Forda Gap
The First Battle of the Next War

DIESLLY: FORDA GAP REVIEWED BY D. I. A. MACK

Forda Gap, which became available in British last September, is one of SPI’s ‘future history’ games on the theme of Warsaw Pact v. NATO; at regimental/brigade level it comes between ‘Warsburg’ and ‘NATO’ in scale and its game system derives from ‘Warsburg’ and ‘Guderian’. But with some improvements—as well as having a touch of ‘Modern Battles’. Let me say now that this game is, in my opinion, one of SPI’s more production-oriented games, quite new and convincing. Designed by James Dunning, it is colourful, fluid, exciting and a reminder that ‘War is the province of uncertainty.’

The overall scenario is a major drive towards Frankfurt and the Rhine by the Soviet 1st and 8th Guards Armies as part of a general assault. The French and Belgian forces, with the German Army Group, are to make a stand against the Soviet advance. But the French are not to retreat without a struggle, following the example of the first French government. If a German counter-offensive is mounted, the French will be enabled to break it up.

The invading force crosses the East German border from Thuringia (the bulge at the bottom left corner of East Germany), the axis of build-up and an important factor in the centre. The armies, composed of divisions of the 1st Guards Army and a corps of the 8th Guards Army, make for the Rhine. The supply lines are long, and the Germans are faced with the problem of moving the armies through the narrow passages between the Rhine and Mainz.

Game scenarios deal with: an unheralded invasion, NATO units still in garrison; the same attack with NATO units in reserve; and the assault, perhaps on D+7 (the first two scenarios end on D+8); and a full D to D+14 campaign for those who want to lose the winter weather. Variants also include Soviet main effort (another Army joins in), weakened NATO and ditto Warsaw Pact.

The game system features two movement phases per turn for both sides, allowing zones of control but combat at discretion only and the opportunity to disengage in lieu of combat, if zero units (UTUs), overruns and, for the Soviet player only, accelerated assault reflecting the Russian willingness to accept high casualties as the price of a quick knockdown. All this makes for very fluid play, even when the front stabilizes for a time: there is a constant ripple as units manoeuvre to break a line or close a gap and the NATO player especially will find his greater ability to change the balance back to the ‘en garde’ a considerable impetus to thinking in terms of a mobile defence well laced with offence. If, particularly during the D – D+6 scenarios, a game seems to bog down over the last two or three turns, this is a case when the Soviet player has failed to maintain the momentum of the attack, not because of any inherent game-fault. As it would be (we hope) in the real thing, all of Forda Gap has overdone it, too many units will have had too many casualties, supply problems will be making themselves felt. Forda Gap, with its breathing space to consolidate a firm line of defence, is tense, absorbing and full of movement and high-rader moments, requiring both players to keep on their toes. The Soviet player has a mighty steamroller indeed and if he can drive an irreparable breach in the thin NATO lines the game will be his. His advantages lie in his sheer weight of numbers, his Accelerated Assault option, his being in automatic supply for the first five days and his trump card, Chemical Warfare, the largely morale effects of this, when used, last for two moves, double Soviet combat factors, slow movement and severity of NATO supply. On the other hand his units are less reliable, his force is less supple than that of NATO and when he does run out of automatic supply his stocky system will hobble him: if he has not yet reached the Rhine by the end of Day 5 he could lose his victory.

To contain the hordes the NATO player will have to stretch his units thin and if he ever has more than one full division in reserve he can count himself lucky. Fortunately many of his units, especially the German ones, are stout defenders and the terrain favours the defensive; hence: however defensive must be the sword, not by the shield and here his ability to strike and withdraw (provided the enemy is eliminated) will help him: the infantry-light Soviet tank divisions are very vulnerable to counter-strike. After three days he is dependent on his supplies and the best positioning of his depots must always come into calculations as must the networks of routes on which his supply lines must be traced; a major breakthrough could knock half his army out of supply. Funnily enough the NATO player cannot blow the bridges over the main rivers as he withdraws: one would have expected a demolition rule in a game of this sort. As a sad study of an absorbing if grandiose and of modern mechanised warfare in a hypothetical setting, ‘Forda Gap’ has a lot to offer the player who is interested in the NATO v. Warsaw Pact theme and/or in mobile operations. Nor does it do so at the cost of a mass of complicated rules: there are certainly a lot of little details to remember and, for example, units having in an accelerated assault require several die-rolls to sort it all out but the general sequence is orderly and logical. The component logic, such as it is, is in the Advanced Rules and, as has been said, these are intended to be added when one is ready for them. FG is still a very good game without them and very playable in all modes.

Did I get my money’s worth? Yes! Would I buy again? Yes! YEAH, JAWHOL, OUI, DA!

ANNEX ‘A’
FORDA GAP – GAME SCALES

No time or distance scales are given in the rules but it is obvious that each move represents 24 hours and the units represent 405,000 men each. There are no maps and measure just over 6km (almost 4 miles) across. These scales are confirmed by a note on the game in Movers 31, page 31; hex-scales are in fact 6.25km.

NATO forces are mainly US, German and French plus a small Belgian Division and British 8th Armoured Brigade on the northern flank. The NATO units are mechanised, motorised and armoured brigades. Warsaw Pact forces mainly Russian, augmented by East German forces.

Continued on next page.
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Chris Ruffle

A wargame is a wargame is a wargame — you can rationalise and abstract it, make it big enough to fill a room or small enough to fit a matchbox, set it in Outer Mongolia or Lower Scunthorpe, but in essence it remains the optimal movement of a number of bits of cardboard over a sheet of paper. Why then is it so much fun and worth the outlay of so many hard-earned pennies? The answer is literally in the mind.

Every wargame, whatever its theme, is basically a battle of wits between a number of fellow-gamers but too many people seek to confine this psychological contest strictly to mapshacht and rule mechanics, leaving such spiritual experiences as panic and command control to a flick of the wrist. My aim is to break away from this rules strat-jacket by suggesting a number of psychological stratagems, used by statesman, generals and machiavels throughout the ages, in a wargaming context. I am not talking about those crude (though not ineffectively) ploys one might expect to find in a "Course Art of Wargaming" such as the advantages of being both teetotal and generous with alcoholic beverages, of possessing dogs/cats with a taste for cardboard or of having a timely bus to catch. No — you'll have more subtle ways of winning der Game! I first, undermine the opponent's morale. Arrive with any book featured in the bibliography casually showing from the pocket — refer to it at crucial points in the game. Use of facial expression (as any poker player knows) can prove particularly invaluable. For example, we have the 'flip to page in rules — amazed whistle — ominous silence' ploy. There is, of course, the 'knowing smile' ploy, used when an opponent points out an "apparent" mistake you have made — more encircled, outflanked — generally doomed troops have been saved this way than I care to remember. Another golden rule for any would-be Machiavelli — always pretend that you have some good, match-winning strategy, especially if you haven't. This illusion can be fostered by such muttered utterances as 'By Turn 43 they should be round there,' or (with knowing smile) 'straight into the trap'.

To maintain the psychological offensive it helps to have a sound knowledge of the rules of the game you are playing or, better still, to have invented it. Failing this, one should put on a bold face I have seen even the most hardened veteran turn pale at being handed the rules of "Wellington's Victory" or "Terrible Slow Sword" with the words 'I'm sure the rule is in there somewhere.' Holes in the rules should be mercilessly exploited. In my last game of TSR's hilarious "Custer's Last Stand" the anti-satirical Sitting Bull, forced by the rules to sit away from the main Indian camps was charged down by a psychic Custer in his wood hideout before he had even had time to say "How?" — all the distasteful Indians immediately fled. On the other hand, the inclusion of a false security in one's opponent by frequently referring to rules you know back to front can also prove effective.

Most wargames are played with a group of friends whose methods of play you will already be acquainted with. Such knowledge can be valuable — especially as Games Master in TSR's excellent "Dungeons & Dragons". Many have been the traps laid for a certain character name "Boris Hog- slayer" who exhibits a fatal determination to barge down dungeon doors through which angels would fear to tread. If, however, your opponent is new to the noble art of boardgaming, a quick burst of SPI Jargonese can work wonders. Who could control an army after being asked "What's your attitude and why is your character less skilled with that axe than he was last game when he was armed with a d20?"

There comes a point, however, in all this skull-duggery where a line must be drawn, despite the reality it adds to any game. Wargame realism should always remain a fun thing to be played on a friendly basis. Perhaps Stephen Potter's description of a commercial game of "One-upmanship & Gamesmanship" — "The art of winning without actually cheating" — should also be applied to machiavellian wargaming. It might not be ethical but it is certainly effective.

Bibliography: Machiavel: "The Prince"
Sun Tzu: "The Art of War"
P. Dixon: "On the Psychology of Military Incompetence"

THE SUBTLE ART OF MACHIAVELLIAN WARGAMING

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**Scenario:**

**The Reconquest: A New Solo Scenario for SPI's Outreach**

J D Beardsworth

After the collapse of the Galactic Empire, the remnants were left under the control of the descendants of five generals who had preserved civilisation within the areas under their command. One of these dynasties — the only one deriving from the former Imperial dynasty — began to reconquer the former Imperial territory, bringing it into conflict with the autonomous dynasties to whom a loss of sovereignty was abhorrent. The Imperialists are handled by the player whilst the Separatists are represented as autonomous forces.

**Initial Set-Up**

Use the seedwinds table to determine the location of the Imperialists and four Separatists. The Imperialists set up as per 18.53 but the Separatists' set up is different. The first-named has a starbase placed in it and then a die is rolled.

1. That force is a G
2. That force is an H
3. That force is an I
4. That force is a J
5. Roll again
6. Roll again

The remaining starbases and the starforges are set up as per 13.1.

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**Victory Conditions**

All the Separatists must be eliminated.

**Game Length**

50 Game Turn maximum. Reduce the maximum if you feel your task to be too easy, or why not set your own record times for victory?

**Special Rules**

1. During every face phase the Separatists interact with the Imperialists even if they are not in contact.
2. If at any time all the Imperialists' starting starbases are neutralised, the game is lost — the Imperial family has been murdered.
3. If the X-chit is revealed the game is lost — hitherto hidden evidence proves the Imperial dynasty to be hoaxes — unrelated to the true Imperial family. The effect of the X-chit is neutralised if, on the turn of its revelation, the Imperialist civilisation level rises — enabling the hoaxes to suppress the evidence of their origins. The X-chit may be expended on the aforementioned die roll.
«What country, friends, is this?»
«This is Illyria, Lady»
«And what should I do in Illyria?»

CHARLES VASEY

So asked Viola in Twelfth Night. Doubtless she had just been engaged in a little strategic planning in The Conquerors: this must be the first game to bring the political importance of Bato the Dardanian into the lives of boardgamers and was eagerly awaited by ancient buffs. In this article, I hope to look into the historicity of the game with special consideration of The Romans. Fashions come and go in board gaming as to whether realism or playability are the most important factor in a game. This is not an argument into which I wish to delve, however, it must be realised that the reason anyone buys a "simulation" is that he wishes to savour some of the problems and glories of that period. Of any game it can be asked: "does this tell me anything about the handling of an empire/battalion/squad etc..."? when I mention the game fails to simulate a factor, this should not be regarded as the same as saying the game would have been better if it had been included - it could well have been much worse!

Oh yes, to answer Viola's question, there is not much one can do in Illyria, git while the going's good.

Series Replay: Second Macedonian War
This is an overview of just one game with myself as the noble Phillip and Geoff Barnard as the malevolent and evil Senatus of Roma. It does not disclose any great play by either side; it is given purely to show what can happen and as a comparison as to what did happen.

September 200 BC - Roman bribery brings King Nabis of Sparta into the war, allowing a second front to be opened against Macedon. The King is somewhat restricted by the fortress of Corinth with its Macedonian garrison. He contents himself with capturing Cyllene to get a port. Consul Aelius lands at Apollonia and is joined by the Illyrians. He swiftly destroys the garrison of Antipatra. Phillip can make no reply to this due to his useless army and must move south capturing Phalangites and dropping off light infantry. The Macedonian fleet moves to Corinth in case of Roman moves on Attica. The Aetolians join Phillip (historically quite impossible). The Pella army under Nicanor lays siege to Pydna and takes 20 days to capture it, only to find the place contains little wealth. They fall back with the Aetolians in tow.

October 200 BC - The consul moves inland to threaten Thessalay. Phillip bribes his way into Athens (odd this, seeing Athens was the reason for the war), giving him the supply base in the south. The fleet moves Naupactus to push back the possibilities of Roman naval landings. Phillip crushes Cyllene to keep the ports closed. In the north a fierce battle occurs with Nicanor defeating Aelius near Aegium. The consul flies towards Apollonia and Nicanor takes the town.

Winter - Phillip gets his peltsats frosted in the Peloponnesus. Aelius is re-appointed consul amongst some surprise from the Macedonians, mercenaries are raising but Rome neglects to build the naval base at Apollonia. Macedon raises ships, men and a siege train.

March 199 - Two legions arrive in Macedonia to bolster this front, the fleet takes Zacynthus where it is joined by the Pergamene and Rhodian fleets. The Macedonians are thus neatly bottled up in the Gulf of Corinth with the reinforcements miles away at Demetrias. To complete their misery, Nabis leaps out of Sparta and defeats Phillip and his army.
in a very close battle, causing him to fall back to Attica. Trenches are opened before Chalcis by Nicanor.

April 199 - Rome continues to play dirty. The consul, with two legions, moves on Pella. The praetor moves through Illyria sacking cities and the Roman fleet moves on Naupactus. Here the Gods played fast and loose with our Latin friends; the legate proved to be incompetent and the entire fleet was overwhelmed. The Macedonians were surprised by this but, glad to be free of confines of the Gulf, they sail on the island cities of Cephalenia. Epirot troops arrive to guard Naupactus. Chalcis surrenders. Fortune believes in doing things by halves.

May 199 - The praetor and consuls join in moving south sacking cities to fill their empty treasury. The Macedonians offer battle but the Romans refuse.

June 199 - The Macedonian armies mass at Naupactus obliging the Romans to pull back.

July 199 - The Romans move into Aetolia on the lookout for loot. The Macedonians clamber into the Roman lands and Hydruellum in Italy, the phalanx moving on Brundisium.

Aug. 199 - The praetor sacks Naupactus - proving his claim to being the dumbest Roman of them all. Had he simply held it, Rome would finally have had a naval base. The consul treks on Thebes and moves to Corinth where Nabis joins him. In Italy the epic siege of Brundisium begins. A small force of light infantry, Epirots and Athenians is sent off to raid Italy - they capture Tarentum.

September 199 - Corinth surrenders immediately while the praetor continues to ravage Aetolia. In Italy, Beneventum, Capua and Terracina fall. The consul, Domitius, sails with his mercenaries, cursing the Third Legion which refuses to leave Rome. In the skirmish that follows he is killed and his army smashed.

October 199 - Leaving Nabis to hold Corinth, the consul moves towards Chalcis to repeat the mixture as before. The praetor keeps on sacking. In Italy Ostia and Senna Gallica are taken. Brundisium keeps on trucking.

Winter - The Romans decide they cannot afford to have Rome threatened and spend everything on legions in Italy. The Macedonians decommission some squadrons in order to get a new army in Pella. A naval base appears at Hydruellum extending the naval range via Senna Gallica right up the Adriatic. Readers will have noticed that the action has slowed considerably as the purses empty.

March 198 - The Romans in Greece have no base and no money - they just starve. In Italy, the Sixth Legion retakes Ostia and Terracina. The Macedonian raiders switch north sacking Ariminum to help bolster the treasury.

April 198 - Capua is retaken. The raiders burn Ancona and Firmaum.

May 198 - The praetor for Italy decides to stop these depredations and seals off Senna Gallica - he cannot get in, they dare not come out. Brundisium (in case you forgot) continues to hold out. The Pella army sacks Tricca and Larissa for much-needed baubles.

June 198 - Aegium is sacked.

July 198 - At Pherae the praetor's starving army is crushed in the last battle of the war.

August and September 198 - Senna Gallica remains sealed, the Pella army sits in Thessaly and the citizens of Brundisium celebrate the anniversary of the siege by making vulgar signs at Phillip. In the distance the sound of dice being shot can be heard! If this is war, what can peace be like?

October 198 - The Macedonians admit defeat and pull out of Italy back to Cephallenia. Only the Senna Gallica army remains.

Winter - Rome builds more legions and Macedon rebuilds its phalanx.

March 197 - The Senna Gallica forces flee into Venetia.
Phillip and forces him to flee back into Thessaly finally making a stand at Tempe (5624). The Aetolians sweep into southern Thessaly (5325-5424) while the Athenians seize Gomphi. Flaminius marches by the Zygos Pass (5021-5222) and south to winter in Phocis (5528). The Roman fleet winters off Corinth while diplomacy and threats persuade the Achaeaean League to join Rome. Argos secedes to Macedonia.

197 BC - Phillip attempts to bribe Nabis of Sparta with Argos. Nabis accepts the gift and joins the Romans! The Boeotians abandon Phillip's cause. Flaminius moves north as Philip builds up his last army. They meet near Pheneus and after some fancy footwork battle is met in 5422. Phillip is crushed at Cynoscaphela, Corinth is surrounded and the Acharnians defeated - his cause is lost. He finds Flaminius ready to be generous to snub his uppity Aetolian allies - the Peace of Nicaea is signed.

General Comments on the System

The game is quite good fun and contains quite a few elements of ancient warfare: in the final result it fails to satisfy. I prefer to look at it as advancing the design art in this period, 
Punic Wars broke new ground. Things have advanced with The Conquerors and will, hopefully, continue to do so. Let us therefore examine some specific problems.

Cities

Anyone trying to cram a living organism, like a city, into a few categories is bound to have problems. Imagine the problems of doing this when you don't have many statistics upon which to work. Is Tyre really stronger than Arados? Does its population simply have a greater spirit of independence (as Polybius claims for the population of Gaza)? Does one estimate cities by their population, by the length of their walls, by the politics of their people? Perhaps one held it that some cities had provided Demetrius Poliorcetes with a safe base for his thalassocracy as well as many of his ships and admiral, yet its "cousin" Sidon seems remarkably silent. One can name the fleets of the cities - Tyre, Rhodes and Gaza - but what about the smaller towns?

To illustrate the importance of those decisions to the rules one must realize that an A-class city will hold 150 ships in its army for three months, but a C-class for a mere 12 days, while D-cities hold for a puny 9 days. One hell of a big difference in naval news! Despite Thucydides III said Ephesus (C-class city) as his HQ for the invasion of Greece. Clearly, in game terms, he was mad with Lysimachus or Mytilene (B-class city) quite near at hand.

The plot thickens when history decides to turn the spotlight on one city - in the Second Punic War (100 years after the Macedonian War) the whole campaign revolved around Cyzicus. In the game this is a mere D-class city. Yet the city provided a marching army of 3,000 hoplites to serve with the Roman army at Chalcodon, a force of about 8 SSFs in game terms. This is rather too large a force to be disregarded, especially as the littoral of the Sea of Marmora had several such cities. Once under siege, the city held through the winter before Mariottus realised his bluff was called and pulled out. This is, practically, impossible in the game. It may only be a D-city but it defended like an A-class.

The real clue to a city's reaction to a besetter is neatly covered in The Macedonians where Alexander is allowed to "burn" cities without attacking: they simply admit his army. The real-life factors that influenced this sort of thing were (i) victory, (ii) taxation (iii) presence of a large army, (iv) political chicanery, and (v) the potential of the besetter. As the cities ceased to defend themselves with their own citizen-fry they often fell to the loyalty to some descendant of a Macedonian General of Division was too expensive a luxury for them. If he was close, or the enemy with blood-crazed Gauls, then it was worth hoping the walls would hold. If he was far distant or beaten, then he did not give them the protection of a good lord: they could simply ensure that the gates were opened, food was provided together with a small donation to the costs of their liberators' army, possibly a few oligarchs/democrats could be killed depending on the army standing their gates. Where a city had no intention of being plundered or simply decided to tuck its toes in - you were in for a fight. So it was with Gaza, Tyre, Cyzicus or Abdyus (where the population strewed themselves). The use of revolt points in Punic Wars also comes close.

The Cost of Living

A legion costs a talent to maintain for a year in TC. A fleet of 20 quinqueremes costs three times as much - right? Well, I'm not so sure, even without the problem that the talent is the Berg Talon which bears little relation to the real prices of the period. One can get an interesting comparison by considering the Peloponnesian War. Thucydides tells us the Athenian league had an income of 600 talents - enough for 150 triremes (according to Nelson's war/ fleets of Antiquity - WRG) in that period. Eight squadrons of triremes would cost 16 talents to maintain - that is the average tax revenue of Rome for one game year!

Again at Artemesium the Greeks fielded 127 triremes from Athens, 40 from Corinth, 20 from Megara, 20 from Chalcis (crewed by Athenian, 10 from Sparta, 64 from others). This little lot would cost 28 talents to maintain - more than Macedonia could raise in a year! The Athenian allies (who had to be told to put up 14 talents a year with which to maintain the army of 15,000 (4 SSFs = 2 talents) or fortifications. Rome in a bad year could produce 9 talents - yet this is the sum to be produced from tiny Attica. These figures are ridiculously high because if Athens spent this 16 talents on an army
15 days in the average month. This indicates an allowance of 15 in TM and 23 in TM (as against 25 and 30 respectively).

**TYPICAL COMBAT UNIT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Strength</th>
<th>12-13</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tactical Offensive Strength</td>
<td>8-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactical Defensive Strength</td>
<td>8-9</td>
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After Tarsus the marches quickened into forced marching. In the desert of Arabia (the area from Thapsacus down towards Babylon along the river) the army marched for 39 days with only 14 days rest (three times their normal rate). This was sufficient of a long march for Xenophon to comment upon it and to mention the losses in the baggage animals. That works out at 22 MP a month on the march. The marches in Syria and the desert give an average cost of 1% MP a hex of clear terrain. The desert hexes may well have cost double and the forced-marching has covered this up, one cannot discover which. Passing the Syrian Gates (3214 - 3215) took 2 MP when the enemy was close speed tended to drop to 50% of optimum moves. When Xenophon was in retreat towards Assyria he was under constant attack but still moved at full speed; my only theory is that not only was Xenophon leading a purely Greek force but that he was not attempting to feint or manoeuvre - he was making straight for the foothills.

**TYPICAL COMMANDER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tactical Offensive Rating</td>
<td>8-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactical Defensive Rating</td>
<td>8-9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Skirmishes like this might increase costs by about 50%. The actual march through the mountains came to 3 MP per hex.

Thus, although too generous with the road the total effect of the terrain chart is about right. It is the actual allowance that seems too large for me. It is perhaps worth commenting that the reaction-interception rules lead to rather silly when they allow a hex full of mountains to count the same as a hex of the Syrian plains.

**Supply**

It is rather a problem to determine how armies supplied themselves in this era. The Romans certainly used corn contractors in Asia, in Gaul, Caesar has corn brought to various points as tribute. What we do not know is whether an 18th Century system of depositories was used or whether the army carried its own convoy with it and no contact was maintained with base. Lucullus once employed a large group of porters to carry corn into the barren Anatolian plateau. Certain other armies either forged or levied quotas on various areas through which they moved. Granted that we do not know for certain what really happened, we will have to examine the game from the point of view of what we know did not happen. Berg links naval movement to their bases (cities chosen for their naval history, dockyards and because they fit the hex grid) which I think is probably a reasonable choice - a lesser of two evils. It does not work for land supply however. If one assumes that the armies live off the country then Athens seems a silly supply base. One wonders why Corisca and Sardina are too barren to support armies; if one assumes the "contractor" theory then any port could allow the supplying of an army. In any case, a 10 hex supply-line is 200 miles long, far longer than the convoy system could hold together. One must assume that this is another jury-rigged supply rule which works sometimes but nobody knows why. Richard notes how armies operated outside their supply ranges, yet it seems to me, if his map is correct, the Romans were out of supply for most of the war and Philip's position on the Aegeus where he hoped to halt Rome was definitely out of supply. This whole subject requires further work.

**The Battle Board**

I gave my initial thoughts on this module in *Perfidious Albion* 18 (5 Albion Terrace, Gusbrough) with the basic conclusion that it fitted no battle of the period. Returning to my erstwhile example - Magnesia - and using Kocha's reconstruction of the line (his "Seleucid Army" CUP) at a scale of 1,000 men per SSP (twice that given in the game), we get the following problems. First, even at this scale, Livy's figures indicate a force of about 70 SSPs. This force would fill to overflowing the first three ranks of the Phalanx-formation board. The stacking limit of 2 SSPs is especially silly when the phalangites were known to form twice as deeply as other units. 2 SSPs might only be allowed to fight out of the "box" but they should be able to stack 4 deep (in my opinion they should be forced to do so). Assuming we make the necessary change, we get a main line that fits on the board. Unfortunately, we have 20 SSPs of light infantry to fit in as skirmishers either in front of the line, or behind it (assuming the skirmishing has been completed). Definitively in front of the line are the dragoones and the skythe-chariots. No line for either force exists.

**TYPICAL MISSILE UNIT**

<table>
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<th>Thyssian 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Missile Strength</td>
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</table>

The Romans (on this scale) would have 6 SSPs per Legion/ala. Of course some of this would be light infantry which also would have retired behind the lines like the Syrian cousins. This gives us a line of correct length with the 3,000 peltasts and cavalry (another 3,000) on the right flank. Usually legionaries were too tall. If they unstack they will be beaten by the strength of the phalanxes, even odder, the entire force has the SSP strength of one game legion! One could allow the Romans to count 3 Roman SSPs as 2 "other" SSPs, to represent their superior organisation. This would make things better but still a trifle odd.

All this tinkering should demonstrate to you the essential inaccuracy of the Battle Board. Although a clever and well-designed abstract design, it bears no resemblance to the real thing, a factor which can be especially annoying when you are losing!
Arms and the Man
Richard Berg admits to having done a lot of guessing in designing the armies, in practice he comes out with some quite accurate guesses.

Taking the Romans as an accurate standard we can consider the other forces. I felt the Macedonians were a very good mix; their pikes may not be the ones that fought for Alexander but they were still the best in the Hellenic world. This very fact should alert one to the problems of filling losses in their ranks. The use of the countermix gives one limit but one year’s losses have a habit of returning next year! Accounts of the war make obvious the problems Philip had in raising enough troops. The mercenary hoplites are a good representation of the mainstay of most armies - although why Rome can produce better ones is really beyond me. The light troops suffer from having very little to do in the game - I use them as siege casualties or garrisons.

The Macedonian horde is secure although perhaps too numerous in the counter-mix (usual proportion is 10:1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUMMARY OF UNIT TYPES</th>
<th>MACEDONIANS</th>
<th>SYRIANS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Front</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phalanx</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>Phalanx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(full-strength)</td>
<td>4/1</td>
<td>(full-strength)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(reduced-strength)</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>(reduced-strength)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phalanx</td>
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The Syrian phalanxes are passable for the main phalanx but the Royal Guard is both too weak and does not cover the whole Guard - only the agama. The Aesoprides are better represented by the Macedonian phalanx counters. Taking the game scale as being 1,000 men per counter one could give the strength of the phalanx in the west as 21 counters of "normal" phalanx and 10 of Guards Silver Shields excluding the actual alogmen. There would be another 11 counters in the East. The lack of the Guards is of great moment as they represent the regular army with the phalanx being the reserve. The xystomen of Syria are a problem. If they are mercenary Gauls or Thraxians then Syria has had an energizing effect on them; if Babylonian foot they are far too good!

The Syrian elephants are better than the Roman’s African elephants but not by enough in my opinion. The Median cavalry is excellent. However, the masses of cavalry from Asia Minor are the reverse of the real situation. Syria raised seven times more cavalry than did Asia Minor - it also tended to be better cavalry. The Arabs are amusing and the chariots seem reasonable.

The size of the neutral armies is a matter of some debate. In 279 BC when the Gauls invaded Helias the Greeks mustered in full strength in Aetolia. Beotia/Phocis with 25,000 men (50 SSPs in total). Aetolia alone provided 12,000 men (30 SSPs) which is more than they are given (24 SSPs) and the game forces include the separate kingdom of

Athenian: it is possible that the garrison strengths need to be added.

As to content we must examine the types of armies. The Hellenes: Spartan quite rightly has the finest troops and the worst cavalry. The Aetolian cavalry is good but the foot is too good (see Polybius, Vol. V, 25, P133). The Aetolians were primarily good mountain troops who defeated the Gauls in 279 by attrition and ambush. The hoplites of Achaia, Athens and Acarnanians are good average troops. The Pergamene foot and horse are good, perhaps too good, while the Rhodian foot are obviously garrison troops. The Bithynians are odd. Prusias seems to have adopted Greek practices, thus barbarian foot may be weak (although the strengths are right). Egypt appears to lack any real army which is difficult to believe - although its weakness is legendary. Epirus (although it was really Hellenic) is not too well simulated. Its puny warriors are weak descendents of the warriors of Pyrrhus who often invaded Macedonia - 3,000 men it seems a very small army for so large an area (see my remarks on Cyzicus). The Barbarians of Europe: apart from being far too few in number the Ilyrians, Dardanians and Thracians seem reasonable. The Barbarians of Asia: the Gauls are believably effective but should have more cavalry. The Cappadocians similarly should have more horse. The Thracians are reasonable banditti. Heraclea should have hoplites and a navy, as should Chalcedon and Byzantium.

Notable for their lack of appearance are the fleet and army of Pontus and the army of Armenia. Neither were involved in these wars because Anti-ochus got beaten so soon and their position, flanking the Taurus and within range of Antioch, is important and could have been decisive. Also silent are the remains of Beotia and Thessaly, not to mention the disappearance of several large islands!

Control of Cities
Perhaps the most basic mistake in the game is the allegiance of various cities, according to my Cambridge Ancient History the following towns are in the following hands:

- Ithria - Scordi
- Epirus - Phoenice
- Aetolia - Thermi, Neapolis, Delphi, Gomphi, Triaca, (NB, Amyndy's kingdom is hex 5124)
- Achaea - Cyclene, Megapoli, Aegion, Argos and Orchomenus
- Sparta - Gythium and Sparta
- Acarnania - Leucas and Anactorion
- Roman Protectorate - Oricus, Antigoneia, Apollonia
- Macedonia - Antipatria, Aegion, Corinth, Creus, Chalicos, Demetrias, Paros, Larisa, Hera- cleum, Pydna, Pella, Thessalonika and Amphipolis
- Independent - Ambria, Same, Zancynus, Olympia, Athens, Messene, Thebes, Megara, Asine, Pylos.

NB. Chalico-Corinth-Demetrias were of immense importance to the Antigonid domination of Greece. The failure of Hellic to be included is thus rather surprising.
Since we have, to some extent, been looking at the classic period in this issue let’s take a look at some books also dealing with that period of history. The great series of Penguin Classics is where you ought to look for this kind of work and I’ve found four titles which will be of interest to Conquerors addicts. Hopefully they flow together almost perfectly to bring the period together almost as one. Let’s begin with a title which has been on my shelves for two or three years now and that is The Peloponnesian War by Thucydides. This is in translation by Rex Warner and is very readable indeed. By the by, don’t let yourself be put off by the somewhat imprecise “academic” notes at the end of a lot of these books. These are there to make the book more useful for the academic reader and thus allow Penguin to sell a few more copies when in turn means that the price is kept reasonable, e.g. this edition cost only 70p. The period covered is the Great War between Athens and Sparta and it’s worth remembering that the author was a general and writes therefore from a professional standpoint as well as that of the historians. I’m unable to say whether this volume is still in print at the moment but it’s worth looking for, as indeed is the next one which is The Age of Alexander by Plutarch. Penguin do this for a very reasonable ninety-five pence and Ian Scott-Kilvert’s translation is flowing and usefully helped by footnotes on unclear references. I prefer this method of note presentation to the recently fashionable notes at the end of the book under chapter headings. Where Thucydides takes us from 435 BC to 411 BC this latter book, a series of nine biographical essays including Alexander, Demetrius and the historic Pyrrhus, takes us quickly through that flowering of Greece under Alexander, into the period immediately after his death, in 323 BC. The maps in this book, as in the others in this series, are adequate without being enormously helpful.

Let’s skip ahead a little now and look at Livy’s Rome and the Mediterranean which was translated for Penguin by Henry Bettenson. This covers the period during which Rome conquered the Med. and made it very much a ‘Roman Lake’. All this in the remarkably short time of forty three years, from 200 BC to 167 BC. Herein are details of the second Macedonian War, campaigns in Spain, Gaul, Italy, the war with Antiochus and the Third Macedonian War. Complete with maps and a good chronology this volume costs a not unreasonable £1.50.

We leap on again and this time to 49 BC and Caesar’s account of The Civil War translated in this edition by Jane F. Gardner. This was written by Caesar and finished just about six months before his assassination so it’s almost hot off the scroll. Penguin are asking pounds twenty for this book which will help bring the series almost to the end of the Conquerors period. The fascination I’ve found in these books is that they give you all sorts of economic and political reasons for some of the odd things that seem to happen in those dim and distant days and for students of that period or players of games of the period the four volumes mentioned here will be grand reading for before, after and in between games.

I mentioned Adrian’s Campaigns of Alexander in Phoenix no. 4 and another book also well worth the money is Robin Lane Fox’s biography Alexander The Great which is in Omega paper back at £1.60. Richly illustrated and brilliantly told this book will do wonderfuly whether the interest is in the man or the military.

A look now at some other books of interest. From Cassell comes the latest book to be prepared by Sir Basil Liddell Hart. I say prepared because he died before the work on the book could be started properly and it’s Robie Lane Fox’s biography Alexander The Great which is in Omega paper back at £1.60, Richly illustrated and brilliantly told this book will do wonderfully whether the interest is in the man or the military.

In 1961 a major book on Napoleon’s Guards was published. It was called The Anatomy of Glory and it was translated from, and based on, a huge work by the French historian Henry Lachouque. The translation was done by a librarian called Anne S.K. Brown and the book rapidly sold out as did a second edition. Even since then the book has been out of print and has been almost impossible to obtain except through second hand shops where you could expect to pay upwards of £500.00 for a copy in good condition! The reason for this is partly due to the very fine illustrations (the book contains 173 plates of which 73 are in full colour) but it’s also due to the enormously careful and searching analysis of how and why the Guard functioned as it did. From structure to tactics the Corps d’Elite of Napoleon’s army is examined in enormous detail. Why talk about a book that’s unavailable except at second hand prices? Well the good news is that Arms and Armour Press have re-published it absolutely as it was first produced with the addition of a forward by David Chandler who lectures in the Dept of War Studies at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst. The price of this monumental work is an almost incredibly low £14.95. This is not just "another book on Napoleon" but a major study of the men that were under the stresses of war and how they are led and how they follow great leaders and it must be vital reading for anyone who professes any interest in military history of what over period.

Two books on aircraft now and both worth looking at especially if you go with a similarly encyclopedic knowledge as I do of "Air Force". Arms and Armour Press have published a very fine, although slim, book on Soviet Aircraft of Today. Nico Sparkes’ book is also beautifully illustrated and included over two hundred illustrations with quite a number in full colour. There are cutaway drawings of seven of the most important aircraft and after a look through this the names of "Fitter", "Frogger", "Fencer" and "Backfire" start to make some real sense. I was disappointed with the brevity of the section on naval aviation which is tucked away at the back of the book and I was amazed at the very poor coverage of "Forger", the Russian equivalent of our Harrier which is currently damaging the flight decks of the Kiev Class Through-Deck Cruisers to such an extent that they are having to consider docking the vessels for repairs. Those comments apart this is an interesting and useful book for "Fokbat and Phantom" freaks.

For the "Air Force" enthusiast comes another marvellous book from the incredibly prolific Alfred Price. This is another title in the Ian Allen “...at arms...” series and it carries the commendation of this already highly regarded collection of titles. It’s the Focke Wulf 190 which comes under close scrutiny this time. The list of aircraft specifications make fascinating reading for Mr Price, back on form after his regrettable lapse with the "Luftwaffe Handbook", has come up with all sorts of "First Time" figures and details including a very stilted letter from Sholto Douglas about the superiority of the 190 over the Spitfire IX addressed to the Unknown Author in Air. The letter is dated 1942 and is followed by a reproduction of a report of evaluation tests carried out at Farnborough which included a piece of paper I had read it sitting in the Under Secy’s chair in 1942. Needless to say as well as all the high quality test... and there’s a lot of that, the illustrations are on the usual high scale that come to expect from Ian Allen with this kind of book. Perhaps one of the most interesting pictures is at the end of the book. It’s a shot of the first 190s and Spitfire flying in formation all wearing Turkish Airforce marking. Truly peaceful and exciting reading and if you can get the low price Ian Allen ask for Alfred Price’s Focke Wulf 190 at War and that price isn’t really bad value.

Finally two paperback... the first A Man Called Intrepid by William Stevenson published by Sphere at £1.25 discusses much the same material that’s covered in the larger work I mentioned in this column in Phoenix no. 9. Unfortunately it does it in a rather hectoring and propagandist style which I found out of place in a history — even a popular history. It is interesting to hear another version of the story and compare it with the two but the reference book to which I shall turn will not be Mr Stevenson’s I’m afraid.

The other paperback is a beauty. It’s Capt. Jack Brookes whose book Convoys P.O.17 has written about in "Convoy is to Scatter" the signal he had to make on Admiralty instructions, at the end of that fateful voyage. In this book he takes a more light hearted look at signals and signalling in "The Senior Service". Make Another Signal is the title of this section and it is a story about the house. For a broilce, to tackle the sense of humour, to ponder on how things might have been different if he had taken another signal. All such foods for thought are contained in this book which is delightfully illustrated by the author’s own pen and ink sketches. It has 38 pages and 30p and how better to finish than with an example of the kind of signal which I find the most enjoyable especially when read in a comfortable armchair. From one writer to another Atlantic Cable: “Have Just Seen Down Your Funnel. Fishing Brightly.”
In an earlier article published in Phoenix No.9 I covered the ten Principles of War and their application to board wargaming. This time the subject is the Gambits of War, the form your operations can take. These few for it is has been reckoned that, short of sitting tight and waiting for the other fellow to come to you, there are only some six basic manoeuvres or gambits and that all battles have been the realisation of, or the attempt to realise, one of these six. They are:

Penetration of the Centre
Envelopment of One Flank
Envelopment of Both Flanks
 Assault from a Defended Position
Feigned Withdrawal
Strategic Flank March

All can be used effectively in board games, with the proviso that, first, some are more suitable to certain types of games than to others and, secondly, Feigned Withdrawal is more difficult to do on the game-map than on the ground owing to the "Eye-balls in the Sky" factor. The first five can be used in a tactical context i.e. involving a small number of units in a limited area of the board, or in a strategic one where the whole of one's force takes in the gambit. The last, Strategic Flank March, is more suited, as its name implies, to the strategic context alone.

Penetration of the Centre

Probably the oldest of them all, this gambit consists of, once battle is joined and the enemy's reserve has been wholly or largely committed, using part of one's own force to break a weak point in the enemy line and then passing the remainder through the gap to fall on the enemy's rear to disrupt his supply lines, rear installations and any reserves he may have left. This is best done when the enemy force's flanks are secure or when his line is too long to outflank; essential for its success is the pinning of his front by secondary attacks on either side of the point of penetration and the holding of a strong force ready to pass through the breach. The breaching force cannot do this as its task will be to hold the gap open and, if possible, widen it. The chief danger incurred is the possibility of the penetration being caught as in a bag and crushed in from either flank if the enemy reserve has not been pinned or if the penetrating force is too small and on too narrow a front.

Envelopment of One Flank

In a tactical context battle is again joined and the enemy's reserve drawn in. Then a mobile force, in the other to hold back, is passed round the enemy's flank to take him in the rear while one's forces in front redouble their efforts in order to catch him between two fires. On a strategic for, rather, grand (tactical) level, one's main force engages the enemy while a strong detachment, not in contact, moves round behind him on a wide flank march to render his position untenable. Envelopment, properly used, means that one has both tactical advantage and crushing local superiority and that the enveloped flank will collapse, leaving the enemy the choice of changing front under disadvantageous conditions, withdrawing altogether or having his line chewed up like a stick of rock. Strategic envelopment can often force him out of his position into a hurried withdrawal, leaving himself vulnerable to an aggressive pursuit. The dangers? Those of the outflanking force being itself outflanked or of a counter-attack breaking the hook.

On the game-board the swift tactical envelopment can result in two or three enemy units being caught front and rear and destroyed at a blow; then judicious movement after combat closes up the attackers into a cohesive force poised on a suddenly-vulnerable flank, possibly with the chance of taking the enemy centre in the rear next turn. Or, if a quick local victory is the object, the flanking units can be weak but fast-moving, pinning the enemy from the rear while heavier units deliver the knockout from the front: if any of the weak units are destroyed in their turn to attack yet points. Where a more permanent advantage is sought, first, move other units out as a screen on the 'open' side of your flanking movement and, secondly, have more strong units coming round the flank to weight the upper jaw of the trap.

When this gambit is being implemented strategically then a time-span of two, three or even four moves can be accepted provided that the enemy's main force can be pinned by you and that his reinforcement are few or non-existent. The flanking force may even move round through rough terrain which your opponent thought wasn't a likely approach. The US player in "Würzburg" who puts nothing east of the Main can find himself in this situation as an entire Russian division slips south through the woods while two more divisions hold him by the lapels.

Envelopment of Both Flanks

The general's dream gambit since Hannibal did it to perfection at Cannae almost 2200 years ago: the Schlieffen Plan for the swift defeat of Prussia was no more than this one writ large. Two simultaneous flanking movements meet behind the enemy, crush...
in his flanks, fall on his rear and there you are: total destruction. But make sure the encircling arms are both strong and rapid—otherwise one of them may be mangled or your centre disrupted ("the [b] & [b]lew fast"). Also the terrain must be suit-
able for the double encirclement.

Meanwhile, back on the board...I would advise that this is done either very much at a tactical level, with only a small pocket (8 units or so) surrounded, or else at a strategic level. In most wargames to attempt to surround tactically a larger enemy force simply closes it up into an immobile but compact mass which must then be chipped away over several turns. Readers who have found themselves at Shiloh, trying to lever apart a beleaguered swarm of Yankees will know what I mean. If there are few game-turns left or if enemy reinforcements are due, one could be thwarted at best or done for at worst. A small detachment thus isolated, however, perhaps after Penetration of the Centre, can be totally destroyed in two moves.

Done strategically, it is usually a more slow-moving operation but when it is successful it can make a good position untenable: once again the options are retreat, possibly hasty, or being bitten off at both ends. Strategic or tactical, do not forget that the double encirclement must be done in conjunction with pressure, or at least a very real threat, from the front in order to inhibit movement of the enemy's reserves and to hinder him from changing front.

Assault from a Defended Position
In this case one takes up a strong defensive position from which the enemy must seek to dislodge one, as Wellington did at Waterloo. Let the enemy attack unwaveringly until his army is depleted, exhausted and possibly approaching demoralisation. Then counter attack.

ASSAULT FROM A DEFENDED POSITION

In a wargame, this gambit will work best on a large scale when the attacker is liable to suffer loss or disruption on the CPT as the result of an unsuccessful or misjudged assault: where failure merely incurs retreat without penalty his force will remain intact, making a major counter attack inviable. The 'classic' AH games are examples of the sort of simulation in which this method can be used; more recent games in which the attacker is liable to suffer step-losses or, as in 'Shenandoah', when attrition does not favour him unless he has much superior numbers are also examples; and grand tactical games such as 'Terrible Swift Sword' permit a strong defensive to shoot a misjudged or unlucky attack into fragments.

However, attrition of an attacker can also be achieved by very local counter attacks, involving no more than two to four units, to nip off an exposed or temporarily isolated unit, especially if there has been a foolhardy advance after combat. Indeed, this tactic is only the Assault from a Defended Position in miniature and, applied often enough against a gung-ho attacker, will enable you to undertake it on a grander scale.

When the counter-assault comes it may be a general one. More often it can be put to good local use against a holding attack intended to pin part of your force while your opponent seeks to use one of the first three gambits against you. It is very disconcerting when, just as he is building up his real effort on one part of your line, another part swings out, scattering the weakened assailants, and begins to envelop his flank.

A word of warning. As few opponents will bet their armies into fragments just to suit you, this gambit can be double-edged. Do not use it unless you are now strong enough to be able to out position your way, where you probably have the advantage of terrain and/or breastworks or improved positions and beat the weakened enemy in the open; or, failing that, when you can launch a swift attack to destroy a number of opposing units and then regroup your original position before he can react. The NATO player in 'Fluids Gap' can do this over and over again, thanks to the double-move rule and his flexible doctrine: indeed this particular game makes this form of the gambit (essential to NATO's survival). Finally, Assault from a Defended Position will not have time to develop if your position can be flanked: the enemy must be forced into having no alternative to the frontal assault, due to lack of time or space.

FEIGNED WITHDRAWAL

Feigned Withdrawal
Quite simple. You withdraw rather precipitately and as your opponent follows up close behind you, you turn on his extended vanguard and destroy it.

This, as I have said, is not easily done on the game-board. Your opponent can see all your units and is unlikely to follow too swiftly or to walk into an ambush. In fact, the only game I know of in which you really can do something like this is the 'Teutoburgerwald' scenario of 'Caesar's Legions', when you do have completely hidden stacks into which a pursuing Roman force can be persuaded to blunder, or which can lay open, howling dreadfully, in his rear, 'Shenandoah', with its lettered counters representing - well, what? There are opportunities for this gambit, especially when one's retreat is along a route to your opponent's objective: and in modern, ranged-weapon games like 'Mech War II' a judicious withdrawal can induce his adversary within range of more of your units; but if he is any good he will do very carefully, nipping from cover to cover and affording you no sitting ducks unless Command Control plays him false.

Strategic Flask March
A derivative of Encampment of One Flask on a grand scale; you leave your enemy facing a part of your force while, unknown to him your main body moves right round behind one flank to cut across his L of C and/or attack his base.

Straightaway one can see that this is another gambit limited in application: in wargame no player is going to feign ignorance while twenty counters move down one side of the board carrying their troops in their hands. Strategically it is possible in games where you can bring on reinforcements behind your enemy's flank and where you can afford to keep up these until they are strong to a force. Even so, your opponent, unless he is an idiot, will be aware of the threat and will not come too close to your flank. It can also be used in 'Shenandoah', using the Concealed Deployment rule. Indeed, I once did it to perfection: my opponent was so sure that Force A was my main body that he paid little heed to humble C moving cautiously up the South Fork of the Shenandoah - until it suddenly force-marched to his depot at Winchester and made away with all his supplies and wagons, forcing him to withdraw precipitately from what had been a good position.

On a tactical level and transmuted into The Blow at the Enemy's Rear it can work in many games, provided that one is lucky. Here the gambit is to move a fairly strong force quickly round one flank with a view to striking at some vital rear location on the map; it may be a hex which the other fellow must keep an eye on, or a supply unit, or even a road by which he is expecting some much-needed reinforcements. With any luck your move will make him react so hurriedly that he will be thrown off balance, which is what your main force, still to his front, is waiting for. As you will have realised, it can often lead to the making of the flanker's force and is therefore best kept in hand for when things are not going too well and disruption of the enemy is important enough to justify the risk, or when one wishes to break a stalemate. Needless to say, it will apply only in games in which some such tender area in enemy's rear exists but many recent ones have some form of supply rule which gives importance to certain roads or hexes. In 'Mudken' for instance, the Soviet player is forever sensitive about the thin umbilical cord that joins him to the north map-edge and in 'Lee Mows North' a threat to Washington's communications can often send the Unison scrambling back from some threatening foray. And 'Caesar's Legions' is all about bad, hairy men jumping out of the woods into the rear areas of the Pox Flamans.

The Six Gambits: of them you will find the first three most readily applicable in most games, with One Flask hitting the flank on a large scale, effectiveness and ease of implementation - I recommend it as being a good way of putting an enemy force off balance and, done vigorously, of cutting the stronger one down to something more like parity. Both Flanks is even better provided you don't try for too big a mouthful at one go, but falls into the 'nice work if you can get it' class. Penetration is, although simple, not to be despised but it is not recommended when the enemy is strongly placed and has defence in depth; against a 'crust defence it can be both swift and effective. From the start of any game you should be alert to openings for one or other of the various gambits. Sometimes the initial set-up of units will dictate one; sometimes you will seek to contrive an opening; and sometimes a mistake on your opponent's part will hand you an opening on a plate. Remember always that whether the situation is strategic or a very small tactical one, the key will usually lie in the application of a suitable gambit.
BATTLE FOR HUE
A review of SDC's game from the 1968 Offensive

ROB GIBSON

I've been interested in aeroplanes for as long as I can remember.... books, models, magazines, the whole lot. When SPI brought out 'Flying Circus' I got hooked on air games too. 'Richtown's War', 'Spitefire', 'Foxbat & Phantom', 'Air Force', Ed Smith's 'Battle of Britain', 'Fight in the Skies' - I've played them all. What I really wanted to do though was fight Mig's vs. Sabres over Korea; so naturally, when Air War came out I just had to get a copy.

Well, they warn you in the adverts that it is a complex game and when you open the box you can see why. The rule booklet is quite large and covers 48 pages. Add to that a quarto size sheet on each of 30 aircraft, full characteristics table for 16 guided missiles; add 12 pages of charts, a one-page sequence of play and a two-page rules summary and then, on top of it all, take a look at an aircraft's control panel sheet.... It's 3 inches deep and 21 inches wide for each aircraft. Of course you also get an 8 piece 'geomorphic' board and 600 counters. Well, it's enough to put anyone off and if it was a week or two after I got it, after several 'well, perhaps tomorrow's', before I finally settled down to try to digest it all.

Once you do get started however it's not all as bad as it seems. Having played an air game before certainly helps. The game is split into steps, of increasing complexity, each with its own scenarios. The first deals with aircraft movement and cannon/mg combat; after reading and mastering this (it is 11 pages long) players can go on to play the first three scenarios and make up their own situations covering any combat which does not involve missiles. The complexity level at this stage is still fairly high, as players have to master such things as 'energy levels', '12 point facing', 'turning progress' (before each 30 degrees turn is made) and to be successful manoeuvres such as the Immelman, wingover etc etc.

Once mastered, however, games flew fairly well and can be very enjoyable. Pilots rated 'Turk'v', 'Novice', 'Average', 'Honcho' and 'Super Honcho' and the survival chance for a Turkey is pretty poor for both novices and experts. Once you have found the correct position for a Mig 15 against an F86 Sabre it can be pretty enjoyable, the game's constant aim for the missile is to lock on a Mig shot down or damaged which is somewhat frustrating.... so is the Mig's limited armament!

To get more kills you gotta get missiles and that leads to stage two.... heat seeking missiles. The increase in rules is actually fairly small, three pages and all the systems are for aircraft so its straightforward. However, the disadvantage of missiles is that you need a new control panel in use as soon as you fire one of the damned things! Heat seekers soon lead you to radar homing (two more pages) then you can fly a basic game with any type of aircraft and the full panoply of weaponry.

After this, optional rules cover visual and radar search, clouds and sun, infra red and radar counter measures, bombing and strafing, ground to air and ejecting. Some of these e.g. visual search and ejecting, are useful even in stage one games, as soon as you've covered the basics, as they enhance the game considerably (make sure your wing man has good eyes).

Next come the scenarios, 10 historical ones, covering everything from 'action over Mig Alley' (Sept. 13th 1962 involving 2 F86's and 2 Mig 15's, to the 'Return of the Red River Rats Route Pack Six', Dec.22nd 1972 involving F105's, F4E's, A7E's, Mig 21's, AIM 7 and 9 Atoll missiles, buildings, trucks, dumps, bridges, barns, SAM missiles, AA guns, bombs, SMART bombs and Bullpup missiles.

Finally, a section on constructing your own scenarios, aircraft availability, pilot capabilities and situation types, followed by some general hints on playing.

Despite its complexity, I enjoyed Air War - in fact, it might be partly because of its complexity - there is always something new. However, I guess you've gotta be an aerobatic like me because it does require commitment to master it all. And, most difficult of all is finding an opponent. Still, I know this guy in Brum who's pretty interested in aeroplane, if...
The opinions and comments made in this column are not necessarily those of the editor or publisher. The editor requests that letters submitted for publication in this column should be short and to the point to avoid unnecessary abridgment. All letters addressed to the Editor will be considered for publication unless they are clearly marked "Not For Publication".

Concerning articles on tips for players, how about one on the tactics of WWII's modern combat and the principles behind them? I find it difficult to grasp the principles of games like 'Panzer' 44 and Winter 'October War'. To be more specific: where do you position your forces in defence? How do you attack, i.e. what portion of your forces should fire while the rest move? What range is optimum for conducting armoured combat? When and why should infantry dismount from APCs? How does one best use artillery? etc. The list is endless.

I have been playing SPI games for over a year and find no problem in comprehending grand tactical, i.e. Napoleon At War (Congratulations, Mr. Merry, on an excellent game) and larger scale games, but tactical games baffle me. If some gallant Phoenix contributor would write an article on the subject I would be very grateful.

Andrew Finkel

(If it is up to you, the reader, to supply such articles; on my part I will only be too pleased to publish them if they come up to scratch, Editor)

Anti-British Bias?

In his letter printed in Phoenix 11, Ed Merryweather says he feels he detects an anti-British bias in S&T. I believe he is detecting things that are not there.

To quote from his criticism of Phil Kosnett’s ‘Highwaymen’ article, "...the British got off to a slow start because of terrain, traffic jams and resistance..." Despite what Mr Kosnett says, XXX Corps fought well and did their job! Now surely the planners of Operation Garden must have considered the effects of terrain, traffic jams & resistance in their planning? And, though XXX Corps did fight very well, indeed, they did not do their job. Their job was quite simply to take and hold that last bridge. Nothing can alter the fact that Operation Garden was a failure, thus the whole of Market Garden was a failure.

Mr Merryweather then comments on the American Military. He compares US Intelligence unfavourably to British, completely ignoring their code breaking skills which were quite effective during the Pacific war. May I point out to him that our work on Enigma owed a very great deal to Polish intelligence? He defends the British on the matter of the Fifteenth Army borders; one cannot blithely ignore an entire army simply because it might be resting or transferred to the Eastern Front. The statement that ‘The Allied fighters that covered the Fifteenth Army... must have been American’ is entirely unsupported. The Americans flying by day and the British by night applies to strategic bombing, not tactical missions. The fact remains that the Fifteenth Army escaped from a British sector.

Next he states that ‘The Americans have never been noted for bravery’. Since we’ve been talking about Market Garden, I suggest he examine the 82nd’s incredibly brave assault across the river at Nijmegen.

Finally, it is a shame that Mr Merryweather should choose to ignore the large number of complimentary remarks that have appeared in S&T about the British armed forces. There is an example from the very article that Mr Merryweather criticizes. Mr Kosnett says of the First Airborne: ‘Given their power and talent as a unit... They did as well as they did. They were outnumbered, outgunned, and seemingly without hope of rescue. Their guts and training were more than they needed...’... most importantly their esprit de corps, held them together where almost any army would have surrendered.

Does that really smack of anti-British bias?

John D Salt

Miniature Boardgaming

I was interested to read Mike Doe’s article ‘Miniatures VS. Mech War & Firefight’ in the Jan/Feb edition of Phoenix, as this is a subject that I have been going over just recently. The question that was raised in this article was basically: what is best? Why both are! Why choose one or the other when the two systems overlap? an integrated, integration of the two. I haven’t tried playing the Mech War/Panzerblitz style systems. However, I have played Tank! rules to great success, the visual impact of miniatures with the ‘complete’-ness of a game offered by the hex sheets and exact rules of this system save the best from both worlds.

Using the SPI blank hex sheets a player can make the board as large or small as he desires, terrain can also be included using other sheets for hills and bridges, etc. First decide where you want a hill to be, then the hex numbers that cover the area, then cut a piece representing the shape of the hill you desire and fit it over the base sheet first sticking it to a piece of hardboard cut to shape. Using another sheet a smaller hill can be made to fit over the first so that the main hill rises in steps with the appropriate cost in movement points to move a unit up each step. This is not perfect if a gradually rising hill is wanted as it places the gamer’s cut pieces out with each hill portion one hex band smaller than the last. Bridges, to the player’s own design can also be made using this method, this would be especially effective making a bridge with its sides anchored to hill portions. The main thing to keep in mind is that whenever a piece of terrain is laid on the base sheet, the numbers must correspond for si-move plotting.

When players make up their own scenarios they may find that at a Preservation Level, I have Tank! in mind now, gives them a problem, I solved this by allotting 2 points to each unit involved for both sides, thus: seven tanks would have a preservation level of 14. Whenever a tank is destroyed a die is rolled, if a Snake1 die roll is then taken off the preservation level until the mortar is broken.

Mr Doe rightly praises GHQ miniatures as being the best, they are the best. (Available mail order from New Hope Design, Rothbury, Northumberland NE65 7QJ.) GHQ also make some nice terrain pieces which may or may not fit into a board. I haven’t tried them. Counters may be used with this game or figures (also supplied by New Hope) of infantry! They are glued to a small square of plasticard look quite effective.

John Smart

(Feel that this letter is a reflection of my comments in the editorial whilst I would disagree that miniatures have any part to play in my hobby. I also admit that John has every right to his view. You will see further articles on the miniatures/ boardgames interface! Editor)
GAME PROBLEM:
PANZERARMEEF AFRIKA
JOHN SPENCE
0703
2-60
4-60
2-60
TO ENTER:
40 Mps

HIGH WYCOMBE WARGAMERS, 19.00hrs
Wed, British Legion Hall, Tel: Beaconsfield
4118.
ULSTER MILITARY MODELLING SOCIETY
meets every last Saturday in the month at 3,
Cheviot Gardens, East Belfast at 2:00pm.
Chris Newey, 21 Calver Grove, Great Barr,
Birmingham B44 9BE, Tel: 021-360 3478.
BLANTYRE BOARDGAMES CLUB, c/o
Elizabeth Scott Community Centre, Logan
Street, Blantyre, Strathclyde. Every Wed.
7-10pm. Tel: East Kilbride 27030 (G.Munn)
LINCOMBE BARN WARGAMES SOCIETY,
Oberdale Rd, Downend, Bristol. Meets Sunday
2:30pm to 9.30pm. Contact: A.Swanston, 40
Rockland Rd, Downend, Bristol. Tel: 565003.
Brian Griffin, 3 Ambleside Avenue, Roath Park,
Cardiff, Tel: 762069.
A.G.V. Riddell, Thornton, Penyfford, Chester.
O.Bowles, 42 Stuart Road, Highcliffe, Christ-
church, Dorset. Tel: Highcliffe 3252.
CRAWLEY WARGAMERS CLUB, Northgate
Comm. Centre, Crawley. Meets every Wed.
at 7:30pm. Tel: J.Liddiard: Crawley 34434 even.
CROYDON WARGAMES GROUP, Sec: P.J.D.
Taylor, 56 Woburn Court, Wellesley Rd.,
Croydon, CR0 2AF.
R. Petty, Vice Chairman Dartington Military
Mod. Sec. 30 Dundee St, Darlington, Co.
Durham. Tel: Darlington 62184.
Peter Shee, 51 Upper Leeson St, Dublin
TRINITY WARGAMERS ASSOCIATION. Meet
every Sunday in Trinity College. Details avail-
able from the Sec: Andrew Finkel, 88 Rathdown
Park, Terenure, Dublin 6.
EALING GAMES GROUP, Northfields Mission
Hall, Northfields Ave, Ealing W13 (meet
18.45 hrs every Wed.)

Notes:
Command Control throw for turn 7 = 1
Supplies for the Axis are represented by two
loaded trucks near El Agheila; otherwise the
Axis network of supplies is intact but stretched.
Answer for at least my attempt in the next
issue.

CONTACT!

SPRINGHEAD WARGAMERS (Sec - D.
Lockyer) 171 Dover Rd, Northfleet, Gravesend
Kent. Tel: 0474-565683.
BOSWORTH COLLEGE CHESS & WARGAME
SOCIETY/ BRAUNSTONE (Univ) WARGAMES
SOCIETY. Both clubs are interested in finding
High J/Upper School age opponents with idea of
extending contacts & players. Sec: Andrew
Poole, 27 Holmfield Ave, East, Braunstone,
Leicester LE3 3FD. This is a new society still
forming.
Mick Godwin, 42 Jellicoe Rd, Leicester.
MERSEYSIDE BOARD WARGAMERS CLUB
meets at "Games", 50 Manchester St, Liverpool
(50 only) Sundays, 2:00pm onwards. Tel: 061-
235 2905.
Ian Wooler, 16 Harcourt Rd, Dorney Reach,
 Maidenhead, Berks. Tel: M'hd 25039.
J. Garrett, 19 Weaverthorpe, Nunthorpe,
Middlesborough, Cleveland.
OXFORD UNIV. WARGAMES CLUB. Meet in
Quarrile Room, Exeter College, at 1:30pm on
alternate Sundays in Full Term. Sec: Andrew
McGee, Magdalen College, Oxford.
Peter Swinburn, 87 Lavernock Rd, Penarth
Tel: 707400.
R. B. Walker, (Sec, South Wales Wargames Fed.)
10 Wildbrook Close, Taibach, Port Talbot,
West Glamorgan. Tel: Port Talbot 87954.
S. Dalby, 89 Stakes Road, Port Talbot, Hants.
Tel: Waterlooville 58467.

Nigel Spike, Univ. of St Andrews Wargaming
Soc: Students Union, St Mary's Place, St
Andrews, Fife. (meet every Tues., Chaplaincy
Centre).
Kim Dent, K17, Glen Eyre Hall, Glen Eyre Rd,
Rosset, Southampton, S09 2QN.
K.A. Smith, 6 Darwin Avenue, Edgley, Stockport
Tel: 061-460 2261.
Petersham Institute, David Road, 46 Crane Rd,
Twickenham, Middx. Tel: 01-894 5265.
K.T. Cockbill, Frank F Harrison Comprehensive
School Simulations Club, Leamore Lane,
Bloxwich, Walsall, W. Midlands.
Barry Sheridan, 75a Hamlet Court Rd, Westcliff
on Sea, Essex.
B. Norwood, Menzies High School Simulations
Club, Clarks Lane, West Bromwich, W. Midlands.

OVERSEAS
R. Cremer, Maastricht 65, Nijmegen, Holland.
Tel: 0980-771210.
Mauricio Bragaglia, 00135 Roma - Via Camp,
ocatino, 39, Italy. Tel: (06) 338 13104.
B.J. Ward, 2 Nedina, Earls Avenue, Windsor,
Hambui, South Africa.

OPPONENTS WANTED
P. James, Oak Lodge, Fulmer Rd, Gerrards
Cross, Bucks. Tel: Gerr, X 88265 (even.)
G.R. Sparkes, 88 Green St, Denton, Manchester.
Tel: 061-336 9571.
David White, 30 Mulgrew Avenue, Saltcoats,
Ayrshire.
J. L. Gillson, La Maison d'Aval, Rue Bélieue,
Torteval, Guernsey. Tel: 84113.

TO ENTER
BY RAIL:
FUSILIER GAMES

WEHRMACHT
The War in Russia 1941-45.

In our view the best simulation of the War in Russia 1941-45 at corps level, with 300 die cut counters, 3 colour map, rule book, set up sheets etc in its second printing for £3.00 postpaid

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The heroic struggle of the inhabitants of Warsaw as they try to wrest control of the Polish Capital from the dreaded S.S. in the face of the active hostility of Stalin. S.S., Herman Goring Pz Grens., Dirlewanger's Brigade Ukranians, railway guns all are to be found in this simulation with its 120 die cut counters 4 colour map, lithoed rules etc for only £2.00 post and package paid.

WHO ARE WE?

Fusilier Games is the collective name for a group of gamers in Aberdeen using hand operated silk screen and litho equipment making a limited print run of only 100 copies of each game. First come first served.

BATTLE for ROME
Anzio - Cassino 1944

With 420 die cut counters, 4 colour maps of BOTH the Anzio beachhead and the Gustav Line connected as in Bar Lev, lithoed rules, set up and reinforcement sheets showing the Allied attempts to take the Italian capital from Jan to May. BATTLE for ROME comes in large minigrip bag for only £3.00 post and package paid.

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The battle that determined that Prussia was to become the dominant power in Germany. Not another N.A.W. copy but an accurate, playable simulation of mid Nineteenth Century tactics. With 120 die cut counters, 5 colour map, setup and rule sheets SADOVA is available NOW for only £2.00 p & p paid in large minigrip bags.

ALL OUR GAMES ARE SENT WELL PACKAGED IN AIR PADDED ENVELOPES WITH POSTAGE PAID.

All the above are available from Fusilier Games, 27 Ashvale Place, Aberdeen, Scotland.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

Starsoldier

In Phoenix 11 you asked for comments on Starsoldier, here are mine:
1) It is often over too quickly. Short sharp slugfests as soon as the two sides are fairly close. What is the point of a fast moving tactical game if the units cannot make flanking manoeuvres without coming well within the killing range of the enemy?
2) The method of taking hits is good, and I am in favour of a recovery rate, but the rate for humans is too high. It makes it necessary to score two or even three consecutive hits on the one soldier, while the other members of the enemy force create havoc. Still, this can lead to some exciting moments as you try to send a wounded soldier into cover, under protective fire from his comrades.
3) There should be more 'colour' (like the Dink-bag and asteroid scenarios).

The link game. The main problem is the time it takes, but there in one point about Tac Point allocations. A fire team costs the same as an android team, and as androids are inferior, there is therefore no sense in ever purchasing an android team. I prefer to make an android team cost one Tac Point.

Despite these points, I like the game. I enjoy playing it and that is what counts.

A Tennent

(Whilst much of this letter applies to 'Target of Opportunity' I think a slow response negates the separate column for the time being! Editor)
MALCOLM WATSON

Question: What do I do about 'Global War'? The Axis win every time, very easily. Is there any hope? Perhaps some of our readers would like to dispute this claim through the columns of Mail Call.

Comment: Most of the Hotline items are of no interest at all, or the answers are obvious.

Question: What percentage of Feedback Cards you receive do you actually use? How many S&T Feedback Cards are forwarded to America?

Comment: We take into account all cards received up to the point collection takes place. We forward all S&T cards received up to the deadline on the card. In both cases it usually works out at 10% of the readership.

Question: Although you are distributing an American product, I wish you wouldn't resort to all these nasty Americanisms found in News From SPUK, etc.

Comment: If I were to report to my native tongue you wouldn't understand a word I wrote. Kenwhutshmeanatmmy? Americanisms have been creeping into our everyday life for years and I’m sure that the structure of our society will not be undermined if some shall slip into Phoenix. However, just to reassure you, we at SPUK do not deliberately go out of our way to ape our American cousins. We're British thru and thru.

Question: Why no special order form for S&T back issues with games mentioned in S&T 68.

Comment: Do the special offers in S&T apply in England?

Question: Do you regularly post special offers to US domestic subscribers or foreign subscribers who take our subs direct with SPI in New York. UK subscribers enjoy special offers put out by SPUK.

Comment: Stop letting people persecute Andrew Gilham!

Question: Hey Andy, you forgot to sign this! Seriously, if Mr Gilham writes provocative letters and articles, as is his wont, then he must be interested in learning what the reaction to his contribution is. In allowing fellow readers to state their views we are hardly allowing or encouraging persecution, all we are doing is affording them the same facilities that Andrew has already made use of.

Question: Can you send on photos to illustrate an article submitted for Phoenix?

Comment: Bring old Phoenix issues into print again.

Question: It's nice to know you want them but the cost of re-printing would be prohibitive as overall demand for these is not high. We just could not justify a print run.

Comment: Put errata on current S&T games in Phoenix.

Question: Strange you should say that. We are in the process of setting up a games test panel with a view to going through new SPI games as they come out to locate as many errors/anomalies as possible before the game goes onto the market. I would like to see the errata that we compile printed in Phoenix and have put this to the Editor, who has agreed in principle. It could be that the first of such errata, based on WOTTR 2nd Edition rules, will appear in this issue. (See page 18)

Comment: I know it's SPI's (USA) fault but I wish you could still supply spares. When you buy a car you don't expect to replace whole car when the tyres wear out.

Comment: We wish we could but without getting spares from SPI our hands are tied. To carry your car as far as possible, when your tyres wear out, you do not go along to a car dealer and ask him to strip a new car of its tyres knowing that you cannot obtain a further set of tyres for that car.

Question: I have a game which I think may be worth publishing. How do I find out whether I am legal?

Comment: To date SPUK has not been in a position to consider the publication of games in the UK however during my recent meeting with SPI this subject was discussed in detail. (See this issue News From SPUK).

Question: Can we be kept informed of the games to be included in future S&T sets, i.e. what comes after S&T 70?

Comment: We did not know ourselves until two weeks ago what was to appear in future issues of S&T. Here is the info now to hand: S&T 67 - Stonewall - The Battle of Kernstown, March 23, 1862. A regimental level simulation of Jackson's spoiling action against Grant's Divisions in the Shenandoah valley. Based on the award-winning 'Terrible Swell' system. S&T 68 - Izumy: Debauch Before Kharkov. An operational-level game depicting the first premeditated Soviet counter-offensive, in May of 1942.

Question: In News from SPUK, is there any chance of having brief game reviews of newly-available games? I would like to know (a) topic of the game (b) complexity (c) time (d) how good is it for solitaire play - are there scenarios specifically designed for it?

Comment: It could be that we could sit in such a feature with our proposed errata section. I will take this up with the Editor. Roll on War in the Pacific, that should keep us busy.

Question: Why talk about S&T 64 and 65 when both have been delivered i.e. in Stop Press re delays?

Comment: Because if I didn't, customers would write in complaining that our service is lousy. Over the past 5 years I have found that delay is acceptable if it is adequately and truthfully explained. I see no point in keeping people in the dark when a few lines of explanation can put them in the picture and prevent any aggro.

Question: Any chance of S&T/Moves binders?

Comment: When these were first brought out SPI could not get enough to keep their own market supplied, let alone ours. I did look into the possibility of getting some made up in the UK but this proved abortive and, as I recall, demand was very limited. I will look into the possibility of getting supply from SPI again. Watch for future announcements in Phoenix.

Comment: Re your comments on stockists, I have not seen any games at Beatties, Birmingham, for 6-6 weeks. When they are stocked they carry a very small range - mainly British printed. Why don't you try to make shops take a minimum pack, maybe it would help to sell a sale or return policy... at the moment I know of only two stockists in the Midlands area.

Comment: Beatties, as a matter of policy, carry only UK-produced games. Initially, they were not tremendously enthusiastic about stocking wargames. Apparently they had already tried a line of non-SPI games which proved unsuccessful. Undaunted, yours truly got 3 titles into 3 of their branches on a S.O.R. basis for a trial. This trial proved successful and we now have all branches carrying up to 16 titles. Wargames are too specialised for general hobby shops such as Beatties to carry the full range. However, I do hope to get further UK-produced titles into their shops this year. Incidentally, the main reason that Beatties go for the UK-produced games is their reliability - obviously we carry a much larger stock of these than we do imported titles, therefore they are more readily available. At this stage we must be aware that imported titles are liable to interruption of supply from source, last year's dock strike being a prime example. It stands to reason a shop will want continuity of supply. Having created an interest in a product they will want to maintain that interest. Your comment re the number of outlets in the Midlands tends to rule out your suggestion that we should force shops to take a minimum quantity of games. Surely, such a step would tend to discourage outlets who are prepared to have a go on a limited basis. Your suggestion that we should supply on a sale or return is really a matter for debate within the SPUK corridors of power. There are many pros and cons and you can be assured that the subject has been debated at length. As a matter of interest, 18 months ago we contacted over 300 model shops throughout the UK in a bid to set up a distributor network. Out of that 300 we got some 30 new outlets. From the answers we got then, wargames were too specialised for many model shops and that's something we can't do much about.
HIGHWAY TO THE REICH 2ND EDITION RULES CLARIFICATIONS

Rule 14.52 Should a stack of units, including an Art, cross a local hex, the Art can stay on the landing hex with no adverse effect while another unit(s) in that serial is displaced to an adjacent hex. Should a second serial land on the hex occupied by that Art, unit (presumably through scatter) that serial would be displaced to an adjacent hex, The Art, unit plus any accompanying units in the original hex would be displaced as would the second serial. Any Art units accompanying the second serial would be displaced, disrupted but not automatically eliminated.

Rule 8.51 is an exception to 8.46

Rule 5.23 states that indirect fire weapons (including heavy weapons) can fire at a unit in a stack on top or bottom, 18.1 contradicts this as does 5.62 para 1.5.23 is incorrect, heavy weapons may only fire at the top two units in a stack. .

Rule 7.43 10.93 appears to contradict this. However, it does not extend both into and across river hexes regardless of ferries.

Rule 17.21 is an exception to Rule 12.2

PHOENIX 11 FEEDBACK RESULTS BASED ON A 10% RESPONSE FROM UK S&T SUBSCRIBERS

During the period December 1977 – January 1978 SPUK service was given a rating of 6.8 which is slightly up on the last period monitored (June – July 1977). 63% felt our service was steady against 11% who felt that it was on the decline. 60% of customers receiving orders by second class post got their goods within 14 days of ordering, while a surprising 22% did not know how long orders took to arrive. 45% receiving orders by parcel post got the goods within 14 days of ordering and 34% did not know. 16% and 14% respectively received their goods within 15 – 21 days and 2% and 3% waited 21+ days. Predictably, 2nd class post beat parcel post in the 10 day delivery bracket (35% against 25%).

Customer service got a rating of 7 which is well up on the previous rating. 27% said it was improving and 70% said it was steady. Our resident Customer Service Department, alias Ray Smith, was highly delighted at this result. However, one must bear in mind that the same Mr. Smith collates the feedback answers. Surely he wouldn’t be dastardly enough to fiddle the figures! 41% of rules queries were answered within 10 days, 27% within 14 days and for the rest he got a slapped wrist.

Moving onto questions about Phoenix, 65% considered Issue 11 superior to Issue 10. 42% of contributors would like to see their article ratings published and 26% would not. In the latter category, 100% said that they would contribute no further articles if ratings were published. 47% of non-contributors would like ratings to appear against 36% who would not. Taking a deft sidestep, I will pass the ratings back to John Spence. How about it, John? Do you feel we should publish ratings?

Non-contributor ratings were as follows:

- Issue overall: 6.9
- News from SPUK: 6.3
- Hotline: 6.3

SPU6 Feedback results
Rate the following on a 1–9 scale:

- 4: Cobra (Simulation): 7.3
- 6: Cobra (Article): 6.6
- 7: The War Against Japan: 5.8
- 8: Outpouring Mail: 6.2
- 9: Briefings: 6.0
- 10: For Your Eyes Only: 6.4
- 12: This Issue overall: 6.8
- Was the issue better than last?: Yes 74% No 26%

1978 continues to be a year of trial and tribulation. Following hot on the heels of the infamous American – Liverpool dock strike we found ourselves at odds with Mother Nature. The cold snap which held our M6s 36 shipment springing a leak and the resultant water damage totalled all of the Red Sun Rising frontstretches, 240 of our 300 Up Scope games, 200 of our standardYupee's of other games. The damage came to somewhere in the region of £2,000. Fourt weather in Boston caused M6s 37 to be late. Seemingly, the weather was too bad that there existed, in that fair city, a state bordering on martial law. Police would not allow traffic on the streets thus the printer could not get to work. Obviously the B.P.D. does not contain any Movers subscribers. The artwork for Phoenix 12 was late in getting to the printer because the gentleman who sets the text put it through the shredder in error – or was it a cunning ploy to deprive gamers of this stupendous magazine? Last on the list, the machine used to churn our Standard Game Boxes broke down and was out of operation for a couple of weeks. Having repaired this wondrous example of precision tooling, the box company duly got our boxes together and sent them off by lorry. It broke down!

Could 1978 continue in this way, we ask ourselves? If yes, then I thank God there are only 8 months till 1979.

I have just got back from my annual pilgrimage to New York, a trip that allows me to catch up on the gossip, learn what SPI have in mind for the future and endeavour to sort out any problems that have cropped up over the previous 12 months. As important as any of these, it gives me an insight into any problems that SPI might be wrestling with and their present big headache is getting games out on time.

The powers that be at SPI are acutely aware of the discontent that is stirred up amongst customers when games do not come out on schedule and they are doing all they can to put matters right. Don’t look for any miracles, it will take some time for improvements to take effect but be assured that no-one at SPI is burying his head in the sand on this one.

In the UK we should be prepared for some disruption in the not-too-distant future. SPI may be moving their operation to larger premises and such a move will almost certainly be tested by us. However, we will do all in our power to keep our operation running smoothly.

We are putting the S&T and Movers schedules back by two weeks since it looks like delays in future shipments are inevitable due to SPI’s workload. It seems pointless clinging to the old deadlines when they cannot realistically be met.

SPI has now shelved plans to publish books on October War and Red Star-White Star. I doubt if we will hear any more on those projects.

The Middle Earth saga now enters Peyton Place proportions as the wheeling and dealing continues. SPI have failed to reach an agreement with the Film Company which holds the Tolkien rights. I have now approached them direct with a proposition which I feel they will find acceptable and expect to have some word by late May. SPI and SPUK have already come to terms on the sale of the game outside the USA. All we need now is permission from the Tolkien firms and this, I am confident, will be forthcoming.

Our 1978 print programme enters its first stage with the printing of Napoleon's Last Battles in May. Negatives for the other three games, as detailed in Phoenix 12, are in our hands and counters for these games are expected within the next few months. Once they do arrive we should be all set for UK production without the hitches we ran into
last year. The next game to be printed will be put on offer in Phoenix 14 — watch that issue for details.

It seems that Simulations Design Corporation have finally gone to the wall. I have written to that company for clarification, but they advise me they have bitten the dust. On receipt of clarification we will take appropriate action on the outstanding SDC orders that we hold.

SPI are giving serious consideration to packaging all games bookcase style. If they decide to go ahead with this course of action it will commence next year with "War in the Pacific" and "Cambrai", both of which are due in the UK late June. Yes, "War in the Pacific" is a set of counters and maps backed with me along with rules and charts in proof form. Games already available will be put into this new style of production. This should take between 1 – 1 1/2 years for the full range.

The slow-selling games to be dropped by SPI when current stocks run out are as follows: — Fall of Rome, Franco-Prussian War, Leipzig, The Marne, 1918, Rif& Barbary and Year of the Rat, once our stocks run out we will not be reordering so if you want any of these games I suggest you put your order in straight away.

I apologise to those of you who are still waiting for a copy of the H&TR 2nd Edition rules. We were short-handed and did not find out until after the announcement was made in Phoenix 12. We will fulfill all requests as soon as possible.

On to the feedback now. Some of you have commented that questions 4 and 5 are identical. Not so, question 4 relates to a deck of cards, question 5 to a trolley of reprints. Please bear this in mind when answering this issue's feedback.

The following is the up to date details on upcoming SPI games: Objective Modern in stock now, Crimean War Quad expected in late May, Descent on Crete expected late July, War in the Pacific expected late July, Cambrai expected late July. Now in stock War in the Pacific, Crimean War, and a revised and boxed and 17.00 unboxed, due to an SPI price change.

From GDW we have 'Imperium', a science fiction game of interstellar empires in conflict with terrain, colonial expansion, Price £10.35 inc. P & P, complexity rating 5. Also in stock we have Battleline's 'Machiavelli', a game of politics and politics of Renaissance Italy, price £10.65 inc. P & P.

The big news to come out of the New York sortie is that SPI want SPUK to obtain UK designed games for them and this is how it will work:

Hopefully. We will feedback on the possibility of situations to gauge UK design for. If the response is good we will pursue the subject and look at any designs submitted to us. Should a game be acceptable we will buy it from the designer and send it to SPI in a 'ready to publish' state. This means that games will be tested here and revised as necessary. SPI will also test them on receipt to iron out any problems that we might miss. The onus is on SPUK to sort out the wheat from the chaff so come on all you budding game designers — pick up the phones to SPI.

Initially we expect to tackle games on the Quad level, using SPI's standard rules with us supplying the maps, counter and special rules. SPI would do the final artwork. The periods I expect to be feedbacked initially are The Peninsula War, The English Civil War, War of the Roses and possibly Colonial Wars. Anyone with suggestions for what they would like to see designed, please write to me.

Finally, SPUK continues to grow despite the numerous problems that have beset us. In the year ending March 31st 1979 we have moved 53,500 units, an increase of 12,500 (30.5%) on the previous year. We estimate that the increase would have been in the region of 45% if not held up by the ten week US stock strike. According to my reckoning, these sales put us fourth in the world wargames stakes with only SPI, Avalon Hill and TS&H behind us. Not bad for a business that started out six years ago as a two evenings a week job stemming from my own involvement in the hobby.

PHOENIX 13 Published May/June 1978

How to use the Feedback Response Card: After you’ve finished reading this issue of Phoenix, please read the feedback questions below and give us your answer/numbers on the card in the response boxes which correspond to each number that is thrown for card. Please be sure to answer all the questions (but do not write anything in the box for question numbers labelled "no question"). Incompletely filled out cards cannot be accepted. Here are the numbers:

Phonix (1) always means NO OPINION or NOT APPLICABLE.

9 Always means "no question". When the question is a "yes" or "no" question "yes" means "yes" and "2 means "no". When the question is a rating question, "1" is the WORST rating, "5" is the BEST rating, 5 is an average rating, and all numbers in between express various shades of approval or disapproval.

The deadline for the return of this card is June 30th 1978.

(1) Did you send in the Phoenix 12 feedback?
(2) Based on the last two months, how do you rate the service you receive from SPUK?
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(10) How many combat simulation games do you have (Quad games count as four)?
(11) How long have you been playing board games?
(12) Rate your appreciation of the longer type of article, as represented by the article on Conquerors in this issue.
(13) Rate your appreciation of the shorter type of article which would be less than a page in length e.g. Outreach scenario or Machiavellian Wargaming in this issue.

(15) Do you read other simulation conflict publications other than SPI? 5 is no, 1-2 other, 2-5 others, .... 9 or more

(16) Would you like to see anecdotally run this service?
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(18) Would you be interested in game problems such as the PanzerArmeeAfrica one in this issue?

(19) Would you be interested in producing such a problem? If yes please enter your name and address below.

(20) As a contributor (prospective or otherwise) would you like to see article ratings published in Phoenix?

(21) If no, would the printing of article ratings discourage you from further contribution?

(22) As a non-contributor would you like to see article ratings published?

Rate the following articles on a 1-9 scale:

(23) Conquerors
(24) Fulda Gap Review
(25) The Gambits of War in Wargaming
(26) Airwars
(27) Battle for Hue
(28) Outreach scenario
(29) Machiavellian Wargaming
(30) Panzerarmee Africa game situation

(31) Book Reviews
(32) Mail Call
(33) Hotline
(34) News from SPUK
(35) Boardgame Contacts
(36) Highway to the Reich Errata

(37) Rate the overall presentation of this issue 1-9

(38) Do you think that this issue was better than the last? 1) Yes; 2) No; 3) about the same.

(39) Do you have rules clarifications direct from the game publishers that you would be willing to publish in Phoenix?

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TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY

To date the response to this column has been poor. In order to cater for the more thoughtful of you and to allow for the printing schedule of Phoenix I am going to repeat the Target of Opportunity from issue 12.

The suggested subject for this issue will be:

AVALON HILL'S SOUQ LEADER

Let's have your views and comments please to go into the proposed column of reader's comments, brief reviews, modifications, queries, etc.
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