
Works in Progress Notes for the Central Front Series

Fifth Corps – Hof Gap – BAOR

(From S&T 80 – M/J 1980)

The Central Front Project

Now here's a new idea: S&T 77 had a proposal for a quadrigame called "The Central Front." It got a very high rating. Since current history stuff does so well in S&T, we thought of a way to do it in S&T. The original idea was to do two of the folio games in S&T and the other two outside of S&T. Each non- S&T folio would be sold for \$6 or \$7, the S&T version would be available for \$6 (as all S&T games are currently).

All three games would be in the one-inch box. But then we started thinking, why stop at one quadrigame? Since four of the maps would be interlocking, why not do more? To cover all of the "Central Front" (as we define it, from the Baltic to the Austrian border, from East Germany to the French/Benelux border) would take about 20 folio size (22"x17") maps at a 1:250000 scale (4 km/hex). We also came up with a new game system. This is described below.

The most exciting concept is how we could add more games. Each one would not only contain a new map and new counters for additional units. Each game would also contain additional "advanced rules" that could be used with most of the other games, Since the basic rules are only four pages, you could also

make additional editions of these. In addition to the additional maps and counters in each game, there would also be a 12 page exclusive rules book of which half the pages would be data (an article in effect). This system would take care of the update problem (always a problem with contemporary games). We would also be able to get more gamers involved with new information, ideas, and game designs themselves. We already have non-staff people working on one of the two non-S&T games.

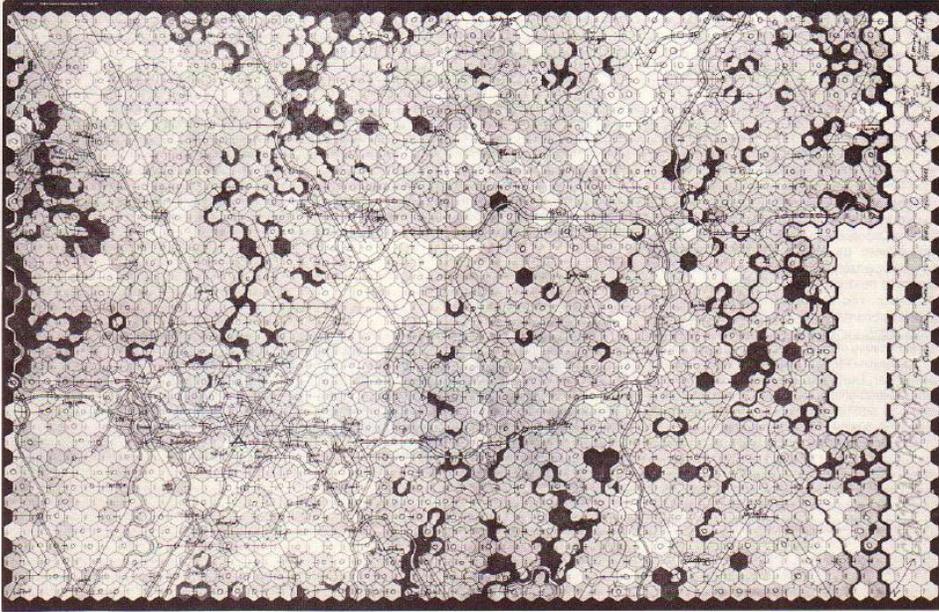
The Game System

The main feature is the use of "Friction Points" (FP's) and the

"Segmented Player Phase," FP's are added to a unit as it moves more than once in a turn and are used to represent losses from combat (plus a few other things). When a unit has 6 or more FP's, it is destroyed. Before that point is reached, additional FP's tend to slow a unit down. One FP is removed each turn if a unit is in supply. Only one marker is used to represent the FP's, and there isn't much stacking. Combat is a function of movement (somewhat like **Next War**). However, each player takes turns moving 1-6 units (depending on the player's "Command Level"). A player can move a unit more than once if he



Fifth Corps sketch map



wishes to gain an extra FP. This makes for a very fluid game without one player running away with it.

JFD

(From S&T 81 – J/A 1980)

Fifth Corps

This game, covering a major Soviet offensive in the Fulda / Frankfurt area of West Germany in the 80's, is slated to appear in the next issue of S&T as the first game of SPI's new *Central Front* series. The second game, **Hot Gap**, will be available separately when issue 82 is in your hands. Jim Dunnigan designed the *Central Front* game system (his initial report appeared last issue). Jim and our man on the inside, Chuck Kamps, have produced an up-to-the-minute regiment-battalion level NATO / Warsaw Pact order of battle for the games. **Fifth Corps**, which I have in the late stages of development, features two Soviet armies, a Soviet airborne division, the equivalent of one and a half West German

divisions, and the equivalent of two U.S. divisions from this OB.

The **Fifth Corps** game map (which appears below) shows the central area of West Germany from the East German border to just west of Frankfurt, including a bit of the Rhein. Other cities of note on the map include Fulda, Giessen. Worms, Wiesbaden, and Koblenz. The terrain analysis is totally new and more detailed than that in other games done on the area. Working directly from the latest 1:250,000 NATO training maps, each hex was analyzed for contour change, woods cover, and population density. Three types of roads are used: Autobahns, roads, and something new - access hexsides. The **Fifth Corps** map (and the **Hot Gap** map) is at a scale of four kilometers per hex. The map is not oriented north-south. Rather, north is traced along a diagonal hex row, moving to the right as it goes up. In play, the **Fifth Corps** map highlights a number of operational realities about the area: control of Autobahns for rapid troop response is

essential; the famous "Fulda Gap" is not really much of a gap at all, it is just not quite as rough as the terrain to either side; the area is also very densely populated. All in all, the area contains some of the best defensive terrain in West Germany.

Most NATO units in the game are battalions, but there are a few companies. The Soviet units are mostly regiments, with a few battalions. Through exhaustive research, Chuck Kamps has provided us with three strengths for every combat unit: an Attack Strength, a Defense Strength, and a Close Combat or Overrun Strength, used when attacking or defending in this special combat situation. Every unit has a Movement Allowance of twelve (called an Operation Point Allowance in the game, since the points are used for movement and to conduct attacks). As stated in Jim's report, each unit may possess from zero to five Friction Points at any point during play. Friction Points, representing fatigue, wear and tear on equipment, and personnel loss, are gained by conducting operations (moving and attacking) and by incurring combat loss. Friction Points are removed once per Game-Turn, to show rest and the receipt of supplies and replacements. A unit that has Friction Points operates less effectively and, if it gains its sixth Friction Point, is eliminated. The use of a hypothetically "endless" Game-Turn (representing half a day of real time) allows a player (especially the Soviet player) to burn his units out by piling on the Friction Points while pressing on for objectives.

Fifth Corps includes three scenarios. The introductory scenario is a tensely-balanced game positing a Soviet raid into the area a few days after the war has begun. According to the scenario premise, this part of the front was initially quiet and thus was stripped of all forces. The Soviets charge on with two divisions and some attack helicopters in the hope of seizing the Rhein-Main airbase, a NATO nuclear site at Giessen, and a REFORGER supply depot near Wiesbaden. NATO responds by sending the U.S. 11th Cavalry Regiment and part of a German *Jaeger* brigade back to the area to hold them off.

The second scenario uses only the eastern half of the map and portrays the opening two days of a major offensive by the Soviet 8th Guards Army (four divisions and army support units). The 11th Cav Regiment (again), a German *Jaeger* brigade, and some German territorials must hold the line until the arrival of the German 5th Panzer Division.

The third scenario is the biggie, using the whole map and all the units to create the first five days of a major Soviet offensive in the area.

Playing times for the scenarios range from two hours for the introductory to 15 hours for the campaign. Electronic warfare, tactical nuclear weapons, and airpower are used in the latter two scenarios. Chemicals are used in all.

Hof Gap will be advertised in the next issue. It covers the area to the southeast of the **Fifth Corps** area and will include 400 counters (instead of 200) and a number of its own scenarios, as

Volume 2 of the *Central Front* series

Hof Gap

The Nurnberg Pincer

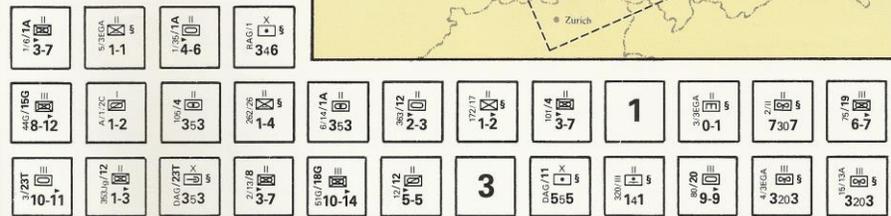
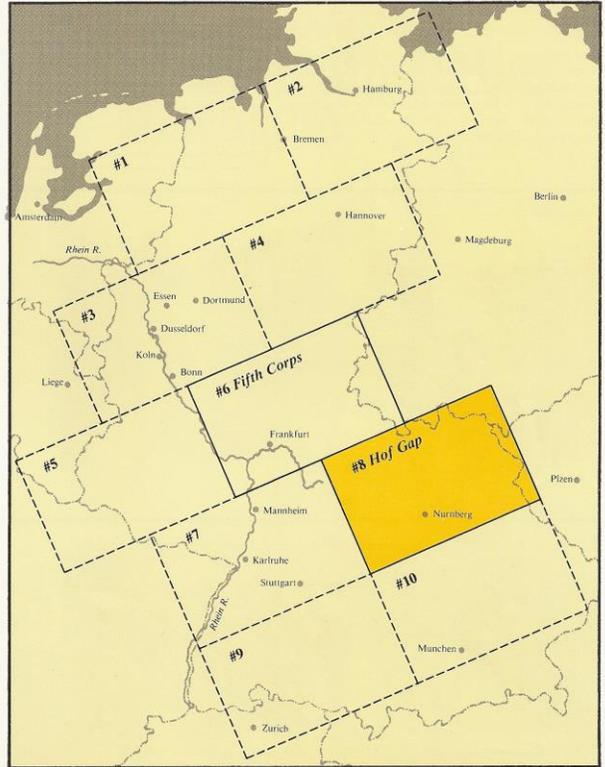
NOW AVAILABLE!

Central Front is an ongoing series of games in which NATO forces in Germany confront the Warsaw Pact steamroller in a hypothetical future war. *Fifth Corps* in this issue is the first of the *Central Front* game series; *Hof Gap*, the next game in the series to be released, will take the game system one step further. *Hof Gap* will add such elements as air supremacy, artillery counter-battery fire, U.S. training areas, supply airheads, and airmobile operations — new ideas that can be incorporated into *Fifth Corps* as well.

As shown in the accompanying map, all of West Germany will eventually be portrayed in the *Central Front* series. The *Fifth Corps* (#6 on the map) game-map abuts on its south edge with the *Hof Gap* (#8 on the map) game-map. The third game in the series, as yet untitled, is scheduled to use map #4.

Hof Gap will include a 22" x 34" map, 400 cardboard counters, *Central Front*-system Standard Rules, 12-page Exclusive Rules, and will contain three new scenarios, one of which *Seventh Army* is a campaign game using the *Fifth Corps* and *Hof Gap* maps joined together.

Available for \$9.95 in retail outlets nationwide!



well as extensive rules for linking with **Fifth Corps** to create a two-map campaign game. Chuck Kamps is hard at work on this one now. He is also writing a *Central Front* article for the next *S&T*.

--John H. Butterfield

(From *Moves 52 A/S 1980*)

Fifth Corps and Hof Gap

The first edition of the *Central Front* series, **Fifth Corps**, is in the art department and will appear in *S&T* 82. The final

version of the game has three scenarios. *The Rhein-Main Raid*, *The Battle for Fulda*, and *Fifth Corps*. A fourth scenario mentioned in an earlier progress report was cut due to rules space limitations. As it is, the game will include an eight-page Standard Rules booklet and an eight-page Exclusive Rules Booklet. The game pits NATO against the Warsaw Pact in the 1980's on an operational scale. Up to nine Soviet divisions assault the Fulda/ Frankfurt area of West Germany opposed by the equivalent of three and a half NATO divisions.

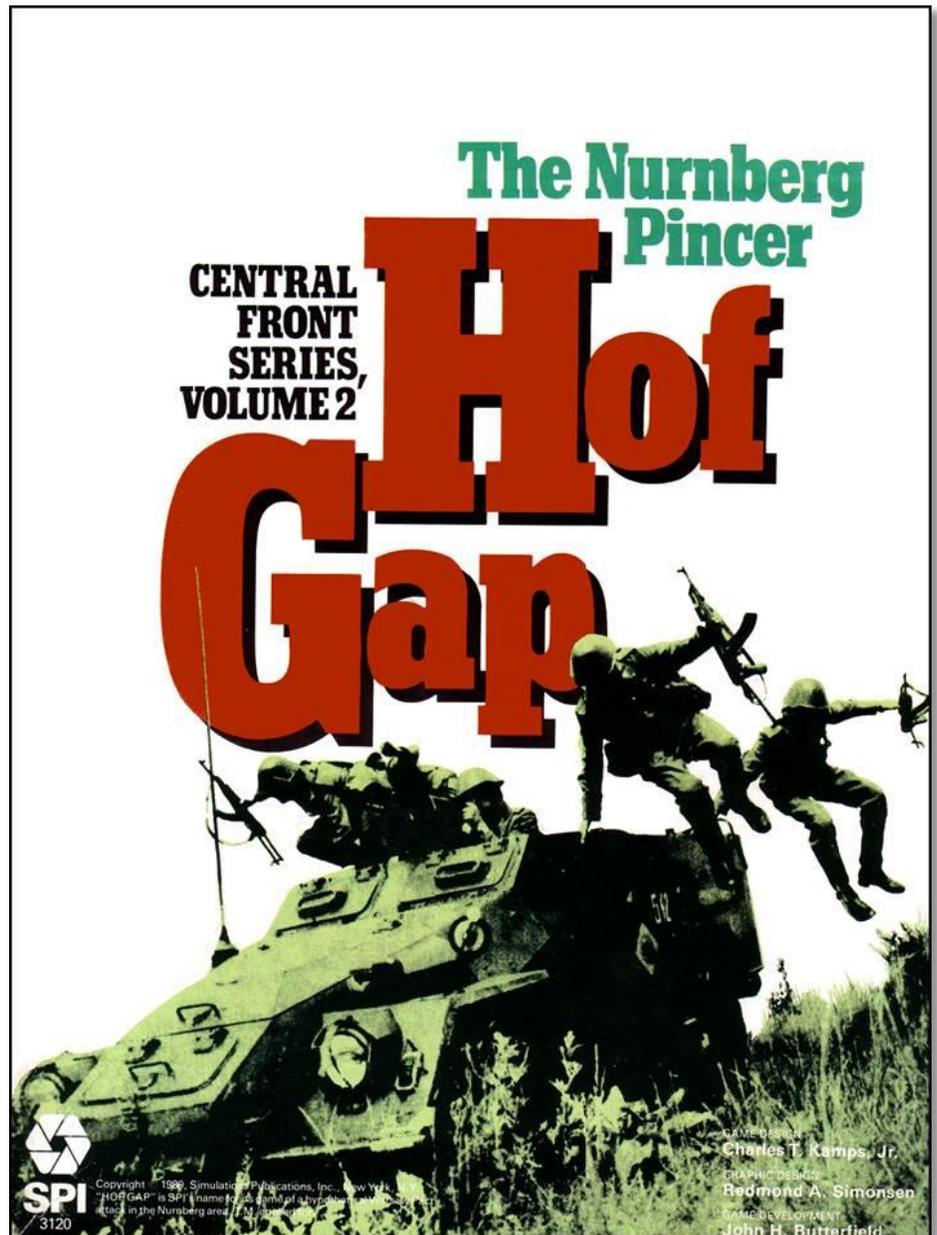
Hof Gap, the first *Central Front* expansion game, may be connected to the south edge of the **Fifth Corps** map to show West Germany from Kassel to the Czech border. It should be going to the Art Department in three or four weeks. This one will have two scenarios on its own map and a campaign scenario played on both maps. **Hof Gap** will have twelve pages of exclusive rules and 400 counters. It will also present new rules that can be applied to the **Fifth Corps** scenarios.

--John H. Butterfield

Hof Gap (From Moves 53 O/N 1980)

All R&D work on the second game in the *Central Front* series has been completed, and the Art Department is readying the game for production. **Hof Gap** has a full-size map, 400 counters, and three scenarios.

Covering Force shows the first 36 hours (three turns) of a Soviet/ Czech assault on the spread-out US 2nd Cav Regiment reinforced by three West German brigades. With seven divisions and attack helicopters, the Warsaw Pact force must advance quickly before the West Germans form a good defensive line, and then break through this line toward Nurnberg. VII Corps covers four days of this same assault. The Warsaw Pact receives three additional East German divisions while NATO defends with two additional US divisions and a West German brigade. *Seventh Army* is played on the **Hof Gap** map and the **Fifth Corps** map (in S&T 82) joined



together. Five Warsaw Pact armies slug it out with the US Fifth Corps and Seventh Corps and the West German Third Corps in a simulation of the first six days of the next war.

--John H. Butterfield

BAOR (from Moves 55 F/M 1981)

The necessary research on the OB for this game has already been completed by the Central Front series' redoubtable designer, Chuck Kamps. Yours

truly has recently completed the game-map. **BAOR** is well on its way. Despite being developed as an S&T issue (#88), **BAOR** will include a full 400 piece counter sheet. The number of units involved is staggering. The Warsaw Pact will be fielding the equivalent of four armies, including units from Poland and the Western military districts of the Soviet Union. Arrayed against them will be elements of the BAOR, the Belgian I Corps, and the West German III Corps.

The terrain involved is extremely varied. The northern quadrant of

the map depicts the beginning of the North German Plain - densely populated but otherwise devoid of obstacles. The southern two thirds of the map is surprisingly rough terrain and promises to offer some very difficult fighting for the advancing Pact forces. Both players will have to make some interesting sacrifices in order to pursue their main objectives in such varied terrain.

A number of aspects of the game mechanics have been evolving fairly rapidly from game to game. This is a healthy development, but we appreciate the need to maintain overall consistency. We will pause sometime in the near future and issue a definitive wrap-up applying to the whole series.

—Mark Herman

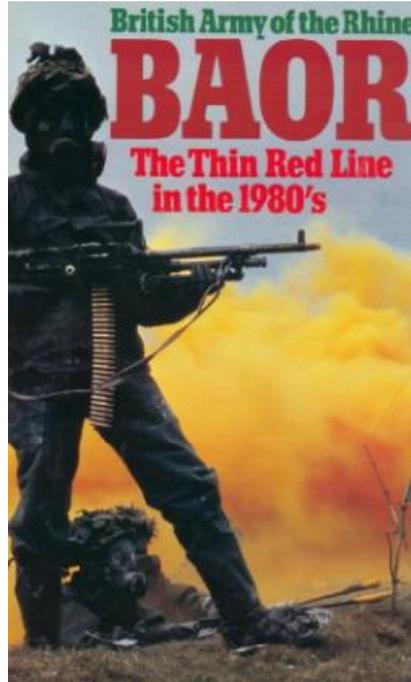
BAOR (from Moves 57 J/J 1981)

British Army of the Rhine (**BAOR**) is the third game in the Central Front series, and covers the action in the British and Belgian operational sectors (map#4). This game will appear in S&T 88, complete with an unprecedented 400 counters (in the future more S&T games will be published with 400 counters, as we wish to expand the scope of S&T games and can now absorb the extra cost). Three scenarios are included:

Race to the Weser is a short, snappy simulation of the first two days of a Soviet advance to the Weser River. This scenario is ideal for playing in a single sitting yet uses the whole map and includes plenty of action.

The Thin Red Line simulates the first five days of combat and includes a large number of units for a true slugfest.

The Mittelland Thrust allows players to combine the **BAOR** map with the Fifth Corps map to cover the whole invasion of central West Germany.



BAOR will introduce several new features to the Central Front system. One of the new elements is a simple form of air interdiction which will allow a player with air superiority to effectively deny key hexes (crossroads, bridges, etc.) to the enemy. A second new element is the capability to repair bridges with engineer units, and an expanded set of bridge demolition rules. Engineers have become quite important units, and justly so. A third new element is a redefinition of the method of tracing a line of supply which applies much more realistic criteria to this aspect of battle. I am particularly pleased with the results of this rule. NATO "stay behind" forces can have a real impact in the later

stages of the game. Conversely, a well-planned Warsaw Pact paratroop can temporarily cut a whole NATO corps off from supply - supply is, after all, the Achilles' heel of a modern army.

—Bruce Maxwell

BAOR (from Moves 58 A/S 1981)

Due to Bruce Maxwell's sojourn to the west, I will be escorting the final version of British Army of the Rhine (**BAOR**) through the production cycle. Currently, the last blind test reports are being incorporated into the rules manuscript while the final balancing of the scenarios draws to a close.

Three scenarios are included: *The Race for the Weser*, *Thin Red Line*, and a scenario which joins **BAOR** with Fifth Corps. *The Race for the Weser* was balanced too much in the favor of NATO, so a south-edge entry for Soviet units was re-instituted which perceptually makes the scenario balanced; the last blindtest reports will, hopefully, substantiate this claim.

The Thin Red Line scenario was thought to be unbalanced, but further play testing has revealed that the use of a first turn airborne drop (a la Operation Market-Garden) seems to give the Soviets a technique short of nuclear release which allows them to pierce the Weser line and win a conventional victory. All in all, this effort by Maxwell and Charles T. Kamps should be a welcome addition to the series.

—Mark Herman

Great Games in the Central Front Series

Soviet armored forces break through into the central German plain. *Fifth Corps* contains a 22" x 34" map, 200 cardboard playing pieces, and *Central Front Standard* and *Fifth Corps Exclusive* rules booklets.
\$8.00



A combined Warsaw Pact force attacks into the mountainous south German area. *Hof Gap* contains a 22" x 34" map, 400 cardboard playing pieces, and *Central Front Standard* and *Hof Gap Exclusive* rules.
\$10.00



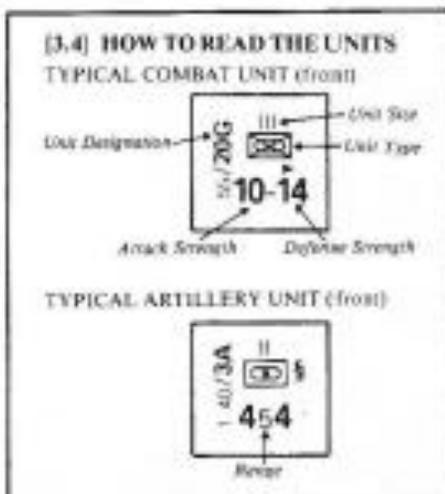
Combine these games with BAOR featured in S&T 88! Available through your retailer for \$6.00.

Central Front is an ongoing series of games in which NATO forces in Germany confront the Warsaw Pact steamroller in a hypothetical future war. *Fifth Corps* is the first game in the series and covers the Soviet breakout in the Fulda Gap area. *Hof Gap*, the second game in the Central Front series, expands the scope of the simulation by examining the Czech, East German and Soviet forces attacking to the south of the *Fifth Corps* area. A campaign game is included which ties the first two games together. New elements, such as artillery counterbattery fire, US training areas, supply airheads and airmobile operations, are introduced which can be incorporated into *Fifth Corps* as well. The third game in the series, *BAOR (British Army of the Rhine)* is available in *Strategy & Tactics 88*, and offers new Standard rules applicable to both *Fifth Corps* and *Hof Gap*.

All games in the Central Front series are now available through your local retailer!

The *Hof Gap* and *BAOR* maps about the *Fifth Corps* map as part of the Central Front game series.

Sections of *Hof Gap* map and sample counters.



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