# SPIRIT

## SPI RESEARCH, INFORMATION, AND TESTING

The Official Newsletter for the Friends of SPI • Letter Nr. 2

Over the years, we (the staff) have been greatly assisted in our various efforts by many people outside the formal structure of SPI. These people have become known around the office as the "Friends of SPI". Interaction with the Friends has always been on an informal basis, and largely the responsibility of the individual game-designer. And, since game designers are merely human, people who have rendered aid to SPI have occasionally been given short shrift, and some who have tried to render aid have even been (inadvertently) ignored. For years, a need to more systematically correspond with the Friends has existed, and we have now finally gotten around to doing something about it! This is a reprint of the *SPIRIT* newsletter which will, we hope, serve as a clearinghouse to provide interested parties with up-to-date news on current developments and to connect such people with the SPI staff, who need help in the completion of these projects.

Our first step has been to publish this newsletter dubbed "SPIRIT" — an acronym which we hope suggests the bond of common feelings that ties together the SPI staff and the informed network of helpful, interested folk all over the world. The *SPIRIT* is particularly intended for those people who have demonstrated their capability and willingness to assist SPI in the following areas:

**1. Blindtesting:** Ideally we would like to centralize our existing (rather haphazard) system of blindtesting with a pool of blindtesters upon which we could draw for every game. However, blindtesting, though most often enjoyable, is serious business. Anyone who has worked on games or has done any serious writing can testify to the dangers of being too close to your valued project and to the advantages of having a sharp and experienced critic to look things over. Blindtesting thus serves as an invaluable feedback system allowing us to evaluate and amend game systems and the rules which delineate them.

**2. Research:** Many readers of this Newsletter have over the years made significant research contributions. Often information provided by out-of-shop people has been of the greatest assistance. Though simulations dealing with the modern era and features such as FYEO have benefited the most from outside research, the state of the art has reached a point where designs dealing with earlier periods can certainly use independent input.

**3. Translation:** This is closely related to our growing research demands. To an increasing degree we are relying on non-English sources for both contemporary and historical games. Depending on the era under consideration, the standard of military research is often higher in German and French editions. People who are capable and willing to translate various key accounts of situations, etc., would certainly be warmly welcomed.

**4. Errata Composition:** Many old games have incomplete or non-existant errata. Often the original game designer is long gone from these hallowed halls, or pleads amnesia. At any rate, we frankly don't have the resources to clean-up all our old, out-of-date games. However, they are still played, and in some cases people out in the world have already cleaned up the game in a sensible fashion, while others are willing and able to do so. It should be possible to get several people cracking on their favorite unrecognized classic.

**5. Writing for *MOVES*:** We hope to establish personal contact with those individuals who submit articles for *MOVES*. If possible, we would like to form a network of regular *MOVES* contributors consisting of the highest quality writers available.

**6. Out-of-Shop Designs:** We do publish games by people not officially working for SPI. *A Mighty Fortress* and *Battles for the Ardennes* are examples of games designed by people who had no previous contact with SPI. People interested in submitting games for possible publication should make certain the game is fully developed and that the rules are entirely comprehensible. It would be a good idea to write the rules in a manner conforming with the official SPI format. The principles governing this format are to be found in the back of SPI's *Wargame Design* book. The reasons for requesting that manuscripts conform to these guidelines is simple. First, a game accepted for publication would eventually have to be translated into SPI style anyway. The second reason, though more important, is probably less commonly understood. The *General Rule* and *Case* approach to rules writing usually assures a straightforward presentation allowing the writer to avoid a convoluted approach. "Transparent" rules, comprehensible to the reviewers, provide the designer with a greater chance of acceptance.

**7. Miscellaneous:** Out-of-shop business and marketing projects, public relations, traveling show/Origins help, are some of the many areas where we could use outside assistance. These will be elaborated upon in subsequent issues of *SPIRIT*. Our use of outside help in these areas depends largely upon your response.

**Remuneration:** SPI's remuneration policy remains the same. Worthy blindtesters are acknowledged in the credits and entitled to a complimentary copy of any game they work with. Alternately, one may receive a credit good for the retail price of a game worked on. Work performed above and beyond the call of duty is not lost upon us and could result in a greater credit being awarded. Rewards for non-testing contributions are scant, aside from gratitude and acknowledgements in the credits when appropriate. But if you have something good to offer, the *SPIRIT* newsletter will tell you who to approach with it and you can negotiate directly with him.

Something to keep in mind: Please never allow anyone at SPI to put you in a position where you commit yourself to do more for us than you can reasonably do. That is unfair to everyone. Obviously it is unfair to you, a person with limited time to allocate to a hobby. It is also unfair to the person here at SPI who is depending up-on you (even if that expectation is unreasonable, no one here can judge whether that is so; *you* have to be the judge of it!) It is unfair to the person who could have helped had you not taken the opportunity. And finally, inasmuch as SPI is not able to dispose of unlimited amounts of money and time, it is unfair to the hobby, because it means that something that could have been done better may not be. And please be aware that if you *do* blow something you may not be asked to participate in such a project again. We have more than enough to keep us busy trying to save the games of the world from our *own* mistakes: we need help avoiding and correcting errors, not making them!

Although we at SPI are "professionals", we (at least most of us working on the games) do consider ourselves active participants in the hobby. Designing and publishing the best games possible is thus

both a function of professional pride and a simple desire to add to the joys of one of the most stimulating and enjoyable hobbies extant. We at SPI are aware of how many people share our view of what we are doing. We feel keenly the desire of the people to take a more active part in the seminal aspects of the hobby and herewith hope to provide them with a direct means of doing so.

## REQUESTS FROM THE SPIRIT WORLD

In the past few weeks things have been hectic around SPI's new offices at 257 Park Avenue South. Steve "Donny" Donaldson has started a remake of the old *East is Red* which will probably appear in *S&T*. He is interested in the OBs and relative effectiveness of the Chinese, Mongolian, Vietnamese, Indian, Korean, Japanese, and Taiwanese forces, and in the logistical and amphibious capabilities of both Chinas. Please *do not* send information that can be easily taken from publications like the *Military Balance*.

John Butterfield and Joe Balkoski need blindtesters in April or May to playtest *Stalingrad* and *Trafalgar* respectively.

Dave Isby has been working on *Naval War*. Dave is looking for someone who has practical experience on warships to blindtest. In conjunction with further developments on *Air War*, Dave is looking for pilots or aeronautical engineers who have information on Saab A37 Viggen, Saab A35 Draken, F-100 Super Sabre, North F-104 Starfighter, F-106 Delta Dart, F-8 Crusader, A-6 Intruder, Su-15 Flagon-E, Mig 19 Farmer, Harrier, Mirage F1, Lightning, Hunter, Meteor. Accompanying missiles are: Red Top, AA-5, Falcon, and Swedish RH.

In the next year, SPI will rework *PanzerArmee Afrika*. The new game will use the same system with all state of the art innovations added in, a correct and improved Order of Battle, and superior graphics. Blindtesters are solicited so that the Victory Conditions may be properly balanced. It is the opinion of the SPI staff that this game is an unpolished gem, and we intend to give it wider exposure. Send all applications in care of *SPIRIT*.

### *World War 3* and *Global War*

These two games suffer from unfinished development, but remain on the bestseller list. We would like to update these games by giving them a thorough overhaul. Therefore, we are looking for a serious individual willing to rewrite the rules and change the system so that the games will be playable and balanced. The counters and the map may *not* be changed, but some charts may. This will require a substantial commitment of time on the part of the person(s) who accepts this task, but there will be cash remuneration. *World War 3* has priority over *Global War*, so if the respondent is undecided, he should go with *World War 3*. Write to "World War 3" or "Global War" in care of *SPIRIT*.

### Game Questions and Errata

SPI has an extremely large line of games, and wishes to be able to answer questions and update errata on all products it has published. However, because staff inevitably turns over with the passage of time, we are looking for people who are interested in particular games to answer game questions and compile errata. Any person who wishes to apply for the position of "official" answer man should be forewarned that this requires thorough knowledge of the game system in question. All errata will be sent to SPI, in charge of the Games Questions editor, but all Games Questions will be sent by the Games Question editor to the answer man.

To apply for the position of answer man, send a letter to SPI and mark it *"Attention:* Eric Goldberg, Games Question Editor" to determine whether the game you wish to work on is indeed available. If the game of your choice is on the list below (or you are informed by return mail that we need a person for the position), a sample errata should be collated so the Editor may determine your ability. Remuneration will be in the form of game credit.

The following games are in immediate need of an answer man:

- **World War I Module**
- **Raid!**
- **October War**
- **Red Sun Rising**

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### Attention Fantasy Role-Playing Gamers

In the upcoming months, SPI will be endeavoring to produce a fantasy role-playing game, to be known as *Dragonslayer*. Due to the nature of the beast, the game will require extensive testing, starting as early as the conceptual stage. We need several good groups of people who will be willing to input into the design and development process. Requirements for this project include a commitment of about ten hours a week, reliability (in keeping in touch with SPI), and several friends with whom the game will be played.

If you are interested in working on this project, please respond to the following questions, and mail the responses to *SPIRIT*, in care of SPI. We will respond to those people we wish to use, by June 30 at the latest.

1. Have you ever played fantasy role-playing games before?
2. Have you ever worked with SPI on a game before publication?
3. If your answer to number 1 was yes, how many hours per week do you devote to fantasy role-playing games?
4. How many reliable role-playing people do you have access to on a once a week basis?
5. Do you prefer to be a player or a moderator (gamesmaster) when playing role-playing games?
6. What do you think is most important in a role-playing game (try to be specific —e.g., playing a role over game systems?
7. Would you prefer to test individual systems (such as magic or combat), or would you prefer to tackle the game as a whole?

Any additional comments would be appreciated, because the responsibility of the designer will be to select those who will do the best testing. The more we know about your preferences and perceptions, the better. However, we do not need long essays on your opinions on role-playing games. Thanks!

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### SpiBus *[continued from page 20]*

**Rights:.** SPI acquires *all* rights to all material upon final acceptance. The software designer will attest that the material submitted to SPI is essentially original and specifically developed for SPI and that no competing use or sale will be made by the software designer of the material developed by SPI.

**Support:** The software designer will remain in contact with SPI and provide answers to any questions SPI may have concerning the program and the impact of any changes in game material. The period of support obligation will extend for six months from the first sale of program to public.

#### General Structure of Program

A. The program will follow the Sequence of Play of the SPI game without embellishment or modification.

B. The user will be prompted with explicit print statements and interrogatories. The only permissable abbreviations are those used in the manual version of the game.

C. It should be possible for the user to interrupt and recover without having to restart the program from scratch.

In programs that have bookkeeping functions as well as resolution and procedural functions, it should be possible to review data at any time during the SOP.

E. The parts of the Sequence of Play should (when feasible) be treated as virtually independent, modularized "sub-programs" so that each major part of the sequence can be dealt with separately both in the editing and using process.

# SPIRIT PROFILE

In order to more intelligently communicate with *you* in particular, we need to know your interests and areas of specialization. It would help us if you would fill out the following as completely as possible. The information you provide is for our resource files only and will not be made public without your consent. If you do not wish to provide certain information, by all means omit it. You may photocopy this page, filling in the information requested and circling your answers to the numbered questions, or you may write your name, address, etc., on a postcard and list the questions (1 through 14) together with your number answer to each question; e.g., 1(4). Please mail your responses back to us as soon as possible.

Name _____

Street _____ Apt. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

**Phone (include Area Code)**

Home: ( ) _____ Business: ( ) _____

**Occupation** _____

**Official Business Title** _____

**Business Address** _____

**Education** _____

Give the amount of college and degrees received; describe majors and specific subject areas in which degrees were awarded.

_____

_____

**Military Service** (Branch, years, rank, specialty)

_____

**Language Skills**

Indicate those languages other than English with which you are familiar to a degree that might aid SPI. Print the name of each language and, directly after each language, indicate the degree of fluency based on the following code:

1 = Read well enough to gather meaning from context.
2 = Read and write moderately well.
3 = Read and write very well.
4 = Read and write well enough to translate into and from the language.
5 = Read and write well enough to translate into and from the language with great precision.

_____

_____

Indicate your experience or training in programming languages and use of computers:

_____

_____

Indicate any other skills or experience you have that you might volunteer to SPI:

_____

_____

Please complete the following portion of the Profile questionnaire by circling the number of the best response to each question. In some questions, you are asked to indicate more than one preference.

1. In which of the following types of games are you most interested (circle as many as three responses)?
   1 = Mapboard wargaming. 2 = Miniatures wargaming. 3 = Diplomatic/political gaming. 4 = Science fiction boardgaming. 5 = Fantasy boardgaming. 6 = Role-playing games. 7 = All or almost all of the above.
2. How do you play most games (choose one)?
   1 = Mainly solitaire. 2 = Mainly against an opponent. 3 = Mainly against an opponent, and usually the same opponent. 4 = About half solitaire and half against an opponent
3. How many sides do you prefer in a game (choose as many as two)?
   1 = Solitaire designs. 2 = Two-player designs. 3 = Multi-player designs. 4 = No preference
4. What game length do you prefer (choose one)?.
   1 = Up to two hours. 2 = Two to four hours. 3 = Four to eight hours. 4 = Eight to 12 hours. 5 = More than 12 hours (i.e., more than a single day). 6 = No preference
5. How much of your game playing involves big games, such as *War in Europe, Terrible Swift Sword,* etc. (choose one)?
   1 = Very little or none. 2 = Some. 3 = At least half. 4 = A majority
6. If you play regularly against face-to-face opponents, how much of this play involves more than one person (choose as many as two)?
   1 = Very little or none. 2 = Some, with groups involving mainly multi-player games. 3 = Some, with groups playing teams in basically two-player games. 4 = At least half, with groups involving multi-player games. 5 = At least half, with groups playing teams in basically two-player games.
7. In what way would you most like to assist SPI (choose as many as three)?
   1 = Research. 2 = Blind-testing. 3 = Marketing/public relations. 4 = Other (specify) _____
8. Do you have special access to information which you think might be useful to SPI, either in a business sense or in the context of history or current military affairs?
   1 = Yes (please describe in a separate note). 2 = No
9. What is your favorite game scale (choose one)?.
   1 = Tactical. 2 = Operational. 3 = Strategic. 4 = No preference
10. What is your second favorite game scale (choose one)?
    1 = Tactical. 2 = Operational. 3 = Strategic. 4 = No preference
11. What historical period interests you most (choose one)?
    1 = Ancient. 2 = Middle Ages and Renaissance. 3 = 30 Years War/pre-Napoleonic. 4 = Napoleonic. 5 = Civil War/19th Century. 6 = World War I (1900 to 1930). 7 = World War II (1931 to 1945). 8 = Post-World War II and Modern. 9 = Science Fiction and Fantasy
12. What historical period interests you most after the period chosen in Question 11 (choose one)?
    1 = Ancient. 2 = Middle Ages and Renaissance. 3 = 30 Years War/pre-Napoleonic. 4 = Napoleonic. 5 = Civil War/19th Century. 6 = World War I (1900 to 1930). 7 = World War II (1931 to 1945). 8 = Post-World War II and Modern. 9 = Science Fiction and Fantasy
13. Have you ever designed a simulation game (choose one)?
    1 = No, and I have no desire to do so. 2 = No, but I would eventually like to do so. 3 = Yes, but only on an amateur level. 4 = Yes, and to a professional standard (although not yet published). 5 = Yes, and it was published on a semi-professional basis. 6 = Yes, and it was published as a fully professional item.
14. Are you now a member of a wargaming club?
    1 = Yes. 2 = No