OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS

RED SUN RISING
Complex but Compact
by Douglas M. Dery

Red Sun Rising was the last game that Frank Davis designed for SPI (he now works for Avalon Hill). Frank and I had a number of conversations early in the conceptual stages of the game in which he was wrestling with the difficult problem of somehow restraining the Japanese without making the game too artificial. Later on, Mark Herman (the developer) and I batted around several ideas on the tactical naval system mechanics. We all got together again on the components and the large ship counters resulted. There are a number of nice touches in the game which I’m afraid won’t get the attention they deserve because of the relative unpopularity of the subject. — RAS

If 1977 can be adjudged as the year that saw the “monster game” gain preeminence at SPI, it was also the year that witnessed strong, solid strides made in its other, smaller, less heralded releases. Smaller, in this instance, is accurate only in terms of physical size and pricing. In terms of proficiency of design and lavish graphics, they are not small games. The expertise acquired and demonstrated in the production of the larger games is present in these smaller games as well. In Veracruz, The Conquerors and Drive on Stalingrad, the pride in craft is no less evident because of the smaller price they command.

Concurrent with this has been the imagination (and courage) demonstrated in the recent explorations of more obscure and neglected historical conflicts, the one exclusive and exotic domain of GDW. This trend is laudable and welcome, and as a historian-game, I feel it is to be encouraged. The release of every new historical title sends this writer off to the library to research the topic. It is one of the main enjoyments I derive from acquiring new games. I admit to having felt left behind by the hobby, having never come to grips with modern and Sci-Fi titles. But one can come home again. Titles, new and proposed, recall to mind that fruitful period at SPI from 1970 to 1972 when its design and publication philosophy in such games as Centurion, Franco-Prussian War and USN ignited the soul. The existing concepts of the hobby were shattered then. Will it happen again? Who knows?

Red Sun Rising, a new release from SPI is the current measure of that trend. An interesting sidelight was that it was proposed in issue #59 of S&T in which appeared an excellent article on the Russo-Japanese War by Sterling Hart, who is a member of SPI’s Board of Directors. Generally articles on game subject matter appear after a title’s release. The many strengths of the article in research and presentation of material certainly contributed to reader acceptance of a game based on that conflict. The Russo-Japanese has not received much gaming coverage, with the few available titles on it receiving indifferent response. These are GDW’s Port Arthur and Tsushima (available jointly as Russo-Japanese War naturally enough), and Siege of Port Arthur and Mukden, 1905 by other, smaller publishers. Their rankings on S&T’s Game Ratings Chart were not good. This is not to denigrate these games, several of which I am unfamiliar with, but merely by way of showing that the track record is not good.

Red Sun Rising (hereafter referred to by the almost inevitable acronym, RSR) is a ground/naval simulation of the Russo-Japanese War covering the period from February 1904 to December 1905. Land combat is on the operational level, with combat units representing division and brigade formations. Naval operations are handled on two levels. First, there is the strategic level with its fleet movement and conduct of searches. Secondly, there is the tactical level where the stylized combat occurs between individual ships and flotillas of the two belligerents. The 22" x 34" map sheet covers the areas of Asiatic Russia, Manchuria and Korea over which the conflict ranged; it spans from Port Arthur in the west, south to Seoul and proceeds up along the Sea of Japan to Vladivostok. The terrain depicted is primarily rough with intermittent stretches of mountains. The few stretches of clear terrain are almost exclusively coastal; the largest expanse, situated on the Gulf of Liaotung, runs northeast toward Mukden. The clear terrain situated on the northern edge of the map, by reason of its remoteness has little if any bearing on play. The remaining — and perhaps most crucial — terrain feature is Trans-Siberian Railroad. The actual main line is the short section of track between hex 3337 and Vladivostok. More important in terms of the game was the subsidiary Chinese Eastern Railway that runs south from 3316 to Port Arthur. Finally, a small strategic naval map located on the lower right hand side of the map sheet handles the movement of the two players’ fleets.

The 400+ counters represent the leaders, combat units, capital ships, flotillas and merchant fleets of both sides. In addition, there are markers to keep track of such items as replacements, supply levels, and fleet composition. There are several neat touches here. To help differentiate between full strength units and those of reduced strength, parentheses bracket the unit size symbol. It may not seem like a big deal, but it is truly helpful for distinguishing between the two. The ship counters are particularly worthy of note. Similar in size to the ship counters found in Jutland, the indefatigable Redmond Simonsen and his overworked Art Department have provided attractive, individualized ship silhouettes. At a glance players can differentiate between battleships, Fuji and Fusō, and gain an insight as to their varying quality. It is gratifying to see components convey such information, fleshing out the barebone data. Indirectly, I’m certain it improves one’s level of play.

Rounding out the component inventory are the unit assignment displays, which facilitate command control and a tactical naval display, about which more will be said elsewhere. They convey all necessary information in immediate, concise terms and enhance, rather than impair, playability.

RSR is played in 23 turns, each turn representing one month of actual time. The length of the game can vary based on the success a particular player is enjoying at several determination points in the game. Each turn is composed of distinct naval and land segments for both players, and the particular segments comprise their own sub-stages. In both sequences, the Russian player proceeds before the Japanese player.

Military operations by both sides in RSR are influenced by leadership and logistics. Weather is the third influence; it is incidental to the performance of the previous two and the effects of it on them are not salutary.

Leaders

Command control is a long time design rationale on the part of SPI. It seeks to recreate the fog of war and to impose constraints on the players similar to the actual constraints. In its mechanics it seeks to deprive, with minimal artificiality, the players of the advantage that hindsight affords them. It also permits greater variety in play, with no game exactly like another.

The command initiative system in RSR is similar to, but not identical with, the command system found in War Between the States. The principal Japanese and Russian land and naval commanders have been rated on the basis of their historical performance in such areas as courage, technical knowledge, determination, and perseverance. A single numerical value has been used on the basis of a one through five scale with 3
representing average performance. This number is then compared to a command die roll; the higher the command value, the greater the propensity for response. Following is a chart giving the dependability of each commander; in terms of percentages. The command evaluation is given in parentheses followed by percentages. From left to right, they represent command modifications (reflecting weather conditions) of zero (0), plus one, and plus two.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JAPANESE</th>
<th>(0) (+1) (+2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SQH (Oyama, eff. of 4) plus a:</td>
<td>100% 100% 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four (4) rated leader increases the initiative to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three (3) rated leader</td>
<td>100% 100% 83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two (2) rated leader</td>
<td>100% 83% 66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUSSIAN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHQ (Alexiev or Kuropatkin, both with eff. of 3) plus a:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three (3) rated leader</td>
<td>100% 83% 66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two (2) rated leader</td>
<td>83% 66% 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One (1) rated leader</td>
<td>66% 50% 33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The similarity of the RSR and WBTS systems was mentioned in passing above. There are notable differences. The appearance of leaders is not dependent upon random selection. Their appearance and withdrawal is tightly scheduled, and although it affords 100% presence to players that can be taken advantage of, the varying capability of players to act on that knowledge should balance things. Individual units outside the span of command may roll for initiative. Full strength divisions possess an evaluation of 2, while depleted divisions as well as brigades possess a 1. They are subject to the same modifications to the die.

**Logistics**

Supply is the second strong influence on military operations in RSR. The effect of being without supply is a brutal attrition that totally eliminates units within two turns. The three movement point range severely restricts operations unless path can be traced over rail, road and clear terrain. Commanders can also extend the length of that path. Supply can be either General or Limited.

General Supply for the Russian originates from hexes 3316 and 3337. The optimum paths for tracing supply from them are along the rail hexes that originate there. This greatly increases supplied Russian activity. As a result, the Russian must take great pains to retain the uninterrupted existence of these lines for the general health of his entire army. For the Japanese, the source of General Supply is his home islands from which a conduit of merchant shipping funnels supply to his invading forces. The main danger to the safety of this pipeline are sorties by the Russian Pacific Ocean Squadron and the appearance of the Baltic Fleet in May 1905.

Limited Supply for the Russian accumulates at Port Arthur and Vladivostok as long as the fortresses are able to trace General Supply. Limited Supply permits both these fortresses to withstand enemy investments; they both begin with initial quantities of Limited Supply. As Port Arthur is more susceptible to isolation, Limited Supply should be stockpiled there before turning to the needs of Vladivostok. Japanese Limited Supply can be drawn from any Japanese merchant fleet present in a port or coastal hex. Japanese units can only trace Limited Supply; the concept of General Supply for him refers to the ability to maintain the presence of his merchant fleets. The success of the Japanese ground campaign is directly dependent upon the conduct of naval operations.

Terrain as it affects Stacking and Zones of Control should also be mentioned. Clear, City and Fortress hexes permit the stacking of 12 Command Points; Rough terrain permits only six points, Mountains, four points. Only four Command Points can stack on Rail Lines for purposes of Rail Movement. As a point of reference, full strength divisions are worth two points for stacking purposes; brigades and reduced divisions are each worth one point. Commanders, merchant shipping, trenches, garrisons and siege artillery possess unlimited stacking.

Zones of Control are exerted into non-clear terrain hexes only through contiguous road hexes. This means that unless a defensive line is established along continuous hexes, it is porous. Infiltration on the Korean peninsula and from the southeast approaches to Liaoyang and Mukden will be frequently witnessed in the game. Maneuvers of this nature are integral parts of the combat process as will be seen below.

**Combat**

There are two types of combat: land combat and naval combat. The systems in RSR are interesting syntheses of previous game elements, with several unique twists that provide interesting problem solving situations. The actual resolution is simple; the subtlety derives from various Players' solutions to the situations.

Land combat occurs when opposing forces occupy adjacent hexes and one player decides to initiate combat. The Land Combat Results Table (LCRT) reflects the heavy attrition and static nature of combat that characterized the engagements of the Russo-Japanese War. The LCRT shows losses in terms of step losses; and it is particularly bloody. No push-pull combat here. A contested position can be vacated/seized only with the complete destruction of the defending unit(s). Engagements are generally inconclusive unless heavy numbers of forces are brought to bear, with the survivors exploiting any advantage gained. Terrain and the presence of Commanders bring adjustments to the die roll. But even at the highest odds, the attacker faces a 57% chance of incurring losses and a 42% chance of losses equal to those suffered by the defender.

The inability of commanders in the actual campaign to adequately exploit local success is also reflected here. Retreat before combat is permitted to the defender; however, the attacker does not have the ability to immediately move into the hex. He must wait until the end of the particular combat phase to do so. The same is true of advancing into hexes vacated as a result of combat. This deprives the attacker of the opportunity to contrive, by instant movement after combat, the opportunity to gain ground or to deprive
Maneuver in RSR is decisive in its effects during the approach to combat phase. It must be used to place units out of supply before initiating combat. A defender out of supply at the beginning of combat is automatically eliminated; while a unit must be in supply to attack. The defender, unless totally surrounded, always has the option to retreat to avoid such a fate. The retreat may be either one or two hexes at the defending player’s option; a retreat of two hexes allows for the 50% possibility of a step loss.

The Combat Stage is unique, I believe, in that it is composed of a series of rounds extending to a maximum of three rounds. All combat of a round is resolved before proceeding to the next. Again, design has admirably recreated the multiple assault nature of the fighting between the actual combatants.

Naval Combat is also of interesting design. Upon the completion of certain preliminaries, combat is resolved on the Tactical Naval Display. Fleet Morale is crucial; it affects every aspect of naval engagements. A fleet’s initial morale equals the Initiative Rating of its commanding admiral and is affected by considerations of new appointments, lack of aggression, combat losses and deaths of admirals, and by time spent in a friendly port. The fleet at a morale disadvantage is forced to act defensively. It must always move away from an opponent or “open the range;” it may never seek to close with an opponent. The maximum speed at which it may open the range may not exceed its morale factor. Its opponent then is always capable of overtaking it if he so desires and the length of engagement permits it.

The Tactical Naval Display, functions in a manner similar to the tactical display found in The Conquerors. It is an arrangement of parallel rows of boxes – a stylized representation of opposing Main and Secondary Fleet Battalines reflecting the rigid combat doctrine of the period. The individual ships and flotillas are arrayed best against best. The side having more high-quality ships is naturally favored. The first ship of the battalline is the flagship, and because of this it draws plenty of enemy attention to itself. In terms of defensive strength, it should be of top quality. It is not usually sound for a squadron of cruisers to take on battleships, unless the latter is acutely disadvantaged in terms of morale.

Range, weather, and length of engagement all come together to allow players to grasp and simulate the essentials of naval capabilities without being overwhelmed by them.

**Comparing the Two Armies**

The greatest strength of the Russian Army is that the Russian in a very real sense determines the composition and strengths of the forces he will wield in the game. This is because the Russian player receives, instead of set reinforcements, a set schedule of replacement points that he may use to create new units or rebuild reduced ones. The initial Russian forces on the map correspond to 11 replacement points. The points necessary to field all available units at full strength would be 90 (minus the initial 11, this would mean 79 replacement points expended). As the Russian player receives only 77 replacement points in the game, it will not be possible for the Russian player to field all his units. When allowances are made for the fact that at several times the Russian will be compelled to rebuild reduced units, the number becomes even less. A capable Russian player should be able to gauge his needs and allot points for rebuilding and reinforcement as necessary, keeping in mind what he hopes ultimately to do with his forces. As there is no lead-time (reinforcements and replacements are available in the same turn as the points are made available) the Russian can take advantage of a situation as it occurs. This flexibility is a great strength. Although it is impossible to anticipate all exigencies, the Russian who proceeds without some defensive or offensive goal will come to grief as his greatest strength becomes his greatest weakness.

In terms of total units, the Russian qualitatively as well as quantitatively outstrips the Japanese. The combat strengths of each Russian exceeds or, at worst, equals comparable Japanese units. It follows that their loss is correspondingly greater. To demonstrate this let us consider the situation of a Russian infantry division (8-2-5) attacking a Japanese infantry division (7-2-5). The combat at 1:1 results in a split 1/1 result; each side losing one step and both replaced with units valued (4-1-5). What has happened is that the Russian has lost 4 combat factors to the Japanese 3 factors. It has also lost an existing 1:2 defense advantage. While perhaps not significant in the isolated instance, spread over repeated instances this uneven attrition rate can have serious ramifications.

The obvious Russian weakness is the initial poor commanders the player has to work with. So be it. A sow’s ear does not a silk purse make. Saddled with mediocrity, lower your expectations accordingly. By establishing realistic goals for them, the disappointments will lessen. With time the opportunities and the leaders capable of utilizing those opportunities will materialize.

The Japanese Army, unlike the Russian Army, is a known quantity; a set of units which are available begin on the map at full strength. Japanese commanders are superior. This, combined with the fact that the Japanese are stronger initially in numbers of units, give it a decided edge. Unfortunately, the lack of commanders hinders flexible operations until May 1904 (when Oku and Nozu become available). With sufficient leaders, the army is supple and extremely proficient; but it must be wielded with intelligence. The necessity for speed, efficiency, and decisiveness in light of the restraints of time must be grasped and understood by the Japanese player.

Materially, the greatest Japanese drawback is the inability to make good losses with either frequency or quantities that matter.

**Comparing the Two Navies**

At the commencement of the game the opposing fleets in the Far East are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Russia</th>
<th>Japan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Battleships, 1st Class</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battleships, 2nd Class</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battleships, 3rd Class</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruisers, 1st Class</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruisers, 2nd Class</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruisers, 3rd Class</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroyer Flotillas</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torpedo Flotillas</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant Shipping</td>
<td>7*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*can increase to a maximum of 12 through foreign aid.

Of the Russian ships, four first class cruisers are stationed at Vladivostok. A tenth, the Varyag, is at Chemulpo and is considered sunk on the first turn. The Port Arthur Fleet, under Admiral Stark and isolated from Vladivostok, is inferior in fighting power to the Japanese fleet, commanded by Vice Admiral Togo. The ace in the hole for the Russian is the powerful Baltic Fleet composed of:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Battleships, 1st Class</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battleships, 2nd Class</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battleships, 3rd Class</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruisers, 1st Class</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruisers, 2nd Class</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruisers, 3rd Class</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroyer Flotillas</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Should the Baltic Fleet unite with the Port Arthur Fleet, the Russian will dramatically outnumber the Japanese. Admirals (again) are a Russian weakness, although Markov is up there with Togo. A much more profound weakness for the Russian is the vulnerability of Port Arthur to capture by enemy ground forces. Vladivostok’s unsuitability is apparent from looking at the Strategic Naval Map. A Russian fleet there could not intervene in the Yellow Sea and could easily be bottled up.

The Japanese inferiority in capital ships is even further aggravated by the high proportion of 2nd and 3rd Class vessels in its fleet. Don’t let Togo be caught dead leading any engagement in the Fuso. Keep it and others of its kind safe within home waters. Do not let your turkeys become the meat on your opponent’s table.

[Ed. Note: Unknown to Mr. Dery, the powerful Russian DesFlot 8, with its Attack Strength of 8, is the product of typographical...]

The area where the Japanese does possess an inherent advantage is in the number of Torpedo and Destroyer flotillas that will give it an edge in torpedo attacks.

\[1:7\text{ TorpFlot 2} \quad 1:5\text{ DesFlot 6}\]
error. It should have an Attack Strength of 1, as have all Destroyer Flotillas in the game."

While both sides are capable of repairing damaged (not sunk) ships, the Japanese, with his more numerous and secure anchorages has the tilt in this instance. Conversely, his greatest weakness is the extreme vulnerability of his merchant shipping to Russian raiding. In particular, Merchant Ship Sector A can never be considered 100% secure until Port Arthur has fallen; given the slightest opportunity, the Russian can be expected to raid there.

### Japanese Strategy

The outcome of the war for the Japanese hinges on naval supremacy and the recognition that that supremacy hinges on the conquest of Port Arthur. Its position and the Russian fleet present there command the sea communications to Japan. Starting from this, the Japanese Player's goal is to take certain strongholds or be the last player to have passed through them. The cities are Seoul, Port Arthur, Liaoyang, Mukden, Chang-tufu, Kirin and Vladivostok. Complicating the matter is the condition that a certain number of these cities must be controlled by the end of each calendar quarter. This qualification meshes conveniently with the actual timetable of Japanese conquest. The Japanese Player must therefore equal or exceed the performance of his actual counterpart; if he should fail to do so, the game is over and victory evaluated. Unless the Japanese is willing to stretch himself in order to enhance the level of his victory, he should realize that several of the indicated cities are potentially unsuitable strategic goals. Foremost among them is Vladivostok.

Vladivostok lies on the extreme right flank of the Japanese. It is remote from the other cities, and operations against it would mean the inability to concentrate against the others. Its loss would in no way contribute to the weakening of the Russian defenses elsewhere. In the case of a fortress like Port Arthur, its capture would require a costly siege. If the Russian should neglect it, it is a possible objective for Spring 1905.

Chang-tufu and Kirin's positions within the interior protect them. Ensnosed in rough terrain with their fronts and flanks masked by rivers, they are formidable defensive positions. This inherent advantage is supplemented by the complications presented which the Japanese will have to overcome to conduct operations that far from his coastal bases of supply.

Of the remaining cities, Seoul is practically giftwrapped for the Japanese taking, while the other three are concentrated in relative proximity. (They were actually seized by the Japanese.) In game terms this represents a Japanese Marginal Victory. The following strategy outline focuses on the achievement of that level of victory.

The optimum Japanese plan is as follows:

1. Immediately attempt to bring the Russian fleet at Port Arthur to action, where superior Japanese morale under Togo should prove conclusive. Should the Russian refuse to fight, blockade Port Arthur and Vladivostok concurrently, increasing levels of mines at both ports.

2. Reduce Port Arthur by land operations before it can be reinforced overland and before the appearance of the Tsarist Baltic Fleet. After initially securing Seoul, land three armies on the northern shore of the Bay of Korea under protection of the fleet. As soon as possible after these landings, a fourth army should be organized and landed in order to attack or lay siege to Port Arthur. The first three armies, in the meantime, are to move on Liaoyang and Mukden before the Russian Player can establish secure defensive lines and achieve numerical superiority. These armies, incidental to their own operations, screen the rear of the forces investing Port Arthur.

### Japanese Operations

**Game-Turns 1-3:**

- With Kuroki, land at Chemulpo (0120), seize Seoul (0121), and begin advance toward Wiju (1413) and the Yalu River. On the way, secure Chinsampo (0715). Do not become snarled in inconclusive combat with possible Russian screening forces. Once across the Yalu, closely monitor your supply situation; judicious positioning of Kuroki will enable limited incursions.

**Game-Turns 4-6:**

- Oku, Nozu, and Nogi's respective armies land in Manchuria. Kuroki, if hung up on the Yalu, may also envelop that obstacle. Ideal invasion sites are Pilsowo (1106) for Oku; Takushan (1310) for Nozu; and Antung (1412) for Kuroki. Oku is responsible with his forces for the seizure of Nanshan (0903) and Dalny (0803). The fall of Dalny will permit siege artillery necessary for the reduction of Port Arthur to be landed and subsequently moved. The First and Fourth Japanese Armies proceed from their landing sites toward objectives in the north, cutting the rails to Port Arthur somewhere between hexes 1606 and 1105. Taking care to secure their communications, the Japanese should avoid costly (in terms of time and casualties) reductions of Russian holding forces while establishing their flanking moves on Liaoyang (0808). If the Japanese player anticipates a lengthy siege of Port Arthur, forces there may be entrusted to Nogi while the besieged Russians slowly starve. Oyama arriving in July assumes overall command of the armies, increasing their effectiveness and coordination by so doing.

**Game-Turns 7-8:**

- This is the initial critical period for the Japanese as he begins to feel the time squeeze. A second city must be seized for the game to continue. Liaoyang is the likely city of decision. The Japanese should possess the advantage of a larger army in the field. With his better command coordination, the Japanese should be able to outmaneuver the Russian stretching the latter's line of resistance, concentrating on weak spots that result with the Russian thrashing in the throes of mediocre leadership. Japanese cavalry can work their way to the rear of Liaoyang sniping its rail to the north. Dilatory Japanese action at this point can bring the game to a hasty end and an early Russian Decisive Victory.

**Game-Turns 9 and Beyond:**

- Increased Japanese pressure is brought to bear against Port Arthur to force its collapse by the end of December. Concurrently, the Japanese forces of First, Second, and Fourth Armies close in on Mukden (2310), positioning it within the pincers of a double envelopment. Adverse seasonal command modifications should not hamper the Japanese to the extent they will affect Russian command control. Kuroki and Oku operating on the flanks, with Nozu in the center, should repeat the success they enjoyed at Liaoyang. With the careful positioning of Oyama, all three will react 100% of the time through December.

- With the fall of Mukden by March, 1904, the Japanese will have achieved their minimal victory conditions. Their losses to that date, combined with the strength of forces in front of them, will determine whether the Japanese will continue on the offensive (possibly against Vladivostok) or assume the strategic defensive. The game would end in June 1905 (Game-Turn 17) as a result.

### Naval Operations

At the outset, every effort should be made to displace the Tsarist Pacific Ocean Squadron by bringing it to action and defeating it. Send Togo with the 1st Class Battleships and Cruisers, the Torpedo Flotillas, and several Destroyer Flotillas. Kamimura, with the balance of the Japanese fleet should intimidate Von Essen at Vladivostok. Mine laying can proceed in earnest, since a Russian sortie is not likely. The advantage of following the Russian in determining naval initiative permits flexibility. With a dormant Russian fleet, amphibious landings, in support of those in the Bay of Korea, can take place in the Gulf of Liaotung near Kaiping (1606) or at Yingkou (1706).

- Markov is an activist, but do not become complacent to the threat Von Essen represents. He will react half the time. Admiral Kamimura has no morale advantage (indeed he has a good chance to be caught napping), so any force under him should be sufficiently strong to overcome this parity. With the battleship Chin Yen and Chitose Class cruisers, a tactical edge can be maintained.

- Merchant shipping in Coastal Sector A may entice the Port Arthur squadron under Markov to sortie, as will the imminent fall of Port Arthur to your ground forces. Maintain your guard.

- Mine the harbors at both Port Arthur and Vladivostok. By September 1904, mine levels should be at their maximum. At Level 8, battleships at Port Arthur face a one in six
chance of being sunk. Flagships face a one in six (16%) chance of damage as well.

Blockade also has its risks for the Japanese fleet. Given below are the percentages for possible attrition at different seasons. From left to right the percentages represent: no effect; 5 defensive points disabled; 10 defensive points disabled; 2 Battleships sunk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>66%</th>
<th>16%</th>
<th>16%</th>
<th>0%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring, Autumn</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In any event, it is imperative that the Port Arthur Fleet be captured or destroyed before the Baltic Fleet arrives. It should be done in sufficient time to permit the Japanese Fleet to refit.

**Russian Strategy**

The main Russian objective is to deny the Japanese the victory outlined above. To achieve that end, a generally defensive policy should be adopted. The Russian Player must assume Port Arthur will be cut off for a considerable period in order to avoid defeat in detail as he comes to grips with the limited capabilities of his commanders. Until able to assume the offensive, a Russian main line of resistance should be established in front of Liaoyang. From this point of concentration, detachments can be sent out toward Port Arthur to relieve it. The main factors governing this strategy are the rail line to Liaoyang and the reinforcement/replacement rate of the Russian troops in Manchuria — the rail line being secure, the rate of reinforcement being slow.

Russian retention of four cities will yield the player a Marginal Victory. A higher level, I believe, would be more the result of Japanese Player ineptitude than decisive Russian action.

**Russian Operations**

**Game-Turns 1-4:**

The first thing to realize is that, because the Japanese always move second, they have the opportunity to capitalize upon your chronic command paralysis.

Use replacement points to bring on infantry divisions. Since numbers are more important than relative combat strengths, bring on the divisions at reduced strength. Trenching begins at Port Arthur and Vladivostok. The 5th and 9th East Siberian Infantry Divisions, with the division appearing on the first turn, proceed by rail to Dalny. Cavalry and Zasultich screen the Yalu from Antung. Subsequent reinforcements begin the screening of a defensive line around Liaoyang utilizing the grain of hex 1800. Complete trenching at Port Arthur and Vladivostok. Kuropatkin conducts defensive preparations from Liaoyang. Trenches are constructed at Dalny.

The Japanese landings in the Bay of Korea should not catch the Russian Player by surprise. The isthmus should be defended at Nanshan, with possible trenches constructed. The Supply Level at Port Arthur should reflect a steady flow of replenishment.

**Game-Turns 5-8:**

In response to the Japanese landings, the Russian begins a slow retreat falling back toward Liaoyang. Retreats will be extremely difficult in the face of flank pressure by the Japanese. Nanshan should be held for as long as possible; the Russian should quickly realize that its defense means less supply for Port Arthur itself and fewer strength points as well. Because of supply considerations, Dalny is untenable with the fall of Nanshan; forces defending there will be compelled to fall back on Port Arthur. A sacrifice unit remaining behind will thwart the landing of Japanese siege artillery.

With the Japanese closing in on Liaoyang, the initial outpost line should fall to repeated, heavy Japanese assaults. This post-line situation two hexes out from Liaoyang should be anchored on the Liao River (1906) tapering off in the rough terrain to the west (1811). Keeping his army intact, the Russian should fall back on his second, entrenched lines. With the increase in his replacement rate, the manpower situation should begin to turn around. With commanders unable to adequately cope with Japanese flanking efforts, Kuropatkin should extract the bulk of his command before it is totally isolated and fall back on Mukden. Initial preparations should have commenced in anticipation of this eventualty.

**Game-Turns 9-11:**

With the fall of Liaoyang, the Japanese player will probably turn his attention toward Port Arthur to insure its fall before the appearance of the Baltic Fleet. If he should do so, events are pretty much out of the Russian’s hands. Any easing of the pressure in front of Mukden should be taken advantage of by the Russian player. Seasonal command modifications will increase the margin of Japanese command superiority, permitting them to continue running circles around Russian forces. However, if the Russian has been successful in extracting strength from the Japanese, such incursions should not jeopardize the defenses rising around Mukden.

**Game-Turns 12-14:**

With the fall of Port Arthur, the Russian braces for the final onslaught against Mukden. Commanders will be practically immobile due to winter, so final defensive positions must be set before then. The city will probably be too strongly held for the Japanese to assault directly, so an indirect approach to isolate the city may be witnessed. If the Russian can prevent the cutting of his rail line behind him until at least March 1904, Mukden will remain his.

**Naval Operations:**

Russian operations are simpler than those of the Japanese mainly because the Russian squadrons must remain almost totally passive for the majority of the game. The initial morale disadvantage they suffer under Admiral Stark, while made good by the appearance of Markov, nonetheless sets the tone of the overall situation. While Markov is certainly aggressive, the Russian must assume that nearly all victories will be pyrrhic. In an all-out duel with Togo, Markov with his inferior numbers will inevitably come out second best. Worst of all, defeat or reluctance to fight feeds upon itself as morale drops, further lowering initiative. The temperament of the individual player plays perhaps its greatest role here in terms of the overall game. An aggressive Russian can throw Togo off balance, perhaps even compelling him to withdraw from blockading for a turn. But this is rare.

Uniting with the Baltic Fleet is ideal, but even that will be of little benefit if Port Arthur is lost. Vladivostok is too easily sealed by Tsushima Strait. Tsugaru and La Perouse Straits are impractical to venture in or out of because of the great distances involved; movement will generally be greater than the 10 hexes permissible.

Attempt to break out when the opportunity to inflict the greatest damage to merchant shipping with the slightest risk to oneself occurs. The best chance should arise between Game-Turn Four and the imminent fall of Dalny when the Bay of Korea should be crowded with Japanese shipping. Fog and storms will help in eluding enemy searches; the Russian will be aware of these conditions before he commences his raids, an added fillip.

The impending fall of Port Arthur provides another instance of incentive for the Russian to venture out, dashing for Vladivostok. Before doing so however give thought to intentionally disabling strength points in exchange for a naval brigade if it would serve to defer the collapse of resistance, perhaps even beyond the end of a season.

Von Essen is also highly useful in raids, particularly in the early game (with its lower mine levels), should Kamimura fail to respond to command die rolls. Such a raid occurring in Japanese home waters would seriously cripple the Japanese merchant fleet there and could, perhaps, make its way to a link-up at Port Arthur. From there, the combined fleets could emerge as one against Togo. Keep in mind the desultory effects of the seasons upon Von Essen’s efficiency.

Possession of initiative on any turn in which Togo is sluggish should be taken advantage of; should both Japanese admirals falter, the Russian can run riot.

**Conclusion**

To obtain his victory, the Japanese player must maintain the momentum and mass of his forces, avoiding heavy and inconclusive involvement with Russian delaying forces. He must remain resolute and decisive.
in his approach toward and contact with the main points of resistance. The implications of flanking must be grasped and such maneuvers competently executed. Dilatory action works only to his detriment. The failure to realize the interdependence of his naval campaign and his logistics will cost heavily.

The Russian wins by properly constructing a succession of formidable defensive lines. Never over-defending, he must attrition off as much of the Japanese strength as is possible, before retiring upon a new line. Holding Port Arthur for as long as possible is critical. Its early demise means more Japanese troops seeking to overload your defenses elsewhere.

These generalities pour forth easily enough, but the proficiency in their application will emerge only by repeated playing of RSR. The many implications of the game’s design subsystems can only be appreciated in that way. Personally, it has unlocked many aspects of the actual conflict in a concise and lucid fashion.

The game itself is a delight. I don’t pretend that what I have written here is the last word on the matter. What SPI has delivered is a challenging game in the manner of the “giants,” but within a format that can fit on a card table and be concluded in an honest one-evening session that does not range from dusk to dawn. The brevity of the rules are a revelation as well. RSR is a pleasant mesh of old and new; the ideas contained within it work. It can stand by itself as an excellent game, while holding out the promise of more like it to follow.

Bibliography

**HELP WANTED**

More than most people realize, the process of designing and publishing historical games is very much a co-operative effort. While the amount of input from outside SPI varies considerably from project to project, very little happens here at SPI that is not affected by opinions and/or information generated by people outside the company. The people working here at SPI do as much editing as they do writing or designing. And most of us enjoy that sort of work; a constant influx of new ideas is a critical element in sustaining a creative community. If you want to, you can probably help us in one way or another.

**Research.** We are constantly in need of military information. This applies both to particular historical games (watch the progress reports on the games to see if something you have on is being worked on) as well as contemporary information for FYEO (TO and E’s, deployments, and weapons data, especially).

**Games Testing.** If you live near New York, why not get involved in the ongoing game testing we do at SPI? Generally this is done Friday nights. If you don’t live near New York, perhaps you would be interested in “blind-testing” SPI prototype games. Write to Brad Hessel.

**R&D Employment at SPI.** We are always on the lookout for people with experience in gaming, historical analysis, and writing who are interested in working on games for a living. Starting salary for a full-time R&D runs upward from $7-8,000, with swift raises to the regular Staff level ($12,500) for those who can hack the work. Write to Brad Hessel.

**Data Files.** A “Data File” is an intensive examination of a narrowly defined military topic, historical or contemporary. They appear in S&T. If you think you have a topic you could do justice to, let us know (do not write one and send it in without discussing it with us first). We pay $50 a shot; contact Joe Balkoski.

**Game Suggestions.** Have we done your favorite game yet? If not, you can’t really complain if you haven’t let us know what it is. We do read the suggestions on the feedback cards. Even more persuasive are the letters that thoughtfully explain why a game on such and such a topic, heretofore ignored, really would be interesting and worthwhile.

**Comments.** Every letter containing general comments is read by at least three people. If you can, please type, and if not, try to print — you can see who reads the most letters by the thickness of the glasses! We may not be able to reply, but your input is appreciated.

**Designer’s Notes** (continued from page 21)

playtests. What now remain to be completed are the final editions of the rules so that everything that is now present during playtesting makes an appearance in the finished product. Among the more interesting aspects of the game are the morale rules which take into account the effects of both dead and fugitives in such a way that morale is calculated very exactly yet using a remarkably clean system. So far the “No Mud on the Field of Battle” scenario has become a favorite of the playtesters. During the playing of that scenario the game turns into a free-for-all that is rarely decided before the final game-turns. There are a number of new concepts in this game — which at this moment are surprisingly very accessible. We are working so that they remain so in the final addition of the rules. We’ll see...

*David Warden*

**The Next War**

*The Next War* is nearing completion.

We recently played a giant campaign game with eight players. The following short history reflects on the first four days of *The Next War*. The scenario is the Trip Wire scenario.

GT1: *The Next War* began with air combat between the Warsaw Pact (WP) and NATO; while the Pact won the air over the Baltic, elsewhere NATO emerged triumphant.

Commandos landed in Danish Syaeland, taking out an important SAM site there, as the East German 8th Mech. Div. captured all the West German naval air bases in Schleswig-Holstein and seized Kiel. Hamburg fell to the Soviet 12th Guards Arm Div, which penetrated to the west bank of the Weser between Bremen and Bremerhafen.

On the central front, WP armies were only able to take Witzlar, while the British Berlin brigade handily repulsed an attack by the Soviet 2nd Tank Div.

Further south, Beyreuth and Weiden fell to the Pact, but a new line was formed at Schweinfurt extending to the south along Nurnberg to the Donau (Danube) River, and north through Fulda, Kassel, Gottingen, Braunschweig to Bremen.

The main WP concentration was directed at the Fulda Gap, the secondary attack in the Hamburg area, and a third drive on Nurnberg.

In a NATO second-day counteroffensive, the Danish Jutland Division recaptured Kiel.

GT2: The Pact continued to maintain air control in the Baltic, but at a heavy cost in planes. North German air superiority also went to the Warsaw nations, but in the South NATO air was unopposed.

Another commando assault took out the last SAM site in the Baltic area. Polish marines invaded Syaeland and headed for Kohnhavn while two Soviet marine brigades landed on the Danish island of Bornholm in the Baltic. There was heavy naval combat in the shallow waters of the Copenhagen