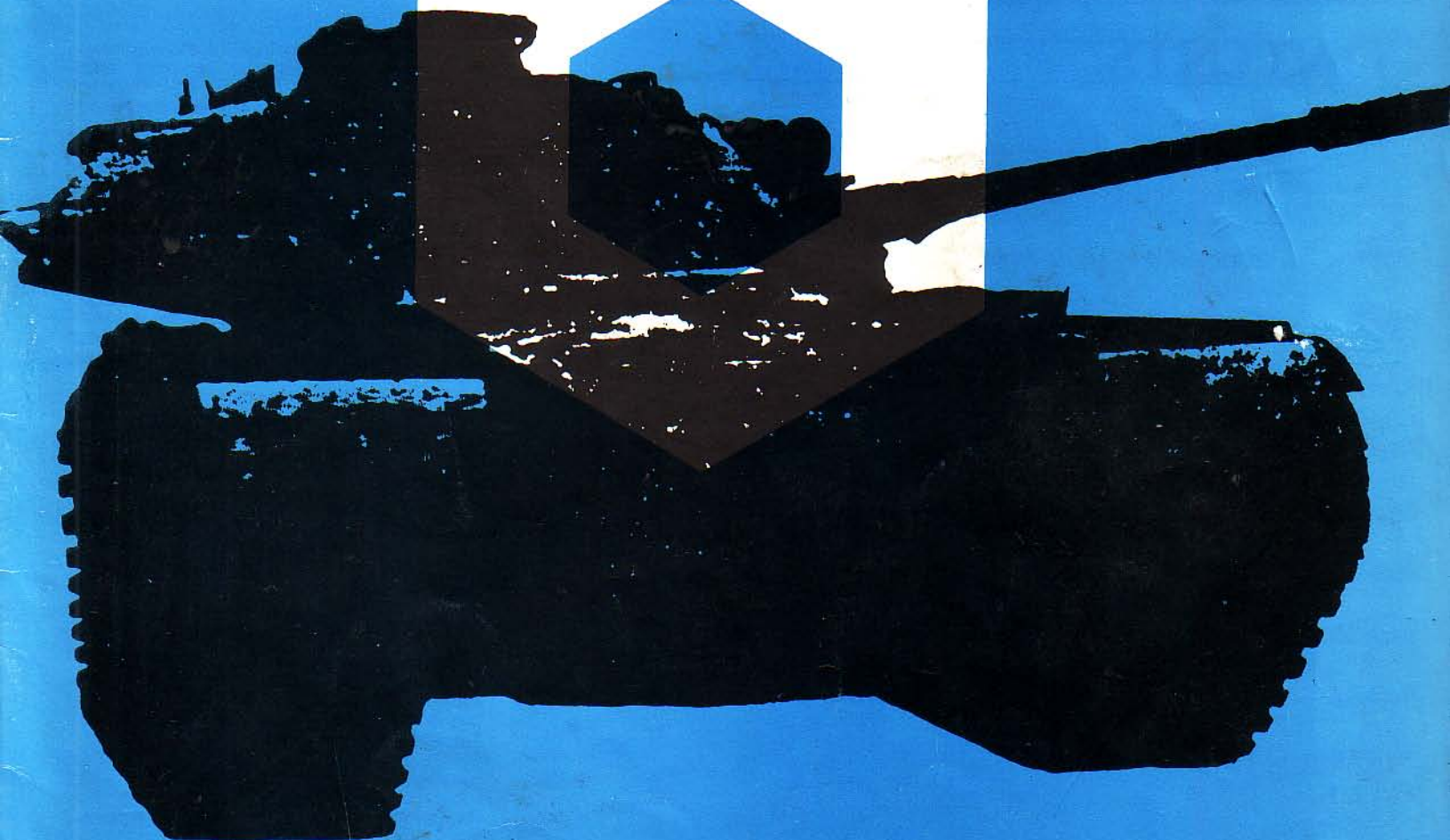


# THE PHOENIX

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# THE PHOENIX

BRITISH BOARD WARGAMERS MAGAZINE

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The Phoenix is a bi-monthly magazine aimed at providing UK gamers with a forum in which they may express their opinions of, suggest improvements to and provide new rules/scenarios for board wargames.

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## Editorial

As I write this editorial we are just beginning a new year and although it may seem somewhat out-of-date by the time you read it I would like to wish all of you who have supported The Phoenix, by your subscriptions or your material, a very happy New Year for 1977.

We have started off the year with yet more changes in the format of Phoenix — you will notice that we now carry a pull-out centre section containing SPUK information, feedback cards, etc. Malcolm Watson explains some of the reasoning behind this move in 'News from SPUK' on page 14.

Details are also given in 'News from SPUK' of the Feedback results from issue 3 of Phoenix and we have been greatly encouraged by these since they seem to indicate that we are indeed on the right track.

From a glance at the 'article bank' I feel sure that 1977 is going to be a great year for The Phoenix — but keep those articles coming we still need all we can get.

For inclusion in the Phoenix Club Contacts list, send full details to: The Editor.

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# FLYING CIRCUS

I imagine, looking at the ratings in S&T that a lot of copies of 'Flying Circus' will be gathering dust in cupboards all over the country, which is a shame because the game can be improved.

Firstly, the map should be numbered, as the variation described here uses Simultaneous Movement. The top left-hand corner hex is 0101, top right-hand corner hex is 4501, and so on. By this numbering, target hex A is 0812 and hex B is 2014, and so on.

## Sequence of Play

The new sequence of play is as follows:

1. Sighting phase players determine which aircraft are able to see an opponent (explained later on).
2. Aircraft sighted, that are on the same altitude and in range, may be fired at, and may return fire. Any damage is registered in the speed counters, and ammunition counters are reduced.
3. Players plot movement, in accordance with the plotting rules which are explained later.
4. The aircraft are moved.

## Field of Fire Modification

The field of fire, of rear swivel-mounted guns and rear ring-mounted guns, remains the same as before, but for forward firing guns it is slightly modified: at 6-8 hexes range, the hexes on either side of the field of fire can be fired into, this simulates the pilot's ability to 'yaw' the aircraft through

about 15 degrees to either side.

The table below is used to introduce some difference between target aspects of aircraft in different situations i.e. an aircraft flying across the field of fire is harder to hit than one which is being chased.

Target	Range	
	1-4	5-8
Receding	1	2
Moving across field of fire	2	2
Being attacked from above	-1	0
Diving	0	1

The numbers are to be added to the die-roll, e.g. an aircraft which is attacked from above at 3 hexes range, if a 3 is thrown it becomes a 2. A one stays a one, six a six.

When an aircraft is hit there is a chance that the pilot could be killed outright, and in a two-seater either or both occupants could be killed.

	Damage					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Dice-throw to kill	1	1	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2

Whenever an aircraft is hit shake on the above chart, shake twice for a two-seater.

## Plotting Movement

In a move an aircraft may dive, climb, increase or reduce speed.

Increase speed by X	'IS X'
Decrease speed by X	'RS X'
Climb	'CL'
Dive	'DV'

Anywhere on the map one or two direction roses may be drawn to help plotting.

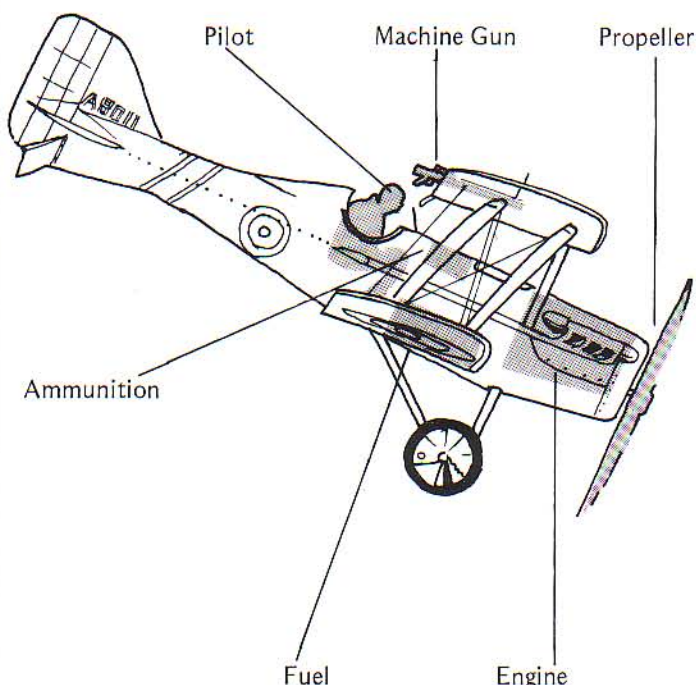
A  
F B  
E C  
D

An example of plotting: an aircraft moving at a speed of 10 and also climbing, must reduce speed by at least 1 mp.

The plot would be RS 1 CL 4A 3F, from which it can be seen that the aircraft also turned.

If two aircraft at the same height wish to complete their movement in the same hex, both players throw a dice. The player throwing the higher number may then move his aircraft into the hex. If both dice are the same then the aircraft have collided and are removed from play. If the aircraft which had to turn away, was a B or D turn mode aircraft, then it must begin its turn in the previous hex.

## Typical Target Areas



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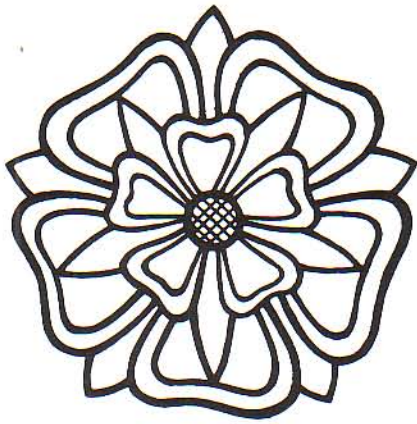
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# Kingma

SOME THOUGHTS by Percy Hastings

The rule booklet for Kingmaker gives some very basic hints about the strategy and tactics which can be used in the game. All the points covered in the booklet notes will become apparent after only a small number of games, but the ideas which I am presenting seem to me to be less obvious. I have played some thirty games of Kingmaker, most of these being three-player games, which seems to be the minimum necessary to give a challenging and interesting game. Because of this experience with three-player games some of my ideas may be of only minor importance or may need adaptation. Anyway, here they are, for better or worse.

Very often the three-player game tends to stagnate with crowned Yorkist and Lancastrian kings being held by two parties, with the third party having no royal pieces whatsoever. Having no royal pieces at this stage of the game is a terrifying position to be in, since the capture of royal pieces from rivals can be made almost impossible by threats of the type "If you attack me, then I kill my royal pieces". This threat if carried out, will of course, bring instant defeat for the faction making the threat, but nevertheless, I have known this threat to be executed at least twice. The state of shock brought about by seeing a game abruptly brought to an end in this manner is enough to remind one to be more careful in future. The player who actually carries out this diabolical threat goes into future games with a powerful reputation for complete ruthlessness. Knowing that this player has a complete disregard for chivalry, the same threat now becomes much more persuasive.

Given a situation where a faction controls no royal pieces at this stage of the game, just how does a faction go about obtaining one and getting back into the game? Well, there seems to be no sure way, but I employ two tactics, neither of which has a high success rate.

Firstly, there is the 'Beaufort Approach', in which plan Beaufort is crowned as the last surviving Lancastrian. If Beaufort is in the crown pack, there is little problem; just keep the game going and hope you draw him. If Beaufort is held in concealment by a player there is no way to bring him into your alliance, but if Beaufort is in play as an ordinary noble, then there is hope. The idea now is to kill off Beaufort in the hope that you will eventually pull him out of the crown pack. Just marching up and engaging

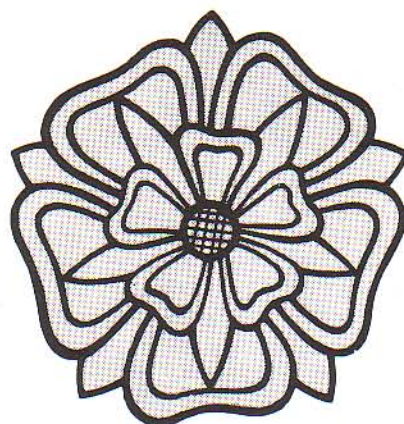
in battle with Beaufort is unlikely to be productive because Beaufort will invariably be stacked with the main army and royal pieces of the enemy and the 'kill the royal pieces' threat will be invited. Because suicide attacks by expendable minor nobles never invite the threat, Beaufort must be killed off by suicide attack. Now you must wait for Beaufort to find his way to you through the crown pack; not of course a certain occur-

ence, but a hoped for possibility. If all goes well and on some future turn you draw out Beaufort, do not bring him into play — that would be to invite disaster. Instead, keep him hidden and direct your energies to killing off the Lancastrians, or sit back and try to make the others fight one another to exhaustion. Only bring out Beaufort if otherwise the game would finish. (Personally I prefer always to keep Beaufort hidden and





# ker



attempt to destroy all the Lancastrians; that way I am assured of some chance of having a royal piece at the end of the game).

The second tactic I mentioned is a sort of mercenary approach. I came across this tactic at the end of an extremely exacting and well balanced game. All three factions were weak and equal with approximately 160 troops each. I was without royal pieces however. The numerical equality made it impossible for the Yorkist faction to attack the Lancastrian, (or vice versa), but if either faction could form an alliance with me, then an attack on the rival would be possible, at odds of 2:1. Both opposing factions controlled more than one royal piece, so I offered my services to the faction which would reward me by transferring a royal piece to me. The offer was refused, but one day in the future, a similar offer may be accepted.

Stalemates tend to occur towards the end of every game. Most often this takes the form of one faction running away to Wales where they get the protection of the 200 extra troops of Chamberlain of the County Palatine of Chester. This usually makes the faction invincible in Wales, and the nobles refuse to leave, adopting a "come and get me" attitude. Nobody dare march into Wales for fear of a clobbering, so stalemate develops. The stalemate is usually broken by calls to raids and revolts which splits up the Chamberlain faction, or by suicide attacks which kill off the Chamberlain with a lucky draw of the card. Similar stalemate occurs when a faction hides under the protection of the Constable of the Tower of London. To my mind, this "Tower of London" card is the most powerful of the lot. Possession of the card early in the game often delivers Henry into the clutches of the Constable's faction and the card gives control of the North-South traffic through London which protects the king from nobles using the roads when he is called to Embassy at Rochester /Rye. The additional 200 troops provided by the card round London are very useful at any stage in the game.

In only one game have I had a permanent stalemate. This arose because a faction controlled the last surviving royal piece but had no bishops for a coronation. All the bishops were held concealed by opposing factions who refused to bring them into play.

Possession of castles and towns on the road between York and London, I do not rate very highly; alternative routes are usually available. Clifford's Castle at Conisboro is useful to hold because now there is no way for opponents to prevent the movement of troops southwards from York to London or Norwich. Generally York is worth holding since it stops the rapid transit of the northern nobles to central England. York is also useful as a screen to hide behind when strong enemy factions look likely to make a trip up the highway to your detriment. In this case a move to the Helmsley square and denial of movement through York will stall the attack, but friendly escape southward is not barred.

Plagues have never been any problem to troops because the players generally avoid going into towns, using Royal Castles if protection is needed, but plagues sometimes wipe out the royal pieces in their starting positions.

I enjoy Kingmaker immensely but I have two major grumbles. One concerns the rules and the other the map. In many instances the rules are unclear, the one that causes us the most confusion is concerned with nobles being in or out of towns. At what point in time must a player decide whether his piece is inside or outside a given town? Presumably during the player's own turn but although this can be deduced from the rule book it is not certain. Another example: when a captured noble is ransomed, what type of ransom is a player allowed to transfer? We cope with the rules quite well, but the map causes endless confusion. Where is "Cheviots"? Where is "Wales"? Where is "Devon and Cornwall"? Which squares are north of the river Tees? Movement near London is unclear because the town itself lies at the intersection of three squares and on an estuary. Such problems of rules and map we have solved by using our own conventions and definitions, but problems have occurred when players who have developed their own different conventions and definitions are met with for the first time. I suppose the Arbitration rule could settle these disputes and I believe that a reprint of the rules may have cleared up some of these problems.



## BOOK REVIEW

### Crusader

No.1 in a series of Classic AFV's, their history and how to model them.

J Milso, J Sandars and G Scarborough

Published 17th May 1976, priced at £2.50  
A Patrick Stephens book, published in association with Airfix Products Limited.

Sole UK, British Commonwealth and European publisher Patrick Stephens Ltd.,  
Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8EL.

This lavishly illustrated book is a detailed record of the development and active service life of the famous British Crusader tank, and includes full details on modelling and converting the 1:32 scale Airfix plastic construction kit of a Crusader III.

Part one, by John Milso, describes the Crusader's development from the earlier A13 and Covenanter Cruiser tanks. Equipped with the brilliant Christie suspension system, and powered by a 340 hp Nuffield Liberty engine, the Crusader was capable of speeds of up to 27mph over flat terrain, making one of the fastest tanks of World War II and an ideal vehicle for the wide-ranging Western Desert battles.

The early Crusader MkI and II were fitted with 2pdr guns, but the definitive Crusader III which saw action at Alamein mounted a 6pdr. The performance of all three marks in the 8th Army's battles against Rommel's Afrika Korps between 1941 and 1943 is well described in part two of this book, by John Sandars. For modellers, there is a special section on Crusader camouflage and marking schemes.

Although outclassed as a main battle tank by 1943, the basic Crusader design was adapted into various anti-aircraft tanks as well as a tractor for the 17pdr anti-tank gun, all of which were used in Europe after D-Day. In all, over 5,000 Crusaders were produced during the war, making it one of the most numerous of all British tanks in this period.

In the book's third section expert modeller Gerald Scarborough shows how to add complete internal detail to the Airfix 1:32 scale kit, how to convert it into a Mk I or II, and even how to alter it into one of the anti-aircraft versions.

Throughout, the text is profusely illustrated by numerous clear photographs of all Crusader variants, as well as scale and camouflage scheme drawings, tactical diagrams and illustrations from actual Crusader handbooks, making this an ideal book for all military historians and AFV enthusiasts wishing to broaden their knowledge of this important tank as well as for modellers working from the Airfix kit.

### Specification:

80pages, 9 5/8" x 7 1/4", 117 photographs and 51 line drawings. Case bound with full colour laminated cover.



# Buy the book

HAMISH WILSON

As always, at this time of year, the reviewer's problem is not finding specialist hooks to review, rather it is selecting *which* ones to write about from the plethora of titles which come streaming onto the market from all manner of publishers. Some titles are more obvious than others — for instance "Convoy" by Martin Middlebrook. This fine writer who has already provided intensive study of two major battles in his previous books "The First Day on the Somme" and "The Nuremburg Raid" has now turned his attention to "Those in Peril on the Seas". Sub-titled "The Battle for Convoys S.C.122 and H.X.229" (Players of "Wolfpack" will understand the coding) the book tells, in the numbers of rivets on the bulkhead kind of detail we have come to expect from this author, of a series of attempts to destroy the above-named convoys. On neither side is it possible to claim absolute victory but, in a carefully unbiased description of all that occurred we begin to see how this battle became a turning point in the Battle of the Atlantic.

The text which covers not only the strategic viewpoint but also that of the matelot whether R.N., K.M. or Mercantile, is supported by good clear maps and appendices giving total O.O.B.s for both sides and ultimate fates for most of the vessels involved. Published by Allen Lane at £4.95, written by Martin Middlebrook and called "Convoy", this book will find a place on the shelf of anyone who is interested in naval warfare or in the Second World War.

Also on the high seas, Richard Humble seeks an opportunity to fill a gap in ready information with "Before the Dreadnought" (published by Macdonald and Janes at £5.95). When peace finally broke out in 1815 the Royal Navy was the most powerful force of its kind in the world. Hearts and ships of oak, the tradition of victory and the band of brothers left Britannia ruling the waves while the ships were essentially unchanged from the days of the Armada. Between 1815 and 1914 both the world and the Navy were to change radically and while showing us the changes and developments in the senior service, Mr Humble throws into relief some of the more significant changes in the world. It is a fascinating story about which little seems to have been written and as a 'nutshell' account of the fading away of the old ships of Nelson and the developing of the fighting machines of Fisher, Scott and Jellicoe, this account is invaluable.

Another 'nutshell' book (though that description applies in one sense only) is "The Lore of Arms". This belongs to the series of "Lore" coffee table books which have included "The Lore of Ships" and "The Lore of the Air" and this latest title deals with arms and armour from Lower Paleolithic man to yesterday's tanks. The author, William Reid, is the Director of the National

Army Museum and brings to his task an intimate knowledge of the detail and development of arms a lot of which has been gleaned from his work and time spent amongst the collections of armour in the Glasgow Museum and art galleries (incidentally, one of the finest of its kind outside London) and from thirteen years on the staff of the Armouries of the Tower of London. As with all these books the text is there to provide both a springboard and back up for the superb art work and the work which has gone into the design and layout of this volume is no less in quality.

The most complex and intricate work is devoted to showing the exquisite artistry which has been employed on the less functional aspects of the subject. Apart from the superb chasing on flint and fire lock pistols there are beautiful drawings of a rapier hilt made for Maximilian II (1527-76) or the complete set of armour made for Sigismund II (1520-72) of Poland but the author takes care to place the weaponry in context with neat descriptions of battles chosen, naturally, to show the use of the weapons in question. I would take issue with some of the omissions. However, Mr Reid makes it clear in his preface that this title is a *personal* study.

I still believe that there could have been more than the mine-clearing version of the Matilda II as an example of AVRE design and development and I was considerably irritated by the apparently exclusive use of American spellings — armor, color and dueling (sic) for instance. I think that the publishers, Messrs. Mitchell Beazly, could have stayed with the British usage in this £13.95 book and considered alterations for other markets if they intended to go for another of the Queen's Awards for Industry, but all that is a quibble. If you have a rich old relation or your coupon's just come up, this one will do well on the shelf.

Robert Hardy is probably best known as the actor who played Alec in "The Trouble Shooters" on BBC tv, but like quite a number of his profession he has an abiding interest in history and his particular speciality is the Longbow. "Longbow" is the title of his book which is profusely illustrated and is manifestly the result of a lifetime's interest and research. Starting with the earliest record of the bow and arrow, we follow the development of the longbow to the peak of its power and effectiveness at Crecy and Agincourt and then its gradual descent, against the will and desire of many, to the fascinating shooting weapon of club and hunter. There is no discussion of modern composite bows in this book which is totally devoted to the longbow and therefore, for students of mediaeval warfare, this book must be invaluable, for here is no discussion

of what might have been — Robert Hardy knows the yew stave bow and the clothyard shaft as well as the leather jerkined men of Henry's army and, what is more, he is concerned and able to communicate this knowledge. "Longbow — A Social and Military History" is by Robert Hardy and published by Patrick Stephens at £7.50.

Crecy is looked at from the other side in "The Cavalry" edited by James Lawford, who has gathered an impressive team of contributors for this book. Amongst others, Brigadier Peter Young, Curt Johnson and David Chandler have each written an essay on one or more aspects of cavalry work in the past. Battles mentioned and considered include Cannae, Crecy, Ramillies, The American Civil War and the American Indian's own unique contribution are all present in this work. The book is actually a series of essays from the specialists, joined by linking passages written by the Editor, who also contributes on the origins of cavalry and on the Moguls and Mahrattas. The whole is superbly though romantically illustrated and supported with clear if, at times, over-simple maps. This is a delightful book for the enthusiast to refresh an ageing memory or to browse through, while for the novice to the art of cavalry tactics it opens many doors and gives just enough of a glimpse of the fascinating country beyond to encourage further reading and research. "The Cavalry" is published by Sampson Low at the very reasonable price of £6.95.

## FEEDBACK continued from page 12

17. Do you consider 'Outreach' good value for money at the new prices?
18. If you feel the physical quality of Outreach fell below SPI standards, would this deter you from purchasing games produced in the UK in the future?
19. Using 'Outreach' as a sample of the physical quality we will achieve with future UK printed games, do you feel we should persevere with production in the UK?
20. Based on the first 5 issues, would you subscribe to 'Phoenix'?
21. If yes, would you do so on (1) merit, (2) because you feel you should support a UK-oriented boardgames magazine, (3) both?
22. Rate this issue of Phoenix on a 1 - 9 scale?
23. Do you think this issue was better than the last?
24. Do you think that this issue will encourage newcomers into the hobby?
25. Do you think that Phoenix is moving in the right direction towards providing a forum for you the gamer?
26. Do you intend to submit material for publication in future issues of Phoenix?
27. If you answered yes to question 26, do you intend to submit (1) historical articles (2) new scenarios, (3) game histories, (4) rule modifications, (5) game reviews, (6) some other aspect relevant to Phoenix readership? If necessary please elaborate on your answer in the space provided below the feedback answer boxes.



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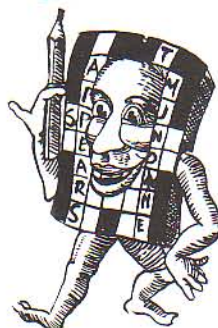
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# TANK!

## A TANK! RECOVERY VEHICLE

by Mike Costello

TANK! was published with S&T 44 and has already sparked off a number of articles on modification in S&T and Moves. The game lends itself to tinkering of this kind, and this article tries to come up with an optimal set of rules from the various suggestions made so far and quite a few new ones. For those not familiar with the game, it consists of a set of basic game rules, rules for the expanded game, counters representing individual vehicles and infantry squads, a Weapons Characteristics Chart to give weapons values for each scenario, and a 50m-per-hex map. I see TANK! as falling into the category of games that are worth saving despite some glaring faults; it's potentially so good that it is worth spending a little time on revision, and it is also excellent value for money, as the number of possible scenarios that can be built up from the information in the WCC is virtually infinite.

The following systems all have the twin aim of including the main factors which affect combat at this level, and avoiding any significant increase in playing-time.

The first move is a bold one: get rid of the map. It corresponds to no type of terrain within human experience and is impossible to take seriously. The concepts of hull-down deployment and variable elevation have been hopelessly confused, allowing a tank to increase its defensive strength by nestling up against a hill-slope. True hull-down positions are not so easy to come by; terrain elevation is very significant in tactical warfare, but for other reasons entirely. Create two or three maps from blank (numbered) hex sheets; one or another will usually fit a particular situation. "Ridges" can be shown along hexsides, usually representing rock outcrops or earthworks such as railway embankments, and allowing armoured vehicles to take up hull-down positions behind them to increase their defensive strength by 2. As well as the more obvious features, urban hexes can be included as suggested by Mike Markowitz in S&T 47. When a building is destroyed, "scatter" the rubble as for artillery impact markers, providing additional defensive positions for infantry and possibly blocking the street which the attacking forces wish to negotiate (the Allies has this problem in Normandy). Vehicle-impassable hexes (marsh, etc) make defending infantry more survivable and encourage genuine combined arms tactics.

The only major innovation is the use of contour lines, as in Ordnance maps. Some solution to the depiction of elevation has to be found by any boardgame which is competing with miniatures, and I give below a set of rules to establish whether a phasing unit has Line of Sight to a target in a particular situation. Do not be alarmed; in most cases the answer will be clear to both players without recourse to the Elevation Differential Table.

**Line of Sight** — automatic unless intercepted by blocking hex (friendly unit, woods, urban, twin contour lines). No blocking (hexsides). "Twin contour lines" covers the case of the LOS crossing any contour line twice; the blocking hex is the hex encountered immediately before the LOS hits the line for the second time. As in the original rules, LOS *passes into* the blocking hex but not *through*.

### Definitions:

Four contour lines run roughly parallel, labelled 10, 20, 30 and 40 (meters). If X is between 10 and 20, while Y is between 30 and 40, X is a "level 10" and Y is "two levels higher" than X.

### Test each potential blocking hex:

Target and firer at same level: LOS blocked unless the potential blocking hex is at least one level lower than the target and firer.

Target and firer at different levels: use EDT, adding one to ED score for each level that higher unit is higher than potential blocking hex, deducting one for each level that lower unit is lower than potential blocking hex.

### ED Score:

- 2 Target is not in LOS
- 1 Range from higher to lower unit must be at least 5 times range to potential blocking hex.
- 0 Range from higher to lower unit must be at least 4 times range to potential blocking hex.
- 1 Range from higher to lower unit must be at least 3 times range to potential blocking hex.
- 2 Range from higher to lower unit must be at least 2 times range to potential blocking hex.
- 3 Range from higher to lower unit must be at least 1½ times range to potential blocking hex.
- 4 Target is in LOS.

Automatic block: lower unit and blocking hex share a common hexside.

The modified Simove system in S&T 57 is certainly worth introducing for TANK! as it cuts playing time, but it needs some adjustment to make it fit this particular game, especially in view of a few other changes I have in mind. We end up with this:

1. Plotting: specify target hexes of DF, Indirect Fire, DT (For moving units write simply "MV").
2. IF: place impact markers (air strikes, artillery, mortar). Execute results. Place artillery & mortar smoke.
3. Morale: test designated units, altering plots.
4. DF: as Standard TANK! Place M markers.
5. MV: as Standard TANK! Place M markers.
6. MT, DT: as Standard TANK!
7. FC: execute plots. Voluntary Facing changes for MV units.
8. Remove smoke & Vehicle smoke markers. Remove impact markers over smoke markers. Place new vehicle smoke markers. Remove artillery impact markers.

The need to include infantry support weapons, as pointed out in Steve List's article (S&T 53), can be met fairly easily as it is not necessary to go into too much detail; after all, it is a game about tanks. Some infantry weapons are subsumed in the generalised "HE attack strength", others can be coined and each stacked with an infantry squad, sharing its fate throughout the game. No effect on movement unless you want to make some fireteams spend one turn in certain types of terrain hex before exiting.

Medium mortar: attack strength 0/3, range 5-35, capable of IF, SF, OF. Called down after 2 turns delay on any hex by any observer of that hex; no MV missions for mortar team during delay. Heavy mortar: as above, periods 6-12 only, attack strength 0/5. HMG: attack strength 1/6, range 20 capable of DF, OF. Support squads may not also be equipped with anti-tank weapons.

You may also want to use flame if the defending forces are in bunkers, and specialised sapper units for demolition, mine-clearing, etc. The attack strengths given for mortars are within effective range (20 hexes); cut the strength by half (rounding up) for greater ranges. I use a separate CRT for all IF fire (which is cumulative) as this allows more logical differentiation of the



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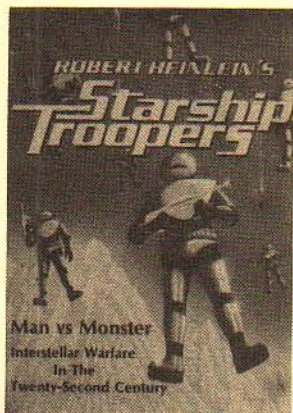
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FIRE AND MOVEMENT is a magazine recently brought out by Baron Publishing Co., California. What the magazine is all about can best be summed up by quoting from the editorial of Issue 1 — "some readers will ask why Fire and Movement, when there are so many other wargaming magazines. The answer is quite simple — to date, the hobby still does not have a magazine with the capacity to cover the entire field. There is no single major publication able to cover games published by all the game companies. This situation constitutes a need and Fire and Movement will work to fill this need in the hobby. Our publication is designed to provide coverage in an independent fashion. Fire and Movement publishes no games. We have no games to 'push'. Our concern is with the hobby and you are the hobby."

ISSUE ONE (44 pages) contains reviews of 'Von Meinsten', 'Chaco' and A.H.'s 'Tobruk' along with a new scenario (plus historical background) for Mech War '77. Also you will find an article on employing Rommel's principles of desert warfare in 'Tobruk'.

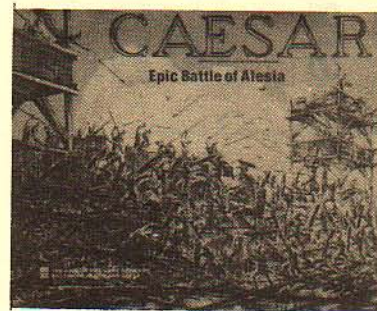
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effects of fire on different types of terrain and target. I also allow infantry to entrench, as this is almost the only kind of defense construction that the time-scale of the game permits. All these little touches can generally be tacked onto the game without causing problems elsewhere, and quantifying attack strengths is generally a matter of playtesting each innovation to make sure it assumes a proportionate role within the games. In the same vein, airlanding units will really live up some scenarios. Using specialised forces of this kind raises problems of game balance, and one of the problems with TANK! is that players have to do their own balancing; there is no friendly neighbourhood SPI game developer to guarantee a fair fight in each scenario. This is a point I'll come on to later.

The final modification concerns the semi-random Panic system, and the indiscriminating Preservation rule. Again two concepts seem to have been confused: "Panic" is not concerned with Morale but with communications deficiencies, whereas "Preservation" (in the Expanded Game) means an inhibiting of Fire together with a somewhat increased likelihood of Panicking towards the enemy! This set of rules (see 12.0 and 25.2 especially) is the sort of thing most likely to convince newcomers that they should stick to miniatures, which is a pity. The rules do not even have the merit of saving playing-time, and can be replaced with procedures for determining the reactions of individual units which are interesting in themselves rather than an exercise in die-rolling.

During each turn, place Morale markers on units in the following categories:

Isolated  
First time under lethal fire  
Other unit in platoon destroyed in that turn  
Currently retreating (test whole platoon separately)

Other categories can be added if desired. An isolated unit is not in Conformity, as defined in the Expanded rules (25.0 & 25.1) except that Conformity in movement is checked only at the end of the movement segment, and the wording should be tightened to specify that a unit can be up to two intervening hexes from another unit which in turn is the correct distance from another, all units in the platoon forming a single chain which includes the leader.

In the following turn, test each designated unit; I use a decimal die, subtracting one per turn 10% Panic level, then adjust die roll as follows:

#### Subtract

- 1 Unit under fire from unspotted unit in previous turn.  
Visible friendly unit Retreated or Fled in previous turn.  
Unit under IF (per 3HE attack points).
- 2 Each destroyed unit in platoon.
- 3 Isolated. Already retreating.

#### Add

- 1 Visible enemy unit Retreated or Fled in previous turn.  
Each visible destroyed unit (in previous turn).
- 2 Unit in Improved Position.

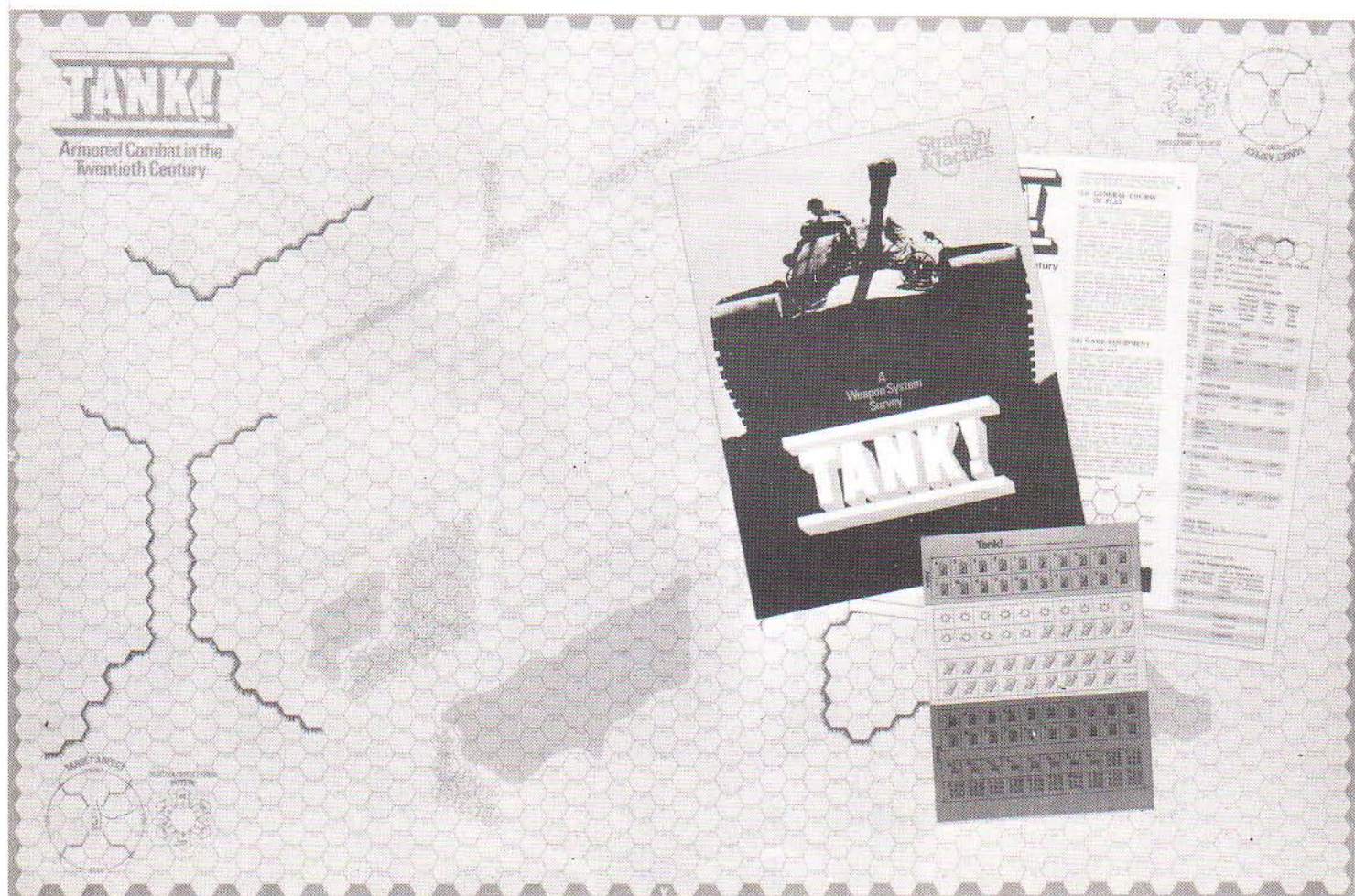
Having worked out the score for the unit, alter its plot as required:

- 4 No effect.
- 3,2,1 Cancel MV/OV.
- 0,-1,-2 Cancel all missions; may give unit FC or MVR mission.
- 3,-4,-5 **Retire**: all mobile units MV/MVR to increased range from enemy.
- 6,-7,-8 **Retreat**: static units eliminated, others full Movement Allowance towards entry map edge.
- 9 **Flee**: as above and may not re-test. May not re-enter map, but not considered destroyed for Victory Conditions.

Under this system a unit is free to move out of Conformity, but in practice a player will seldom choose this option because units become too unreliable. Panic and Preservation rules as such are no longer used; players will already have sufficient incentive not to expose their units to excessive hazards.

If you find the rules covering hidden and unspotted units unsatisfactory, you may consider using dummies. Having to remember where your hidden anti-tank guns are supposed to be on the map is one of the less entertaining aspects of the game, and partial solutions, such as the proposal by John & David Tate (Moves 26) that occasional units can be moved while off-map, will break down as soon as players discover that opposing units have just "moved" through each other without realising it.

Each dummy would represent a certain type of unit (vehicle, infantry, etc) and would be allowed only MV missions, being eliminated whenever spotted in the usual way. Indirect fire attacks then have to be resolved by your





opponent if the targets are unspotted, since this fire would not itself reveal whether units are dummies or not. There are a few other little complications in practice, but the system is still workable if you do not mind cluttering up the map with extra counters. All units are in an unspotted state to begin with and each can be spotted only by a specific enemy unit, immediately before its Fire mission. This is the only time that units are revealed, whether spotting is "automatic" or not; if it is automatic, though, there is no need for any enemy unit in its LOS to have a Fire mission against it. All spotted units can be targets for all units. Finally, a much-needed improvement to the existing rules is to add (say) 2 to the die roll when resolving an attack against a unit which has had to be spotted in that turn; the attacker is penalised for constantly shifting targets.

To ensure balanced games, give each unit a points value, including all types of defensive installation, and "charge" also for dummies. Values of tanks will be derived from the AP attack strength, the armour defense strengths, and perhaps the movement allowance as well. Each player can equip himself with any weapons within the constraints of the WCC and Historical Period Chart, up to a total points value which will be the same for both players. This will still give the Alpha player a greater number of combat units than the Bravo player when attacking a prepared defensive position, since the defender will have to allocate considerable points quotas to defenses and dummy positions.

This innovation actually does the game a lot of good, as there must be few players who voluntarily equip themselves with inferior weapons in the manner ingeniously described in section 31.0.A German player in period 5 will probably never choose any other tank but the Panzer V; this means that half the equipment in the WCC will remain unused. In any case it was rare enough for a Company Commander to have available to him the very best weapons of every type. Players will have to think more carefully about their requirements when faced with the choice of, say, eight Pz III's or five PzIV's.

These innovations have worked well in play-testing so far, although there is still room for improvement. Period 12 scenarios are less successful, as indeed they are in the original game, because of changing battlefield conditions, but rather than continuing to tinker with the mechanics it would probably be simpler to go out and buy *Firefight*.

To sum up, the following rules sections are deleted and replaced with new rules: 3.1, 4.1, 6.0, 8.71, 8.8, 8.81, 8.82, 8.83, 9.0 through 9.13, 9.35, 9.36, 9.37, 10.13, 10.21 through 10.26, 10.5, 10.6, 12.0 through 12.24, 13.4, 14.2, 14.5, 15.0 through 15.2, 21.1, 14.5, 25.21, 25.22, 25.4, 27.3, 28.32 through 28.34, 31.0, 32.6 through 32.7. Minor changes need to be made to the following sections to accommodate the new rules; 2.0, 4.0, 5.0, 9.2, 10.0, 13.21, through 13.23, 14.0, 14.41, 14.9, 22.0, 28.61, 34.0 through 34.4. This includes the changes in the Standard rules dictated by the Expanded rules.

# The Battle of BORODINO

Borodino Dismembered Part 3, by Rob Gibson

I doubt if any boardgame could simulate effectively the daily routine of the Emperor Napoleon: to sleep for four hours and work as leader, administrator and commander-in-chief for a large part of Western Europe for the other twenty would have drained many a lesser man of inspiration. By 1812, Napoleon had been at war for the best part of twenty years, and had been losing his touch of late: the narrow margin of victory had become narrower. Now he began to play safe: sheer weight of numbers replaced the calculated manoeuvres of earlier years.

So when Marshal Davout came to the Emperor on the 5th of September, 1812 to propose an outflanking movement by his 1st Corps and Poniatowski's Vth Corps to roll up the Russian line before Borodino, he was curtly refused permission and sent away with the proverbial flea in his ear.

Would it have worked? Since the object of our boardgame is to simulate past events without necessarily repeating the same moves, it seemed to me to be worth a try. The first thing to do was to identify the units involved on the turn/reinforcement chart, using the 'Borodino' historical order of battle (cross checked against Duffy). As the game is presented it does not quite bring on units in their historical entry positions, this caused a certain amount of confusion at first but this was resolved by resort to the H.O.B. and Duffy once more. Once the point of entry was established on the game map, everything was set for a very diverting alternative game, presented below.

## The Davout Plan

### A. Changes in the order of Battle

The following units do not appear on the turn/reinforcement chart for September 5th.

Game Turn 2	One 4-4 at B
Game Turn 4	One 7-4, one 7-3, one 5-4 all at B.
Game Turn 5	One 2-5 at B.
Game Turn 8	One 4-3, two 4-4, one 2-5, all at C.

These units are set aside as they become available behind the French Player's start line.

### B. Point of Entry

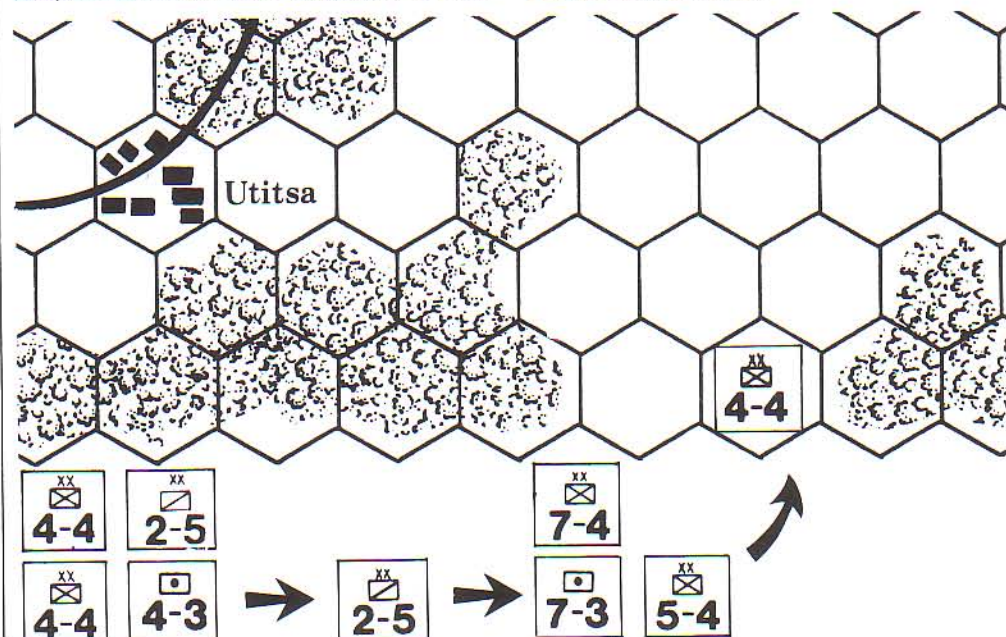
The units detailed in 'A' now enter on the southern edge of the map behind Utitsa. i.e. in the gap along that edge between the Utitsa woods and the next wooded area to the east.

### C. Time of Entry

The earliest possible time of entry would be game turn 15 (September 6th) and the most probable time of entry would be game turn 17 (September 6th). At the start of game turn 15, the French player throws a dice. If the result is 1,2, or 3 he places a 4-4 unit on the entry point, and then continues as normal. On the following turn (16) the units originally allocated for game turn 4 appear; on game turn 17, the units allocated for game turn 5, and so on. If the dice throw is 4,5, or 6, the process is repeated at the start of game turn 16. A successful throw (1,2 or 3) allows the 4-4 unit to enter; an unsuccessful throw (4,5 or 6) defers entry until game turn 17 by the remaining units in their original allocation sequence.

### D. Prohibition

No Russian unit may move deliberately within 3 hexes of the southern map edge in the point of entry until a French unit actually appears on the map at this point (This excludes retreat after combat *if no other hex is available*).







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# OIL WAR

## RECONSIDERED

BY

ANDREW GILHAM

In Phoenix number two, there appeared an article entitled 'Oil War — Strategy & Tactics' by David Bolton, which sets out the author's 'Optimum' Arab deployment for scenarios 1 and 2 of the game. I would like to take issue with Mr Bolton's set-up and suggest an alternative deployment of my own.

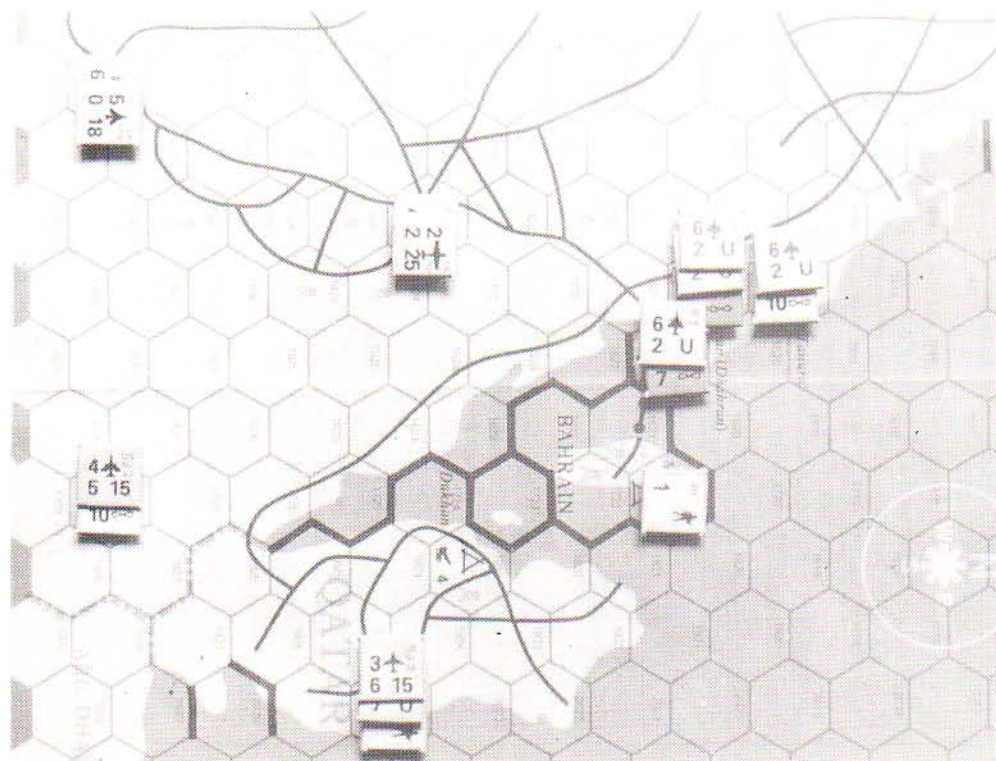
My major complaint is that the Persian Gulf region of Saudi Arabia is virtually defenceless, inviting a US invasion there. A landing at Ra's Tanura can only be attacked by ten ground strength points, while a landing at the airbase on hex 1728 can only be attacked by eleven strength points; similarly, Riyadh can be attacked by only ten. However, these counter-attacks cannot be executed simultaneously. If the US player attacks these bases and gives them air cover, the Arab player with optimum luck can only remove one landing, and in the process will leave large areas of Saudi Arabia unprotected, allowing devastating turn 2 airdrops.

There are many invasion gambits here; I do not favour attacking Riyadh, as it is relatively distant from ports and oil facilities. Perhaps the best is to attack Ra's Tanura and Az Zahran in conjunction with hex 1728, viz



Above: Reconsidered deployment of Arab forces.

Left: American and Israeli forces attack the 'Bolton' deployment, as outlined in issue two.



In the air transport phase, these landings are made:

hex 1419 IS 10, US 7

hex 1520 US 7

hex 1728 IS 10

In the movement phase:

US 7 moves from 1419 to 1420

US 7 moves from 1520 to 1521

IS F4's move to 1419

1521 (the SAM is neutralised, rule 7.51)

1420

1420

USN A6 and FE move to 2024

USN A7 moves to 1728

Vigorous Arab air attacks can eliminate any stack of air units the US can put together on turn one, hence the spread-out deployment of US/Israeli air units. The US F4 can move onto Az Zahran once the SAM is neutralised by the airlanding brigade. (Rule 7.51 states that "(SAM sites) are neutralised when occupied").



In the event of any unit being retreated in the Az Zahran area, hex 1520 is vacant. Thus all the airlanding units will survive.

The riskiest landing is on hex 1728. The IS 10 can be surrounded by the Saudis (and maybe by the Qatar unit, if it survives the air attack by the A6 and F4). Also, the Arabs can amass 28 air strength points to attack the A7 and F4 on 1728, normally enough to destroy them. If the Arab does this, the Israeli unit has an overall chance of survival of 68%. The main effect is to divert the main Arab strength from the principal landing area (Ra's Tanura - Az Zahran). If you think it is worth it, do it.

On the following turn, reinforcements will be brought in at all three captured airbases, and Bahrain will be captured by an airlanding brigade. The US breakout into Saudi Arabia will be almost immediate, and the complete capture of Saudi Arabia and southern Kuwait is virtually certain.

Enough! Here is my plan to save the shiekhs:

Saudi Arabia	0326 one SA4
	0828 one SA F5
	1324 one SA 167
	1420 one SA 4
	1425 one SA 6 (mech)
	1728 one SA Ltng
Kuwait	0711 one KW Ltng
	0813 one KW 1
	0914 one KW 7 (arm),
	one KW 1
Iraq	0508 one IQ 3
	0606 one IQ 3
	one IQ 4 (mech)
	0607 two IQ 4 (mech),
	one SU7, one M21
Iran	0805 two IN 8 (mech)
	0806 two IN 7 (arm)
	0807 one IN 7 (arm)
	1306 one IN 7 (arm)
	1712 one IN 6, two F5's
	1303 two IN F4's
Qatar	1922 one QT 1
Bahrain	1721 one BH 1

This set-up allows a vigorous defence of the Ra's Tanura/Az Zahran area, using Mr Bolton's upgraded Kuwaiti armour. The set-up of the Saudi and Qatar units allows landings in the Qatar area to be surrounded with ease. The units on 1420 and Riyadh deprive the US player of these airbases for bringing on of reinforcements until turn three. The deployment of the Qatar unit means that if the US lands in Qatar he must go out of his way to destroy it with his ground units. Of course, he can use air to hit it, but there is some risk attached.

Essentially, this set-up uses the Kuwaiti forces to defend northern Saudi Arabia, while using the Saudis' own meagre forces to protect southern Saudi Arabia. Contrary to Mr Bolton's suggestion, no sane US player will ever attempt invading Kuwait against a competent Arab. He is trapped between the powerful Iranians and the suddenly up-gunned Kuwaitis, and will surely be surrounded and destroyed. At the very least, his units will be forced to stack high on their airbases, thus preventing reinforcements from appearing. He is beyond the A6/A7 range line, giving the Arab air superiority (for a few turns at least). Invading Kuwait (or Iran for that matter) is a good way to lose!

The opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of the editor.

## MAIL CALL

I read in 'Mail Call', Phoenix 4, that Mr Paul Morphine is interested in a PRESTAGS scenario for Navarette - it so happens that I am way ahead of him and I take the opportunity to present:  
**SCENARIO - Navarette (February 1367)**  
 Henry's Army: 15xPS, 5xCB, 6xLC, 2xHC, 20xMI, 1x"2", 1x"3", VP=91, PL=27.  
 Deploy (1215) -4, stacking:2.  
 Edward's Army: 12xMS, 12xLB, 2xPS, 1x"1", 1x"2", 1x"3", VP=79, PL=31.  
 Deploy N-3, stacking:2  
 Game length: 20 game turns.  
 Victory conditions: Both sides must achieve a substantial victory.  
 Terrain Mods: Ignore all woods, towns and the stream running 0911 to 1636.

So there you are: the stacking and panic levels probably need a bit of fiddling with to sort out the balance but overall we have a larger and quite powerful army attacking a smaller force, but with considerable firepower. It makes for quite a good scenario, as both sides have their strong and weak points.

Andrew Gilham

Perhaps this tip will be of use to readers of Phoenix. A lot of gamers will have found that after playing a game once or twice or even before play the map starts to split where two folds cross in the centre. It is a simple job to halt further splitting along the folds by means of sticky tape. I use paint masking tape, as sellotape tends to dry out and fall off. Four small pieces of tape at each fold cross over will prevent any split going further along the fold.

The tape will increase the life of maps and care in folding will always help.

Ian T Parry AIST

Dear Sirs,  
 I feel I must point out Dr. PHS Hatton's erroneous belief that Albert A Nofi is a fanatical Catholic for writing that Frederick of the Palatinate was "fool-hardy" and "foolish" (in S&T 55), which he said on the Letters Page of Phoenix 4.

Frederick's acceptance of the Crown of Bohemia was surely based on the supposition that Ferdinand and of Styria would be too weak to resist this move, as he was concerned with internal revolts and external threats (the Turks). Even so, this was to ignore the Habsburgs' allies, which included Bavaria, Saxony, Poland and, most importantly, the Spanish Habsburgs, with whom the Austrian branch of the family had fairly strong links at this time.

The Palatinate was militarily not strong enough to resist these powers and could not muster much powerful international support. Although Frederick was son-in-law to James I of England, James openly said that he was not prepared to support the venture into Bohemia and was in any case too weak to do so. The Dutch, Protestant like Frederick, were shortly to be tied up with the Spanish, when the truce with that country expired in 1621 and were thus unable to give any substantial aid. France, patron of the Protestant Union, was too weak to support Frederick in open war against the Habsburgs and lacked the guidance of Richelieu until his rise in 1624. The members of this Protestant Union disliked Frederick's leadership of that body and were therefore unprepared to support him.

In short, Frederick misread the situation. He tried to be opportunistic and failed, due to lack of the necessary power to back up a legal claim (for his election to the throne of Bohemia was legitimate) against the certain reaction of the Habsburgs. His action led to a situation where Protestantism had never seemed so threatened and he could not have foreseen the final result, when religion was less of a driving-force anyway.

R J Stephens



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# News from SPUK

As mentioned in Phoenix 4, we have had a number of SPI games out at a local printer for quotations on various sized print runs, the object being to print in the UK and bring prices down. We have now had these quotations and happily, they are sufficiently attractive to merit taking our plans a stage further. The only hang-up is that we do not yet know what standard the physical quality will come up to and being a canny Scot I want to see what the printer comes up with before fully committing SPUK.

The test case will be 'Outreach'. This job is with the printer now and the final go ahead for further UK prints will be given if I am satisfied that 'Outreach' comes up to the required physical standard. If it does not, then it's back to the drawing board.

On the assumption that the test run is a success, I have ordered negatives for 'Minuteman' and 'Star-soldier' to be printed in February and March respectively. Other new titles scheduled for UK production are 'Battlefleet Mars' (April), 'Fulda Gap' (May), 'Lord of the Rings' (August), 'Modern Battles II Quads' (September) and 'Road to Ruin' (October).

In addition to these new games we plan to produce a number of released titles over a period of time. These will be the better-selling titles and they will be produced only when our stocks of imported games have been reduced to an acceptable level. It cannot be assumed therefore that the most popular game available will be the first to be produced. Further details will be given in future issues of Phoenix.

New items now in stock are The Expansion Module for War in the West from SPI, Avalon Hill's 'Starship Trooper', 'Caesar', 'War At Sea' and 'Wargames Guide to Panzerblitz' (£2.25), and from TSR we now have 'Dungeons and Dragons' plus various supplements and 'Empire of the Petal Throne'.

New games expected in stock by mid-February are — 'Wellington's Victory' from SPI, 'Airforce', 'Custer's Last Stand', 'Submarine' from Battle-line Publications and Fire and Movement magazine. For details of the non-SPI products see our advertisement on Page S1. SPI's 'War in Europe' should be with us by early March.

SPI have re-released a further 12 games (nick-named The Dirty Dozen). Of these, we will be stocking 1918, Franco-Prussian War, The Marne, Year of the Rat, The Wilderness Campaign, El Alamein and Destruction of Army Group Centre (available late March). The other five games will not be stocked by SPUK.

When re-subscriptions started coming in recently a number of you sent in sufficient to cover not only a sub to S&T but also one to Phoenix. Naturally, this vote of confidence was a great morale booster. However, we cannot accept the extra cash for Phoenix as we have already priced Phoenix into the S&T sub at 15p per issue. The reference to Phoenix subs on our renewal slip is intended for those gamers who have taken out a subscription to Phoenix but not to S&T.

Now for the bad news. Game Designers' Workshop have recently appointed a UK agent and we can no longer buy direct from the States. This means we are not now in a position to control our GDW selling prices. The resultant increases (see price list on the centre spread) range from 15% to 50% depending on the title, most prices have gone up by around 35%. We still have a small stock of imported games and we will sell these at our old brochure price as long as stocks last, so if you are thinking about getting a GDW game, buy now!

Once more we come to apology time. Outreach was not produced on schedule because the negatives required for platemaking got caught up in a mail strike in New York. (In fact, at the time of writing — December 5th, 1976 — the game has still not gone into production as the negatives arrived only three days ago). Moves 29 was also late in going out as the ship that was to carry our shipment over the 'Pond' bounced off a dock in New York and damaged its propeller. It went into dry dock for repairs and our goods came to us via Rotterdam with a resultant delay of 2½ weeks. S&T59 will almost certainly be a couple of weeks late in going out. The last I heard it was due to leave SPI between Xmas and New Year. However, SPI are obviously under a great deal of pressure at this time of year and there is always the possibility that they will be unable to maintain the hitherto excellent service to the UK.

Even if the shipment does go out on time, I have found from past experience that delays are inevitable in the actual transportation around December/January so I usually prepare myself for the worst. Apologies are due for any inconvenience caused.

On now to 'Bover' time. In issue 3 of Phoenix, I printed two letters in an effort to illustrate the problems we face when vetting non-SPI products with a view to stocking same. Both letters referred to Jagdpantser Products and both stated that the physical quality of certain of their games was less than acceptable. Since that issue, I have received several letters from the Jagdpantser people complaining about victimisation and demanding a retraction etc, etc. Obviously I cannot retract another man's opinion. If a gamer thinks a game is poor then he has a right to say so, far be it from me to put a gag on him. Bearing in mind the fact that Phoenix was produced as a forum where UK gamers could express their opinions, it would be pointless producing same if we must stop printing gamers' views because they upset game publishers. Surely said publishers should note the criticism and take steps to put right the flaws commented on. I would however like to make it clear that I had no intention of picking on Jagdpantser. There are numerous wargames that I will not handle because I am not happy with the physical quality. Amongst these are the five re-released SPI games 'Bastogne', 'The Flight of the Goeben', 'The Battle of Moscow', 'Flying Circus' and 'Lost Battles'. These five games can be very enjoyable but they have only black and white maps and they do not come up to the physical standards that gamers have now come to expect. I did not print letters about any other publishers' products because I just did not get any and I am not about to start making them up to smooth a couple of ruffled feathers.

Having made it clear that I do not necessarily agree with the opinions expressed in the letters I must point out that of four game samples sent by Jagdpantser only one (Spanish Civil War) was of sufficiently high physical quality to be stocked by SPUK. I expect to announce availability of this game in Issue 6 of Phoenix. Hopefully, the above will put this episode into perspective.

Climbing deftly from my self-built soapbox, I will now turn to happier things. Due to the success of SPUKORGY '76 we are making arrangements to hold two Orgies in 1977. The first will be held April 29th — May 1st inclusive. This falls between the Easter and Spring bank holidays. The second will be held in mid October, final dates still to be fixed. Details of this event can be found on the booking form in this issue (see centre spread).

More pleas from the pleading customer service. Please do not use your completed feedback card for queries. If you send an enquiry with an order, make sure this is on a separate sheet of paper. Write your query in such a way that allows a 'yes', 'no' type of answer where possible and remember that stamped self-addressed envelope.

SPI game parts: please note that these have been increased in price by 20%. Also, please note that spare parts for War In The East are not obtainable at present and that situation is likely to last until the Summer of 1977.

As an economic measure, we will not be producing a new brochure until about the middle of the year. Instead, we will print an updated order form and insert this into the present brochure. Brochures will no longer be sent out with S&T. In its place we will put an order form into the centre spread of

each issue of Phoenix.

We will be cutting down the exhibitions attended by us this year to the following — Southern Militaire 1977 (to be held at the Post House Hotel, Southampton — 2nd and 3rd April), The National Convention and Northern Militaire. Details for the latter are not yet to hand.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our customers the very best for 1977.

## Phoenix 3 feedback results.

SPUK service received an average rating of 7.2 out of 9 (that is somewhere between average and excellent) with 74.86% rating it between 7 and 9. 48.13% considered our service to be improving whilst 50.8% felt it was steady. After sales service got an average rating of 6.97% with 30.43% saying the service was improving against 6.8% who said we were slipping. Of the seven new non-SPI titles feedbacked, only 7th Cavalry received a 15% 'Yes, stock it' response. The others fell below therefore we will not be stocking any of these titles. Questions 12-23 were game ratings:

Title	% played	Accept. rating
Foxbat & Phantom	29.5	5.63
Mech War '77	31	6.87
NATO	32.5	6.35
Panzer '44	27	6.59
Sniper	35	6.67
Sorcerer	45	6.00
Starforce	38.5	6.30
Vwv II	41.5	6.11
WW III	37	5.74
Sinai	62.5	6.70
Seelowe	55	6.30
Normandy	41.5	5.71

Based on issues 1-3, 91.5% of you would subscribe to Phoenix, 5% would not. 41.45% would do so on merit, 8.29% to support a UK magazine, 39.90% both. 60% felt issue 3 was an improvement on issue 2, 25% did not agree. Overall visual presentation was rated at 6.22, whilst news from SPUK was given 6.68. The ratings on contributors articles will not be published for obvious reasons.

## S & T 57 feedback results

Rank article	UK Rating	US Rating
1. Panzergruppe Guderian	7.09	7.23
2. Outgoing Mail	6.70	6.95
3. Battle of Smolensk	6.89	6.87
4. Rolling Thunder	6.19	6.52
5. Game Ratings	6.38	6.48
6. Briefings	6.13	6.46
7. Invasion-America	6.16	6.31
8. Russian Civil War	5.91	6.21
This issue (overall)	6.98	7.01

75.15% felt issue 57 was better than 56 and 86.98% felt that S&T57 would make you subscribe.

# Despatches from SPUKORGY '76

On the weekend of All Hallows Eve is, I suppose, as good a time as any to have an orgy of wargaming and on that weekend board gamers from all over the UK converged on Hale in Cheshire for the first ever British board game get together. I must confess I approached it with a wee bit trepidation for most of my experience of wargames with unknown opponents had been with our miniature figure cousins and, while "off parade" I had found them all highly likeable blokes, "on parade", or when actually "playing", they seemed to me to be loud, angry, aggressive and taking a game all too seriously. So it was that when I arrived at the Ashley Hotel in Hale, after dumping my luggage and having a quick wash, I repaired to the games room listening for the loud hum of heavy conversation and discussion already joined. To my surprise, and delight, there was none. Despite five or perhaps six games in progress there was nothing but the quiet hum of conversation, banter

and the odd laugh as a die throw rolled in a more bloody-minded way than usual.

This was to be the pattern for the weekend. From my arrival with the Scottish contingent at 23.15 hrs on Friday night until my departure at 18.10 hrs on Sunday night, the only voices raised were those of the mock earnest negotiators during the many "Russian Civil Wars" which were fought during the two days. On that first evening I played two games. One, a "Lord of the Rings" game which was less than enthralling and the title of which I cannot remember. The other was after my dismissal from Middle Earth when four of us played a game of "Emperor of China" (Pub: G.L. Lamborn) which is a great fun game, a cross between "Diplomacy", "Risk" and "The East is Red". This was enjoyed by all the players until Malcolm Watson, an itinerant games importer of no fixed odds, got a dose of "divine wind", a chance card which calls for an end to the



game regardless of what stage you are at and a general totting up. Malcom lost (and so did I).

And so (as Pepys has it) to bed at 02.00 hrs approximately.

Up betimes and did bathe in the bathroom provided (the Ashley is well appointed with bath, shower, wash basin, loo, TV, radio and Teasmaid in, I think, every room) and to breakfast where, after two fat kippers together with toast, marmalade and coffee I repaired upstairs to awaken another of the Scottish cadre, one John Robertson, who had played till 04.00 hrs and thus almost missed his breakfast. This act of charity on my part earned me a sound thrashing at John's hands (and Arabs) when I played him at "Jerusalem". The game is a good one and beautifully presented but the rules are not as clear as they might be and we both made several errors in the playing of it.

However, this is not said in mitigation of my defeat — even by *our* rules, I deserve to have lost for one basic mistake in strategy. (Guess who didn't guard his communications then?) After a pleasant buffet lunch I was invited to play "Chinese Farm" from the Modern Battles Quad by a kind gent by the name of Laurence (stand up whoever said "of Arabia") and, as this was my first experience of these games, while I plowtered through the rules he got on with a game of "Sealion" on another table. I think that this split in his concentration allowed me to get away with the odd tactical nicety which normally would have been seen before it had time to develop and in the early evening Laurence ceded the game although it was still in the balance. So cheered I went in to dinner and was thereafter inveigled (Hell — I volunteered) for a game of "Russian Civil War". From this also I was dismissed but only after stirring things quite beautifully. It was while I was resting from my counter revolutionary activities in a corner of the room that I made the following notes which I reproduce as they are, in the manner of despatches from the front.

"The Ashley Hotel in Hale, Cheshire, is a quiet, respectable, pleasant building and it is probably at its quietest at just after one o'clock on a Sunday morning. This quiet and respectable facade was totally belied by the ongoings on the first floor on the morning of Sunday the thirty-first of October last. At that hour an assassination was being plotted! Bolsheviks and White Russians were planning to put an end to Lenin's life! Malcolm Watsonski, a name not unknown in diplomatic and co-centric circles, was hoping to bring about the downfall of the apparently invincible leader. As this was happening in the centre of the room on the far side, Warwick the king maker was juggling lives, crowns, sceptres and castles as the feudal lords of fifteenth century England scrambled for power and stabbed one another in the back, front or beer mug. Walking across the room, if one cared to leave one welter of gore for another, one could encounter the Nazi Blitzkrieg rolling over the plains of France, the massed forces of the English Civil War at Marston Moor while in another corner of the room yet another Russian Civil War is wending its tortuous way to con-

clusion. In short, you are witnessing the fag end of day one of the SPUKORGY.



For the last thirteen hours or so, gamers from all over Britain have been pitting their wits, dice throws and unit counters one against the other. The games played have ranged from Ancient Greek battles through reconstructions of the Battle of Chinese Farm in the 1973 Middle East Campaign to a future view of America being invaded by Maoist forces in California. The reports reaching your correspondent would suggest that, in the latter example, the invading forces employed green and black jelly babies in their advance. I should doubt these reports had I not been privileged to witness the occurrence personally. I can assure you that the sight of green jellified men some two hundred miles tall marching up from the Panama isthmus reminded me of nothing so much as Arthur Wellesley's remark at Waterloo: "I don't know what they do to the enemy — but by God, they frighten me!"

As the time wears on, even the hardened gamers left playing are beginning to suffer from combat fatigue. The time is beginning to tell for in the furthest away Russian Civil War an assassin has, all unknowingly, shot his own leader, while a little nearer at hand, the Royalist artillery at Marston Moor has just fired on its own side."

Shortly after that report ended a certain expatriate Dundonian made certain approaches to me concerning a game called "advice" or "advise" and a bottle of whisky. This, as readers will surely understand, was in the nature of an offer I couldn't refuse and so from about 01.45hrs till 04.00hrs on Sunday morning I sat and played and won and lost in about equal parts that marvellous game — where can I get a copy? — thereafter, as Pepys would not have written, though he undoubtedly said it often enough "and sho to bed".

The Sunday was much as the Saturday with games being played by a large number of people apparently undaunted by the prospect of another Monday just over the horizon. Indeed, until the start of the dispersal at 16.30 on Sunday afternoon, the evidence of continued enjoyment of the games was apparent wherever one looked. It is worth remarking that the entire weekend, as far as I am able to tell, was totally good-humoured and was instrumental in introducing many players to new games which they might not have considered playing in the first place. This, combined with the informal social atmosphere and the added spice of the visit to the Aladdin's Cave of the SPUK warehouse, made the weekend for some and destroyed the bank

balance for others. The Hotel was, as I have said, comfortable, the company good and the bar, for those who wanted it, well stocked, so were there no complaints? The only one of any note that I heard was that the weekend was expensive. This one I don't buy. To expect to find a bed and breakfast in any hotel in Britain nowadays at the price we were asked to pay would in the normal run of things be silly. We were able not just to take bed and breakfast but those who wanted could have an evening meal as well and share a lot of time with many like-minded people and find a lot of good fun and great relaxation. It may be that there were people who were there who found the total outlay of fare, bed and B., and the odd pint of beer a bit more than they bargained for but even so, surely the question should be not "how much?" but "was it worth it?" and as far as I am concerned, it was well worth it. In fact, I will be there at the next one if I can fit it in. I thought round about May next year.....

Gies ma' SPUKORGY 'n 'at. **Hamish Wilson**



*Vic Martindale, playing 'Invasion: America', brings a new dimension to wargaming by spearheading the South American advance with Jelly Babies!!*

The time is : 29th October 1976 AD  
SPUKORGY '76

Jon Ormandy and Nick Carter

A weekend of wargames, more wargames, and yet more wargames.

Visitors to the Ashley Hotel, Hale, Cheshire on October 29th may well have been astonished by a sign which read "Orgy this way"! Those bold enough to peep behind the wooden screen were perhaps disappointed, out nonetheless privileged, to witness the first (of many we hope) SPUK wargames orgy.

Some 50 gamers from as far afield as Kent and Scotland attended what was to be a most entertaining weekend. Visitors from afar had the advantage of sleeping in the hotel itself enabling many games to continue playing into the small hours. The SPUK premises, conveniently situated about 300 yards from the Ashley, were open on the Saturday from 10.00am to 4.00pm. Sales of games seemed fairly high despite an increase in prices due to the sinking (sunk?) pound.



"Conquistador" made its debut in public, appearing in both solitaire and multi-player guises. An advance copy was eagerly examined by all those with subscriptions to S&T. By now you will probably all have come to your own conclusions about the game but first reactions to it certainly seemed favourable, even from the player whose English explorers were repeatedly driven back by fanatical eskimos!

Since everyone who subscribes to S&T had recently received issue 57, many games of "Panzergruppe Guderian" were in evidence. This game also proved to be very popular and there were nearly always one or two games in progress. Perhaps the most encouraging fact to emerge from them was that, in spite of there being only one scenario, most of the games developed differently, various methods of defence being tried and different directions of attack attempted. One problem is that with SPI's new printing method, the rules are printed on flimsy paper and ideally need to be protected if you intend to play the game often.

Quadri-games proved enormously popular, most likely because they are both quick, making ideal time-fillers, and simple — nobody wants to spend ages reading rules when they have travelled miles for a weekend of wargaming. Quadri-games seem to offer a sufficient challenge for even the most experienced of wargamers however. Particularly popular were the "Napoleon at War" quads and the various shades of "Blue and Gray" but all the quadri-game sets were represented at some time or other. The playing of the different sets of quadri-games seemed, with uncanny regularity, to go in distinct phases — "North Africa Quads" on Friday, "Napoleon at War" on Saturday and Sunday, and "Blue and Gray" and "Thirty Years War" on Sunday, with odd games of "Modern Battles" and "Island War" Quads in between.

Non-SPI games (shh!) were in the minority throughout the whole of SPUKORG '76 as one might expect but among the more popular titles were the colourful "Bar-Lev" and "Jerusalem" and various Avalon Hill games, in particular the recently published "Russian Campaign" which seemed to play quite well and "Kingmaker", an update of Philmar's immensely popular Wars of the Roses game.

Among the more popular SPI games were "Sinai", "Spartan", "World War II", "Borodino" and several very lively games of "Firefight", SPI's new modern tactical game. Other, yet more popular, games are mentioned at greater length elsewhere in this article.

One of the highlights of SPUKORG '76 was SPI's recent publication, "Terrible Swift Sword". This game attracted almost as much interest from other gamers as from those actually playing it. With its three very colourful map-sheets and hundreds of counters, "Terrible Swift Sword" is certainly attractive. The game was played all day Saturday, yet the players were unable to complete the first day of the battle of Gettysburg which

it simulates. This gives some idea of how long the game can take if it is played in full — longer than the real battle actually took. However, the players certainly seemed to be enjoying themselves and "Terrible Swift Sword" looks like a must for any wargamer who is interested in the American Civil War. The game can be played in its entirety, or one of the three one-day scenarios may be played. We were told that it is possible to play certain scenarios using only one or two of the maps at least some of the time.



Another very colourful game on show on the Saturday was "Invasion: America". Four players took part in a game of this novel SPI publication and were having great fun, one of the players even recruited several units of Jelly Babies!\* While this game attracted much attention, the electronic randomizer being used in place of a die attracted even more!

Two gamers who obviously intended to make the most of the weekend, had the idea of playing two games at once. Using fairly simple games such as the quads (in this case two "Napoleon at War" games), two players can complete moves in approximately the same time can 'simultaneously simulate'. It is not advisable to do this with a pair of complex games as you have to keep a careful eye on what your opponent is doing otherwise you may miss something important and lose the game, or rather games.

Several gamers at SPUKORG '76 possessed acrylic sheet which they placed over their game map and moved the counters on the perspex cover. This not only protects the map but it also helps to keep it flat — it can be very annoying to have vast ridges in a map even more annoying when all the counters jump out of place after you have tried to flatten them. A perspex cover also allows you to plan moves and make alterations to the map without actually drawing on the game map itself. However, this perspex sheet is quite expensive, costing up to £5 for two square feet. Gamers who would use it often may still consider this worth it though.

Another good idea picked up at SPUKORG '76 was the use of plastic folders to protect rules booklets, one folder being used for each sheet of rules so that they can be read without actually removing them from the protective folder. These folders are available separately or in book form from Boots and WHSmiths shops.

Before we draw this article to an end, we would like to mention local gamer, K Broadhurst's creation "Strategos". This game is about the Peloponnesian War between

Athens and Sparta. Athens being a naval power and Sparta a land power, it is necessary to defeat your opponent on his own ground in order to win the game. The game has an attractive map, uses leader, naval and land units and rules are included to allow for Persian and Sicilian participation. Several players tried and liked the game and Malcolm may consider publishing it. We could certainly do with some more British games on the market.

Towards the end of the weekend a competition was proposed to choose a name for next year's SPUK wargames orgy. The prize of an SPI tee-shirt deterred any would-be entrants. Thanks are due to all those who helped to organise SPUKORG '76 and in particular to Malcolm Watson. Thanks also to all the gamers at SPUKORG '76 who made the event so enjoyable for one another. We look forward eagerly to.....'77.

## FEEDBACK

Phoenix 5

Published January/February 1977

**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 question number. See centre spread 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 processed.

**What the numbers mean:** When answering questions, "0" always means NO OPINION or NOT APPLICABLE. When the question is a "yes or no" question, "1" means YES and "2" means NO. When the question is a rating question, "1" is the WORST rating, "9" is the BEST rating; "5" is an AVERAGE rating; and all numbers in-between express various shades of approval or disapproval.

1. Based on the last 2 months, how do you rate the service you receive from SPUK (1-9)?
  2. Do you feel our service is (1) improving, (2) the same as always, (3) declining?
  3. Based on the last 2 months, how do you rate our after sales service (i.e. rules queries, complaints, etc) (1-9)?
  4. Do you feel that this service is (1) improving (2) the same as always, (3) declining?
- Will you purchase a copy of the following non-SPI games if we make them available. The game title is given first followed by a reference indicating where a description can be found (e.g. ST55, P18 indicates a review can be found on page 18 of Strategy & Tactics issue 55). Rate the games on a scale of 1 to 9, with one indicating very little intention to buy...(up through) nine indicating very great likelihood of buying the game.
5. Eastfront (ST59, P16)
  6. Airborne (ST59, P16)
  7. William the Conqueror - 1066 (ST59, P16)
  8. Tunisia (ST59, P16)
  9. Starship and Empire (ST59, P16)
  10. Stalk — 1 (ST59, P16)

Did you feel that the quality of the physical components of 'Outreach' was "1" lower than SPI standards, "2" level with SPI standards, "3" higher than SPI standards, "4" did not purchase therefore cannot comment.

11. Map
12. Counters
13. Frontsheet
14. Rules Book
15. Charts

If in any of the above you consider the quality fell below SPI standards please give specific criticism at the foot of your feedback card.

16. Rate the overall physical quality of 'Outreach' on a 1-9 basis.

Continued on page 6