

TIPS FOR GAMERS

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When I first started gaming, maybe 8 or 9 ...no, it was 10 months ago, one of the first problems I had to overcome was how to get round having to put a game away at the beginning of, and set it up at the start of, each sitting. This was a big problem with me at first, as I was a beginner and I had to play solo and therefore I played very, very slowly. At first I used to write down the position of every unit and put the game away. This, and setting the game up again next time, was very time consuming, so when I thought of buying a 3ft x 2ft piece of 1/4" plywood, I was very pleased with myself for then, at the end of each sitting, I only had to carry this 3ft x 2ft piece of plywood, with my game still set up on it, through two doors, 2ft6ins wide and a flight of stairs, through another 2ft6ins wide door, then climb upon a chair and place it gently on top of the wardrobe. This was quite enjoyable, especially when there were 3 high stacks of counters all over the map.

I didn't REALLY have to do this. I could have left the game on a coffee table, hanging over the sides and simply told my three children (all of whom are under 4), not to touch it for the next day or so, but I enjoy doing things the hard way.

This method (which I shall hereafter call the Wardrobe Method or WM), saved me at least half an hour a sitting and a couple of times provided a surprise ending to the game halfway up the stairs. I carried on with the WM quite happily, until one day I found a substance called Blue-Tac in a D-I-Y Shop. Blue-Tac (BT for short), is a blue, rubbery, tacky substance, with which you can lightly attach, small light objects to walls etc. It said on the box that the same piece of BT can be used over and over again but will eventually lose its tackyness. Anyway, I bought some and tried it out on a counter. I put a small piece of BT in the middle of the back of the counter and pressed it lightly on the map — it stuck on. It was quite firmly held in place and no amount of shaking the map would cause it to fall off. Then, gingerly, I removed the counter from the map, expecting part of the map to come with it, but no, there wasn't a mark on the map.

I now have BT stuck on the back of all my counters (except double sided ones) and my games with these counters never end halfway up the stairs. BT is also useful for storing and sorting counters, mine are all individually sorted. I cut a sheet of paper so that when it is folded in two it will fit in one of the small Zip-Lock bags, then I rule this paper off into squares and write the details of a counter round the edges of a square (BT picks up ink), and stick each counter in its appointed square. So if I ever lose a counter, I know exactly which one it is at a glance. BT seemed like the answer to my prayers, until the boys at SPI, spitefully, made one-sided counters a thing of the past and not only that, they bring out games like Highway to the Reich, which I just had to buy.

So now as I can't play HWTR using the WM (just the thought of dropping one mapboard full of counters down the stairs, halfway through the campaign game, makes me go cold all over) and as I can't use the BTM (Blue-Tac Method) because of double-sided counters, I am going to buy some large sheets of cork, or something else that I can stick pins in, and will make a hole in each counter and if I am careful will make only one hole in each hex on the mapsheet. Then, while there are already holes in the counters, I will store them by threading them onto loops of cotton.

This may sound drastic to some of you but we don't all have a spare room where we can leave a game set up for days on end and anyway I am determined not to have any more games ending suddenly halfway up the stairs. Finally, if any of you are in the same boat as me, I want to leave you with a pleasant thought. What will the folks at SPI think of next, when they decide to make double-sided counters out of date? I dread to think!

A NEW SCENARIO FOR SPI's "CA"

ROB GIBSON

ACTION OFF VESTFJORD

At first light on the 9th April, 1940, the German battlecruisers KMS "Scharnhorst" and KMS "Gneisenau" were steaming in a north-easterly direction. The pride of Hitler's navy were engaged in a covering operation for the German invasion of Norway, fifty miles off Vestfjord and the vital iron-ore port of Narvik. Their sailing orders also included sanction for a breakout into the North Atlantic to ravage Allied shipping. No enemy warships had so far appeared and they looked set for a long cruise.

Suddenly, they were surrounded by the towering waterspouts made by 15-inch shells. Their opponent was barely visible in the heavy seas: a British battlecruiser and yet more ships opening fire nearby.

Half an hour later, with one of the two German ships damaged, the battle was over as the Royal Navy accepted the futility of pursuit in worsening weather conditions. HMS "Renown" and her four destroyers returned to patrol, while the German ships escaped northwards to return to Germany as best they could.

Considering the later career of the "Scharnhorst" and the "Gneisenau", one wonders whether it was possible that one or both could have been sunk in the fleeting action that took place that stormy April morning.

The simulation game "CA" was chosen for two reasons:

- the nature of the action dictates an alternate move situation
- the small number of ships involved.

Scenario

50 miles West of Vestfjord, 9th April 1940 (use the complete map sheet — no land)

British

Hex No.	Ship/type	Speed/heading
2720	1 Repulse BC-2	3/se
2419	4 Benson DD-5	3/se
2617		3/se
2722		3/se
2920		3/se

German

4622	2 modified Hiei BC-2	3/ne
4923	(Note A)	3/ne

Game Length: 20 Game turns

Special Rules and Victory Conditions

A. The Hiei BC-2 counters have a gunnery strength of 16 and a defensive strength of 12.

B. Weather

(1) Heavy seas restricts DDs to a maximum movement allowance of 4.

(2) Rain and snow squalls caused intermittent visibility during the action — each player at the start of his own turn throws a dice. A throw of 5 or 6 means that rain or snow masking the target — fire could be directed on the estimated position of the target, ie if the target moved in a straight line at its last known speed — so, if there is a ship in this hex you may fire — if not, you are wasting ammunition!

C. Victory Conditions

(1) Victory Points : German player totals these as follows:

Both German ships exit North edge	+30
For every hit on German ship	-5
Each German ship sunk	-30
One power or weapon hit on "Renown"	+5
Two power or weapon hits on "Renown"	+10
"Renown" sunk	+15
For each DD sunk	+1

(2) Victory Levels:

German Substantial victory	+45 to +41
German Marginal victory	+40 to +35
Draw	+34 to +25
British Marginal victory	+24 to +20
British Substantial victory	+19 or below

