowler-

I was glad to see you gave Richard Zalud a plug for his new game Custer's Last Stand. I hope you will do the same for me! GDW has just published the game I designed: BURMA. I worked on this game for literally several years, and really feel it's my baby. It was quite a sense of satisfaction that GDW found it interesting and published it, with Marc Miller doing the game development (Marc also designed Chaco). The game covers basically the entire campaign in Burma and north-east India in the period 1943-1945. It was really the forgotten army that fought there, but it was a massive struggle and the game includes it all: infantry, tanks, air transport, paratroops, amphibious landings, long-range penetration units. Being the designer, I would like to volunteer to be the rules judge and errata coordinator for BURMA. (**Why don't you volunteer to judge all GDW games? Then, we could find another man for AH, perhaps another for SPI.**-pm) (**Almost forgot Dept: comment in Signal magazine on this game: "The result is a hard fought campaign in which almost anything can happen. A good representation of a relatively obscure part of the Second World War." BURMA can be had from GDW, 203 North St., Normal, IL 61761, for \$8.00.**-pm)



TREASURER

Joe Horne

AHIKS SECOND QUARTER 1976 FINANCIAL REPORT

Effective balance at beginning of quarter \$ 2,389.05

INCOME	Second Quarter/76	First Half/76
Dues	\$ 263.00	\$ 1,836.95
Initiation Fees	225.00	380.00
Miscellaneous	32.29	47.29
	\$ 520.29	\$ 2,264.24

EXPENSES

President	\$ 61.14	\$ 107.17
RD East	19.89	47.17
RD Northeast	5.20	5.20
RD West	16.15	37.91
Editor	244.20	454.84
ICRKMeister	00	65.00
Treasurer	16.40	46.42
Judge	3.50	9.50
Stationery	9.71	59.18
OOB's	127.00	127.00
Miscellaneous	8.00	8.00
Match Coordinator	11.92	36.78
	\$ 523.11	\$ 1,004.17

Effective balance at end of quarter and first half \$ 2,386.23

Total postage cost for quarter \$ 199.16

Total K printing costs for quarter \$ 142.18

First of all, I would like to point out that I made a mistake in the K printing costs for the first quarter; they actually were \$51.21 rather than \$103.43. (**Correct; the remainder was actually my kickback from the printer!** -pm)

The primary reason for our great financial showing in the second quarter was the larger-than-normal influx of new members. This has tailed off considerably in the third quarter and will reduce our next effective balance accordingly.

I'm happy to report that the membership has responded well in keeping me informed of their address changes. This helps to reduce our (the officer) workload due to returned mail, etc, and thus is greatly appreciated.

While on the subject of address changes, here's something you might try: if you have a tardy opponent and you suspect he might have moved, write "Address Correction Requested" on the envelope when you send a reminder. The Post Office will give you your opponent's new address if he has indeed moved, and charge you 10¢ or 13¢ if the address you have is incorrect.

K

LAW AND ORDER

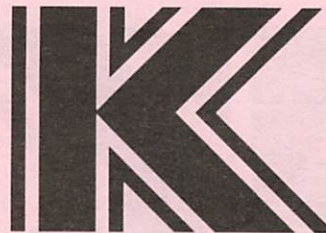
Tom Oleson

I will shortly be leaving Santa Barbara after enjoying this "Garden of Eden" for five years. Most of my games will be stored for an indefinite period, and without access to them there is no way that I can function as Judge, so I must resign effective year-end (at which time I will have served six years). I am leaving Santa Barbara about a year earlier than contemplated, and I regret not finishing out my full term, but circumstances just don't permit.

A few people have wondered if AHIKS needs a Judge, and if so on what basis. I do believe we need a Judge. During this six-year period, I have answered hundreds of queries, with very few instances of disagreement with the rulings rendered. So far as I know, no complaints to Omar. I have to presume that this has facilitated the play of the games involved. I have always tried to explain how I arrived at a ruling, or where I found pertinent material in any available errata, not just to give a decision without explanation.

In my opinion, any experienced, intelligent wargamer could function as Judge if he has access to the game in question, and all available errata. It has been suggested that the Judge could rule on the basis of arguments presented by the players involved, without the necessity of referring to the game itself. I strongly differ. I believe the Judge MUST first review the pertinent sections of the game rules, and MUST also research the errata and previous rulings. At times one of the players involved may present arguments superficially very persuasive in the absence of the RULES, which, however unrealistic they may be, are the final authority.

continued page 3



THE KOMMANDEUR VOLUME 11 NUMBER 5 OCTOBER 1976

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K

editorial

If you will all raise your sights about three inches, you will note that a number of officer positions are underlined. Come next January, some of them will be missing, unless we get some volunteers (...this is a recording...). Not shown above is the Secretary, since it's a new post. I believe the most critical voids are in the Judge and RD East (I think we've got volunteers for all others).

With this issue, I hope we've found a reasonable solution to the need for listing new members. The RDs will include names and city/state locations: if you want to contact a new member in your locale, contact your RD for more details. All new members are sent a complete address listing (current as of the first of the year). We may work the same system for address changes, if the RDs so desire.

If you have a look under the Ideas section, you'll find something from Dan McClure. Dan is something of an artist and has offered to do some work for the K. This opens some additional possibilities for those of us who could use graphics "support". I hope to include a review of Sea Strike to (again) illustrate what can be done--very simply--to liven up an article.

I would like to--again--acknowledge thanks to Bill Kamery and his typewriter. His help has made putting the K "to bed" much easier. It means that I can usually start the processing of an issue with about four pages already typed, which is quite an aid.

In my continuing efforts to make the Editor post suitable to my disposition (lazy), I am refining a "page predictor" system. I know that an issue (10 pages) requires some 300 column-inches of material. By measuring material as it is typed, the running tabulation tells me when I have enough. It also gives some interesting information on what is being printed. For one thing, about 7% is "waste space"; 14% goes to headings, address, set request form, etc.; 26% is devoted to officer reports. I am frankly surprised at the implied volume of input from all you guys in the form of reviews, etc.--good work & gimme more!

K

This brings us to the biggest problem of being Judge: access to the games and the errata. Not only must the Judge own hundreds of games, he should also subscribe to most, if not all, wargaming magazines, and assiduously collect errata, as well as keeping a properly organized file of errata and rulings queries. It's really remarkable how errata can proliferate! Right now I am pbming Panzerblitz with Robert Chiang, top-rated AH AREA player, and an expert on this game. He has sent me 22 typed pages of errata and clarifications he has assembled on this game. I was frankly astonished, having thought of Panzerblitz as a fairly unambiguous game. So you see what the Judge is up against.

I strongly recommend that the judging function be split, perhaps SPI, AH, and all the rest, or any other logical way. I hope that many of the qualified people that I am sure we have will offer their services.

Recently, I has a rules query which touched on one of the two "General Rulings" on the "Rulings" page of the AHKKS Introductory Booklet. I am not personally sympathetic to those rulings; what do the rest of you think? In any case, these two rulings apply only to the 8 games dealt with specifically in the booklet, as they would not fit in with many later games.

Recently a ruling of mine on Panzer Leader provoked the member soliciting it to ask Avalon Hill what they thought. Another member wrote me back to present further arguments on a Bulge ruling I had made. This is good, and I appreciate it, and want to encourage it. If you are not convinced by my arguments, please do feel free to continue the discussion, and to get other opinions. I can use all the help I can get! I would also much prefer to get all rules queries in writing, although I am delighted to hear from any AHKKSer by phone.

The amount of help I am getting in response to my suggestion in the last K (re compiling errata sheets) is overwhelming by its absence! Only one reply, so I presume the club is not much interested in errata sheets.

The question of excluding games does continue to excite comment. I should clarify that my only reason for suggesting the exclusion of any game from the judge's purview is that I don't know how to rule on a game I don't own, and don't even know anyone who owns it! No very helpful suggestions as to how to solve this problem has been made as yet, in my opinion. This is no very big deal, nor do I want to make a "federal case" out of it, but the same odd personality that makes one into a judge, also makes one into a nitpicker! Recently Omar asked me for PBM guides (the judge's responsibility) on a dozen or so recent games, several fantasy/SF, none of which I have even seen. As I say, my own suggestion is to split the judging duties. So far reaction on this is positive.

K

REVIEWS

FIELD MARSHAL

-Glenn I. Simpson-

The new game from Jedko of Australia, "Field Marshal", might just as well have been entitled "Son of Blitzkrieg"! For those who recall the Great Dotted River and Lake Pinsky with misty-eyed nostalgia, Dennis Brackman, John Edwards and friends have managed to include their names not only on terrain features, but also on a few unit counters as well. At first sight a rather juvenile and naive game, albeit with first class game components, it nevertheless has many excellent points which are marred by an over-emphasis on chance which completely dominates the efforts of the Players.

The game consists, as you'll have realized, of a fictionalized scenario, with a four colour map on board a la Avalon Hill, 24x18 inches with four folds, and 196 counters in red, blue and black. T o big nations, Grossblau and Redmark are at war, with the Black Republic, a third (minor) country, tucked away in a corner for a bit of play imbalance. Units are infantry, armour, cavalry, artillery and command or combinations thereof, which are organized into four armies per side. Air and naval factors are abstract. The rules are really rather inadequate, game mechanics are "off the shelf" with double impulse for armour only, a new and well-balanced CRT and army integrity rules (supply derived from only your own Army HQ, increased stacking with units of the same Army). Airstrikes, paratroops and marines are sometimes available as are "elite" units (printed red or blue on a black background for all you SS freaks out there!).

But the real novelty of this game lies in the fact that unlike most other games, you are not entirely in command. The title is reflected in the fact that on each side the player is in command of only one Army Group, with another one, "Southern Command", off

board, which interacts with yours according to chance cards. Also there is a Leader piece (you guessed it: also printed on Black) whose capricious orders also come to you via chance cards. The Leader has his "elite" guards and controls the Strategic Reserve, paratroops, marines, etc., which may be released to you or suddenly taken away. You must protect your leader, but you are yourself represented by a Field Marshal piece and may be killed or captured.

While this heavy dependence on chance cards is novel and sometimes exciting, it also means that the game depends very largely on luck. Perhaps this is a reflection of the way wars are actually fought, but it does make the game very unsatisfactory on some occasions. At least you know how Manstein, Reichnau and Kesselring felt, but if you're playing the game as a game, it's very frustrating to lose purely because of chance cards.

The base art, unfortunately, is another dreadful Jedko pastiche in black and white, including a large photo of Field Marshal Sir Thomas Blamey, the Australian Army C-in-C during the Second World Misunderstanding. Just what he has to do with this improbable brawl between Grossblau and Redmark is not clear, but I guess when you're a little country which only ever had one Field Marshal, you've got to flaunt him whenever you can!

To sum up, an interesting but frustrating game, without so much as a nod towards historical realism and with that genuine late-60's flavour. For those who always felt there should be a nice little game that was a cross between Blitzkrieg and Kreisenspiel, look no further. Price is A\$9.00 (plus \$2.90 surface air lifted postage), although I'm not sure the company will send it to you since they have a mutual distribution agreement with SPI and AH. This may mean that the game will be available only through those two in the US. If you wish to try, Jedko's address is 18 Fonceca St., Mordialloe, Victoria 3195, Australia.

K

SPI WESTWALL QUAD

-Dave Grant-

This quadrigame is composed of four battles representing portions of the Allied advance into Germany through the Rhine area defenses, the Westwall. The four battles show the Allies at their peak strength and the Germans at the next-to-last ditch, sub par, but still able to make a strong defense. The general rules for the series include such things as rigid ZOCs (requiring mandatory combat if adjacent), artillery pieces, restrictions on armored movement to clear, road and trail terrain. Each player turn consists of movement, allocation of ground and offensive artillery fire, allocation of Final Protective Fire by defensive artillery, and combat resolution. The CRT is a differential type, with lines for varying terrain; results are retreats of varying numbers of hexes. The maps are excellent and enjoyable to plan on. Air power is satisfied in each game abstractly by "ground support points", which are used like artillery. Line-of-communication and artillery rules vary for each game. The units are battalion- and regiment-size, artillery, armor, infantry and airborne. Scale is between 500 and 1500 meters and 12-24 hours per turn.

BASTOGNE: This is an enjoyable presentation of the portion of Hitler's Ardennes Offensive that centered around taking the vital town of Bastogne, the hub of the Bulge road network. It covers the time Dec 18-26, 1944, with three scenarios. Spearhead, seven turns, encompasses the stalwart defense of the area by the 101st Airborne. The second scenario, Relief, depicts Paton's Third Army relief of the 101st. The third scenario is a Campaign game, 18 turns, combining the first two.

ARNHEM: This is another balanced game with excellent possibilities for both sides. In ten turns, it plays the Sept. '44 Allied combination airborne-armor operation, Market-Garden, to achieve a breakthrough across the Rhine at Arnhem. Special rules cover the weather, bridge demolition and repair, river assault, and airborne and glider landings. The Allies need to keep moving and advance armor units across the Waal River to gain any substantial victory points. Two scenarios include the historical game and a variant to history.

HURTGEN FOREST: This game is the least balanced of the four. It depicts a portion of the Allied move to the Rhine through the forests of the Hurtgen sector during November, 1944. Again, two scenarios are offered--one based on actual history and a "plan your own". The German units have the option of counterattacking, but must be selective or they will wind up retreating and giving up extra ground to the Allies. There are 14 turns of somewhat lopsided play, since the Germans get victory points only for unit elimination, and it is pretty difficult to eliminate US forces due to low German attack strength. Meanwhile, US forces roll up points for both unit elimination and achieving territorial goals.

REMAGEN: This game simulates the American capture of the Remagen Bridgehead during March, 1945. Scenarios include an historical game and a first-German-reaction game; game length is 30 turns.

Special rules include provision for reinforcements, bridge placement and demolition, and night game turns (salvation for the Germans!). The map includes much wooded area which can cause the elimination of armor or mech units if an attack forces them to retreat off a road or trail. Night turns (every third turn) allow either an advance into an enemy ZOC or a retreat out of an enemy ZOC. No combat is allowed. The 30 turns are deceptive as to length in the historical game, as many of the first 13 turns are composed of just sitting there waiting for reinforcements to arrive, and one third of the turns involve no combat (night).

Bastogne and Arnhem are very good. Remagen is a little long for PEM (unless you like lots of brief moves), but has possibilities for FTF play. Hurtgen demands tactical genius out of the Germans or the opposite from the US player to be a fair game.

(K)

PATROL!

-Bill Kamery-

You are leading your squad of ten men, eight with assault rifles and two with "thump guns" (grenade launchers) on patrol in Vietnam. Your point man has just passed a thick growth of trees and underbrush, with the rest of your men in single file about 30 meters back. Suddenly, you are caught in a VC ambush, under fire from the adjacent jungle. What's left of your squad after the initial shock scrambles for cover and begins to fight back, tossing grenades in the direction of the enemy fire.

This action is typical in Patrol, a game by Simulation Publications, Inc. A brother game of Sniper, infantry combat on an individual level is simulated in a non-urban environment. The game system is the same as Sniper, with both players plotting their mens action, followed by simultaneous movement and combat. The mechanics have been improved, making Patrol a cleaner game to play than Sniper. By using the Patrol counters, many of the improvements can be incorporated into Sniper.

While the simultaneous movement and combat rules add time and paperwork to the game, as well as making it hard to PEM, it is the "heart" of the game, resulting in a very high degree of realism which could not be obtained by the players taking alternate turns. The game system is not hard to learn and does not require constant reference to the rulesbook.

Counters represent individual men, carrying various weapons ranging from rifles and pistols to bazookas and machine guns. Each man has two back-printed counters, one representing him in an able-bodied state and one in a wounded state. The front and back of each counter represents an erect and prone posture, respectively. Counters are also provided to indicate such things as tanks, horses, smoke, barbed wire, etc. Markers placed on the men represent their condition, such as stunned, killed, unarmed, armed with a hand grenade, etc.

The map is about 18 X 24 in. overall, and is divided into six sections which can be arranged into different configurations. Hexes are numbered, with slopes and two types of rough terrain represented. The terrain effects vary depending on whether open, mixed, or closed terrain modes are used. A 32 page, 8½ X 11 in. rulesbook with several diagrams is also provided, along with separate charts and tables.

Panic and preservation rules are employed. The panic rules simulate the fact that men do not always follow orders under fire, because of confusion or fear. The susceptibility to panic varies for different groups, per the OOBs. The preservation rules simulate the "Let's get the hell outta here!" feeling men get when their side is getting wiped out. This also varies per the OOBs.

These rules add much to the game, especially much frustration. It is very hard to remain calm when one of your men finally works into a position to take a key point only to "freeze", or a man carrying your only "thump gun" panics and runs into the enemy's field of fire. The players are forced to keep their plans simple and to assign more than one man to a single task, if they are to be successful. Complex strategies will SNAFU almost every time.

The rules outline five scenarios, including patrol, ambush and assault. Forty-one OOBs are provided, ranging from WWI to the present. Not all OOBs are used in each scenario but around 150 combinations are provided. The OOBs give the number of men and types of weapons, panic and preservation levels, number and type of mines, artillery fire, etc. Some of the more unusual matchups are the Gurkhas vs. Pathans, White Russians vs. Red Cossacks, and Nationalists vs. Anarchists. Information is also provided so you can make up your own matchups.

Patrol is a test of a player's flexibility. No one plan will work in every game, and quite often you have to redirect your attack, or defense, several times during the course of a single game, as the battlefield conditions are constantly changing. If

you enjoy playing tactical games with lots of action, Patrol is a game you should try. Patrol is available, at a cost of \$8.00, from Simulations Publications, 44 East 23 St., New York 10010.

(K)

TORGAU

-Pete Menconi-

This is a tactical simulation of Frederick the Great's (frankly) lucky victory against the Austrians in 1760. The board is roughly 4' X 2½', with about 60-75 units per side, making this a large (almost intimidating) game.

The situation opens with the Austrians set up on the board, defending a redoubt area in the center. The game is played in 15 minute turns starting at 8 A.M. with a probable end at 5 P.M. (possibly continuing to 7 P.M.). The Prussians enter the board in four corps formations, having the option to enter at some nine places around the board. Die rolls can cause variance in entry time (up to an hour earlier or later than desired) and place. The Prussian is therefore immediately faced with a critical decision: bring the entire army on in one area at one time, allowing the Austrians to concentrate; or enter at more widespread locations (and times), splitting the Austrians (and also risking Prussian defeat in detail). The one hour (four turns) time between entries does present the Austrians with plenty of time to "work over" a lone corps.

The units are primarily regiments, with infantry, cavalry and artillery the primary types. The infantry can be deployed in line, column or square, with each formation having its tactical advantages and drawbacks. Combat occurs both by firing and (hand-to-hand) melee. Moving can be complex since fire combat occurs during movement (and a unit can fire up to four times each turn!) AND the defender can also shoot at anyone moving adjacent to his position. (An optional rule allows defending cavalry to charge and melee units moving adjacent to them.

Both sides achieve victory, essentially, by hurting the other side badly enough. The problem comes when you consider that the burden of attack falls on the Prussians (except when the Austrians can catch an unsupported Prussian corps). The Prussians must push into the redoubt, inflicting more casualties than they take, which is always a difficult proposition for the attacker. Suffice it to say that in the course of three games, Tom Oleson and I (each in turn) could not reverse the inclination of the attacker to lose more. The one possible method to do it might be for the Prussians to use their longer-range artillery to continually push back the Austrians. However, it would be a slow, grinding process, only feasible over fairly open terrain (of which there is some). Sooner or later, though, the Prussians would have to close in and take their lumps. In the original conflict, Frederick had already suffered a stinging defeat when, late in the day, one of his corps sort of wandered into an Austrian formation, reacted more quickly, wiped it out and suddenly the Austrians ALL took off for the hills.

Tom and I tried a variation on the game system that was fun. We each picked a force of 100 stack points and set a time limit of 4 (game) hours for the Prussians to dislodge the Austrians from a majority of the redoubt hexes. The Prussians were able to push the Austrians back well enough, but their casualties mounted very quickly. However, the concept of "budgeting" a force of your own design was fun.

I must conclude Torgau to be a seemingly accurate simulation with an absorbing, enjoyable play mechanism. I have reservations about its ultimate worth as a balanced game, but freely admit I may have missed some critical technique. There is no denying you get your money's worth; I'd say that you would very much want to buy Torgau if you like the period or prefer tactical pre-modern simulations. Torgau is a (\$8.40) product of Game Designer's Workshop, 203 North Street, Normal, IL 61761.

(K)

GRUNT

-Richard Sylvia-

GRUNT is a man-to-man tactical game by Simulations Publications. The game once sold for \$7.00. The game depicts the war in Southeast Asia. The opposing sides in the game are the Viet Cong (VC) and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) (the bad guys), versus the U.S. forces and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN). Also included are various special counters representing civilian forces (porters and peasants), and game markers.

The game has over twelve possible situations including a solitaire version. There are four Allied Orders of Battle (OOB) and seven NVA-VC OOBs. The rules folder is accordian style with a total of ten panels. The map is a two color style (black and white) of the heavy paper variety that SPI publishes in most of their games. The counters are well-made as most of those that SPI publishes. The special markers include mines (booby traps), dummies, and special items that the Allied forces have to try and capture.

A significant difference between this game and many of the other games on the market is how the defense of the unit is represented. The unit under attack has no intrinsic defense value, but is determined by the terrain the target unit is in. This aspect forces the players to learn how to use terrain.

The game usually begins with the NVA-VC forces on the map face down, and the Allies being flown onto the map via helicopter. There are no helicopter counters, so this is set up as an abstract play. Once the Allies land they proceed to whatever objective the situation calls for.

The game is one of limited intelligence for the Allies in that the NVA units are face down. The Allies have to play peek-a-boo for most of the game, since they are looking for only certain counters, and if they are not careful they will run into a booby trap or shoot a civilian, either of which could cost the Allies points (**doesn't help the civilian, either**~pm).

The majority of the time the game is a slow tedious one for the Allies. Fast action can occur but is not very frequent. The game can easily bog down, depending on how careful the Allied player is. The player on the side of the NVA will need a knowledge of defense and quick riposte. The Allied player should be a player that has a methodical approach on offense with the ability to give quick jabs to keep the opposing player off balance. Two such players would make the game very interesting.

As in the real battles of Southeast Asia the Allies have the advantages of firepower, including air and artillery. The NVA have the advantage of stealth and limited intelligence on the part of the Allies.

(K)

SPEARHEAD

VOICE FROM THE EAST

Jerry Schott

In answer to the many of you who have written asking the whereabouts of my column in the last "K", I must admit that I got the deadline date confused and thought that I had until the end of August to send in my column. Anyway I am sending this column in well ahead of time, so if you are not reading this, blame Pete.

The following is a list of all new members who joined the Eastern Region from the start of the year: Gerard Murphy (Somerville, MA), Paul Truesdell (APO NY), William Hill (Galesville, MD), Griffin Mitchell (Stone Mt., GA), Richard Locke (Evanston, IL), Peter Manis (Baltimore, MD), Leslie Deck (Clark, NJ), Bruce Townsend (Wynnewood, PA), Jean Jodoin (Greenwood, NS), Bill Wilcockson (Decatur IL), Brian Garigan (Rockville, MD), Thomas Holtz (Edison, NJ), William Randolph (Hampton, VA), Michael Moushey (Columbus, OH), Claude Bloodgood (Richmond, VA), Andrew Lester (Wilson, NC), Bill Reiman (Clinton, MA), Robert Moeller (Akron, OH), Bill Holdsworth (Bloomington, IL), Bill Kamery (Buffalo Grove, IL), Paul Person (Ft. Devens, MA), Richard Flynn (Chicago, IL), Charles Turner (Somerville, MA), Tom Williams (Charlotte, NC), John Curley (Stanford, CT), plus fifteen others who I hope will get listed in the next column. Pete has mentioned that he really doesn't like to type all the new members names and addresses, except on the one big list that gets printed each year. Yet I know from past experience, that it is nice to see your name in print, and to know your RD spelled it correctly.

I got several letters about Russian Campaign. First I would like to dispel the rumors that I was reviewing that game in my column. I personally feel that this game is one of the best games to be produced by any game company in several years. I can only afford to buy a few games in any year; this year I bought two games, Russian Campaign and Von Manstein. I also get 6 games (?) (or whatever) from S&T, but since I have no choices on these, they rarely strike me as favorites. It is my belief that Russian Campaign will become a classic. I currently have a set going with John Ratzenberger. The system we are using allows us to make both movement phases in one mailing. Basically this amounts to making your first move, recording the attacks on the back of your OOB sheet, listing your attacks from North to South and using your ICRK for the results (as opposed to sending for your opponents ICRK results); then you make the second movement and the second attacks, again using your ICRK sheet and mail the move to your opponent. As long as both players are relatively honest the system works quite well. Actually, even if you did "look ahead" at the ICRK sheet before you listed your attacks, you wouldn't gain much of an advantage in the game. The nice part of this system is allowing you to see the impacts of your attacks on the very day that you conceive them. Using this system allows you to finish the game in 25 mailings--about 6 months of time against a fast player. For those of you who don't own the game, but do own a copy of Stalingrad, it is everything that you wished S-grad to be: faster, bloodier, full of excitement, and full of

things like Partisans, Stukas, HQ's, sea movement, etc., without being any more complicated. The rules run 4 pages, and only had one small ambiguity (over replacing a Guard Armor unit: the Judge says it is either a Guard or an Armor unit; if replacing along with another armor unit, treat it as a Guard; if replacing a guard infantry unit along with it, treat it as an armor). One rather nice thing is that the possibility of a draw runs about 80% (my estimate) between two experienced players. Now what this means is you guys who are playing Russians can get as close as you can to Berlin without quite taking it by the end of the game and say "If this was real life those Germans are beat!" While you die-hard Germans will consider holding onto Berlin a "great victory!" As a matter of fact the only losers are the ones who aren't going to buy the game, because they already own every other game about the "Russian Front".

Let's see, according to my rough calculations it should now be the 20th of October. The elections for AHIKS are coming up very fast, and we are still looking for a volunteer to run for RD East. The amount of time needed to fill this post has diminished quite a good amount since I first stepped into office. Apart from two or three new members to process in a month, and a blur for the "K", the only thing that is going to take any time at all is looking after late responders. I suggest the next RD use a form letter which explains what the late member's responsibility is in regard to informing his opponents of the reasons he is late or dropping out. The RD's are constantly weeding in our garden of wargaming chums, and I cannot say that I am sorry to see those who never did bother to write back to the RD with an excuse. As AHIKS gets larger, this gets to be more of a problem, so if you get a letter asking you why you are late in reply to Sidney Wargamer, please keep in mind that the RD's are not out to punish anybody, only to keep harmony in the club.

Last, but certainly not least, four new members to add to the above list: William Farone, Bon Air, VA; William Osmanson, Morris, IL; Roy Schelper, Cox's Mills, WV; Richard Stephens, Columbus, GA.

(K)

NORTHEAST REGION

-Mike Truex-

A very short column this time out. I will be sending out some sort of flyer to all of you (NE Region), with details on a get-together, tentatively planned for the weekend of November 6. I think it could be a blast, and hope we can get a fair showing.

We have four new members to introduce: John Burt, Reading, PA; Gilbert Johansen, Denville, NJ; Randy Pippus, Ottawa, Ontario; Woodrow Sullivan, Red Bank, NJ.

(K)

NUTS AND BOLTS

the icrkmeister

As many of you may know by now, Gene has resigned his post as ICRKMeister, and yours truly has agreed to take over the office. I am hoping that you will see fit to make the change official in the upcoming election, as I will be running for the post. (I enjoy getting lost of mail).

There may be some slight interruption in service for a while until I get used to the routine. Also, if you have sent Gene a request and it is not answered by me or Gene shortly (or at least by the time you read this), then write me and let me know. It may have gotten lost in the shuffle. I hope my current opponents will put up with the loss of even more speed on my part!

(K)

THE WESTERN FRONT

John Ratzenberger

Not much to write this time. It has been a very slow two months. My column last time generated no response concerning local meetings; is no one interested, or don't you require assistance?

I am recommending to the Executive Committee that two of our members be dropped from the club for non-response to opponents. Fair warning to anyone else out there who may be delinquent.

The Norman meeting came out very well and we are planning another one for sometime in February or March. The guys in Norman were going to write an article describing the event for this issue. I haven't seen it, so I'm a little leery of it (given the fact that they are a wild bunch down there!).

To all my opponents: a new job is making serious inroads into my time. I can see where my normal one/two day response time is going to run more like one week if things keep up as is. Please be patient.

A warm welcome to the west region to the following new members: Bruce Hudspeth, Gilbert, AZ; Mike Schelhorn, McCall, ID; Walter Waldau, Denver, CO.

(K)

RANDOM SHOTS

Henry Radice

One of the great advantages of moving from my Northern fastness, although there is much that I miss, is that more members can drop in to see me. John Spence, Chris Hancock (twice), Harry and Gwen Tucker (for their annual visit) and David Isby from SPI have all been for an evening or longer.

Chris is still talking about going abroad (we have been hearing this for a long time, Chris!!), but one decision has been made. He and Fay have decided to get married on Christmas Day in the USA; our best congratulations to you both. Another good man Gone!!

David Isby gave news of both SPI and Origins II. He confirmed what Omar said in the last K that it was a success. I gather that Jim Dunnigan was in action for five hours at the Games Design and Research Seminar. Talk about stamina, I reckon he deserves a medal for that; and what about those who stayed the whole time, they are better men than I am Gunga Din. North African Quads was unveiled at this event, but be warned, as so often happens when there is a rush to get a game out by a specific date, some of the checks and testing tends to be omitted and always with fatal consequences; the games companies, oddly, never learn from experience that there is no short cut. If you buy a USA-produced edition make sure you get the Errata sheet. I expect that Malcolm's edition printed in UK will have corrected these mistakes. Also on view was Terrible Swift Sword, somewhat irreverently nicknamed Terrible Slow Bore by the SPI staff. I suggested to David that the Quad Games were probably about played out, they had been a success but there was a danger that they were being run to death. He promised to represent this view back home.

With the cricket season coming to an end, it will soon be time for Epping IV. Once again, Alan Youde is mine host aided by the Tree-tops Hotel. Remember to book early to avoid disappointment.

There are still a few who, despite the reminders, have not paid their subscriptions, a final demand is out with a deadline for payment; if this is not met, reluctantly it will be the "chop" for those concerned.

We welcome two new members to the Society and one on transfer from Eastern Region: Steve Brockbank, Harborne, Birmingham; Robert Christian, Kenya; William Fox, APO NY.

(K)

OPINIONS

JOE SELIGA (9/27): I propose that the Movement/Combat Results sheets that AHKS now uses be changed. They are really of limited use for the games presently being produced. In particular, it is the combat results side of the sheet which is outmoded for the current crop of games (they are useful for their intended use: the older AH games). I would separate the movement sheet from the combat results sheet. This would have several advantages: 1) the movements for an entire game would then be able to kept on a single sheet instead of discarding the sheet because one ran out of room on the combat side; 2) for some games, a single sheet could be used for both games of a set; 3) the combat results sheets could be particularized for a series of games and thus be made more useful and minimizing the effort required to play the game. As an example, I would refer you to the combat results sheet which I have devised for the estwall, Island War, Modern Battles and North Africa Quad games that SPI has brought out; 4) it might be possible to use 8½ x 11 paper and derive a cost savings for the Society. I would print the Movement sheet on both sides of the paper, with no unit printing on them so that we could increase the print run and save some money, and then to print a double-sided Combat Results sheet to ease the time it takes to make the notations for battles. We would need to have a few different types of CR sheets for the different games that are currently being developed. What are your ideas along these lines? (**One thing, let's open the spacing on the horizontal lines; the current spacing is so narrow that I wonder we don't lose more members to early eye failure. Anyone who wants to submit samples of his ideas, I'd be happy to print some in the K: this might stimulate suggestions**~pm)

BOB FOWLER (9/10): Monitoring is a subject that has been on my mind lately, and I'm glad the subject was opened up last K. The trend at SPI and in other corners of the hobby has lately been to produce BIG wargames--DNO, WITE, Bataille de Moscva, etc. Obviously people are buying them (I haven't yet, but would like to get one). However, the price and time required to play a game seem prohibitive unless one plans to use the game carefully. I am a game player and not a game collector. I suppose many who have bought the games must be game collectors, but that's not my bag. Having a job, family, house, etc. leave limited time for games, and playing a BIG game FTF is definitely impossible. It has to be by mail; but even then, to play the entire game means that it has to be left set up between moves. It seems impossible to try to set it up every turn in PBM, unless one plays a segment of it only, and that requires a monitored multi-commandered game. I strongly feel that if one lays out the money for such a game, then you must be willing to fol-

low up on the investment. I would be willing to pay a small amount per turn to a monitor in order to have the pleasure of playing the game in the only way I can see as being feasible for me: monitored, multi-com. Monitoring cannot be that much fun, so I think any monitor should be paid for his time and effort. I feel that AHKS could be the vehicle in which such monitoring could be organized and promoted. (**I think Bob has hit it on the head: monitoring isn't so much fun--especially on these two or three year projects; in fact, over the long haul it can be sufficiently burdensome that the question comes up: how much money is required to offset the time invested by the monitor? More comments?***~pm)

(K)

doin's

CONVENTIONS

(information courtesy Signal newzine, #410-240 Brittany Dr, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1K 0R7)

NOV 19-21: Ft. Myers, FL; phone John Strain, (813) 995-8612.

NOV 20-21: Kaiserlautern, W. Germany; English language; write Sgt. D. Starr, HHC 59th ORD GP (SASCOM), S2 Div, APO NY 09189.

DEC 3-5: Rochester, MI; Wintercon V; looks well-organized with lots of everything; write B. Somers, 1654 Chandler, Lincoln Park, MI 48146.

(K)

SWAPPE SHOPPE

For sale: Goebben & Chicago-Chicago, Centurion, Strike Force One, Grunt, Nuclear War.

Richard Locke, 2232 Wesley Ave, Evanston, IL 60201

For free: 1914; you pay postage.

Pete Menconi, 4334 E. Indianola, Phoenix, AZ 85018

(**I would like some of you who have advertized here in the past to write me and tell me that you've had some sort of success in exchanging games. If I don't get any response that some sort of exchange has taken place, I will conclude that this column is not effective, and it will be eliminated.**~pm)

(K)



Terrible Swift Sword

TERRIBLE SWIFT SWORD MULTI-COM? PROGRESS REPORT
-Dan McClure-

It is blatantly obvious that the designer of TSS was not concerned about the game's suitability for PBM. Whoever this fellow may be (Richard B. keeping a low profile?), he is undoubtedly oblivious to the AHKSers cumulative ire, for the game has been universally praised as the best simulation of the Civil War. As the GM for what is reportedly the first PBM effort of this gargantuan, I will join the choir singing its praises. The game is clean and historically accurate. But, it would be hard to conceive of a game more maddening for PBM: the game is a tactical madhouse on a grand scale.

Regardless of our fears we are underway with the game and at the moment General Reynolds' First Corps is raising dust while the Rebs close in on the crossroads. There are twelve active players with eight Union and four Confederate commanders. We have two alternates and, with the prospect of an indeterminately long game, the chance for more alternates getting involved is great. The two major problems with our game are the book-keeping hassles and the game's length. As for the length, there is little that we can do but resign ourselves to our fate as stoically as possible. And as for the bookwork, the GM has abandoned himself to a slow death by hex number inhalation. The one advantage that the game's length offers is the chance to work out all of the rough spots in our PBM procedures. So far the original rule additions and changes that we're using have worked out quite well. We have allowed for messengers between commanders to get way-layed or lost and the random introduction of enemy sightings from prisoners and local farmers. The most exciting prospect for the game is the most obvious one: The game is so complete that the addition of limited intelligence and visibility promises to make the game as close to reality as possible in a two-dimensional simulation.

All in all, the game looks very exciting and everyone is highly enthusiastic. Whether or not the people in butternut and grey can change the meaning of the Fourth of July celebration remains to be seen. Wish us luck in our marathon adventure and look for a note in the Guinness Book of World Records for the longest sustained communal insanity!!!

(K)

IDEAS

10-DIGIT "ICRK" RESULTS

-Pete Menconi-

Several months ago, a member sent me a method for converting our six-digit ICRK into a 10-digit generator. Essentially, you'd call for a column and a specific die (1-6) value (e.g., "B5"); go to your column B, and see where the value "5" first appears: if it's, say, in the sixth row down, the result is "6". The problem with this method is that you do not get a random distribution of results. In fact, it is quite lopsided: there is a 16.7% of getting "1", with the chances declining all the way to 3.2% for "0", and a 16.2% chance of getting nothing (the column may not contain a "5"). In the absence of AHIKS making a 10-digit ICRK available (which I do not rule out), I have another method which is at least reasonably workable. You simply specify three ICRK numbers (e.g., "B5-4"). Your opponent takes the three results, multiplies them, then converts the product into a single digit via the following table: 1=1-5 (9.4%), 2=6-10 (11.3), 3=12-16 (10.4), 4=18-24 (12.3), 5=25-32 (9.4), 6=36-45 (9.4), 7=48-54 (7.5), 8=60-72 (9.4), 9=75-100 (10.4), 10=108-216 (10.4). The numbers in parenthesis are the percentage probability for each digit. As you can see, there is some variance from the low of 7 to the high of 4, but it's reasonably evenly distributed, and not too difficult to use (helps if you can do the 2x2 bit correctly).

GRAPHICS IN THE K

-Dan McClure-

I took note of your comments in the last issue about your desire of including some sort of graphics in the K. I would like to offer my talents in that regard. Though I have about ten years of college/professional training in art, my talents are mainly concentrated in the area of fine art. I draw a distinction here between fine art and illustration or design. I would be more than happy to do some drawings for the K if drawings with a moderate amount of personal interpretation would be acceptable. Let me know what you think. (**I think it certainly has some possibilities. I'm not sure if we want just random drawings, unconnected to the subject matter of the K material, but I believe that drawings relative to the printed matter would be very welcome. How does this strike you: if you think your article would be enhanced by either a drawing of an item you wish to describe (e.g., a game cabinet), or an illustration (e.g., an action scene, tanks, whatever), contact Dan or ask me to do so. Dan would, of course, have "first refusal" rights, and he and I could coordinate to insure we don't get an issue with all pictures and no printing. Comments?**-pm)

WESTWALL, MODERN BATTLES, NORTH AFRICA, ISLAND WAR: EASY PBM

-Joe Seliga-

It has come to my attention that some AHIKS members may not be playing these Quadrigames because they don't lend themselves to the use of the standard AHIKS Combat Results sheets, and consequently are missing out on some tense, exciting games by mail. The artillery FPF, and movement after combat add the element of uncertainty to almost every battle and turn every game turn into a competitive situation. With the use of the Combat Results sheet shown below, these quadrigames can be played with relative ease. Tom Holtz and I have used this sheet with the Bastogne game in the Westwall, and Bob McLaughlin has used a precursor of it for the S&T version of Battle of the Bulge. The latter was highlighted and described in one of the Barrages that I wrote while I was RD East. (**This is the intro paragraph to a full-page procedural description on using Joe's PBM sheets. Greg Leisner will have the complete report, adding it to his PBM procedures collection (see Omar's comment in his President's Corner).**-pm)

Combat Results - Modern Battles - Westwall - North Africa - Island War

Battle #	ICRK	Terrain	Attacker	Defender	Attacker															
					Unit	AF	Unit	DF	-1	-2	+1	+2	+3	+4	-1					

Defender					
-2	-3	-4	+1	+2	Sum

MISCELLANY

-Dave Grant-

After using manila coin envelopes to hold counters, I discovered zip-lock sandwich bags (unused, unless you want to odor-code your games!) were cheaper and had a see-through advantage. They are available in local supermarkets (I got them at 59¢/50). I like to break the counters down for a game into smaller groups to avoid sorting. For games like the Westwall quad with lots of reinforcements, I first sort out the "on map" units, and then the reinforcements by game turn. I put these in individual zip-lock bags. For games with many scenarios, I sort by unit type and put each type and side in a separate bag. Using this system, I have Pblitz in 12 bags and Arnhem in 7.

Being prone to buy games as cheaply as possible means I get them without boxes. I found in an office supply store some folios (similar to SPI folios) with two pockets (one inside each cover). Each pocket holds the map, rules and counter bags for one game (plus ICRKs and correspondence if currently PBM). These folios are available for 25-50¢ each. What do you do with a stack of folios? I bought a couple of magazine shelf files (99¢). Each one can hold 4-6 folios and 8-12 games. They take up a total of 4 inches of shelf space. They are also handy for storing S&T, Moves, the General, K, etc. (**Some other ideas you may find handy: Tom Oleson stores his games for PBM on individual shelves, made to fit the game. The shelf is 1/4 or 3/8 board with 3/8 or 1/2 molding all around the edges. The molding allows you to stack the shelves one upon the other without the bottom of one board resting on the units below.//When reading the rules to a game, outline the important sentences with yellow highlighter--it works just as well for rules as for textbooks! You'll find that going back to look up specific rules will be very easy since all the material you need is highlighted. In fact, you will be very surprised to see how much of the rules printed for a game is so non-specific that you won't highlight it--and won't have to dig through it looking for the good stuff.//For those games in which the strength of a unit varies (Terrible Swift Sword is an example--separate strength counters are placed under each unit), cover the counters with 3M Scotch tape, 1/2" wide, before cutting them out. You will be able to write on the tape (and erase) with pencil, grease pencil, transparency marker, eliminating the extra counters.**-pm)

(K)

ELECTIONS

CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT STEPS FORWARD: JOE SELIGA

In the volunteer tradition of AHIKS, I am announcing myself as a candidate for the Presidency of AHIKS. I've been a member since October, 1969, and am familiar with the workings of the Society. I held the office of Eastern Regional Director from May, 1970, to January, 1975. My platform is a simple one: "To promote responsible gaming by and for the membership."

Joe Seliga

Candidates for office (preliminary):

PRESIDENT	Joe Seliga
SECRETARY	Bill Kamery (possibly)
JUDGE	vacant
ICRKMEISTER	Carl Benton
RD EAST	vacant
RD N.EAST	Mike Truex
EUROPE	Procedures regulated by that Region

Since this is a relatively new post, it may be appropriate to list the duties of the Secretary: 1) keep the Intro booklet up to date; 2) send out intro books to new members; 3) keep Application forms up to date and supply RDs with them; 4) keep Intro Info (green) sheet up to date and supplied to appropriate officers; 5) be in charge of OOB sheet preparation; 6) type for reproduction the material for Intro and Application forms; 7) arrange to have the above material printed and distributed. Sometimes, members are a bit reluctant to run for election, but would nevertheless be willing to do the job functions. If this is the case for anyone out there, write to Omar. In the absence of any elected official, it is the duty of the Exec to appoint volunteers to the office.

(**This issue and the next two will have increasing amounts of our election coverage, so I figured the title block was warranted. I am very happy to see someone of Joe Seliga's experience stepping forward to replace Omar; I feel the President's post requires both longevity in AHIKS and a couple years' experience in some other officer position. As mentioned earlier, we do have a number of volunteers who have stepped forward for other positions, but the Judge and RD East jobs are critical voids that we need filled. The idea has been kicked around that it's time for the Judge job to be somehow split so that no one person has to keep track of all the games. If you feel you can handle one "branch" of games (say, all the AH, or all the SPI) volunteer to run for Judge on that basis, and then we can dig up assistants for the other games. You will find many people willing to help, but often unable to take on the total responsibility for a job, so don't feel bashful if you don't know everything about every game.**-pm)

(K)

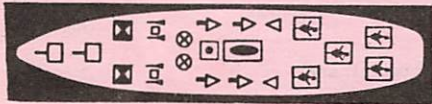
SEA STRIKE

-Pete Menconi-

I have to rank this as one of the most enjoyable games I've played. It has a relatively short playing time (several games during the course of an afternoon), and is so constructed that each game is unique in course and outcome.

The playing area is any convenient flat space (a 3' X 5' board does well), which acts as your ocean. You then scatter the cardboard islands about the board (roughly a dozen islands, all shaped differently). The board is divided in half, each player taking one side. There are 18 Objective Cards, each in its own envelope. Both players pick a card which outlines a general background ("Your Navy is still building, but you need to inflict some loss on the enemy to keep him off-balance."), gives a specific objective for victory ("Sink any two enemy ships, one of which must be a Frigate if the enemy has one."), and gives a budget (varies from about £60 to £130). With your budget you can secretly purchase a force of Cruisers (£60 each), Frigates (varying types, £20-30 each), Light Frigates (varying, £15-20), Submarines (£6-20), Patrol Boats (£3), attack aircraft (£6), interceptor aircraft (£4), or SAM air defense sites (£4). Each side sets up in his area without the other guy looking on. The result is that the game starts off with each player ignorant of the other's objective, force composition and strength, and placement. It is slightly dismaying to pull the covers off and find your two frigates, patrol boat, and submarine opposed by a massive fleet. And yet, with your objective set to match your budget, you stand a remarkably even chance of victory (in the situation described, the small force may only need to sink two enemy ships for victory: you pick on two of his patrol boats and walk off the winner!)

Movement and turning ability are neatly measured with a small plastic ruler (sort of). Movement only takes one or two minutes. Ships and weapons are fired at the end of each movement phase, alternating between ships of each player. Combat resolution is by means of drawing results cards, which specify target damage for each type of weapon firing. Potential offensive weapons are attack aircraft, helicopters, surface missiles, guns, torpedoes (all with differing ranges). Defensive weapons are SAMs and AA guns (against aircraft and helicopters), and interceptors (against aircraft). Interceptors may only be used in your half of the board ("limited reaction time"), so venturing into "enemy waters" can be hazardous!



Components include the islands, the "movement ruler", a range finder (showing weapon ranges), objective cards, ship, aircraft and SAM site counters, and rule book. The counters are NIFTY. Example is the cruiser counter, a 3/4" X 4" rectangle. The plan (top) view of the boat is shown, with symbols representing the number and type of weapons available: 5 helicopters, 2 guns, 2 offensive missile batteries, 2 SAM batteries, 2 AA gun batteries, propulsion (engine) section and fire control center. As enemy ships are successful in hitting the cruiser, the results cards specify what has been damaged. The very handy feature here is that the ship counter has a very hard, shiny surface on which you can write with a grease pencil. If a result card says the enemy missile wiped out a SAM battery, you simply "X" it out. At the end of the game, the grease pencil wipes right off.

With 18 objective cards and two players, there are (18 X 17 =) 306 combinations of victory objectives and budgets, making for a continuously unique experience. The concept of building your own (hopefully) balanced force to meet an unknown enemy force is probably the game's finest "strategic" aspect. Lots of action, little rulebook thumbing, two or three or four games in a two-hour evening: what more could you ask? Yes! They have additional optional rules! Robin Wyatt, the inventor, says that Seastrike has been sold to Philmar (original publisher of King-maker), which may well lead to its introduction into the US by Avalon Hill. For the moment, however, it appears the game is not available, but schedules for publication in the first half of 1977 in the UK.

(K)

AVALANCHE

-Tom Oleson-

(**I had occasion to visit Tom recently, and we tried GDW's latest, a simulation of the Allied landings at Salerno, Italy, in 1943. We had some difficulty with the game, and this review is actually a letter Tom wrote to Frank Chadwick at GDW. The letter will also appear in Walter Luc Haas fine magazine, EUROPA ("Swissmade"), c/o Edi Birsan, Apt 302, 35-35 75th St, Jackson Heights, NY 11372,

or c/o Dave Watts, 32 Eastleigh Drive, Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire SA73 2LY, UK.**-pm)

As you may know, among other things (none of which add up to much!), I contribute game reviews to EUROPA, and articles of one sort or another to other wargaming magazines. I can recall raving about the game system of TORGAU in the pages of E, which should give you the idea that I esteem much of your firm's work highly.

I played your new game Avalanche this weekend, and thought that I would cast my "review" of it for Europa in the form of a letter to you, which seemed all the more appropriate because I disliked the game!

On the positive side, the map is among the most beautiful and accurate which I have seen. The counters also are handsome, although mine did not part easily, and some were marred. In the past I had always found your counters excellent, but recently a friend sent me examples of faulty counters he had gotten in recent games of yours. Mine were not bad, but not up to my previous experience.

I found the rules of the game to be fairly well done, although neither perfect nor comprehensive. The effect of terrain on movement is novel and complex, and I feel that a diagram or two would have helped. I did not find a rule covering off-board movement, e.g., primarily switching of German forces from one side of the map to the other should connecting on-map roads be blocked. Speaking of roads, I thought that the treatment of the movement cost of primary roads was innovative and good.

I made the mistake of separating my unit counters before reading the rules, and then had to fumble around to figure out what units made up a given battalion, etc. Reminded me of the 1969 version of Anzio. I also could not find all the units listed on the German OOB, and it seemed to me that one of the British beaches on the initial entry was over-stacked. I don't bother to go back to the rules to give you chapter and verse on these points, about which I might be mistaken, because it seems to me there are other, more serious flaws.

The dividing line between enjoyment and annoyance as one travels along the road of further complexity, or "dirt", in wargaming rules, obviously is subjective. I found the complexity of Torgau amply repaid in terms of gaming enjoyment, and although I have not played Narvik, I gather that the consensus is the same. Many of the little complexities in Avalanche just annoyed myself and my opponent. For us, they added little. I would be fascinated if some day you had the time to write an article explaining your thinking in including many of the complexities in your games. I reiterate that this is a personal question.

My opponent and I could not see how the Germans could do much in this game, surely with the murderous naval gunfire, how they could recreate history; as you know, the Allies nearly got pushed back into the sea. Perhaps further play would reveal to us the correct German strategy.

To get to what I think is the chief, and fatal, flaw in the game, it is the victory conditions. I have talked with several people who have played the game, and I don't know of anyone who thinks that among fairly equal players the Germans can win a "decisive victory" by, at the end of 27 turns, seeing to it that "there are no Allied beachheads or harbors in Allied hands and there are fewer than twenty Allied companies on the map." Failing that, there are four other victory conditions, ranging from German major and marginal to the same for the Allies, each depending on quite a narrow kill-ratio of enemy units. Therefore, if one accepts that it is improbable that the Germans will win a decisive victory (and to try for it they have to move right down to the beaches into the teeth of those big Allied naval guns!), then the whole point of the exercise is to kill more enemy units than you lose, according to the table in the rules. I find this to have two enormous drawbacks:

1. As you know, the German objective was to repel, or confine and constrict the Allies' invasion, and also, surely, to hold the northern approaches leading to Naples and Rome. This means nothing in the game. If I were the German player, I would slowly withdraw to the high terrain in the East (center) section of the map. I wouldn't bother about holding the northern flank; let the Allies take the road to Naples. I wouldn't bother about holding the southern flank; let the Allies link up with the units advancing from the South. I would just pull back away from the range of the naval guns, and let the Allies attack UP against me. Nor does this affect reinforcements, since German reinforcements may "appear at the closest road on either side of the scheduled road." Of course, the Allied player won't bother about breaking out of the beachhead south or north, either, because it doesn't help to win the game!

2. The game is 27 turns long, and every turn there can be a fair number of casualties in comparison with the number sufficient to influence victory conditions. Suppose that I am playing the game as Allies, and by turn 7 I have killed enough Germans to assure me of a victory: why should I continue to attack? Why not go over to the defensive? Indeed, why not go back and huddle on the beaches under the range of the naval artillery, which has range superior to the German artillery? I can envision at several points during the game each player shifting from aggression to caution, completely without reference to the considerations that historically shaped the course of the battle, but just because the "kill-ratio" has swung around in his favor.

My opponent and I decided to change this by assigning victory points for geographical objectives, as well as for casualty ratio, so that victory would be decided by a combination of losses and terrain won/lost, but by that time we had become so bored with the game that we just put it away!

Much of what I have said might be refuted with greater experience with the game, but it does seem to me, at least, very clear that the victory conditions are unrealistic in the extreme.

(**We put this one away with many a lingering, longing glance back, wishing there was some way to salvage it. The mechanics of play are very well done, and--uniquely--juggle the stacking rules so that you are motivated to keep battalions and regiments together. I'd have to say that "pulling the trigger" in this game is one hell of a lot of fun. However, when you look at the board at the end of only the second turn and find the Allies shoving the Germans all over the map (and no relief in sight for Jerry), you suddenly lose interest. There is either a serious flaw in the game development, or Tom and I simply misunderstood how to apply the rules to the situation. I honestly hope the latter, because it IS a fun game.**-pm)



AHIKS RATINGS

Dave Turansky

(**Taking a leaf from the AH tree, we will only print the "top dogs" in the ratings, with full listings appearing perhaps twice or once per year. We currently have some 72 US players signed up in the ratings system, and Dave informs me that it is now in operation under the calculation procedure he gave us earlier.**-pm)

1955 D. Burdick	1435 M. Yarwood	1300 T. Becker
K. Mills	1400 J. Frediani	1275 J. Caton
1850 J. Popolis	1395 L. Ercolino	R. Teleucky
1735 J. Drummond	1350 C. Benton	1200 The Rest Of Us
1685 T. Eller	S. Brooks	
1565 B. Maston	D. McClure	
1500 W. Hopkins	D. Turansky	



FROM THE MATCH COORDINATOR

Dave Turansky

I will be in Chicago from Oct 2-24. During this time I will be unable to respond to my correspondence, so please hang in there. Perhaps I will be able to contact enough Chicago area members to effect a get-together.

Our longtime ICRKMeister, Gene Gardner, has resigned. The new man is Carl Benton, who has been doing a great job as Gene's assistant. Carl designed and has run off hundreds of our new computerized ICRKS. Thanks to Gene for his years of service to the club.

I am proposing to the Executive Committee that we look into the possibility of merger with other wargaming clubs. The advantage of having a larger pool of members would mean that the time lapse required to match requests would be shortened. Unpopular games sometimes take months to be matched, at this time. (**I think the biggest single problem with this idea is that screening the new members will be difficult; also, we would invariably get a large batch of undesireables which we would have to weed out over the time span of a year or so, creating a "bubble" of headaches and bitches. Administratively, selection of officers, and transition of funds would also be difficult. The history of wargaming is strewn with the bleaching bones of large clubs.**-pm)

Please do not expect miracles from volunteers who monitor multiplayer games! Many such games go very poorly by mail, and even the most astute game monitor will make errors resulting in frustration for the players.

If you do not see your requests listed in OPEN GAMES, and you have not received your ICRK for these requests, your letter to me may

never have been received. Also, bear in mind that only requests received by the 25th of the month can meet the K deadline.

OPEN GAMES: African Campaign, Airforce, Alex, Antietam, Anzio Beachhead, Avalanch, Barlev, Battle for Germany, Breitenfeld, Chaco, Crimea, Dreadnought, 1815, Franco-Prussian, Gettysburg '64, Grand Chancellorsville, Lost Battles, Mech War 77, Musket & Pike, Narvik, Nato, Overlord, Panzerarmee Afrika, Panzerleader, 1776, Tactics II, Tobruk, Turning Point, UBoat, Wooden Ships, WWII.

OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS ONLY: Afrika Korps, Antietam, Battle for Germany, Bulge, Chickamauga, France 40, Fred the Great, La Grande Armee, Lutzen, Manassas, Napoleon at Waterloo, R-War, 3d Reich, Waterloo, Winter War, WWI.

3-WAY GAMES (TWO PLAYERS NEEDED): Desert War, Starforce, Tank.

MONITORS AVAILABLE:

Tim Grant, 452 Brass Lamp, Ballwin, MO 63011: Mech War 77 with limited intelligence (in the game, not Tim!). Tim would also like to get a multiplayer Sorcerer together for which he would prefer not to serve as gamemaster. He says it may be able to go well without a monitor and has some ideas along these lines.

Robin Hood, 103 Oxford Gardens, London W10 6NF, UK: publisher of Herald which promises to be the Kingmaker magazine. Robin will consider opening an international Kingmaker if the response is sufficient. Subscription £2.00 (\$3.50 American--whup! \$3.40--oops \$3.30--uh, \$3.20--check with Robin).

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) **G** 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.

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

(**Taken from the Kommandeur, Vol 1, No 1, Summer, 1966.**-pm)

This is the first of what we hope will be a long and satisfying series of reports to the Constituency. Henry Bodenstedt (**Editor**) and I are gratified by your acceptance of AHIKS. The last six months have seen a pyramiding growth of what may have been an idle passing thought. Henry was demolishing me in Waterloo. In the midst of a letter, he mentioned the difficulty he was having in finding capable adult players (I overlooked the insulting adjective), and that the "other brand" of younger players were, well, suspected of being unethical, and that maybe we should start an adult group. One thing led to another, and so here we are.

In organizing AHIKS, and I must concede that Henry has been the more active partner, we have tried to resolve these problems: How to attract the caliber of members that we desire, including members from other nations; How to improve upon the Stock Market system that unscrupulous opponents have twisted to their advantage, and which is a barrier to international play; How to resolve the inherent one-sidedness of many A-H games; and several other problem areas.

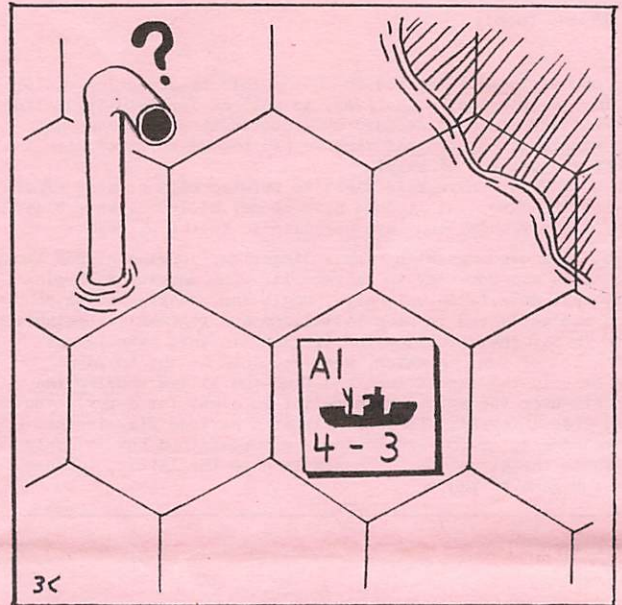
Today, for better or worse, you are seeing the fruit of our lengthy transcontinental correspondence. We are proud of the quality of our membership. Because I work as a supervisor in a State Employment Office, I am interested in the type of work that a person performs. You are educators, engineers, architects, inspectors, supervisors, doctors, lawyers, and many other valued professionals. More important, however, than these titles are the qualities of the persons involved and you are a good group!

Elsewhere in the Kommandeur, you will find the story behind the ICRK, which is unique to AHIKS. The basic idea of the ICRK is Henry's. We are proud of it, because it can be used anywhere, anytime, and because it is as cheat-proof as we could design. We are eagerly awaiting your reactions and suggestions that will help us to improve the ICRK, its instructions, and, perhaps, a better avenue of approach.

Until later, happy hunting.

Fred A Webster

(**The old issues of the K do lend a tremendous perspective to many of the problems confronting both AHIKS and the hobby today. They are also a lot of fun to read. Next issue: Chris Wagner who? Back issues are available from the Archivist, Jim Wallace.**-pm)



NEXT ISSUE

I hope to have all the outgoing officers send me a picture, so we all get to see what they look like. It will be a bit of an experiment. Next issue will also be the election one, so candidates must send "platform" statements. It will be VERY important for all of you members to keep us informed of address changes: if you don't get a dues notice, you probably won't pay your dues and we certainly will kick you out! DEADLINE FOR K11/6 IS DECEMBER 1. I will really be pushing to get it out early in order to avoid the mail crunch. Please read the instructions on where to send money, ballots, etc. If you send it to me...kiss it goodbye!!!



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