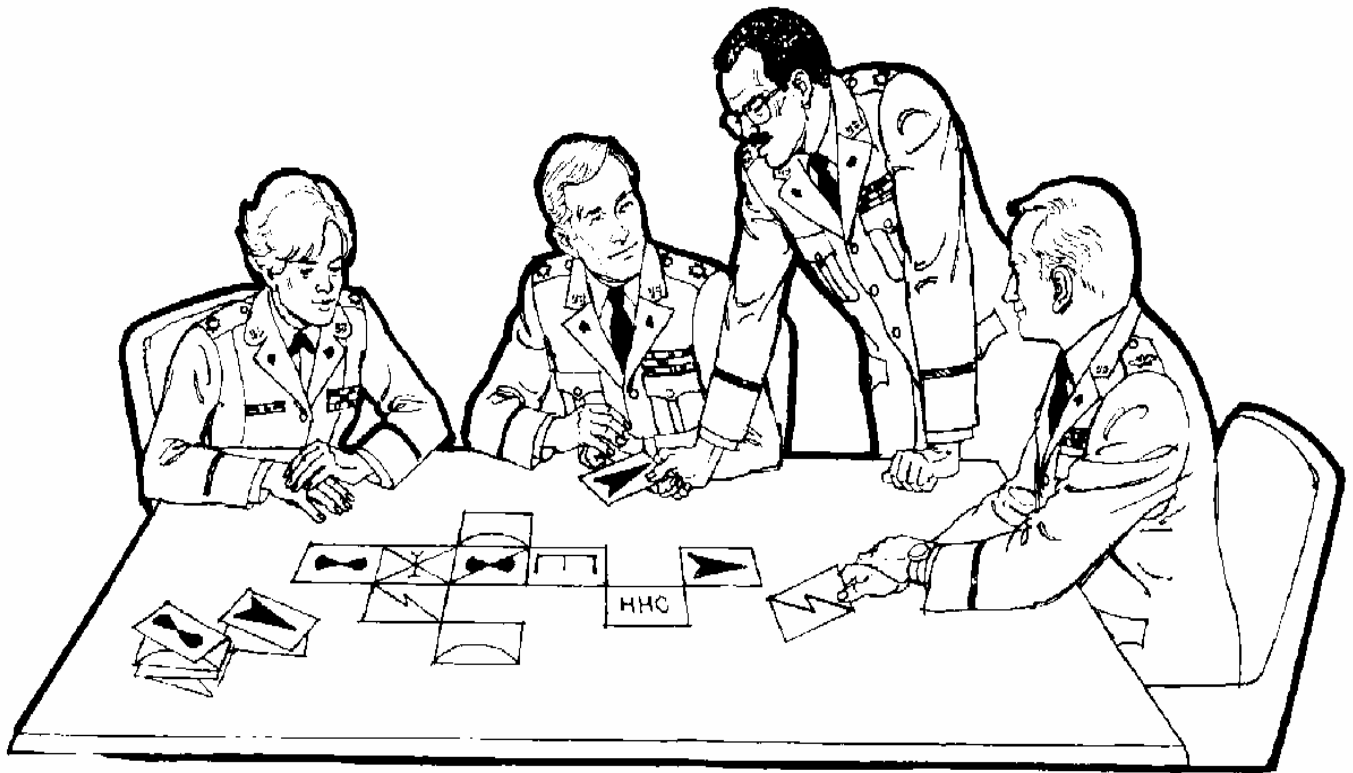


Special Preview Issue August 1995

The BOARDGAMER



**Dedicated To
The Competitive Play Of
Avalon Hill / Victory Games
Board, Sports and Card Games**

*Featuring: Circus Maximus, Candidate, War At Sea, 1830,
Up Front, AREA News*

Current Specific Game AREA Ratings

Below (and on pages 12 & 19) are the reconstituted AREA ratings for many different games. Those games with a date listed are the ratings as they have been reconstructed to date. Those games with an issue number of the GENERAL listed are the ratings as they were last published in the GENERAL. You may notice that some of these ratings are quite old. While reconstructing the specific AREA ratings for these games, it is possible that this is some of the best reference information Glenn Petroski has available. If you have any more recent data on your specific rating for these or any other games, send a copy to Glenn as soon as possible (for Glenn's address see article on the AREA rating system inside this magazine). It is expected for all AREA ratings to be finalized and for the Avaloncon results to be entered into the system well before the end of this year. In future issues, this space will be used to highlight not only the AREA rating lists of the most active games (ASL being the most obvious choice) but also the AREA ratings of some of the less popular and more obscure titles.

Advanced Squad Leader

(As Of July 1995)

Fortunately, Russ Gifford had requested a printout of the entire list of AREA rating for Advanced Squad Leader just before the loss of the records. Therefore, Russ has been able to reconstruct the ASL AREA records and has been adding to them with match results which have since been turned in to him as well as with the results of some recent tournaments. As a result, the ASL AREA system is already up and running at full speed and it a step ahead of AREA for most other games. Here is the most current list of the ASL Top 25:

1. Michael McGrath	2383	IM*
2. Gary Fortenberry	2159	IME
3. Perry Cocke	2049	JL*
4. Steven Pleva	2041	GJJ
5. Bob Bendis	2013	CF*
6. Bill Conner	1960	HJ*
7. Scott Drane	1946	IMJ
8. Philip Petry	1930	QK*
9. Guy Chaney	1926	CG*
10. Richard Summers	1923	EI*
11. Eric Givler	1916	GK*
12. Omar Jeddaoui	1915	BD*
13. Dave Deresinski	1903	EI*
14. Yves Tielemans	1900	BD*
15. Bruce Reinhart	1888	IH*
16. Lawrence Halpern	1885	BDF
17. Russell Bunten	1873	CG*
18. Eric Baker	1871	FJ*
19. Robert Barnette	1869	FI*
20. Russ Gifford	1858	OPH
21. Raymond Woloszyn	1855	INB
22. Scott Holst	1845	AC*
23. Mike McMain	1835	ACE
24. Jeff Cebula	1815	BE*
25. Warren Smith, Jr.	1813	CGH

Afrika Korps

(Volume 29, #3)

1. Randy Heller	1986	FFK
2. Michael Crowe	1830	BDB
3. Thomas Delaney	1643	DFJ
4. Joseph Beard	1640	BCC
5. Bruno Sinigaglio	1625	AC*
6. Roger Eastep	1600	ABE
7. Barry Smith	1595	ACA
8. Gregory Smith	1575	BDB
9. Michael Reffue	1570	AAA
10. Mark Gutfreund	1505	BC*

Russian Front

(Volume 29, #3)

1. Patrick Flory	2006	DGC
2. Charles Sorbello	2000	BCG
3. James Bjorum	1997	DFI
4. Alan Frappier	1995	EHE
5. Thomas Gregorio	1883	EHG
6. Ed O'Conner	1866	CFE
7. Tim Greene	1836	FGM
8. Larry Earhart, Jr.	1827	EEK
9. Craig Clemens	1800	CEH
10. John Laney	1750	ABD

Up Front

(Volume 29, #3)

1. Jeff Paull	1750	BD*
2. Bill Conner	1730	BE*
3. Stephan Buchholz	1695	BB*
4. Mike Fitzgerald	1645	AC*
5. Philip Coveney	1610	AA*
6. Michael Zeimentz	1570	BD*
7. Nick Vlahos	1555	BD*
8. Gary Fortenberry	1545	AB*
9. Don Wilson	1464	DC*
10. Jean Luc Brouillet	1450	AA*

From The Editor

This is the Special Introductory Issue of The BOARDGAMER. The first official issue, Volume 1 Issue 1, is due to be out in January 1996. The BOARDGAMER will be a quarterly magazine devoted primarily (but not exclusively) to coverage of Avalon Hill/Victory Games and to other valuable aspects of the boardgaming hobby (AHIKS, AREA, Avaloncon, etc.).

So, why another magazine devoted to coverage of Avalon Hill games. Don't we already have The GENERAL?

This publication will never match The GENERAL for coverage of new game releases, first looks at new games or computer game coverage. In fact, it will never even try. The BOARDGAMER is for coverage of those games which no longer grace the pages of The GENERAL with any regularity. Being independent from Avalon Hill, there is no need to concentrate on current "best selling" titles or new titles which need a little advertising. The goal of The BOARDGAMER is to cover the games

which people play, regardless of their current sales status.

I hope to deliver coverage of a great variety of games in each issue. I see no reason why articles on Advanced Squad Leader, March Madness, Advanced Third Reich, Title Bout, Blitzkrieg and Wooden Ships & Iron Men could not reside in the same issue.

I also plan to promote other valuable aspects of the hobby. You will notice the advertisement for AHIKS on page 11. AHIKS is an organization which specializes in play by mail (and e-mail) of boardgames. It is especially valuable for someone like myself who does most of his gaming by mail and e-mail due to a lack of local face to face opponents and because I find it easier to fit in many one hour time blocks for my gaming than it would be to devote 4-6 hours at a time.

There are also lists of specific game AREA ratings and an article detailing

Continued on page 17.

The BOARDGAMER

The BOARDGAMER is published by Bruce Monnin. The BOARDGAMER is intended to be a compilation of quality articles on the strategy, tactics, and variants for a variety of boardgames.

Articles from contributors are considered for publication at the discretion of the editor. Rejected articles will be returned whenever possible. Potential authors should be advised that all outside submissions become the property of The BOARDGAMER and may only be reprinted with the editor's permission (which will usually be freely given).

Unless otherwise mentioned, all game titles mentioned are trademark names of The Avalon Hill Game Company/Victory Games, as is the GENERAL and Avaloncon.

EDITOR: Bruce A. Monnin

ADDRESS: 177 South Lincoln Street
Minster, OH 45865

E-MAIL:

Genie: B.MONNIN

Internet: B.MONNIN@GENIE.GEIS.COM

PHONE: (419) 628-3332

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De-Randomizing The Circus

Circus Maximus Setup Revisions

by Bruce Monnin

You've made it to the finals of the Circus Maximus tournament. Looking around at the other contestants, you see a lot of players who are known to prefer the heavy chariots and the combative style of play. So you decide to put two preparation points on team speed and one each on driver modifier and team endurance. Your plan is to outrun the pack at the beginning and then survive the gauntlet run on the final lap to claim victory. There's just one hitch to your strategy. During the setup phase, you roll a '6' for both team speed and endurance while a couple of the heavy chariots roll '1's or '2's in these two categories. Suddenly these heavy chariots can go almost as fast (and as long) as you and your horses and chariot are doomed to be targets for many attacks from the big boys. Your whole strategy has been destroyed before the race has even started by two die rolls.

This may be an extreme example, but it happens to a lesser extent all the time. The final outcome of the race is heavily dependent on those two die rolls during setup. When you spend preparation points on the driver modifier and car type, you know exactly what you are getting. The team speed and team endurance are more of a crapshoot. In order to eliminate the problem mentioned earlier requires a system of receiving known team speed and endurance values for your preparation points.

Due to the large ranges of available team speed and endurance values, the number of preparation points has been doubled from four (4) to eight (8). This addition number of preparation points also works well in tournament play where an entrant who has won multiple qualifying heats can be rewarded (but not too greatly) with a ninth preparation point in the finals.

The Standard Game

The driver modifier remains essentially the same. You still need to spend half of your preparation points (4) to receive a +2 driver modifier. However, the option has been added to

take the +3 driver, but you'll have precious few prep points left for anything else. The driver hits die roll has also been done away with. If you desire more driver hits, they can be purchased at three (3) driver hits per preparation point, although a method of more overall value would probably be to spend a second prep point to upgrade your driver a level.

The car category has been made to deliver a little more punch if you spend more than two (2) prep points and even less punch if you allocate no prep points. Also provided are five car types instead of just three to allow greater flexibility during setup. Maybe you want to do some attacking but not at the expense of no team speed. Then you can pick the heavy chariot instead of the ultra heavy, and save the extra prep point to acquire a little more team speed.

The team speed category is straightforward, with each preparation point providing an additional 2 movement factors and horse strength. Thus a team can range from a low speed of 14 (0 prep points) to a high of 22 (4 prep points). The team endurance category is similar with each prep point providing an additional 8 endurance points. Total team endurance varies from 22 (0 prep points) to 70 (4 prep points).

Optional Features

The variable strength whip is one of my favorite options. Each preparation point spent gives a +1 modifier to all voluntary straining and lash attacks. The highest voluntary straining result attainable in one turn is still six (results above six are considered to provide six extra movement points and cost six endurance points, no more). An especially good choice for a light chariot, the heavier whip allows both the options of higher voluntary straining results when trying to run away from the pack and better results on the lash attack table when attacking becomes necessary. Also good for those 'sneaky' attacks, such as trying to swerve a chariot (into the spina or into another

chariot), or whipping a team of horses (to speed them up before a corner or to use up their remaining endurance).

The counterweight is an option (although an expensive one) for those who like the flexibility of being able to fly through the corners. A standard chariot can only get through the '8' lane without risking a corner strain roll. A chariot with two points of counterweight can get through the '8', '9', '12', and '15' lanes without such a roll (and without any endurance cost). Considering that each counterweight point can save you one endurance point for each of the five corners (as opposed to gaining 12 endurance points with a prep point on team endurance), the player choosing counterweights will have to make other gains to make this option pay off. Probably best paired with some driver modifier points, the chariot with a counterweight is likely to be taking chances and rolling often on the corner strain table.

The wheel guard is just the opposite of the heavy whip. It is for the heavy chariots who wish to perform many ram attacks against the defenders' wheels. Normally a chariot can afford 1 point of wheel damage without any worry and 2 points of wheel damage with little worry. Each wheel guard point allows a chariot to perform more attacks with less chance of flipping himself. The wheel guard is probably not in the best interest of the light chariots, since they are likely to suffer wheel damage in greater bunches if they do not avoid their attackers. Therefore the preparation point is better spent on driver modifier, team speed or team endurance than on the wheel guard.

Chariot Setup Tables

Start with eight (8) Preparation Points instead of the usual four (4).

Driver Category:

Preparation Points	Driver Modifier	Driver Hits
0	0	4
2	+1	6
4	+2	8
6	+3	10

CHARIOT RACE LOG

PERFORMANCE CHART

Categories	Driver				Car					Team Speed					Endurance				
Preparation Points	0	2	4	6	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4

Categories	Driver Hits			Whip			Counterweight				Wheel Guard			
Preparation Points	0	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3

(Mark off from left to right)

Driver Hits

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----

Faction: _____

(Enter latest current driver modifier)

Driver Modifier

CDM

Whip Type

Whip Lost (No lash attacks or voluntary straining)

Car

Ultra Light (-4 to opponent's damage)

Wheel Damage

If damage > (2) dice roll, chariot flips

If damage = (2) dice roll, add one damage

Light (-2 to opponent's damage)

Normal

Left Wheel

(Mark off from left to right)

-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	

Heavy (+2 to opponent's damage)

Right Wheel

-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	

Ultra Heavy (+4 to opponent's damage)

Horse / Total Speed / Damage

1		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Endurance (Mark down from highest to lowest)

72	71	70	69	68	67	66	65	64	63	62
61	60	59	58	57	56	55	54	53	52	51
50	49	48	47	46	45	44	43	42	41	40
39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29
28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18
17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7
6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4

(New Reduced Team Speed)

Team Speed

(Deduct from Team Speed: 8.43)

Turn Speed									
Turn	Speed	Turn	Speed	Turn	Speed	Turn	Speed	Turn	Speed
1		8		15		22		29	
2		9		16		23		30	
3		10		17		24		31	
4		11		18		25		32	
5		12		19		26		33	
6		13		20		27		34	
7		14		21		28		35	

Driver Hits:

An additional three (3) driver hits may be purchased with an extra one (1) preparation point.

Car Category:

Preparation Points	Car Type (Modifier To All Wheel And Horse Attacks)
0	Ultra Light (-4)
1	Light (-2)
2	Normal (0)
3	Heavy (+2)
4	Ultra Heavy (+4)

Team Speed Category:

Preparation Points	Horses 1-4 (Total Team Speed)
0	5324 (14)
1	5434 (16)
2	5445 (18)
3	6446 (20)
4	7447 (22)

Team Endurance Category:

Preparation Points	Endurance Points
0	22
1	34
2	46
3	58
4	70

Optional Setup Tables**Whip Category:**

Preparation Points	Whip Type (Modifier For Lash Attacks)
0	Light (0)
1	Medium (+1)
2	Heavy (+2)

Effects:

Lash Attack On Horses: Add modifier to attacker's die roll determining defender's horse strain

Lash Attack On Driver: Add modifier to lash factor

Voluntary Horse Straining: Add modifier to voluntary strain die roll (6 still the max)

Counterweight Category:

Preparation Points	Effect (Amount Added To Safe Corner Speed)
0	0
1	1
2	2
3	3

Wheel Guard Category:

Preparation Points	Effect (Starting Box For Wheel Damage)
0	0
1	-1
2	-2
3	-3

For those of you Circus Maximus addicts, the Avaloncon Circus Maximus tournament is a must. Three qualifying rounds are available during the weekend in order to earn a berth in the championship race by either winning a preliminary heat or by placing high and accumulating a high number of 'inflicted damage points'.

There is nothing quite like the feeling of being in the middle of a 12 to 16

chariot pack on the front straight and hoping you live long enough to fight it out for the whole three lap championship race.

The large number of chariots in the finals tends to make for a lot of shifting alliances as the lead switches back and forth. Everyone tries to position themselves in third or fourth place so that the other players attacker the leaders while they perform a last lap sprint for the finish line. A great time and a great experience for those who like the combination of a competition of skill where the players try not to take it too seriously.

Remember, it is better to crash in a blaze of glory than to meekly finish in the middle of the pack.



The Winning Candidate

A Brief Overview and Strategy Tips

by Bruce D. Reiff

Bruce Reiff is familiar to many Avaloncon attendees as a five time event champion, including the 1994 CANDIDATE tournament. Bruce and his group of gaming friends are better known to some as the ones who organized the sports and leisure time games at Avaloncon so that they do not overlap. This allows an Avaloncon attendee to spend the entire convention moving from the end of one tournament right to the beginning of the next.

Candidate is a fun and easy game for three to six players (although I'd recommend a minimum of five and you can play with up to seven). The object of the game is to capture 270 electoral votes. The game is intended to be a primary campaign for your party's nomination, but is more of a hybrid of a primary and a national election. After all, 270 electoral votes is the goal of a Presidential candidate.

The means to obtain these votes very closely mirror reality - the candidate with the most money wins! The player who has the most money in a state wins that state's electoral votes. There are six types of cards - money, endorsement, Zero cards, Rumors, Squelch Rumors, and Problems. Here is a brief description and number of each type of card.

1. Money - The money cards come in multiples of \$10,000, starting from \$10,000 to a high of \$100,000. There are four of each money card for a total of 40 money cards.

2. Endorsements - There are 10 endorsement cards running from \$10,000 to \$100,000 in multiples of \$10,000. These represent endorsements from politically powerful groups or people.

3. Zero Cards - These are the equivalent of a cower card in games like *Up Front*. If you play one on yourself or your opponent it has no effect. If you get two of these cards you may call a Super Tuesday, which will be described later. There are six Zero cards in the deck.

4. Rumors - These are cards you play on your opponents to reduce the amount of money they have on a state. The rumors run from minus \$10,000 to minus \$100,000. There are ten rumor cards in the deck.

5. Squelch Rumor - This card does exactly what it says, it stops a rumor from hurting you. One squelch rumor card will stop as many rumors in a state that have been played against you this turn. There are five squelch rumor cards in the deck.

6. Problems - There are five different kinds of problem cards. They are:

A. Party Ruling - This card cancels all endorsements in a state for *all candidates*, regardless of whom it was played upon. There are two Party Ruling cards in the deck.

B. State Ruling - This card cancels all endorsements in one state, but *only for the player on whom it was played*. All other player's endorsements are unchanged. There is one State Ruling card in the deck.

C. Favorite Son - This card gives the player it was played on the state automatically unless a Scandal or Deadlock was played. This can be used by each player on himself *only once*. However, a player may use it on another player or as a Zero card if it comes around his way again. There is one Favorite Son card in the deck.

D. Scandal - This is the "do over" card. Unless the deadlock is played all players discard the cards played in that state and recampaign. There are four Scandal cards in the deck.

E. Deadlock - This card puts the state it is played on in the undecided box. There is no recourse for this card and there is one Deadlock card in the deck.

The play on these cards is very simple. On yourself you can play one money card, one problem card and as many other cards as you wish (this means you can use multiple endorsements on yourself). On your opponents you can place one card in each state that round.

Now that you know more about the number, play and types of cards. Here are some strategy tips to help you win in *Candidate*. Keep in mind you will need to be flexible and react to the situations that present themselves. But these are good ideas in general.

WATCH YOUR OPPONENTS' PLAYS. Many times I've watched someone put down one card and have the next person play four! Hey! When someone plays just one card in the first round, that should tell you something! Can you say scandal? Pay attention! When that happens you should at least be suspicious. If the person's cards

were that bad they'd certainly be dumping them and not holding on to them. Watch and learn from your opponents' plays. Of course a good counter is to play a \$100,000 money card first and try to make your opponents think you are playing a scandal!

CALL SUPER TUESDAY. There are two benefits to calling a Super Tuesday - getting rid of two Zero cards and, more importantly, you get to go last. I'll sometimes hold onto a Zero card just hoping to get another and call the Super Tuesday. Also use this play to wipe out opponents ground work. If you can call areas where 3 or 4 people have laid groundwork, somebody is going to have wasted a turn or two and not get any benefits. The worst you'll lose is one card where you may have lost two if both regions were done separately. Don't forget that the Favorite Son card is also a Zero card the second time it's in your hand. Rather than giving it to an opponent in a critical state like Delaware, use it as a Zero card and call Super Tuesday.

LAY GROUND WORK. You'll be amazed at how much easier it is to win a state when you take a card from everyone prior to campaigning there. Think about it, in a six player game you are going to have at least a ten card hand and your opponents four. That's a formula for victory. An additional plus is that you can steal a good card from someone who is hoarding them. Nothing is more fun than drawing a Scandal, Favorite Son or \$100,000 card from an opponent. Be sure that if you are trying to hoard cards at the end of the game that you lay ground work. Even if you finish second, that means no one will steal your good cards going into the convention. I know that it seems wasteful to lay ground work in Alaska or Hawaii, but keep the option in mind.

DON'T LAY TOO MUCH GROUND WORK AND DON'T UNNECESSARILY FIGHT OTHERS. Remember, you win the game with electoral votes and not ground work. If you spend every turn laying ground work, your opponents are scoring votes. Also, don't jump over someone else's ground work in the beginning of the game. This does a couple of things. First, it means you'll be drawing one less card. Second, it could set off a ground work war (and both players lose in that). Third, it will make you an enemy. Early on in the

game, pick another area, a few electoral votes won't make a difference. At the end of the game, that's not necessarily true. It sometimes is a good idea to jump another person. But save yourself the headaches early on in the game.

COUNT CARDS. I know what you're saying. "If I could count cards I'd be in Vegas right now". That's not exactly what I mean. There are only six cards you need to watch, the four Scandals, the Deadlock, and the Favorite Son. If most or all of these cards are in the discard pile, you know that you're fairly safe in playing big money cards to win a state. You also can use this information to determine when it's safe to use Favorite Son. If the deck is three quarters gone and you've only seen one Scandal card and a large state is up, you can rest assured knowing that if you play your Favorite Son card now, you'll probably end up losing it. The reverse is also true. If the Scandal and Deadlock cards are all dead, you can be assured of not wasting the Favorite Son card.

While there are many other subtleties to the game, these are some of the major pointers that should help you to become a better player. Try some of these out in your next game (unless, of course, you are playing me) and see how you feel they work. Let me know what you think the next time you talk with me.



Subscriptions To The BOARDGAMER

The BOARDGAMER is to be published quarterly with mailings near the beginnings of January, April, July and October. Individual issues are \$3.50 each and a one year (4 issue) subscription is \$13.00 (\$12.00 for members of AHIKS). Although the first few issues may be sent by First Class mail, eventually all domestic subscriptions will be sent via bulk permit. Overseas and foreign deliveries require additional postage charges. Contact the BOARDGAMER for details.

AREA News Welcome Home!

by Glenn E. L. Petroski

So this is the new place? We are all going to have to take a look around and get used to it. Nothing wrong, to be sure, or we wouldn't have picked it in the first place. But it will be different.

How different? Here in the BOARDGAMER the focus is on COMPETITIVE boardgaming, and COMPETITIVE play of established titles.

The GENERAL focuses on new products. The newest games, newest modules, the next sale. It is their business. Now don't say that I have ever knocked the GENERAL or Avalon Hill, it just ain't so. There is simply a very different point of view between selling more games faster, for a living, and nose to nose competition for its own sake. There is also a difference between gamers who are serious competitors and those who are more casual about these activities. All of which will make great material for another column.

This hobby has room for us all. I am certainly one of the more serious competitors, but I understand that there are other points of view. So do Don Greenwood, president of Avalon Hill, and Robert Waters, editor of the GENERAL. Robert is not so competitive as I am, and Don is somewhere in the middle. In spite of our differences, they both put up with me, to their credit. They are both tolerant to the point that I still write a column for the GENERAL, as well as this column here. It is their assistance, and last few years of coaching, that have gotten me to where I am now; editor of columns in two magazines, coordinator of PBM efforts, Victory In The Pacific guru, and AREA chief of operations.

Bruce Monnin and I are of much the same ilk, which is to say "we play to win!" Our goal, with every game we play, is serious competition without compromising fair play or good sportsmanship. Which is why the BOARDGAMER has come into being. It is also why there needs to be AREA.

That all of this can be said in the same breath is why AREA and the BOARDGAMER belong together. So here we are.

I can be more outspoken here. AREA news will now actively promote SERIOUS COMPETITIVE gaming. AREA ratings can take a precedent and a real meaning to all who want it to. I can, and will, be less concerned about offending potential customers, and more inclined to please the competitors among us. This is not to say that I will deliberately offend anyone, or put down anyone else's point of view. I will simply be more bold in expressing my own views.

It would be well to say at this point that while Bruce Monnin and I agree on many (dare I say most?) things, we do not agree on everything. The opinions expressed here are my own, published with his tolerant permission. If you have a difference, it is with me. But hey! Write and let me know. I need feedback. I want to hear from you, whether we agree or disagree. Even in a disagreement we will all learn.

Let me put in a plug for our editor, also. When the problems with AREA broke, and I took over, no less than a half dozen publishers, or would be publishers, asked me to sign on with them. I already knew Bruce, and knew that he has planned the BOARDGAMER for over two years. The trackwork was already in and he knew where he was going. Then too, his intended focus is the very thing that I espouse, and what AREA was always supposed to stand for. Add the confidence of personal association, and here we are.

You know what? I am very glad to be here. I expect to stay for quite some time. This does feel very much like home.

At your service,
Glenn E. L. Petroski
210 W. Hunt
Twin Lakes, WI 53181-9786
(414) 877-4178

I feel I need to add in a number of comments here. First of all, I want to ensure that nobody pictures me as a Vince Lombardi type, standing over a cardboard map shouting "Winning is the only thing". When I arrive at the Avaloncon War At Sea tournament, I try to win it all. However, during the rest of

the year, I often try out alternate strategies which may lessen my chance of winning, but hopefully will teach me new lessons which will help improve my chance of winning when Avaloncon rolls back around again.

In a game like Circus Maximus, I feel that a light, fast chariot has a better chance of winning than a heavy, slow chariot. However, I still usually choose the heavy chariot because it is a lot more fun to be the hunter than the hunted.

As to AREA, I would like to add my own plea. Glenn will need to firm up all the current AREA ratings shortly so that he can add in all the Avaloncon results and get the system back on its feet again. If you have access to any information regarding the specific game AREA ratings for either yourself or anyone else, please forward this information to Glenn as soon as possible.

While Glenn is responsible for all of the other AREA ratings, Russ Gifford is the man in charge of all the Advanced Squad Leader AREA ratings. All inquiries regarding ASL should thus be directed to Russ and not Glenn. When submitting a claim chit for an ASL match, Russ requests that you also include the scenario name and/or number, the side the winner played and any play balance used. I believe Russ would like to use this information to rate the play balance of various scenarios to help determine which to use in tournament play. Russ can be reached at:

Russ Gifford
320 E. 27th Street
South Sioux, NE 68776

Finally, you will notice AREA ratings listed on pages 2, 12 and 19 of this issue. It is the intention of this magazine to continue to publish the AREA ratings of a large variety of games in each and every issue, in addition to Glenn's AREA News column and information regarding other AREA related activities (postal tournaments, etc.). I plan for the partnership between AREA and the BOARDGAMER to continue well into the future.



Admirals Raeder and Doenitz Would've Been Proud

Axis Play in WAR AT SEA

by Bruce Monnin

Admiral Erich Raeder was commander in chief of the German navy until he resigned in early 1943. Admiral Karl Doenitz was commander in chief of the U-boat fleet and succeeded Raeder as C-in-C of the Kriegsmarine.

Articles on War At Sea strategy tend to concentrate on Allied rather than Axis play. This is because the Axis early turn strategy is to a large extent dictated by the Allied choice of opening setups, and Axis later turn strategy is dependent on the outcome of the early turns. Despite this emphasis on Allied early turn strategy and Axis responses, most War At Sea games are not decided in the early turns. Many games hinge on the ability of the Axis player to use his resources to maximum advantage during the later turns of the game. This article will detail some ideas for Axis play throughout the course of the game.

Who Has The Advantage?

In some cases (such as tournament play) the first decision required is which side to play. Many beginning players feel that the Axis side has a marked advantage, and indeed the Axis side has won the majority of the games at the first four Avaloncon conventions. However, players who consistently do well in tournament play often prefer the Allied side and obtain better results as the Allies. So, which side has the advantage? It's been my observation that it depends on the personality of the player. The Allied player can dictate the strategy and pace of the game, which is always an advantage. However, to win as the Allies you must play an almost mistake free game. Therefore, experienced, careful gamers usually do better as the Allies while players who prefer to react and take advantage of any mistakes by the other side do better as the Axis. Also, it is safer to play the Axis side when faced with an inexperienced opponent. This choice best lets you capitalize on your opponent's mistakes, and helps

minimize the possibility of getting beat by an opponent's lucky die rolling.

Overall Axis Strategy

Obviously, Axis strategy is always dependent on the Allied deployment. However, any Axis response should keep in mind these three keys to eventual Axis victory:

- 1) Maintenance of Axis fleet mobility
- 2) Preservation of the Axis fleet
- 3) Accumulation of Points Of Control

The maintenance of fleet mobility should always be the first and foremost Axis priority. Due to the fact that the Axis ships move second, the threat of any Axis action is often of greater value than the action itself (as in many other wargames). For example, forcing the Allied player to guard against the four Italian cruisers sailing into the South Atlantic Ocean has more value than does sailing them on an early turn and losing that threat for the remainder of the game. The thinner the Allied fleet is spread, the easier it is to both gain POC and maintain the strength of the Axis fleet. The most obvious and effective way to maintain this mobility is to deny control of the North Sea to the Allies. This should be the first and foremost job of the U-boat fleet.

Preservation of the Axis fleet runs hand in hand with the maintenance of fleet mobility. The Axis player needs to realize that there is no need to use the entire Axis fleet on every turn. In games where the British have abandoned the Mediterranean to the Italians, the German fleet only needs to sortie against the British about 4-5 times per game. An effective strategy is to alternate use of the German ships and the U-boats. On turns that the German fleet sorties, it is best to keep the U-boats in a safe area (such as the Baltic Sea) where there is little risk of losses. While the damaged German ships are repairing, the U-boats can be used to break Allied control of the North (or maybe Barents) Sea on the next turn.

This gives the recovered German fleet maximum mobility on the following turn.

The Italian fleet deserves special consideration. Since the Axis player often does not get the opportunity to put the Italian fleet to good use, the temptation is great to sail the Italians no matter what the odds when the British contest the Mediterranean Sea. Unlike the German fleet that should only seek battle when the odds are definitely weighted in its favor, the Italians can afford to offer battle at even or even slightly unfavorable odds. There are two major reasons for this. Since most of the Italian fleet can only contest the Mediterranean Sea, its loss only reduces the Axis threat to one sea area. However, losses to the German fleet affects the Axis threat to most sea areas. Secondly, for the Allies to control the Mediterranean, they must commit ships there each turn. The Italians can contest the area one turn, then use the next turn or two to repair the fleet before contesting the Mediterranean again.

Finally, the whole game boils down to the accumulation of points of control (POC). However, this must be made a secondary consideration during the early turns of the game. You can run up a huge POC lead in the early turns, but if you have no fleet left the contest the final turns, your POC lead will rapidly evaporate. Therefore, it is occasionally wise during the early turns to give up the POC for controlling a sea area in order to keep the German fleet concentrated. A concentrated German fleet has a better chance of inflicting greater Allied losses and thus also suffering lesser losses. A good example of this is when the German fleet is faced with the choice of dispatching a cruiser to the Baltic Sea for the one uncontested POC or keeping it with the rest of the fleet to battle the British. Although every POC is valuable, the better results achieved in battle by keeping the German fleet together can lead to greater POC gains in future turns.

Continued on page 13.

Advanced Squad Leader AREA Victory Claim Chit

(winner's name)

(player number)

(signature)

HAS DEFEATED

(defeated player's name)

(player number)

(signature)

in a rated ☐ live ☐ pbm game of Advanced Squad Leader:

(Scenario Name and/or Number)

(Side of Winner)

(Date)

(Play Balance Used - If Any)

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☐ 1st ☐ Subsequent
game vs. this opponent

2-Player Game AREA Victory Claim Chit

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(player number)

(signature)

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(defeated player's name)

(player number)

(signature)

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(Name of Game)

(Game Company Published By)

(Date)

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Twin Lakes, WI 53181-9786

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(Player Number)

(Signature)

(Name of Winner #2)

(Player Number)

(Signature)

in a rated ☐ live ☐ pbm game of:

(Name of Game)

(Game Company Published By)

(Date)

If more than 2 winners or 6 defeated
players, continue listing on another chit
and mark box in lower right corner.

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(Name of Defeated Player #1)

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(Name of Defeated Player #3)

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(Name of Defeated Player #5)

(Player Number)

(Signature)

(Name of Defeated Player #6)

(Player Number)

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AHIKS

International Wargamer's Society

Have you ever looked over your closet of wargames and wished you had an opponent to play against. Perhaps you live away from any other gamers, or perhaps your gaming acquaintances just don't enjoy your favorite game. Maybe you just lack the time for face to face gaming but have no experience with play by mail. Maybe you've tried playing by mail, but found that your opponents quit writing back as soon as it became obvious they were going to lose that AREA rated match. If any of the above circumstances sound familiar to you, then maybe you should be trying AHIKS.

The AHIKS International Wargamer's Society was founded in 1966 to be a self-policing, non-profit organization devoted to supporting play-by-mail wargaming among reliable members. AHIKS is unaffiliated with any particular wargame manufacturer and encourages the play of games produced by all manufacturers. AHIKS consists of a wide variety of potential opponents with its hundreds of members in both its North American and its European branches.

AHIKS main function is to serve as a matching service to pair members who wish to play the same game. If a match request cannot immediately be filled, it is published in the AHIKS newsletter to help encourage other members to accept the requested match.

Besides its primary function of providing members with mature, reliable opponents for play-by-mail games, AHIKS also provides the following services:

- 1) A workable PBM system which includes preprinted OOBs for some games and ICRKS for die roll generation. ICRKS (short for International Combat Resolution Keys) are sets of random numbers sent to players to replace die rolls and stock tables. Each player's ICRK sheet is different, and players exchange used portion of their sheets during or after each match to ensure accuracy and integrity.
- 2) A bimonthly newsletter (the Kommandeur) filled with open match request lists, gaming related articles, society news and much more.
- 3) The judge, an impartial rules arbiter available to resolve rules questions.
- 4) The PBEM Coordinator to help find electronic mail opponents.
- 5) The Unit Counter Pool to replace that one missing counter from your otherwise complete favorite game.
- 6) The Multi-Player Coordinator to help arrange for matches in multi-player games.
- 7) Courteous, dependable competition. Members with a history of dropping out of games or otherwise behaving unethically can face expulsion from the society.

Besides all these benefits, members of AHIKS also receive \$1.00 on a year long subscription to the BOARDGAMER (obviously the greatest benefit of them all).

To join AHIKS, you will need to contact your Regional Director. He will provide you with more information about AHIKS as well as your membership application. Below is a list of who to contact depending on the region you reside in (or you can always write to The Boardgamer and we will help you out).

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198 Brookdale Road
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1000 6th St., SW Apt #313
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The BOARDGAMER is always in need of authors to pen quality articles. Although there are no set restrictions as far as article content, the BOARDGAMER will always concentrate on the play of Avalon Hill/Victory Games boardgames. Thus strategy articles, series replays and variants for these games are always good material for submission. Game reviews of some of the older titles which may not be as familiar to some of the newer members of the hobby as they are to the old grognards would also be welcome material. History articles, game reviews/previews and articles dealing with games from other companies will be considered on a case by case basis.

So, break out those word processors and start writing. Pull out those thoughts on that older title which you never thought would be published. Tell us about your adventures at Avaloncon. Describe that wild play-by-mail match you just finished or that e-mail Diplomacy game. The BOARDGAMER cannot survive without the contributions of its readers.

Pay for authors is currently in the form of one free issue of the BOARDGAMER for each page the article occupies. Although nobody will ever get rich this way, hopefully there is enough perceived value in this publication to make the effort worthwhile.

Articles submitted will not be printed with any significant changes without first receiving the approval of the original author. Articles received will be considered the exclusive property of the BOARDGAMER, not to be printed elsewhere without permission of the BOARDGAMER. Such permission, however, will usually be freely given.

Panzer Blitz

(As of July 22, 1995)

1. David Giordano	1871	EHK
2. Ken Oates	1710	BCE
3. Mike Patterson	1695	BBB
4. John Hasay	1627	CD*
5. Jeff Wolff	1615	BB*
6. Bruce Wright	1600	BB*
7. Mike West	1532	AAA
8. Paul DeVolpi	1500	BB*
9. Robert Ehmke	1500	BB*
10. Rocky Giordano	1500	BB*
11. Douglas Ilioff	1500	BB*
12. James O'Donnell	1500	BB*
13. Mark Roman	1500	AAA
14. Barry Shoults	1500	BB*
15. Stanley Sunderwirth	1500	BB*
16. Jeff Wise	1500	AA*
17. Steven Gore	1495	BB*
18. William Thomson	1486	BB*
19. Joe Scott	1481	AA*
20. Jeff Lange, Jr.	1480	AA*
21. Bruno Sinigaglio	1480	AAA
22. Bruce MacConnell	1479	CB*
23. Neal Porter	1471	AAA
24. Chuck Leonard	1423	CB*

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Gettysburg '88

(As of July 22, 1995)

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2. David Zimmerman	1715	AC*
3. John Poniske	1701	AC*
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5. Allen Kaplan	1671	BD*
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8. John Scvolette	1511	BC*
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13. Chris Bauch	1438	AC*
14. Dave Angus	1430	AB*
15. Dan Thielen	1429	AC*
16. Ed Snarski, Jr.	1424	BC*
17. Frank Fischer	1422	AC*
18. Michael McAnney	1392	AC*
19. Frank Lane	1369	AC*
20. Al White	1340	AC*

*Would've Been Proud,
Continued from page 9.*

First Turn Axis Strategy - Mediterranean Openings

The Allies potentially have two goals when pursuing a Mediterranean strategy. One is to control the Mediterranean Sea throughout the game for the POC gain. The other is to damage the German fleet early, then move the Mediterranean fleet back to England to shut down the depleted Kriegsmarine.

When faced with the Mediterranean strategy opening, the Axis player needs to avoid two major pitfalls. It is important for the Italians to avoid losing the majority of its fleet, as this will help the Allies to achieve their goal of long term control of the Mediterranean. Also, when the Italian fleet stays in port to avoid a superior British fleet it is important for the Germans to avoid suffering significant losses in battle. Heavy German losses will tempt the British into returning their intact Mediterranean fleet to England where it can operate against the now weakened Germans.

One reaction to this British Mediterranean setup is to keep the Italian battleships in port, send a German pocket battleship to the Barents to pick up the 2 free POC, and then send the rest of the Germans and the four Italian cruisers to the South Atlantic. This force should be sufficient to control the area and take the 3 POC, while also allowing any German ships left to oil without fear of being stuck in the neutral port. Then on turn two, the Allied player has to consider the possibility of some German ships reinforcing the Italians in the Mediterranean Sea. This threat will often convince the Allied player to abandon the Mediterranean. This will set up a game where the Axis will control the Baltic and the Mediterranean Seas throughout the game and then need to win about two or three major battles and stop one or two convoys to win the game. A variation on this is to sail the six Italian battleships against the British on turn 1 to prevent the British Mediterranean fleet from retreating unscathed to England to fight the Germans. If the Italians have better than average luck, they can win the area and the Allies will be in big trouble. However, if the Italians perform poorly there is a real danger of losing control of

the Mediterranean Sea for the rest of the game.

In general, if the British Mediterranean fleet is weaker than or even with the Italian fleet, the Italians should sail. Meanwhile the German fleet should collect the free POC in the Baltic and Barents (unless there is a British force too vulnerable to pass up). If the British Mediterranean fleet is stronger than the Italians, the Axis fleets should look to link up in the South Atlantic. If the South Atlantic is also defended strongly, then the rest of the British fleet is spread thinly enough for the Germans to pick up the free POC in the Barents and maul a British fleet in the North Sea or the North Atlantic Ocean.

First Turn Axis Strategy - Northern Openings

The Allied northern openings involve surrendering the Mediterranean Sea to the Italians and concentrating the fleet against the Germans. There are many variations on this strategy, each of which ultimately strive to blockade the German fleet by controlling both the North and Barents Seas. This allows easy control of the North and South Atlantic and easier passage for the convoys on the first half of their journey to Russia. These openings vary from attempting to slap on the blockade on turn 1 to waiting until the activation of Russia on turn 3. Each presents its own set of dangers and opportunities to the Axis player.

All the northern openings have one thing in common. The Italian fleet will sail alone in the Mediterranean, picking up the free 2 POC. It is easy to not put much thought into the Italian deployment, but care must be taken to save the Italian cruisers from the Allied LBA. If the Allies are not contesting the Mediterranean and the Italian cruisers are not sailing towards the South Atlantic, be sure to divide the cruisers between Italy and the Mediterranean Sea, thus giving the Allies a land-based airstrike at only some of the cruisers.

Barents On 3

Barents on 3 is the most conservative of the northern openings. It involves the Allied player holding the North Sea and the North and South Atlantic Oceans on turns 1 & 2 and then contesting those three areas along with

the Barents Sea on turn 3. Since the Allied player controls the North Sea on turn 2, he only has to defend the South Atlantic against the Italian cruisers and the U-boats. This allows the Allies to send strong forces to the Barents and North Seas to establish the blockade against the Germans.

The Axis response to this depends on the specific Allied deployments. The Axis should pick up the easy POC in the Baltic, Barents and Mediterranean Seas on the first two turns to build up a 4 POC lead and should not use their submarines. On turn 3, if the British North Atlantic force is weak, then hit it with the entire German surface fleet and use the subs to deny control of the Baltic to the Russians. If all the available sea areas look to be held strongly enough by the Allies to make combat chancy, then be patient and sail to the Baltic while not using the submarines. On turn 4, send the fleet to the Baltic and look to break control of the North or Barents Sea with your full force of seven submarines. This will force the British to spread their fleet a little thinner for your navy to sail against on turn 5.

With the early POC lead and the conservation of the German fleet and submarines through the first two turns, the Axis should be able to win by being patient and waiting for the U-boats to break British control of the North Sea. If the British guard the North Sea at the expense of the convoys, then the submarines can go after these convoys to preserve the POC lead. When faced with this Allied strategy, the Germans have to remember that much of the outcome of the game will depend on the ASW/U-boat battles. Therefore, all land-based airstrikes and U-boat shots not directed at convoys need to go right for the British carriers. Once the blockade is broken, the unscathed German fleet will be nearly impossible to stop.

Barents On 2

Barents on 2 is an often overlooked strategy as conservative players may lean towards Barents on 3 while aggressive players may lean towards Barents on 1. It is also a strategy that I like more the closer I look at it. Essentially, the Allied player holds the North Atlantic, South Atlantic and the North Sea in force on turn 1, thus sealing off the South Atlantic from the

Germans on turn 2. When executed well, on turn 2 the Allies divide the fleet to have a slight advantage over the Italians in the South Atlantic and over the Germans in the North and Barents Seas. This leaves 3 or 4 battleships in the North Atlantic to punish any German foray there.

The Axis response to this is again dependent on the details of the Allied turn 2 setup. If the South Atlantic is left too weak, now is as good as time as any to attempt to win control, maybe even with U-boat support. The temptation will be to hit the North Atlantic, since this will be the lightest defended area, but realize that this is a trap of sorts. A German fleet in the North Atlantic will suffer some damage and losses, plus any survivors will be faced with a blockade on turn 3. The survivors can attempt to oil, but each has a 33% chance of failing the oiling roll. A German planning to oil will be forced to use the U-boats in the South Atlantic to ensure that ships failing their oiling roll will not be trapped on turn 3. That can cause other problems, since any U-boats lost will hurt the efforts to break the Allied blockade on future turns. Also, a failure of the U-boats to break control of the South Atlantic is a minor catastrophe.

So, a German venture into the North Atlantic is best only if there is a weak Allied North Atlantic fleet (such as two battleships) and not a great amount of ASW in the South Atlantic Ocean. Against 4 U-boats, 6 ASW has only a 10% chance of holding the area, while 7 ASW has a 17% chance and 8 ASW has a 25% chance. Above this, the odds get increasingly risky for the Axis. If the Allies fail a number of their speed rolls, the Barents Sea can be an inviting area, but this cannot be counted on and those pesky cruisers can ruin everything with a few timely disabled results.

The best Axis response may be to do nothing. The Axis will gain 2 POC on turn 1 and lose 1 POC each on turns 2 and 3. This gives the Axis an even POC count, an untouched fleet (except maybe for an Italian cruiser or two) and the full complement of 7 U-boats. Meanwhile, the Axis will have had 6 airstrikes in the Barents against Allied carriers and battlecruisers. With the Allies protecting convoys on turn 4, the blockade should be able to be broken in the North Sea by the U-boats, freeing

the intact German fleet to win a sea area on turn 5. The Axis will then need to win a few more surface battles and will probably need to sink at least one convoy, but should have a good chance of pulling the game out on the final turns.

Barents On 1

Barents on 1 is a favorite strategy of aggressive Allied players and can lead to some quick games. Here the Allies send the fast ships to the Barents on turn 1 while holding the North Sea in force and leaving damage inflicting forces in the North and South Atlantic. This forces the German fleet to sail on turn 1 or lose POC and accept a blockade.

The Axis response to this opening is dependent both on the particular Allied fleet deployment and on any speed roll results. A British full Barents Sea force consisting of the Ark Royal, Hood, 8 cruisers and the two 3-3-6 battlecruisers is too strong for the Germans to contest. Should both battlecruisers fail their speed rolls, the Germans should obviously sail everything to the Barents to feast on the outgunned, valuable fast British ships. If only one battlecruiser fails the speed roll, or if the Allied player sends a few fewer cruisers to the Barents, then any German foray into the Barents is a gamble. It is personally a chance I do not mind taking. If the Germans lose the battle, at least they took out some of the more valuable British ships, thus hampering Allied mobility later in the game. If the Germans win, then it is the best of all worlds: POC gains, next turn fleet mobility and damage to the fast British ships.

If challenging the Barents is out of the question, the Germans are going to need to hit one of the other areas in order to gain both POC and future fleet mobility. The South Atlantic Ocean is an obvious place to look, as the Italian cruisers can join the cruisers there and oiling can be safely attempted at the end of the turn. The only problem is that the Allied player also knows this and will probably have four battleships and the carrier Eagle waiting. Although the Axis will almost surely win this battle, they are likely to lose a few ships and have others damaged and in the neutral port. This can be a classic case of winning the battle but losing the war.

The North Sea has the advantage of being accessible to the entire German fleet with no speed rolls required. It is also likely to be occupied by 4-5 battleships backed by 1-2 carriers. A German foray here which runs into accurate British airstrikes is in deep trouble, and even if the airstrikes miss the Germans will be facing from 16-22 shots, sure to cause some heavy damage. A move here is usually not the best option.

This leaves the North Atlantic Ocean. If the other areas are all guarded well enough to discourage the Axis, then this is the sacrificial lamb. In these cases, the British force here will generally range from 2-3 battleships and 0-1 carriers. The Germans should come out with the four ships with a speed of 7 and at least two (and probably all three) of the 2-2-5 pocket battleships. After the battle is won, the question becomes whether or not to attempt to oil. Since the South Atlantic will have enough ASW to make using the U-boats a low odds option, any German oilers will have a 1/6 chance of being locked in the neutral port. Considering that some German ships will be sunk and/or damaged and that the blockade will be in force, the Germans will probably spend the next few turns repairing and cruising the Baltic Sea awaiting the arriving of the submarine fleet. Therefore, the gamble required to oil has no real payback and should not be attempted.

In summary, against a well-proportioned Allied Barents on 1 setup, the Axis will have few obvious moves. Any Axis sortie has the potential for great gains if good luck strikes and the potential for disaster if the luck runs dry. With average luck, turn 1 will be indecisive and the game will hinge on play during the middle and end of the game.

Mid to Late Game Axis Strategy

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, it is difficult to discuss Axis strategy beyond the response to various Allied openings. However, there are some factors that come into play during most War At Sea games.

ASW/U-Boat War

Due to their limited numbers, U-boats have little impact on the first few turns. However, when grouped together in a

pack of 6 or 7, they are almost unstoppable in any of the following four primary tasks:

1) Breaking control of sea areas to allow for greater fleet mobility. This should be the top priority for the U-boat fleet through the first six or seven turns in order to allow the surface fleet to create the greatest threat to the Allied position. Breaking Allied control of the North Sea usually provides the greatest mobility, as this allows a fleet based in Germany to reach everywhere except the Mediterranean Sea.

2) Attacking convoys and carriers. Convoys, with their potential 3 POC value, are always a worthwhile target. Carriers are the best target on early turns as sinking them gains the dual advantage of eliminating future airstrikes and also reducing the total number of Allied ASW factors. This allows the U-boats more opportunity on future turns to perform any of these tasks as necessary.

3) Providing fleet support in crucial battles. Due to the fact that with poor die rolls they may not affect the surface battle at all, this option should be used only in desperation situations. This is usually most effective against small Allied fleets, such as in conjunction with the Italian cruisers in the South Atlantic Ocean or in conjunction with the Italian battleships against an Allied fleet in the Mediterranean Sea during the later turns.

4) Taking POC from the Allies. Since POC is the measurement of who wins the game, this is always important. However, especially during the first 5-6 turns, it is sometimes a better move to conserve U-boat strength by sending the subs to a safe area (like the Baltic Sea). This allows the U-boat fleet to be built back to full strength so that the U-boats can open up the North Sea or go for the convoys on future turns. A pitfall to avoid is the continuous use the U-boats on early turns to take the one POC in the North or South Atlantic while the German fleet sits trapped in port by an Allied blockade.

Keeping the above thoughts in mind leads to a few general tips on U-boat usage. Try not to use the U-boats anywhere except in the Baltic Sea on the first 3 turns. This will provide the

Axis with a full 7 U-boat fleet on turn 4 that is certain to frustrate the Allied player. Also, before placing the U-boats, consider how you intend to use them on the next turn. If you are going to need a full force on the next turn, be sure not to commit your U-boats to a heavy ASW area. If your U-boats will not be necessary because the full German fleet will be sailing next turn, or if it is turn 5 and you are receiving 3 new U-boats next turn, go ahead and take a risk by sending the subs into harm's way. Just be certain that the potential gains are worth the risks.

Convoys

Considering that most sea areas are only worth one POC to the Allies, the nine potential POC from the three convoys are the best way for the Allies to make up POC in a hurry. As such, this also makes the convoys prime targets for the Axis player. It is important for the Axis player to not be excessively worried about the convoys and instead treat them as potential opportunities. Every convoy in the Barents Sea does not have to be contested. Instead the Axis can send the fleet to win another sea area, thus counteracting the convoy's three POC gain. Furthermore, the LBA has a 25% chance of disabling or sinking each convoy, which can lead to an Axis POC bonus if the fleet is winning POC elsewhere.

When the German fleet has been blockaded by Allied control of the North and Barents Seas, the convoys can actually be a help. Any carriers the Allied player diverts to cover a convoy in the North Atlantic decreases the amount of ASW available to enforce the blockade. That makes this a prime turn to use the U-boats for breaking the blockade. If the Allies have two convoys on the board, there is no way he can have enough ASW to protect them both and the North Sea if the Axis has any significant U-boat strength. The Axis can then decide whether to go after the convoys or to bust open the North Sea. I have found as the Allies that it is better in the long run to keep the North Sea secure and risk the convoys. After all, each surviving U-boat has only about a 25% chance of sinking or disabling the convoy whereas the damage is already done when a U-boat survives to break control of the North Sea.

Miscellaneous Tips

German ships with the attack bonus have twice the potential to score a hit on an opposing ship as ships without the attack bonus, but the same chance of disabling an enemy ship. Therefore, employ the ships without the attack bonus against ships you are trying to disable but may not sink if hit (such as the 5-5-3 battleships). Use the ships with the attack bonus against ships that can sink easily (the Hood, the 3-3-6 battlecruisers, carriers and convoys).

After all the maneuvering for position, the battles, the convoys, etc. of the first seven turns are done, the close games come down to the desperate struggle for a last POC or two on turn 8. After the surface ships have been placed, the Axis player may find that he needs to take more than one POC from the Allies by means of the U-boats. The Allied player will often have one or more areas covered by only one or two ships (such as the Baltic Sea and the South Atlantic Ocean). The question then becomes, can you afford to use two U-boats to take deny control from just one ASW factor, or do you gamble that the one U-boat will survive (or 1, 2, or 3 U-boats vs. 2 ASW factors). Make certain to calculate the odds of U-boats survival in both sea areas. When faced with only one ASW, a single U-boat has a 33% chance of being defeated. Bring in the second U-boat to ensure success unless that U-boat will increase your chances by a similar percentage in the other sea area.

When deciding where to deploy the Axis fleet, do not depend too heavily on odds calculations, fuzzy-wuzzy calculations and the like. It is just as important to keep other factors in mind, such as what you are going to want to do with the fleet next turn, whether you can oil and where the fleet will have to base at the end of the turn, what the current POC situation is, etc. A move with the same battle odds may be a good move at one point in the game and a bad move at another point, depending on the above factors.

Finally, perhaps the most important tip for the Axis player is to be conservative with the Axis fleet, especially the German fleet. Those 11 German ships (and only 7 at the start) have to threaten the Allies for the entire eight turns of the game. The Axis can

achieve all sorts of successes on the first few turns, but if the fleet is destroyed the Allied convoys will roll through and take back any Axis POC lead. On the other hand, the North Sea and North Atlantic Ocean are always worth 3 POC, so the Axis player can

afford to be patient. He must only be certain to preserve his fleet mobility to maximize the threat to the Allies. The Axis player then has to pick his opportunities wisely, always attacking on his terms instead of on the Allied players'. A good rule of thumb for the

Axis player to use before deploying his fleet is to stop, pause and decide if the fleets really need to sail on the current turn or if it is better to preserve them until a better opportunity arises.



Random Events in 1830

by Brad Martin

The railroads game 1830 provides players with many difficult choices. However, after a number of games most players work out which corporations and private companies provide the best opportunities. A game played with only three or four players is also more predictable.

At the risk of offending the "diceless" purists, I have drawn up a random events chart. These events should add variety, enhance the sometimes "cut-and-thrust" atmosphere of the age of the Robber Barons, without significantly distorting play balance or depreciating the value of intelligent and skillful play.

The Random Events Chart should be consulted at the start of each game-turn, by one player rolling a twenty-sided die. If an event calls for a random Railroad [RND RR] to be affected, a player should roll one eight-sided die to determine the identity of the Corporation from the Random Railroad Chart.



Random Railroad Chart

Die Roll	Affected Railroad
1.	PRR
2.	NYC
3.	CPR
4.	B&O
5.	C&O
6.	ERIE
7.	NYNH
8.	B&M

1830 Random Events Table

Die Roll	Title & Description of Event
1.	BULL MARKET - Move stock token of RND RR up 1 line
2.	BEAR MARKET - Move stock token of RND RR down 1 line
3.	PUBLIC BUYS - The public buys 1 share certificate of a RND I RR from the Initial Offering or Bank Pool (remove certificate from play)
4.	PUBLIC SELLS - If the public has previously bought a share I certificate, return it to play (if more than 1 such share then roll randomly to determine which)
5.	TRAIN SALE - Overproduction of trains cuts purchase prices by 25% for the first operating round only.
6.	TRAINS SCARCE - Factory strike causes train purchase prices to rise by 25%, for the first operating round only.
7.	POLITICS - A RR President may use his own money to purchase one train in the first operating round.
8.	STRIKE - One RND token of a RND RR is closed down for the first operating round
9.	BONUS - Increased productivity allows RND RR to lay an extra tile in the first operating round
10.	FIRE - One RND terminal of RND RR is burnt down (return token to Corporation card)
11.	BRIDGE DOWN - If RND RR has a tile in a river hexagon it is removed
12.	BOOM - Double the income from all Private Companies
13.	BUST - No income from Private Companies this turn
14.	GOV'T SUBSIDY - There is no cost to place tiles in mountain or river hexagons this turn
15.	AVALANCHE - If RND RR has a tile in a mountain hexagon it is removed (roll RND if more than one)
16.	BANKRUPT - Private Company closed down (roll 1 6-sided dice to determine which, #1 being Schuylkill)
17.	NEW TRAIN - The optional '6' train is available for purchase
18.	DIRTY TRICKS - RND RR uses innovative tactics to seize the initiative - treat this RR as if it had the highest share price this turn
19.	CONFIDENCE - Failure to declare a dividend does not result in the stock valuation being moved 1 space to the left this turn
20.	INTEGRITY - Trains may not be purchased from another Corporation at less than half their face value this turn

Up Front Quick Reference

Acquiring Infiltration Status / RPC Modifiers / Close Combat / Infiltration Effect and Loss of Status

by Michael Nagel

The following article has been reprinted from issues number 3 and 4 of *Relative Range*, a periodic newsletter dedicated to the support of players of Avalon Hill's *Up Front*. Back issues and reprints are available at a cost of \$2 (or \$4 for foreign orders) per issue. Submissions, inquiries and comments regarding *Relative Range* should be addressed to Michael Nagel at: 167

Samdin Blvd #2, Trenton, NJ 08610; or through the Internet at: M.NAGEL@genie.geis.com.

Rules manuals can be a real pain! Particularly when the game being played is chock-full of little chrome rules which only apply in specific situations. *UP FRONT* is a classic example of this, the problem augmented by the addition

of two subsequent manuals (*BANZAI* and *DESERT WAR*). This article provides quick-reference cards which can be kept inside your *UP FRONT* box for easy situational reference. Simply copy the contents of this page onto sturdy paper (colored cover stock works nicely), cut out the card and pop it in with the rest of your stuff!



Quick Reference: Acquiring Infiltration Status

- * Each unit attempting INF must play a Move card (20.22) or make a Morale Check (20.21), ignoring color. Failure results in a Pin.
- * Crewmen attempting INF will give up Crewman status (20.23).
- * Flamethrowers and Secondary Weapons may be affected (20.23).
- * No INF from Minefield or Wire. When attempting INF from a Stream, a Ford Card or Ford Check must be played in addition to any Move card played to ignore a Morale Check. A successful Ford RNC is used as the INF RPC. INF from Marsh may only be attempted if two Move cards have been previously played (20.24). No INF into a Minefield (20.25).
- * INF is resolved for each unit by drawing an RPC. If the RPC is red, the INF attempt is successful. The base RPC column equals the number of men in a target group, which may be modified (20.3).

Quick Reference: Close Combat

- * Each unit attempting to enter CC must play a Move card or make a Morale Check (20.52), ignoring color. Failure results in a pin.
- * Both defender (first) and attacker may play one Concealment card on opposing fighters to decrease their CCV (20.621).
- * Unpinned supporting personnel (additional attackers or crewmen) add +3 to attacker or defender's CCV (20.622).
- * If more than one man attacks a single defender, and the primary combatant is killed, CC is resolved again immediately using remaining attackers (20.73).
- * CC is resolved by attacker and defender drawing an RNC and adding applicable modifiers. The lower result is killed, and a tied result eliminates both fighters (20.7).
- * The victor in CC may acquire a victim's weapon (not ordinance) and does not lose INF Status (20.73, 20.74).

Quick Reference: Cumulative Infiltration RPC Modifiers

Concealment (20.3)	Value Left
at Night (20.31)	3 Left
to and from Smoke (20.32)	2 Left/card
from Brush (20.33)	2 Left
from Woods (20.34)	1 Left
from Hill (20.35)	1 Right
to Pillbox (20.36)	1 Right
from Open Ground (20.37)	2 Right
Pinned Defenders (20.38)	1 Left/each
to or from Moving (20.39)	2 Right
from Infiltrated (20.39)	2 Right

* Night and Smoke modifiers cannot be taken together. Smoke cards are Cover cards in night scenarios (13.26 and 20.4).

Quick Reference: Infiltration Effects and Loss of Status

- * A unit with INF Status may enter Close Combat (20.52) or double Firepower against the Infiltrated group (20.51).
- * A unit with INF Status: has the option to participate in a fire attack against the Infiltrated group (20.531); is immune to ordinance attacks from the Infiltrated group (20.54); may acquire an unpossessed weapon from the Infiltrated group which has no designated crewman (20.57).
- * An Infiltrated/Infiltrating group may not make a Lateral Group Move unless INF Status if voluntarily dropped (20.56).
- * Voluntarily dropping INF Status costs an Action (20.56).
- * A unit loses INF Status if pinned, upon taking a prisoner, if his group plays a Movement card (except to remove Wire), after firing, or if the Infiltrated group plays terrain at RR4 or Moves to RR3 (20.53), or if voluntarily dropped.

From The Editor continued from page 3.
current state of the AREA rating system. These features will also continue in the future.

Finally, I plan to have as extensive as possible Avaloncon coverage on these pages. I hope to not only have an overview of the whole convention, but also in depth accounts of specific tournaments. Look for 1995 coverage in the January 1996 issue.

Of course, to make this vision of mine a reality, I will have to rely on you, the readership. Plans are to expand the length of this magazine to around 32 pages, depending on the number of subscribers and the amount of material received. I will need plenty of quality articles to choose from, and will need your feedback as to the type of games you wish to see covered. It is easy to complain about the lack of coverage for a particular game, here is your chance to do something about it.

One of the goals of this magazine will be to provide references for new players to quickly become competitive in a game and for more veteran players to pick up a few useful tips. My father used to say that anything worth doing is worth doing right (actually I think he stole that quote). My personal corollary is that any game worth playing is worth playing well. If this magazine can help improve anyone's play of or appreciation for these games, then it has accomplished one of its missions.



Rules Clarifications For War At Sea

As Of January 11, 1995

This is a combination of rules clarifications from The Avalon Hill Game Company as well as clarifications compiled by the Avaloncon War At Sea tournament director, Alan Applebaum, from questions arising during the 1991 - 1993 tournaments. The below are considered the definitive word on the subject, at least during the Avaloncon War At Sea tournament.

2.4 & 6.7 If Italian cruisers are in the North Atlantic at the end of turn 7, where do they return to?

A. They are eliminated for a lack of a port to return to. If there at the end of turn 6, they would return to France, where they would be interned and likewise removed from play due to France becoming an inactive port at the start of turn 7.

5.2 Are repair points applied before airstrikes occur?

A. Yes.

5.3 Does the Axis player resolve speed rolls before placing U-boats?

A. Yes.

5.6 Which player picks the order in which sea areas are resolved?

A. The Axis. All combat in each area is completely resolved before resolving the next area.

5.7 Which player returns his ships to port first?

A. The Axis.

5.7 Where do Italian cruisers in the North Atlantic return to if France is not available as an Axis port?

A. They don't - they are eliminated. Note also that any Axis ships returning to France at the end of Turn 6 are eliminated immediately and may not sail on Turn 7. Thus this question could only arise if the Italian ships sailed from the Neutral Port to the North Atlantic on Turn 7 or 8.

5.7 & 12 Are ships that successfully disengage in the South Atlantic required to go to the Neutral Port as if they were disabled?

A. No - they could also go to France (if an active port). German ships may not oil at sea if they have retreated, however (*note this is in contrast with Avalon Hill errata stating that retreated German ships may attempt to oil*).

6.4 Can Axis ships starting the turn in the Neutral Port and failing a Speed Roll to the North Atlantic return to Germany or France?

A. No. The instructions printed on the board sea areas refer to Section 5.7, not section 6.4. Ships which fail a Speed Roll

must return to their original Port or one bordering the second sea area. Such a ship which returns to the Neutral Port as a consequence costs its side one POC. Similarly, a British ship failing a Speed Roll to the Barents after Turn 2 may return to England or Russia.

7.1 May a player refuse to fire in a combat round to avoid disabling a ship he hopes to sink in a later combat round?

A. Yes - but the target is not considered fired upon for screening purposes in this case (see answer to 11.6 below).

7.6 If a carrier receives damage equal to its Defense Factor, thus losing its airstrike capability, must it be fully repaired to regain its airstrike capability or will partial repairs suffice?

A. Partial repairs will suffice.

7.6 & 8.3 Does a carrier still have its full ASW capacity even when it has lost its airstrike capacity due to damage?

A. Yes.

8.1 Can eliminated U-Boats be returned to the game as reinforcements?

A. Yes.

9.5 & 10.5 Section 9.5 says that "ships and U-boats disabled . . . which return to port are not considered in the port at the time of the airstrike and thus may not be attacked there." Does this imply that 10.5 is wrong and U-Boats may be attacked by airstrikes if they stay in port?

A. No. U-Boats may not be attacked by airstrikes under any circumstances.

11.6 Can a ship with an Attack Factor of 0 "fire" upon another ship so as to fulfill the "screening" requirement that would allow another ship to fire on a more valuable target?

A. No - ships must have a usable Attack Factor and must actually roll dice to "fire" for screening purposes. Also, to reach opposing carriers, you must fire on all screening ships in the current round of combat.

13 Can British ships repair in the United States?

A. Yes - on Turn 4 or thereafter. Note that this is contrary to an explicit statement in Section 2.7 which states that the U.S. port is available immediately.

13 & 15.2 If a damaged Russian ship rolls to see if it can move, may it then repair in Leningrad?

A. Yes. The Allied player may observe both Russian-move die rolls before deciding whether to move or repair either ship. Russian ships need not move merely because a 5 or 6 was rolled.

14.3 Can convoys remain at sea indefinitely so as to use their ASW capability?

A. No. They may remain in each of the North Atlantic and Barents for one turn only. After their turn in the North Atlantic, they must either move to the Barents or put into England for 1 POC. After their turn in the Barents, they must put into Russia for 3 POC. If disabled, after returning to the U.S. they may again spend one turn in each of the North Atlantic and the Barents. This is contrary to strategies mentioned in some articles in the GENERAL.

14.4 If a convoy in the Barents successfully disengages (that is, outruns its pursuers), may it put into Russia for 3 POC?

A. Yes. If it is disabled, however, it must return to the U.S.

14.8 Does a convoy lose its special screening protection if it fires?

A. No. It may fire every combat round and still may not be fired upon unless all other Allied ships in the area are damaged or disabled.

14.8 If all Allied ships are damaged, can a convoy still be screened as though it were a carrier under Rule 11.6?

A. Yes, as long as it doesn't fire.

15.5 Can Italian cruisers enter the South Atlantic on Turn 1?

A. Yes.

15.6 Can Italian cruisers move through the North Sea to reach the North Atlantic from France if the South Atlantic is Allied-controlled?

A. No.


15.7 Can formerly Italian battleships and battlecruisers now controlled by the Allies or Germans on Turn 8 move out of the Mediterranean?

A. Yes. Also, Italian cruisers now controlled by the Allies or Germans may move into the North Sea. However, if ships are still controlled by the Italians, all previous movement restrictions still apply.

16.1 Must successfully oiling ships be placed in a sea area on the next turn, or can they be placed in a port?

A. Either. However, they must be placed on the board. In order to attempt to oil at sea again on the next turn, they must end that turn in the North or South Atlantic.

16.2 Must the German predesignate all ships attempting to oil before the rolls are made, or can he review the results of each attempt before committing another ship?

A. Ships to be oiled do not have to be predesignated. 

Victory In The Pacific

(Volume 29, #2 & #3)

1. Dave Targonski	1790	DF*
2. Raymond Freeman	1720	BDA
3. William Thomson	1645	ABB
4. Steve Packwood	1620	CE*
5. Kenneth Nied	1615	BD*
6. Kevin Kinsel	1585	ABC
7. Lance Ottoman	1585	ABB
8. Glenn Petroski	1573	DG*
9. James Bjorum	1520	AB*
10. Steve Resman	1520	ABB
11. Clifford Smith	1505	AC*
12. James Cmelak, Jr.	1480	CD*
13. Douglas Hopkins	1475	BCB
14. Gregory Hanson	1432	EF*
15. Daniel Henry	1430	BD*
16. Michael Ussery	1430	BD*
17. Glenn Vogt	1430	AAA
18. Tim Greene	1405	AAA
19. Vince Meconi	1355	BD*
20. John Sharp	1307	DG*

The Russian Campaign

(Volume 29, #1)

1. Charles Sorbello	2000	BCG
2. James Bjorum	1997	DFI
3. Ed O'Conner	1841	CFE
4. Tim Greene	1831	FGM
5. Larry Earhart	1827	EEK
6. Craig Clemens	1800	CEH
7. Thomas Gregario	1789	DGF
8. John Laney	1750	ABD
9. Dan Barker	1720	ACD
10. Henry Lowood	1610	ABB
11. Paul Siragusa	1590	BEB
12. Jim Eliason	1590	ACC
13. John Cooper	1570	AAA
14. Gary Dickson	1565	AAA
15. Randy Schilb	1540	AAA
16. Alan Hayes	1500	AB*
17. Russ Gifford	1500	***
18. Tom Oleson	1485	ABB
19. Tony Owens	1480	ABB
20. Jeff Jenkins	1465	BCE
21. Gary Dayton	1444	CFF
22. David Largent	1440	AAA

Panzer Leader

(As of July 22, 1995)

1. James McAden	1902	DFJ
2. Daniel Price	1780	CCC
3. Bruce Wright	1735	CCC
4. Kevin Kinsel	1555	CCC
5. Eric Vonner	1500	CCC
6. Ted Ferneza	1500	CCC
7. Bob Mann	1500	CCC
8. Paul Martin	1500	AAA
9. Dave Mugmon	1500	AAA
10. Michael Noan	1500	AA*
11. Barry Shoults	1500	AA*
12. Richard Wagenheim	1500	CCC
13. Mike West	1500	CCC
14. Jeff Wise	1500	CCC
15. James Yen	1500	CCC
16. Kurt Harris	1485	BB*
17. Chuck Synold	1470	AAA
18. Carlton Vegarty	1467	BBB
19. Roy Heine	1435	AAA
20. Henry Burdine	1430	CCC
21. Ken Oates	1427	DEJ
22. Jeffrey Jenkins	1367	CCC
23. Steven Gore	1335	BB*

Third Reich (4th Ed.)

(Volume 28, #6)

1. J. Ingersoll	1927	DHF
2. B. Sutton	1800	AC*
3. G. Wilson	1640	AB*
4. M. Mitchell	1620	ABA
5. D. Lydick	1455	AAA
6. J. Rogers	1385	AAA
7. A. Libuszowski	1360	ABB

War At Sea

(Volume 28, #4 & July 22, 1995)

1. Bruce Monnin	1835	CEC
2. Tom Scarborough	1785	AC*
3. Wes Letzin	1618	ABA
4. Mike Crowe	1425	AC*

Fortress Europa

(Volume 27, #3)

1. R. Heller	1970
2. T. Pavy	1660
3. H. Lowood	1660
4. J. Eliason	1585

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