

INTERPLAY™

\$1.50

the metagamer dialogues no. 2



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july...august

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We have a sneak preview of the UNICORN GOLD art on our cover - if you like it, you'll love it in full color! See the ad in this issue for information.

Inside, you'll find a lot of new ideas for TFT: an interesting Yeti background, spells and a Western variant. Scenario notes in this issue cover LORDS OF UNDEREARTH and STICKS & STONES.

The first half of Damon's STALIN'S TANKS designer's notes and Some Turkey's latest work of genius are here too.

And, of course, the usual gamer letters and plugs and news from Metagaming.

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INTERPLAY the metagamer dialogues is published six times a year by Metagaming, Box 15346, Austin, TX, 78761. All materials © 1981 by INTERPLAY. All materials addressed to INTERPLAY are considered to be submitted for publication, unless otherwise specified. News items are accepted according to editorial whim. Subscriptions: \$9 for six issues. All rights reserved for materials accepted for publication. Compensation for submissions by arrangement.

editorial...

What a great response! I haven't ever gone through so much mail as what we received after INTERPLAY 1.

It's as if gamers now feel that they can speak their minds directly to Metagaming and that they will actually be heeded... wonderful! That's what this is all about.

We've been getting so much material that plans are under way to double INTERPLAY's page count; more on that later.

Some of you have questions about submissions: let me start off by saying that INTERPLAY is a magazine of communication and exchange. Anyone is welcome to share experiences and ideas on anything tied to Metagaming (suggestions, criticisms, game variants, fiction, humor, art, etc.)

Your work will hardly be edited at all. INTERPLAY is not slick, nor will it ever be - we feel that the less we interfere with what comes in from gamers, the more valuable INTERPLAY will be to our audience.

Another thing about submissions is that we will only award credit for Metagaming merchandise to contributors. The rate is roughly one cent per word for copy and ten dollars per printed page of art.

I hope not to dissappoint anyone, but INTERPLAY isn't about making money - for you or for us.

And we won't take ads either.

Magazines which are dependant upon ads end up serving the interests of their advertisers.

At least in INTERPLAY you'll know exactly when you're getting the company shill and when you're getting a message from another gamer in the interest of gaming.

Here, you'll find stories on our historical, science-fiction and fantasy games by designers and players.

Much of the material will deal with TFT.

Please note that most TFT variants presented here are unofficial (Nothing in INTERPLAY 1 was official), and may be incorporated into campaigns only at the discretion of the Fantasy Master.

More TFT material will be found in the upcoming Fantasy Masters' Newsletter.

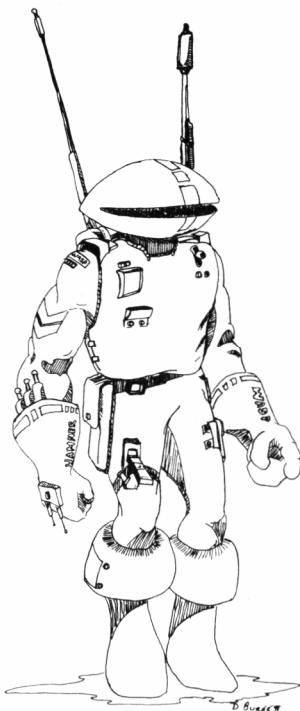
Finally, my apologies for omitting the graphics from Epperson's Vagabond Thief in INTERPLAY 1. You'll find the needed art in this issue.

Comments on the MicroTrip idea were favorable, regardless. Suggestions for future pieces are hereby solicited.

The type in this issue was printed on our new computerized typesetter. It took some time to get used to, but now we'll be a lot more versatile and save time too.

That's it, enjoy the issue and let's hear from you.

Trace Hallowell



coming distractions...

Our long awaited intermediate sized boxed game project is here! They are introductory priced at \$6.95. The idea is to introduce a new, well done product line at an attractive price to get it started in the market. Be warned now that in 3-6 months the price of Meta sized products will go up at least a dollar.

Soon, you'll also be seeing our next batch of Micros, including UNICORN GOLD, HELLTANK, and yet more reprints of MELEE and WIZARD.

UNICORN GOLD is this year's \$10,000 treasure hunt. Etherion the Silver Dragonodon is frozen in stasis, leaving only Golden Xenon and the maiden Miri (and you?) to carry on the last hope for humanity - another programmed Microquest taking you through the world of the dragonodon, the second of the trilogy.

HELLTANK is the latest development in the area of future tank battles. Each player will determine the make-up of his forces and of individual tanks.

The range of choices for tank sizes and weaponry make for enough variation to keep the game fresh for a long, long time.

THE MICROCLONE WAR

Since Metagaming started the idea of small, fun games lots of imitations have sprouted. The under \$5 market is undergoing a curious evolution. Many under \$5 games are reappearing as \$7-\$8 boxed games. Yep, the same \$4 games in \$8 boxes.

When Metagaming went to boxed micros and upped the price a dollar some gamers complained. In hindsight our \$1 increase was the best of the box price hikes.

Most of the competition under \$5 seems to be aimed at quick profits. Some are lovely to look at. Most aren't up to even average Microgame play value. Just ask yourself if you want the success story or expensive imitation.

Our Meta-sized products are a similar story. Don't compare them to \$8 former microclones. Value them against current \$12-\$15 boxed games. THE AIR EATERS STRIKE BACK, COMMAND AT SEA, TROJAN WAR and HITLER'S WAR are large games in value packages.

Well, that's enough company propaganda for now. Next issue will have some update on the Fantasy Masters' Guild and a UNICORN GOLD designer's intro.

And now for a word from our sponsor...

ADVERTISEMENT

DISCOUNT- INTERPLAY will revive an old Metagaming custom. Subscribers to INTERPLAY, and only subscribers, get a ten percent (10%) discount on non-subscription METAGAMING products. The minimum mail order has gone to \$10.00. Each order also carries a \$1.00 mailing and handling charge, (US Post Office Ouch). Just add up the retail value of your order, add the dollar mailing fee and then subtract 10% to get the amount you owe.

(NOTE - The 10% discount IS NOT applicable to subscription purchases. The 10% discount ONLY applies to non-sub buys.)

FREE GAMES- METAGAMING is in the process of closing out our stock of old plastic packed Microgames. We want the line standardized in boxes. We're giving them away with INTERPLAY and Microgame subscriptions.

You get ONE FREE GAME for a one year INTERPLAY subscription. You get TWO FREE GAMES for a two year INTERPLAY subscription. You may not enter more than a two year subscription to INTERPLAY.

You get ONE FREE GAME for a six Microgame subscription, or TWO FREE GAMES for a twelve Microgame subscription. You save \$3.70 over the retail price of six Micros AND get a \$2.95 game free for a six Microgame sub.

The only Microgames you may select for your free game as per the above conditions are:

Chitin:I, Olympica, Ice War, Black Hole, Sticks & Stones, Invasion of the Air Eaters, Holy War, Annihilator-One World and Hot Spot.

If you don't have current order forms that show the 10% discount and free Microgames just note it on your order.

TFT PROJECTS NEEDED

There are many game projects desired by gamers. THE FANTASY TRIP system is an ideal opportunity for Fantasy Masters to turn their knowledge and fun into a bit of extra cash. Rather than ignore the valued game experience of thousands we'd rather call on you for TFT's evolution. Meta-gaming is seeking TFT manuscripts in any of the following areas.

1. Mounted Combat Microgame.

This would use the combat options list in MELEE, with perhaps added definition for some options. It would cover combat between mounted characters and between unmounted and mounted characters. There are short mounted combat rules in IN THE LABYRINTH that can serve a rough starting point.

2. Ship Combat Microgame.

A new, brief set of combat options would be necessary for combat between ships. Ship and deck maps should be in MELEE megahexes. Character boarding could be part of the movement option with a movement cost, ie similar to jump. The ship combat module might be based on Ramspeed rules. The first ship Microgame should be about smaller ships where individual characters appear instead of group combat. There would be a possible sequel Microgame about larger ship combat. Rules should give some construction costs and guidelines.

3. Religious Rules Module.

This would be a booklet that would describe how to handle religion. It should be broad enough to handle all Terran religions and religions for other races. There should be no gods that have any effect beyond what

is done for them by their worshippers. You may include rules for characters gaining power through extra-ordinary adherence to a religion's tenets. Religion on Cidri is what you make of it, not what gods do. A separate and special form of magic should not be created. Magic needs to be integrated with TFT spell magic. However, there may be some spells that are developed by a specific religion for use by its adepts. These spells should be allowed AFTER characters have created them in an active campaign.

4. Buildings Rules.

This module would cover construction of buildings, bridges, castles and the like. Mapping for these should be in megahex scale. Cost should be geared to so much per Megahex or MELEE hex of each type of construction. Also, rules should cover how to find and support the building work force. Larger cities or organized principalities may have firms that build. Time for building should be reasonable but affected by increased expenditure.

5. Flying Microgame.

This may be a pipe dream but it may be possible to do a Micro that gives a reasonable semblance of air combat between creatures. Combat between ground and air creatures, including mounted air creatures, could get pretty sticky. The best approach is to do something that plays well but doesn't try for realism.

6. Campaign Guides.

These rules would cover details on how to run a campaign on a specific background. TFT rules can cover historical motifs such as Samurais, Vikings, Aztecs, Zulus, Hellenes, Mongols, Egyptian, Incan and Chinese. Other campaign backgrounds could be based on specific special cultures the Fantasy Master develops, including new races, monsters, weapons, magic and the like. You should be very careful in unique material to adhere to basic TFT philosophy.

Howard Thompson

features:

unofficial tft variant...

UNOFFICIAL TFT VARIANT

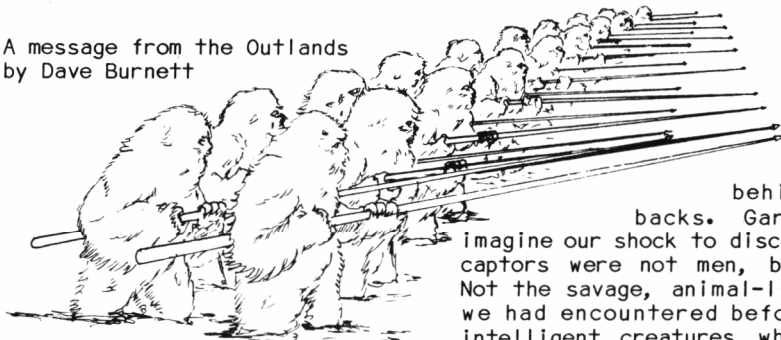
This title indicates that the following material contains suggestions and/or variant rules for TFT which are not part of the official rules. It is up to the individual Fantasy Masters' discretion as to whether to use them in his or her campaign.

The Fantasy Masters' Guild may elect to incorporate the material into the TFT rules at a later date.

inside to set a snare. The back part of the cave was lit by a strange blue light. As we approached, I discovered a doorway of flickering blue light. I knew this must be one of the legendary Gates. Where did it go? What did it do? You know I could not resist. I took two hunters and passed through.

As we emerged on the other side, we were roughly siezed and thrown to the ground. Our weapons were taken and our hands bound

A message from the Outlands
by Dave Burnett



Dear Garbodiri,

I send this missive in great haste as I fear for my life. They seek me even now. Belividia will deliver this to you. If I escape, I will meet you in Argon as planned.

I am still in High Cryops in the Sun Piercer Mountains. As you know, my purpose for coming here was to capture a Yeti. I have long felt that they have the capacity for intelligence. Little did I realize the truth. If I had, perhaps my life would not now be in danger.

Just a month ago, I was attempting to trap a Yeti in the mountains west of here. Four hunters, eight porters, and I saw a Yeti emerge from a cave. He was acting in a most peculiar manner. The beast was screaming and rolling in the snow. Then he jumped to his feet and charged down the mountains. Thinking the cave to be his lair, we went

behind our backs. Garbodiri, imagine our shock to discover our captors were not men, but Yeti. Not the savage, animal-like Yeti we had encountered before, but intelligent creatures who spoke an archaic version of our own tongue. We were taken to a large oval building some three kilometers away. I tried to observe as many things as possible on the way. We seemed to be in a small valley surrounded by towering cliffs. I saw hundreds of these creatures on our short journey.

We were taken before their Khan, a giant of his kind named Ambos IV. Garbodiri, my curiosity knew no bounds. But I believe his matched my own, especially when he discovered that I was a scholar in my own land. Little did I suspect the true reason for his inquires. You know I am not a subtle man, and I do love to talk. I pray the harm I did will be forgiven. But I ramble, and time is most short, dreadfully short.

I learned that his people, they called themselves the Fhazhi, had always lived in this

great rift valley. The cliffs could not be scaled and they have absolutely no knowledge of Magick. Though intelligent they are unlettered. They are skilled metal workers and fine weapon smiths, though they wear no armor. Their valley is badly overcrowded and starvation is a constant threat. Until Ambos united all the Fhazhi some four years ago, fierce civil wars kept the population down. Now peace, strange enough, threatens to destroy them.

They have long known of the Gate in their land, but all attempts to use it have ended in disaster. Any Fhazhi passing through the Gate has been driven insane. By the way, I believe this to be the source of the creatures we call Yeti. Ambos told me there were runes carved on a stone near the Gate. Perhaps if I could read them, he said, I could discover a way to safely return to my world. Oh, Garbodiri, if only I had remained illiterate. Perhaps a more devious mind would have seen the danger, but not I.

With a large escort, we went to the Gate. I almost laughed when I saw the inscription. The language was Old Draconic, long a passion of mine. The phrase was so simple: "wood could save you." Ambos was overjoyed and my heart swelled with pride. Two guards were dispatched and returned shortly with wooden buckets. These they placed over their heads and entered the shimmering Gate. Within minutes they returned, broad grins splitting their shaggy faces. But Old Friend, my joy quickly turned to dismay as Ambos turned to a guard and said, "Take the Human to a cell. We will execute all three of them tomorrow!" I was stunned. "Why?", I asked. "I thought you were my friend." His snarl crushed me as I realized how gullible I had been.

"Fool. You have given the Fhazhi the key to escape and survival. We can safely leave our valley. Your weak lands shall fall to the Fhazhi pikes and feed our expanding population.

And you, Scholar, have made it all possible. I shall thank you with a quick death!"

Garbodiri, Old Friend, the next few days are a blur. I remember grabbing the two buckets...a dash for the Gate...my companions in the cave...hacked to death...fleeing wildly down the mountain. I know they hunt me. They will find me, I fear. No one here believes me. I have seen one following me I believe. Belividia will deliver this directly to you while I try to evade them and return to Argon. I fear I may fail, Old Friend.

Convey my best wishes to Mira, your dear wife. Her bread was always a delight. Forgive me.

fetterik d. Ilsbifon
Scholar of Argon



NOTE TO GM'S USING FHAZHI AS MONSTERS:

1. Use basic Yeti Stats but with human type intelligence. Add one or two points of dexterity.
2. In groups, they prefer to use pikes. Their size and strength make them formidable foes.
3. Individuals prefer the great axe or a huge composite bow.
4. Fhazhi could be used as player characters. Possible scenarios could include scouting missions, raids, invasion.....

CROSSROADS: CIDRI

by Guy W. McIlmore, Jr.

This looks like a nice place to rest! In Cidri, each crossroads is both an opportunity and a challenge, but when you can share it with brother and sister adventurers, the danger is but an exhilarating bit of spice added to life - especially when dying isn't necessarily permanent!

As usual, there's an inn at the crossroads, and you NEVER know just who (or what) you'll meet in one of THOSE places. The nice old man with the gentle smile just might be a master thief--of a powerful wizard with a short temper - or (shudder) a Fantasy Master!

Unlike other forms of gaming, fantasy role-playing games (often abbreviated FRP's) are shaped in the playing by game masters (Fantasy Masters in TFT terminology) more even than by their designers. In the case of the TFT system, the Fantasy Masters ARE designers to some extent. Though INTERPLAY and Metagaming's open-door policy regarding outside game submissions, each Fantasy Master has the opportunity to help shape the TFT game system.

It is likely that the system itself will never the "finished". A good system has room for endless growth, revision and expansion according to the needs and desires of the gamers and Fantasy Masters. Still, coordination toward an internally consistent overall plan is necessary to avoid the chaos of "too many cooks". Toward that end, this month let's take a look at the possibilities for independent designers in the TFT system and establish some rough guidelines for new designers.

Metagaming has need of independent designs in many parts of the TFT game system. Most of the submissions have been for MicroQuests of the DEATH TEST variety, or of suggestions for

new spells and creatures for the TFT/Cidri universe. Both are welcome, but there are other directions a designer can look as well.

MicroQuests of the numbered paragraph variety have been a mainstay of the TFT series because there is a great demand for solitaire playability. Fortunately, TFT lends itself rather well to the solitaire concept, as may be seen from the wide variety of MicroQuests already on the market. Again, most submissions have been variations on the DEATH TEST-type labyrinth. Labyrinths will always be a part of FRP gaming, but a MicroQuest needs to be more than a redressed DEATH TEST labyrinth with new creatures in the rooms.

FRP gaming is more sophisticated now than when DEATH TEST was published. Gamers demand, and have a right to have, labyrinths with internal consistency. Each labyrinth needs a reason for existing. DEATH TEST and its sequel were elaborate testing areas for adventurers trying to gain a high position in the personal guard of a powerful nobleman. This is a good, original idea, having an internal logic which shaped the design. For such a testing area, the hazards would be chosen to test the strength, cunning and trustworthiness of each applicant.

There are other types of labyrinth, each with its own reason for existing. Its structure and content should be chosen to fit in with the "background story" created for it. Labyrinths can be tombs in which one would find sarcophagi, personal items belonging to the deceased, guardian beasts and magical traps to discourage tomb robbers, etc. These things should be appropriate to the background--a wizard's tomb would most likely be different than that of a hero/fighter or an ancient boy-king.

SECURITY STATION is a unique "labyrinth" - a modern (20th century or thereabouts) underground installation once used as a bomb-

proof administrative center. The contents reflect its origins, and the amount of time it has been lying around since its Mnoren collector/owner disappeared.

The labyrinth concept in FRPs has been around long enough for there to be labyrinth clichés - ideas so overworked as to be boring when used without a fresh approach. The DEATH TEST concept of a "test labyrinth" is a good one, but the world of FRP gaming can get along very well without seventeen more variants on the same thing. Likewise, the idea of a "pay as you die" dungeon run by some incredibly-powerful character (who charges a fee to go in a fight monsters for treasure) is pretty well used up now.

There are still plenty of labyrinth ideas that aren't old hat, however. If you want to do a labyrinth, there's still plenty of room.

Of course, the labyrinth isn't the only adventure type. Overland adventures are just as much fun and sometimes not so limiting for the new designer. My own GRAILQUEST MicroQuest is an attempt to develop a fresh idea by moving away from the labyrinth concept. GRAILQUEST is numbered-paragraph structure in much the same way as labyrinths have been done, but overland adventures need not use this system. MASTER OF THE AMULETS, coming soon, has a modified board game framework designed for solitaire play. There are other possibilities, too.

One idea not yet explored in the TFT/MicroQuest format is a city with several built-in adventures designed for solitaire play. This type of thing could be excellent aid for a Fantasy Master as well.

Most first-time designers tackle a solitaire MicroQuest simply because this type of product is most visible in the Metagaming line. There is a crying need, however, for more Fantasy Master designs. Metagaming will be publishing Adventure Supplements for adventures requiring a Fantasy

Master, as well as the traditional solitaires. Both short, one-night adventures and longer campaign-level designs are needed in this area. Such designs should contain more richness of detail and subtlety of form than the solitaires, since a Fantasy Master will be required to run them. Lots of maps, background and play aids are a must for an elaborate adventure like this. Once more, the emphasis should be on fresh new ideas, not rehashes of old material or "dungeon" clichés.

The doors are wide open at Metagaming. Try your hand at designing, and maybe all that work you've done on your campaign will pay off in REAL treasure for you.



Publishing deadlines being what they are, most of you just heard about me recently when my first column appeared in INTERPLAY #1. Despite this, as this is written I have just completed one full year as Metagaming's TFT editor. This may go down in gaming history as being the shortest-run column ever, though. As of July 1, the

editorship of TFT will be turned over to someone else.

During the past year, I've had the privilege of seeing - and helping - TFT become a coherent, cohesive gaming system that will soon grow beyond the limited area of medieval fantasy. TFT is growing, and I am glad I had the opportunity to be part of that growth. But the growth of TFT as a system needs to be guided by someone who can keep a closer eye on things than I can - someone based in Austin at Metagaming HQ. The problem of "absentee Editorship" will continue to grow as TFT grows, and it's time for someone who can live and work in Austin to take command.

You can't get rid of me that easily, however. Though I will no longer be the TFT editor, I intend to stick around and work closely with the system as an independent designer, editor and developer. I have several TFT projects in various stages of completion, and I hope to have many, many more through the years ahead. I'm not quitting now - things are just getting exciting.

However, TFT questions and comments, plus new TFT-related manuscripts, should be sent to the new editor c/o Metagaming, Box 15346, Austin, TX, 78761. As for me, I am centering my TFT work, as well as other projects, through a new independent game design/consultancy group formed with my partners Greg Poehlin and David Tepool: FANTASIMULATIONS ASSOCIATES. Greg and Dave are TFT-related designers, too, and you'll be seeing their names a lot around Metagaming soon. Greg is co-designer of the upcoming Basic TFT beginners system and the IN THE NAME OF JUSTICE... super-powered hero role-playing game, while Dave has just completed HIGH NOON, a western role-playing system, for Metagaming.

And who is the new editor? Once again, the deadlines necessary for magazine publication mean this is being written before the new editor has been selected. Perhaps Howard Thompson will be able to squeeze

an announcement in later in the issue, before it goes to the printer. (If not, watch this space next issue...)

Anyway, I'll still be around, wandering the back alleys and dusty trails of Cidri. We're bound to meet again. Till then, remember never to ask directions of a prootwaddle. See you at the crossroads...



unofficial tft variant...

VARIANT TFT SPELLS
by Ian Bell

IQ 9: TURNING (T): Rotates victim to any new facing chosen by the wizard. Victim will then be disoriented, -2 DX for remainder of turn and 3D/DX to avoid falling. Costs 2 ST or 4 ST if victim's basic strength is 30 or more.

Item 1: Enables wearer to use this spell as if he knew it.

Item 2: Often an arrow, turns wearer to a new facing as above.

Item 3: Cannot be removed by normal means, each turn after wearer moves roll 1d6. On 5 or 6 wearer assumes random facing, if original facing then roll again.

IQ 12: SONIC BLAST (S): Similar to Dazzle, this spell creates a deafening noise. All hearers within 5MH of the Wizard without intervening doors or wall save the wizard himself are at -2DX for the remainder of the turn, are deaf for the next five turns (including turn cast), and must roll 2D/ST to remain standing. Creatures relying predominantly on hearing as opposed to sight are at -5 DX for the first turn and -3 for the next four. Sonar reliant creatures, such as bats, will be flying blind for the next five turns and will probably crash. ST Cost 5. Can be heard 50MH.

Item: Cast on any noise-producing device such as a drum or reed whistle, this spell will amplify its natural sound sufficiently to give above effects.

IQ 12: KNOTTING/UNKNOTTING (T): KNOT spell. knots and tangles any one lasso, bola, rope, whip, etc. rendering it useless until untangled with an UNKNOT spell or unpicked in 3D-DX+12 turns. Cast on a rope that already is ensnaring somebody then treat that rope as though it had been there for one turn longer and if removed it will still be tangled. One UNKNOT spell will negate the effects of one KNOT spell, or untangle any one naturally tangled rope, whip, etc., or free somebody from bonds, lasso, or magic rope, or part the weave of one net. ST cost of both spells is 2.

IQ 13: ICE (C): Covers one hex with magical ice. Treat ice hexes as slippery floor and as fire for damage due to extreme cold. Crawling out of an ice hex does 1 hit damage. A character will have 3D/IQ to see ice before moving onto it, 4D if in combat, 5D if running, 6D if both. Animals roll one less die.

1H ICE IQ 13 ST Cost 2; 3H ICE IQ 15 ST Cost 3; 7H ICE IQ 16 ST Cost 5; 14H ICE IQ 16 ST Cost 7.

IQ 14: AMNESIA (T): Makes victim/subject forget all or specific events of the last hour or longer. Will not erase talents or spells. Subject may remember on the next or subsequent days on 3D/IQ per day. Spell takes longer than one turn to cast if detailed or specific forgetting desired. ST cost 4 plus 2 per additional hour or hour elapsed between desired time and spell-casting.

Item: Causes temporary or permanent forgetting of last hours, days, years or even whole life and identity (difficult role playing!).

IQ 14 MAGIC MIST (C): Anyone entering a magic mist hex becomes disorientated and must roll 3D/IQ to move a further hex in a desired direction, failure means moving one hex in a random direction (which may be the desired one). Process continues until character emerges from mist or mist vanishes after 12 turns. People are seen as blurry outlines in the mist so -2DX per mist hex attacked from, into or through and the GM should remember that in battle players may mistakenly attack their friends.

Exceptions: The casting wizard is not disorientated by his mist but does suffer the DX penalties; a figure running into magic mist from outside moves two hexes in before becoming disorientated; those with magic sight are unaffected by magic mist; animals roll 2D/IQ to avoid disorientation. ST cost is 2 for one MH and 1 per further MH. The centres of all created magic mist MHs must be within the wizards MMh on creation.

IQ 17: STAFF TO WEAPON (T): Lets wizard convert his staff into any one piece weapon which he may then wield as if he had the required talent(s) for it. Normal DX penalties apply, however, if weapons required strength exceeds basic strength of wizard. The staff/weapon will not effect the wizards subsequent spell casting in any way and will explode if held against the wizards will as

unofficial tft variant...

13

The following article is an unofficial set of rules, based on Melee, allowing gamers to recreate gunfighters and other standard Melee rules apply. Note that players are allowed to draw and fire in the same turn, and that players may move up to 1/2 MA and fire, but suffer a DX penalty.

Ron Hopkins

TFT: WILD WEST

by Fred Askew

The combat system of TFT can easily fit many periods of history. The American Wild West is a perfect example. To keep it simple (and fast) many factors are abstracted and therefore not completely accurate, but I think the feel of the time is still there.

It helps to throw away the Hollywood concept of a fast draw. The professional gunmen of the 1870-1890's period depended on surprise, ambush, and careful aim. When they did face and enemy he was often drunk, terrified, emotionally disturbed, or all of the above. There were brave gunmen, but they liked the odds in their favor.

A shooter who could hit his target with a pistol at 15-20 yards was considered top notch. He would have to take his time and aim to do that. There are examples of shootouts across a barroom table in which many shots were fired before someone was hit. The quality of pistols available varied, and poor maintenance was common.

If you use talents in TFT, give lawmen, some professional outlaws, gunfighters, etc. a pistol talent (IQ 9: cost 2). The average cowboy or other working type won't be very good. I recommend a -2DX for most with a -4DX for dudes and others without a pistol talent.

Most Westerners used rifles for hunting and for serious fighting. Give just about everybody rifle talent (IQ 8: cost 1). Dudes and their like should be still a -4DX.

Shotguns do not require training, but do require strength. A shooter without the shotgun talent (IQ 8: cost 1) gets -2DX. A shooter without the required 15 ST gets -2DX even if he has the talent and also takes 1D-2 damage each time he fires.



Due to the nature of shotguns you cannot roll to avoid hitting a friend. Anyone in the blast pattern is hit, period. If someone is partly behind cover it doesn't help. If the cover is wood (doors, tables, etc.) the shotgun pellets go through; otherwise they hit the exposed parts.

Deringers and shotguns have only one shell per barrel. Pistols may have up to six, although five were common. Repeating rifles may have up to 17 shells in them.

Bullets tend to pass through people and things. A pistol bullet will hit anyone standing behind a target (make another roll). A rifle bullet will continue along its path of flight for several hexes and will require a roll for each potential target. All bullets will pass through wooden doors, tables, walls, etc. Wood only lessens visibility, but does not protect.

EFFECTIVE RANGES

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Deringer----- | 1 Megahex | -1 DX per hex |
| Pistols----- | 5 MX | -1 DX per MX |
| Rifles----- | 40 MX | -1 DX per 4 MX |
| shotgun----- | 9 MX | no minus for range |
| sawed-off shotgun-- | 3 MX | no minus for range |

DIE ROLL MEANING

T6 = gun misfired no effect

17 = same as above

18 = gun mechanism jammed;
requires two full turns to fixHTH COMBAT

Anyone who is rushed and is facing the attacker will always get off one shot (assuming he has a gun, it's out and ready to fire, and the gun does not misfire). Pistols and deringers can be used in HTH combat if not dropped. They can be fired or used as clubs. A rifle may be used as a club also, but it breaks on a roll of 16+.

SUGGESTIONS

Don't use these weapons against fantasy characters. The firepower will eat up heroes and trash alike. If you want to see what happens, try an Indian attack. The Indians will have normal fantasy weapons like bows, hatchets, knives, spears, and so on, with maybe a rifle here and there. Put the non-Indians behind good cover and try to rush them across a large, empty space with a war party. That's how the West was won.

| <u>WEAPONS</u> | <u>DAMAGE</u> | <u>ST</u> | <u>NOTES</u> |
|----------------|---------------------|-----------|---|
| Deringer | 1D per barrel | 8 | Single barrel: fires every other turn--adjDX 15+ every turn Double barrel: fires every 3 turns adjDX 15+ fire every other turn |
| Revolver | 2D | 12 | Fires 2 times per turn: adjDX 14+ fires 3 times per turn |
| Rifles | 3D | 10 | Single shot: fires every other turn--adjDX 14+ every turn Repeating: Fires every turn--adjDX 14+ 2 times per turn |
| Shotgun | 3D* | 15 | Single barrel: fires every other turn--adjDX 18+ every turn Double barrel: fires every 3 turns--adjDX 18+ fires every other turn |
| Bowie knife | 1D+2 | 10 | |
| Brass knuckles | same as cestus | | |
| Broken bottles | same as dagger | | |
| chair, etc. | same as club | | |

***SHOTGUN DAMAGE**

| | | | |
|----------------------|----|------------|--------------------|
| Regular shotgun does | 3D | per barrel | for first 11 hexes |
| | 2D | | for next 9 hexes |
| | 1D | | for next 9 hexes |
| Sawed off does | 3D | | for first megahex |
| | 2D | | for next megahex |
| | 1D | | for last megahex |

DX FACTORS

| | |
|--|-------|
| Shooter braced against solid support | +2 DX |
| Firing at back or side of enemy | +2 DX |
| Target running (moved at least 5 hexes) | -2 DX |
| Target behind wooden cover | -2 DX |
| Drawing pistol from holster | -2 DX |
| Drawing pistol from pants pocket, coat, etc. | -4 DX |
| Drawing pistol while sitting at table | -2 DX |
| Responding to ambush fire: 1st shot | -2 DX |
| Moving more than one but less than five hexes and firing | -4 DX |

Treasure of UnicornGold™

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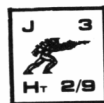
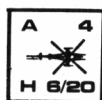
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scenario notes...

the Lords of UNDEREARTH™

by Keith Gross

A major part of the design of LORDS OF UNDEREARTH was the development and play-balancing of the scenarios. Each scenario represents an event in Underearth's "history". Each is a tactical situation which is completely different from that of any other scenario.

"Pursuit" depicts an invasion of underearth by Humans after a defeat of the Dwarves in an outside battle. The Dwarves have a small force which survived the preceding battle and many unalerted units throughout underearth. The Dwarves must carefully divide their Field Army Remnants to both slow down the Human attack and mobilize the rest of the Dwarf forces. The Dwarves will be able to counterattack eventually--but this may come too late if too few units are used to mobilize the unalerted units. The Humans benefit from their Duke, whereas the Dwarves do not have their Lord in this scenario. The Duke and heavy Human infantry should push forth until they reach a crossroads; then the Humans should split up and try several routes to reach the Great Hall. Infiltration is important to both sides for surrounding and destroying lead units of enemy columns. "Pursuit" is the scenario which comes closest to being a grind-it-out battle of attrition.

"Surprise attack" also depicts a battle, but of a different type. A force of orcs is attempting to break through the defenses, get to the Throne Room, and kill the Dwarf Lord before the dwarves can mobilize and destroy the orcs. The orcs are both weaker and less numerous than the dwarves, but benefit

from the fact that the dwarves are all unalerted, and from a special rule giving the orcs odds-column shifts for attacking unalerted units. The orcs can either head straight for the Dwarf Lord with all units, or split up to attempt to destroy as many dwarves as possible first.

"Dragonfire" depicts one of the classic themes of fantasy: a fiery dragon descending upon and pillaging a treasure-filled dwarf realm. The dwarves are numerous and powerful, but the dragon has the advantage of total surprise. Also, the dragon has great mobility due to its ability to fly, and it benefits from a four-column odds shift due to its ability to strike terror into the dwarves.

In "Dragonfire", as in other scenarios, the Dwarves must mobilize as quickly as possible. First, a Dwarf unit must become alerted to the dragon's presence, and then escape to tell other dwarves. To escape, the dwarves have to take advantage of the fact that the dragon is too big to fly in the Narrow Corridors or to go in the tunnels. Locked doors are particularly important here: the dragon will be able to blow them down, but this will buy a few precious minutes for the dwarves to escape. The dragon, on the other hand, should attempt to maintain secrecy as long as possible, while stalking the halls of undearth, by attacking and killing all dwarves which have become alerted to its presence.

The dwarves can win either by evacuating the bulk of their treasure, or by killing the dragon. The dragon wins by killing 12 dwarf units. To kill the dragon, the dwarves will have to either surround the dragon with several companies, or get a lucky die roll while attacking with the Dwarf Lord and his Guards. The dwarves need to lure the dragon into a room, or at least a wide corridor, where a sufficient force can attack it.

One way to do this is to gather as many units and as much treasure as possible into the Great Hall, and then form a "convoy" to evacuate the treasure. The dragon must attempt to destroy isolated dwarf units, before they can gather together. The dragon might want to hit the Dwarf Lord first, before he stacks with the guards. (Remember that the dragon can fly over the Dwarf Lord's sentry and guards.) Another sometimes-useful tactic for the dragon is to collect treasure into a small, defensible room.

In "Passage of Underearth", the dwarves have gone, and been replaced by the dragon, and by orcs and other creatures whom the dragon tolerates. Six dwarf and human individuals, with no companies, are attempting to get from one side of underearth to the other alive. The defenders are an odd assortment: an orc brigand and his followers, an independent company of orcs, a goblin company, two trolls, a wolf, a bear, a giant scorpion, a gargoyle, and the dragon. The dragon and some of the lesser creatures will sometimes help the orc brigand and his followers to hunt down the intruders--but sometimes they will eat the orcs instead. This fact, together with the set-up rules and a special Disorganization rule, keeps the defending player from using his enormous superiority to easily destroy the human-dwarf alliance intruders. Instead, he must use small units to delay the alliance until either the brigand and a strong orc company, or two companies, or the dragon, can be

brought up. The bridge in East Hall is often important. The underearth player should be certain that a "loyal" strong orc company sets up in East Hall.

The six individuals of the alliance receive an odds shift due to morale, which gives them a chance in combat and even allows attack on orc companies. Still, though, the principal strategy is: Run! Infiltration will probably be necessary towards the end. One option for the alliance is for the two scouts to split off from the Lord, Duke, and Captain. The scouts will be more of a nuisance than a help in combat because of their lower morale, and besides their higher movement allowance makes them useful for screening ahead of and behind the main party. On the other hand, they may well get killed by themselves.

"Gold!" is the only multi-player scenario to make it into the final edition. Several wealthy nobles independently decide to hire mercenaries and investigate whether or not the dragon is still alive, and if not, get his fabled treasure. Players can hire lots of mercenaries, but this costs money, and the goal is to make a profit. Underearth is defended by non-player units, but most of these are just nuisances to a good company led by the player's Captain. The dragon will be dangerous to all but the largest mercenary forces--but players may find that it is not among the hidden underearth dwellers. The most serious danger is other parties of treasure-seekers.

NEW UNITS

| Unit Type | Combat Strength | Movement Allowance |
|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Goblin Chieftain | 2 | 8 |
| Goblin Wolfriders | 55 | 12 |
| Gargoyle Company | 70 | 8 |
| Small Dragon | 9 | 6 |
| Giant | 5 | 8 |
| Elf Lord | 5 | 12 |
| Elf Scout | 2 | 12 |
| Elf Unarmored Company | 35 | 12 |
| Elf Medium Company | 45 | 9 |
| Elf Heavy Company | 55 | 6 |

Other scenarios, including a multi-player assault on a strong, prepared Dwarf defense, were developed and playtested, but were dropped from the final edition of LORDS OF UNDEREARTH for various reasons. Players are encouraged to develop their own scenarios. For variety, the Combat Strengths and Movement Allowances of other units are indicated in the accompanying table. LORDS OF UNDEREARTH is fast-playing, allowing lots of experimentation. Have fun!






STICKS & STONES

ADVANCED SOLITAIRE

by Larry Blincoe

The world of primitive man, as it is accurately portrayed in STICKS AND STONES, was one of basic solutions. The four two-player scenarios provided with the game trace the early growth of societal conflict, from simple village raids in search of food and dependents to large scale tribal warfare over territorial acquisition. The most common form of conflict in most early societies, however, occurred between man and the animal life that shared his environment. The games solitaire scenario successfully depicts this conflict in the form of a mastodon hunt.

Man was not the only predator in his environment however. While he was out stalking game, he had to be alert for other beasts that may have been stalking him. These rules expand the original solitaire scenario by adding predators as well as additional prey animals to the environment, and by broadening the game's hunting aspect to include the search for game as well as its taking. Most of these rules are additions, although a few minor changes to the original rules are recommended for use with this variant.

| | |
|--|---|
| D  10-6-8 | E  6-4-6 |
| R  18-6-6 | S  20-10-6 |
| | W  8-6-6 |

NEW COUNTERS

Predators: Predators compete directly with man for the supply of food in the environment. In the course of this process, both man and predator animal may become prey for each other. While some predators may offer relatively easy prey to a fair sized band of hunters, they also have relatively low victory point values and therefore they are not as efficient a kill as a prey animal.

Three different predator animals are used in this variant.
1) Smilodon - The sabre toothed tiger, Smilodon, is the largest and, with one rare exception, the deadliest predator animal in the game. Its strength, speed, ferocity and cunning give it an attack strength of 20. With its deadly 9 inch fangs and powerful rending claws, it is held in awe by both man and beast. Its defense strength is 10.

2) Diatryma - The diatryma was a 10 foot tall, flightless, carnivorous bird. Its talons and beak make it a threat to smaller animals - and to man. As indicated on the counter, its attack strength (AS) is 10 and its defense strength (DS) is 6. It is faster than other predators and thus has a movement allowance (MA) of 8.

3) Dire Wolf - With an AS of 8 and a DS of 6, the wolf poses a minor threat to small groups of hunters; but the real threat from this predator is not the solitary wolf but the wolfpack, which has a minimum AS of 32 and DS of 24 (see wolfpacks). Wolfpacks threaten all life and should be studiously avoided.

Prey Animals: Three prey animals are used in this scenario. One of these, the

mastodon, is supplied with the original game. The other two, the wooly rhinoceros and the Irish elk, are described below. Prey animals spend most of their time grazing and are generally passive unless attacked. They are larger than predators, and supply most of the food, hides, and bone material used by the hunters. Two of these animals, the mastodon and the rhinoceros, are so large that single attacks cannot kill them. They must be repeatedly injured and bled to weakness before a fatal attack can be made. The characteristics of the two new prey animals are as follows.

1) Wooly Rhinoceros - Like the mastodon, the thick hided rhinoceros must be attacked repeatedly to achieve a kill. It is somewhat smaller, however, and only 8 d-w or d-k results are needed to kill it (4 to wound it). Though not as large, it is more agile and aggressive than the mastodon and just as deadly when attacking. Like the mastodon, it has an AS of 18 and a DS of 6.

2) Irish Elk - The easiest but least valuable prey is the Irish elk. It has an AS of 6 and a DS of 4. Its outrageously oversized antlers slow it down in forest hexes, where it must take care to travel be relatively wide paths.

FORCES

The hunters have 15 PPTS and 40 WPTS. No restrictions on PPT to WPT conversion or unit types. Six dependents and one unprotected village are also used. Ammunition limits are doubled, as in the Genesis of Warfare scenario.

SET-UP

The unprotected village is placed in the lower left corner of the board, in hex number 2127, 2128, and 2228. All six dependents are placed in the village. All hunters also start from the village.

Animals are assigned to hexes by rolling two dice and consulting the table below. Match the number rolled on the dice in

the left column with the hex number in the right column with the hex number in the right column. This is done once for each of the six animal types.

| Dice | Hex |
|------|------|
| 2 | 2018 |
| 3 | 1619 |
| 4 | 1612 |
| 5 | 0814 |
| 6 | 1113 |
| 7 | 1313 |
| 8 | 1010 |
| 9 | 0810 |
| 10 | 1615 |
| 11 | 1318 |
| 12 | 0706 |

GAME SEQUENCE

The hunters move first. The three predator animals move second, and the three prey animals move last. Within each group, animals move in order of their attack strength, strongest first. The mastodon moves before the rhinoceros.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The game continues until a total of at least 56 victory points (gross) has been accumulated. To gain points for killing prey animals, they must be killed and returned to the village. Likewise, victory points are gained for killing and returning predators. However, half of each predators victory point value is gained merely by killing the animal. The other half is gained when the body is moved to the village. This rule reflects the psychological and competitive benefits attached to killing fierce predators. The victory point value of each animal is as follows:

| | |
|------------|----|
| Mastodon | 30 |
| Rhinoceros | 20 |
| Elk | 6 |
| Smilodon | 8 |
| Diatryma | 6 |
| Wolf | 4 |

For each hunter or dependent killed, 2 points are deducted from the total victory points. For each hunter or dependent wounded, 1 point is deducted.

Successful Hunt: 45 + victory points earned

Moderate Success: 40 - 44 victory points earned

Barely Success: 35 - 39 victory points earned

Failure: Less than 35 victory points earned

If all dependents are killed, the game is automatically lost. Dependents may not leave the board.

GRAZING

All prey animals follow the same grazing rules that are given in the rulebook for mastodons with two exceptions; one, when an animal leaves the board through grazing, a substitute is randomly re-assigned to a hex on the next turn (see Animal Replacement) and; two, if at any time after making at least one grazing move, no hunters or predators are within their own MA of the prey animal (taking terrain into account), the prey animal is removed and re-assigned to a different hex. This is not the same as Animal Replacement in that the original animal is re-assigned whereas in Animal Replacement a new animal is chosen randomly. The purpose of this rule is to make prey animals somewhat elusive, and thus add more hunting flavor to the game.

HUNTING

The normal behavior for unmolested prey animals is grazing. For predators, it is hunting. Any predator not engaged in pursuit or combat will move 3 hexes in a direction by the die. After moving these 3 hexes, any potential prey (see Potential Prey) within the predators remaining MA or adjacent to the predator will be attacked. For example: a smilodon moves through one rough hex and two clear hexes. This costs 4 MA. Since the smilodons MA is 6, any potential prey within 2 hexes will be attacked. If it had moved through 3 rough hexes, it would have spent all 6 MA and only potential prey in adjacent hexes could be attacked.

If potential prey is within 3 hexes of a predator at the beginning of its turn, it will attack directly and not bother to make a hunting move. If more than one potential prey is available, predators will attack the one with the weakest DS. If two have the same DS, a die is used to determine which one is attacked.

After making a kill, predators do not make a hunting move on their next turn. Instead they remain stationary and devour their victim(s). However, they perceive humans as a threat to their hard earned meal and will attack any hunters within 3 hexes of their kill, provided that they meet the requirements of potential prey.

STACKING

With the exception of wolfpacks, animal counters do not stack in this scenario. Moves that lead to stacked animal counters (attacks, fleeing, or stampedes), always result in combat.

INTERRUPTED MOVES

If an animal cannot complete its hunting or grazing move because a hex is occupied, a die is rolled again to determine the direction of its remaining MA.

An animal that is fleeing or has been stampeded will charge straight into occupied hexes and attack its occupants.

A wounded animal being pursued by predators or hunters cannot flee off the board. Instead, the die is rolled again to select a different direction for the remainder of its MA.

POTENTIAL PREY

Because of their considerable size or strength, certain animals or groups do not make feasible victims for predators. Smaller animals or groups which predators have a reasonable chance of killing are known as Potential Prey (PP). The PP for each individual predator animal is any prey animal or group of hunters which has an adjusted DS low enough to give the predator 2 - 1 combat odds advantage if it

attacks. Mastodons and rhinoceros are an exception to this rule. They cannot be killed through single attacks, but must be harried and killed through multiple wounds. Consequently, predators will not attack these large beasts unless they are already wounded to half strength, in addition to offering 2 - 1 odds advantage. Other predators can be considered to be PP if they are wounded, and if no other prey is available on that turn.

Wolfpacks will attack anything that they have 2 - 1 odds over except for unwounded predators.

Hexes containing existing conflicts (e.g. 2 hunters attacking an elk) can be considered PP and attacked if the predator has 2 - 1 odds over all parties in the conflict. However, if it does attack, it attacks only one party (either the hunters or the elk). The other party may flee or continue attacking on the next turn. Wolfpacks will attack all parties to the conflict.

PREDATOR ATTACKS

Once a predator has initiated an attack, it will continue to attack as long as it can maintain 1 - 1 odds for its attacks. If combat odds drop below 1 - 1, a die is rolled to determine whether it will flee or continue to fight (use the same procedure as specified in the rulebook for mastodons). Likewise, if an animal or group of hunters attack a predator and the predator has less than 1 - 1 odds, a die must be rolled to determine its reaction. With 1 - 1 odds or better, the predator will always counter-attack. If an animal or hunters engaged in combat with a predator attempt to flee the combat while the predator still has 1 - 1 odds, the predator, when its turn comes to move, will pursue its prey using its full MA if necessary.

ANIMAL REPLACEMENT

Animals may leave the board while hunting, grazing, or fleeing, or they may be killed in combat. At the start of each

round of moves for predators, and at the start of each round of moves for prey animals, if less than 3 living members of the respective group whose turn it is are on the board, additional units of that group are randomly chosen and assigned to hexes. This is done using one die. For example: the hunters have moved and it is now the predators turn. Only two living predators are on the board. A die is rolled. If a 1 or 2 is rolled, a wolf is selected; a 3 or 4 chooses a diatryma; 5 or 6 chooses a smilodon. Two dice are then rolled to assign it to a hex (using the table included under SET-UP). After the other two predators have moved, it is the prey animals turn. Only one prey animal remains on the board. A die is rolled twice to select two new animals. A 1 or 2 selects an elk; a 3 or 4 chooses a rhinoceros; and a 5 or 6 selects a mastodon. The two new counters are assigned to hexes, the existing prey animal is moved, and it is the hunters turn to move again.

Note that after prey animals are assigned to a hex, they do not graze until the next round of moves. Predators do not hunt until the next round, but if PP is within 3 hexes of their assigned hex, they will attack immediately - i.e. on the same round that they are assigned to the board.

If the hex an animal is assigned to is occupied, the dice is rolled again to choose a different hex.

WOLFPACKS

Whenever two wolves come within 3 hexes of each other, a wolfpack is formed. If one of the wolves was pursuing prey, attacking prey, or is then in a position to attack prey, the pack forms on that wolf's hex. If neither or both wolves are involved with prey, a die roll determines which hex the pack forms on. If one of the wolves has not yet moved, the pack will then move (or attack).

To form a wolfpack, stack both counters on the chosen hex. Add 2 more counters to the stack to reflect the total strength of the wolfpack (32 AS, 24 DS). If any additional wolves should come within 3 hexes of the pack, they join the pack and increase its strength by their own AS and DS.

From the time the wolfpack is created, it is never removed from the board until it is destroyed. If the die indicates a direction that will result in the pack moving off the board, it is rolled again and a different direction is chosen.

Wolfpacks count as one predator for determining animal replacement.

PREY ANIMALS RESPONSE TO ATTACK

All prey animals respond to attack in the manner outlined in the rulebook for mastodons.

ANIMAL DEATHS

To kill the rhinoceros, the same procedure is used that is specified in the rulebook mastodon, i.e., multiple attacks are needed. However, while the mastodon is killed after 12 successful attacks and injured after 6, the rhinoceros is killed after only 8 successful attacks and injured after 4. All other animals have thinner hides and are small enough to succumb to single attacks. For all animals except the mastodon and the rhinoceros, the CRT is used to remove combat into the same way in which it is used for combat between humans.

The direction of all retreat results against hunters is determined using a die.

Attacks made against mastodons or rhinoceros at odds of 5 - 1 or greater automatically count as two D-K results against that animal.

PITS

As anyone who has played the solitaire scenario knows, killing a mastodon in open combat can be very costly. One method often used by primitive man to kill such large beasts was to dig a pit, drive the animal into it, and then harry it to its death.

Pits may be dug for this scenario in one of two ways:

1) At a cost of 10 WPTS, one hex can be turned into a pit before the game starts.

2) After the game starts, a pit can be dug by having 3 hunters remain in one hex for 4 gameturns. During this time, the AS and DS of these hunters is halved, and remains halved until any combat initiated with them during the 4 turns is resolved. Hunters may leave the pit and return to finish it at a later time. Any turn in which the hunters are involved in combat does not count towards construction of the pit.

To mark the location of the pit, place a goods counter on the hex in which it is located (goods are not used in this scenario).

Animals that fall into the pit have their DS halved and can only attack hunters that are in the pit with them.

Pits cannot be dug on the 11 hexes to which animals are assigned, or on any of the hexes immediately adjacent to them.

Predators will not enter the pit hexes unless they are fleeing.

Once a pit is constructed, hunters can wait for game to fall into it, or they can attempt to stampede their prey into the pit.

STAMPEDES

Prey animal can be stampeded by hunters. To do this, hunters approach the animal and stop on the adjacent hex. If the player wishes to stampede, he rolls one die and the animal will flee in one of the three directions farthest away from the hunters. For example; if the hunters moved to the hex directly north of the animal (direction 5 on the map indicator), the animal would only flee in directions 1, 2, or 3. The direction is chosen using a die, with a 1 or 2 indicating one direction, a 3 or 4 another, and so on. To stampede a mastodon, 3 hunters must occupy the hex; to stampede a rhinoceros, 2 hunters are needed; for the elk, only 1 is required.

Hunters stampede animals by frightening them with torches.

Therefore, prior to stampedeing an animal, a fire must be built and those hunters involved in the stampede must have been in a hex adjacent to the fire.

DEAD COUNTERS

In order to gain victory points, the bodies of the slain prey must be returned to the village. To do this hunters must move with the dead counters to the village at their MA -1. It requires 3 hunters to return the mastodon, 2 to return the rhinoceros, and 1 to return any other counter. Dependents may also return dead counters. Two dependents are needed to replace each hunter that is required for any given animal.

Obviously, this rule is not meant to simulate 3 hunters carrying the entire body of a dead mastodon. Tusks, hide, and haunches of meat would be stripped from the body at the site of the kill and removed to the village.

Dead animal counters may be left on the board and returned to the village at a later time if one hunter is left to guard the counter. If it is abandoned for more than one turn, it is considered lost to scavengers, removed, and no victory points are gained for returning the kill. Counters representing dead hunters or dependents are removed immediately.

CONCEALED PREDATORS - OPTIONAL RULE

The purpose of this rule is to simulate the stealth and cunning that characterizes most predators. All predator counters are placed face down on the table and mixed or shuffled enough so that the player does not know what each one represents. During initial set-up, 3 predators are randomly selected from the pile and placed face down on the board in their assigned hexes. These counters remain face down and move as though they have a MA of 6 until they are attacked or move within range of any PP for the smilodon (the strongest predator counter). At that time the counter is

turned face up and play continues normally. Whenever predators are replaced, they are chosen randomly from the pile rather than with the die, and are placed face down on the board.

TERRAIN EFFECTS

Predator animals are affected by stream and rough terrain hexes just as hunters are for both movement and combat. Woods hexes have no effect at all on predators. Predators will not enter swamp hexes unless they are fleeing.

Swamp hexes effect predators in the same way as they do hunters.

Terrain effects for the rhinoceros are the same as those given in the rulebook for the mastodon. The elk is also affected the same way except that in wood hexes, it suffers the same combat penalties as hunters, and its MA is halved.



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Stalin's Tanks

By: Roger Damon

STALIN'S TANKS is the second of a series of Microgames depicting tactical armored combat in the Second World War. Where ROMMEL'S PANZERS had you racing across open desert in British Stuarts and German Panzer III's, STALIN'S TANKS has a much wider array of armor in an area with more varied terrain features.

In the four years of the struggle between the German and Soviet armies, a wider variety of armor was fielded by both sides. And though the gently rolling areas of the Russian Steppes were much like the desert, elsewhere in Russia, the terrain emerged in the form of vast forested areas, swamplands the size of Vermont, and hills everywhere.

The terrain of the STALIN'S TANKS MAP lies between these two extremes. There is enough to make it interesting, but not so much that players fight trees more than their opponents forces.

Armor has captured the gamer's fancy. There is some security in knowing that an inch or so of armored plate separates the vital parts of a unit from its enemies. There's also the exhilaration of passing through enemy lines unscathed and roaming around in his rear areas with disastrous potential.

There are a few problems, though. The enemy also has units with an inch or so of armor plate. And, as safe as that inch of armor plate sounds, there are weapons that will pierce it with devastating violence.

With these facts in mind, we needn't go all the way back to square one. We need only proceed back as far as the drawing board, which is exactly as far as Soviet and German tank designers went.

PART 1

If armor becomes vulnerable, design and technology must be employed to make it less vulnerable. One way of decreasing an armor unit's vulnerability is by increasing its effectiveness. This is done by increasing one, or better yet, all of its basic capabilities: armament, protection, and mobility. In tank terms, that means gun size and effectiveness, armor thickness and slope, and cross country speed. In game terms that means Panther.

Lets go back a little to the proud and triumphant German army of 1941. They swept across Poland and France with their tanks in the lead. It was a feast of glory. And now they were doing likewise in Russia, as armored columns plunged deeper and deeper into the heartland. Then something happened. Something small at first. Just a minor disruption. But it was to set off tremors that would eventually reach all the way back to the German High Command in Berlin and set the stage for a most phenomenal battle of technology that would deeply involve both the German and Soviet war machines for the next four years. That something was the first encounter the German army had with the Soviet T34 and KV tanks.

They would rumble out of forests and literally pass through lines of German tanks while shells bounced off their thick, well sloped armor until the panzers had to wheel about to chase them. They would emerge from cornfields, totally overrun anti-tank gun positions, and disappear, leaving behind settling dust and unsettling feelings.

As the number of encounters with these tanks increased, so did the anxieties of the German commanders, as they harbored the knowledge that their sophisticated anti-tank weaponry and their tanks were fast becoming obsolete. Back at the factories, the Panzer III's and IV's were given better guns. Extra armor was being welded on to their

fronts. Plans were being drawn up for new tanks, better tanks. There were even some suggestions to directly copy the T34, but these were scratched.

The Tiger I was the first completely new tank off the German assembly line to counter the Soviet tank threat. This was the first German heavy tank. It was well armored and it had an 88mm gun (which, up to that point in the war, was the only weapon the German army had that could effectively and repeatedly penetrate the armor of the Soviet tanks). But it was slow. It was also far from its final version, the Tiger II. This tank had even heavier armor, and was armed with the best anti-tank weapon of the war; the 88mm L71 KWK (turreted) Pak 43.

In 1943, another new tank would arrive on the Russian Front from the German factories. This was the Panther. With 110mm of well sloped frontal armor that would deflect most Soviet anti-tank rounds, a 75mm L70 main gun that would penetrate any Soviet armor, and a speed equivalent to the T34, the Panther became the main contender for being the best tank in the world. After initial "bugs" were worked out, this tank became a prime example of the "perfect tank".

It also started to rule the game's battlefield. In the early stages of playtesting, one Panther could hold up and destroy column after column of advancing T34's and KV's, as they often did in real life. However, for purposes of play balance and to eliminate the need for twenty or more T34's to knock out one Panther, the entire combat system was revamped and adjusted around the Panther and its relationship to the other units. Actually, though T34's can knock out Panthers frontally in STALIN'S TANKS, in real life this was extremely rare even at very close ranges. Thus, the German army had caught up with, and even surpassed, its Soviet counterparts. But, alas for the German army, the Soviet tank designers weren't sleeping either.

The T34 was a tank of sound design and years ahead of its time. Yet it underwent constant improvement throughout the war years, until it culminated in the T34/85. The KV's were also improved, with impressive amounts of armor added to their hulls. The Soviets also developed a new tank; the Joseph Stalin. The JSII met most German armor on equal ground. Its successor, the JSIII, was the peak of Soviet tank design during the war, however, none of these tanks were able to reach the rapidly receding front in time to see action.

Perhaps more important than the quality of the Russian tanks was the incredible number of them which could be produced. Almost 20,000 T34/85's alone produced with upwards of 30,000 or more of the earlier models of the T34 coming off the line. The German tank that was most produced was the PzIV, with a total number of all models barely breaking the 5,000 mark. So what if it took ten T34's to knock out one Panther? The Soviets had ten more to back up the first ten, and ten more after that.

With all this in mind, one may wonder how the German army managed to extend all the way to the Volga River. This, I believe, can be explained with one concept--Command Control. Basically, the Germans had it and the Soviets didn't. Those early encounters were sporadic, uncoordinated, and achieved little. It mattered little if ten T34's swarmed out of the night to wreak havoc on a German anti-tank gun company when the bulk of the German division was relentlessly advancing on Moscow.

Even on a smaller scale, Command Control was a problem for the Soviets. In a T34, there were two men in the turret; a gunner-commander and a loader. The gunner-commander had to instruct the driver, watch the battlefield, find targets, track the targets, fire at the target, and watch for flag signals from other tanks in his outfit. He was busy--too busy. With all this going on, any single T34 often did the

wrong thing, went the wrong way, failed to fire, or whatever, rendering the tank far less effective than its qualities would imply.

In contrast, German tanks had three man turrets; a gunner, loader and a commander who was in constant contact with other tanks of his outfit. This, coupled with superior crew training (some Soviet tank crews received only a few days training) and superior optic and tracking ability, the Germans had an edge that lasted until the last stages of the war. By the time the Soviets were catching on as to how to handle armor effectively, their qualitative edge was waning due to the ever increasing number of Panthers and Tigers appearing on the battlefield.

DESIGN--Initially, I wanted STALIN'S TANKS to be totally compatible with my first game, ROMMEL'S PANZERS. My intention was to design it so that one could take a T34 out of STALIN'S TANKS and plop it down in the desert to fight Stuarts. These intentions were not realized for a number of reasons.

There comes a point in designing a game, where the game seems to take on personality of its own. It's uncanny, but I've encountered it more than once. The only way I can describe it is to say the game begins designing itself. (No, I haven't been to the loony bin lately.) I kept getting these urges to change the game--to alter its direction away from its predecessor. I began to realize it was a different game.

Some of the differences were apparent. Translating a ROMMEL'S PANZERS type of combat system into a multi-terrained environment was the most obvious stumbling block. Another problem was the wide variety of armor present in the campaign. I'm not saying this couldn't be represented using combat-odds type system, but it would be difficult to represent the subtle differences in armor and tank gun effectiveness of the varied units without getting into Attack Factors with three digits.

Finally, I wanted a more defined relationship between armor-piercing weaponry and armor.

STALIN'S TANKS is an upgraded ROMMEL'S PANZERS. Ways were sought to improve on the basic system. One automatic improvement was the addition of terrain. It was important, for playability's sake, to keep things general. For instance, when a unit was on a hill, it was automatically assumed that unit was in the best possible position on that hill as far as defensive stance was concerned. It would, in effect be hull down, thus not only presenting a smaller target area, but also presenting its heavier upper hull and turret armor. This called for a Dice Roll Modifier on the "To Hit" roll and an effective increase in the units Armor Class. A unit in the woods may be a little harder to hit (being a little harder to see), but trees would offer little practical defensive value to a unit when super-sonic anti-tank rounds are concerned. By the way, in case you're wondering why tanks can't enter buildings, its because the buildings all have basements.

Another addition to the design was the inclusion of infantry and all that goes with it (HE Fire, Assaults, Overruns). Infantry not only gives armor something else at which to shoot - it gives it something else about which to worry. The size of the infantry units was a problem. It was hard to imagine a squad alone knocking out tanks in assault after assault. It was even harder to imagine a platoon being liquidated by one 75 mm HE round. So squad level units were chosen. Stacking was prohibited for playability purposes only. Plans are in the works for more detailed infantry rules for a later game in this series.

The most questionable addition to the game is Section 14.0--High Explosive Versus Armor. This rule can be abused. Basically, it represents firing either high-explosive shells or smoke rounds in the direction of enemy positions with the intention of

disrupting an enemy's ability to return fire. A "hit" with an HE round indicates that the shell exploded close enough to the tank to raise dust, causes the commander to slink down into the turret, and shake up the crew a bit. The freak hit, indicated by rolling "snake eyes", indicates a direct hit on the vehicle. Since most guns are 75mm and larger, the high explosive content is enough to warp gun barrels, blow off tracks, and flake off hot metal from the inside of the tank (which would be most disquieting to the crew).

Many armor purists will (and have) complained about this rule, especially those who have lost a Tiger II to a "snake eyes" hit from a T34. The rule does help the Soviet player a little more than the German, though, just for laughs, the German player could announce his JagdPanzer VI is firing HE at a T34. It may seem a bit ludicrous to imagine a T34 commander choosing to fire a high-explosive round, rather than an armor-piercing round, at an enemy tank. But if our T34 commander knows, or at least believes, that a target is a Tiger II, he would probably be aware of the slim chance of penetrating its 180mm frontal armor with the 76mm gun at his service. So what does he do? Well, he could pepper it with armor-piercing rounds hoping for a freak hit on the Tiger's gun barrel or vision slit (as the long 88 slowly lumbered around towards him), or he could start cranking out HE rounds in its general direction hoping to cause enough chaos (Hail Eris) to disrupt the crew's effectiveness long enough for him to either close for a flank shot or get out of the Tiger's way. I'm not saying that Soviet tank commanders did this, but they could do it.

Looking back, I see that this rule should have been optional. To help even this rule out a bit, I offer the following changes: 1) HE Fire Versus Armor has a +3 Dice Roll Modifier instead of the +2. 2) A tank disrupted by HE fire may not fire in the upcoming

fire phase in which it would have been eligible to fire, although it may move normally. 3) Units may only fire HE at armored targets during their turn. These restrictions do not apply to firing HE at infantry. The +3 DRM is only used when firing at armored targets. When firing at unarmored targets, a +2 DRM is used. This is to account for the additional effect machine guns would have on infantry and AT guns.

These changes virtually limit the use of HE versus armor to the Stationary Fire Phase and acts as cover fire by making possible a disruption of an enemy's defensive fire. With the more severe DRM, HE fired at armor in the moving fire phase will be mostly ineffective (a 3 or less being the best available shot). Players should note the facing of disrupted units, especially if they move.

The Optional Rules are basically just extensions of the advanced rules and I strongly suggest that they be used. The Range Attenuation rule definitely favors the German armor and displays the superiority that German weaponry had over Soviet weaponry. It may seem a little slow at first, but when used a few times, it becomes second nature.

The 60 Degrees Full Frontal Face rule indicates the increased effectiveness of armor as the angle of the shot is increased. Just as it was common to slope armor to increase its effective depth, approaching known enemy positions at an angle was also a common tactic.

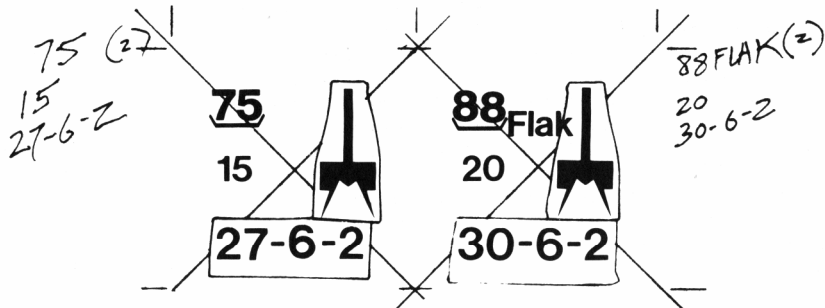
Overruns should have been an Advanced Game rule rather than an optional one, and players should definitely use it.

The Soviet Suicide Assault represents the occasional mad-dened dash to overtake an enemy position with almost total disregard for casualties that the German army had to deal with.

The game represents a variety of encounters covering a span of four years. Because of this, I had some problems coming up with

a map. My early intentions were to use three maps; one representing open terrain, one representing close terrain, and one in between. This did not seem very feasible. Not only would it cost too much, but by manipulating set-up and entry hexes for the forces, one map could take on different aspects. A hill that was important in one scenario was useless in another. There are some spots that seem good in almost every scenario. Hex 1517 is one of these. This is a great spot for a Panther or Tiger to cover units coming from the North or South. Otherwise, the terrain is generally balanced, with some nice spots upon which to put the big German guns, some places to sneak by these big guns, and some places to muster a blood-curdling charge across open terrain.

THE UNITS--With such a wide variety of armor available to both sides, some lines had to be drawn on what was to be included and what was not. Units that were common and of the same type but with an incremental difference in either gun effectiveness or armor were included, such as the T34 a, b, and c. Along with these were some not-so-common, but interesting, unit types such as the SU 100 and Elephant.



The Light tanks, the PzII and BT-7 represent early models of tanks from both countries, each originating from the 1930's. Though the BT-7 was phased out of Soviet tank production in 1942, the Pz II, in various models, was in production up until 1944. It was primarily used as a recon vehicle in the later years, when it had been totally outclassed as a competent fighting vehicle.

The German high command was familiar with the BT-7 as the German and Soviet armies had actually worked together on armor design in the 1930's. The classic failure of German Intelligence was when the German army was taken by total surprise by the appearance of the T34 and KV1, the latter of which, along with the KV11, were awesomely heavy tanks for 1941.

The KV 11 was not included in the game as it was manufactured in small numbers and was primarily used in an infantry support role. Anyone who had access to a picture of this beast is urged to take a look at it. It is an incredibly monstrous and terrifying piece of machinery.

The T34's and KV 1's were armed with a Russian 76.2mm gun. Though this gun was eventually outclassed by the German 75 and 88mm guns, for the period of 1941--early 1942, this was a weapon capable of dealing death blows to any German Tank.

This cannot be said for the early German Medium tanks, the Px IIIe and J, and the IVd. These tanks, with a 50mm and a very short 75mm gun respectively, could meet such lightweights as the BT-7 on equal terms, but were but totally ineffective against

the T34's and KV's. The time came for the German army to develop some heavies.

END OF PART 1

I really hate to do this, but the piece is just too long. Catch the rest in INTERPLAY 3. TH

This is a game
I designed while taking my
afternoon bath.
I call it...

One Tub Bilge

A. The true flavor of the game is best captured by using plastic boats in your tub, but I've thoughtfully designed a map and game counters for those of you who (like so many wargamers), have a hard time finding a bathtub.

B. Both ships have an unlimited MA. Movement is simultaneous and constant. The ships take turns firing and US always shoots first.

One six-sided die is required to resolve combat in the absence of real splashes of water (see C. SEA CRT). All hits scored against COMMIES kill, any hits scored against US cause serious damage.

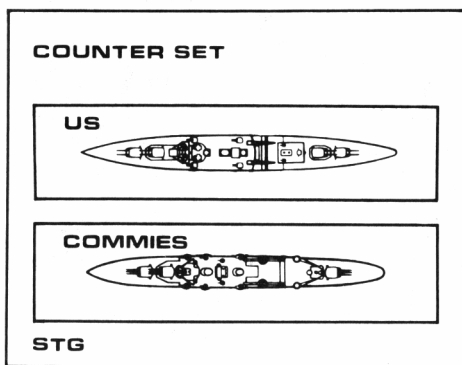
by Some Turkey

D. Designer's Notes:

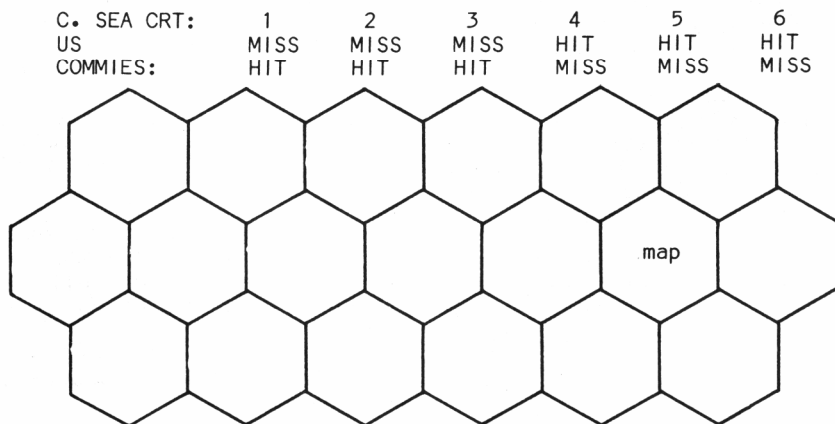
Players should note, that while I always strive for absolute realism, I did have to make some small allowances for playability. Upcoming variations and expansions include the MicroClone BIRDBATH BULGE, the tensely exciting (and very clean), HOT TUB BILGE and, finally, the monster game SWIMMING POOL BILGE.

Also, be on the lookout for our new play-by-mail system, POSTAL BILGE.

I, of course, designed it all and thought up all of the creative titles. You're welcome, fans!



counters



news...

CONVENTIONS:

GEN CON EAST: July 23-26; P.O. Box 139, Middletown, NJ, 07748; \$1,000 TFT tournament Stellar Conquest, Command at Sea, Micro tournament; Metagaming attends.

NAN CON: July 31-August 2; Stephen C. Nanny; Nan's Toys and Games; 1385 Galleria Mall, 5015 Westheimer, Houston, TX, 77056; TFT; Metagaming attends.

GEN CON XIV: August 13-16; Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI, 53147; UNICORN GOLD tournament; Metagaming attends.

MASSCON 81: August 22-23; Dennis Wang; 11 Dickinson St., Amherst, MA, 01002; TFT, MELEE, ROMMEL'S PANZERS.

DENVENTION 11: September 3-7; Bill Reece; Box 11547, Denver, CO, 80211; Science Fiction; Metagaming attends.

Glasc VI: September 4-7; pre-register for \$6, \$8 at the door; L. Daniel; 20550 Wyandotte St., Canoga Park, CA; at Student Union, California State University, Northridge.

Dragon Flight: September 12-14; FRP and wargames; The Brass Dragon Society, Box 33872, Seattle, WA, 98133; (206) 364-8383; at Seattle University.

ARMADILLOCON 111: October...; Metagaming, Box 15346, Austin, TX, 78761; \$100 TFT tournament, STELLAR CONQUEST, Micros, Science Fiction; Metagaming attends.

VOLCON 11: October?; Ken Peterson; 3605 Tieton Dr., Yakima, WA, 98902; (509) 452-8838; Science Fiction, Games.

ALPHA CON 111: November 14-15; Bill Freebairn; 310 N. Sunset Dr., Ithaca, NY, 14850; at Ithaca Ramada Inn; Films, Games.

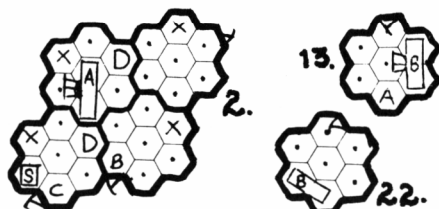
MISC:

VIKING!: For those who want to contribute to sustaining continued acquisition of data from the surviving Viking Lander: Viking Fund, 357 Saratoga Ave., Santa Clara, CA, 95050.

DRAGON: While they last, send SASE for a free glossy print of the SILVER DRAGON. Ask about UNICORN GOLD. Metagaming, Box 15346, Austin, TX, 78761.

ERRATA:

INTERPLAY: The following illustrations were omitted from Vagabond thief in INTERPLAY #1. The numbers indicate which line they belong to in the adventure.



SECURITY STATION: The following paragraphs replace the ones in the booklet. Our thanks to Walter Rabuck and Stuart Weiser.

17. You come to a 3-way intersection. You can go west (184), east (265), or up the stairs to the north (90).

96. You are in Room 303, Project Coordination (see map below). Roll 1 die. On a result of 1-3, go to (339). On a result of 4-5, go to (318). On 6 go to (52).

FURY OF THE NORSEMEN: The following set-up rules should be added to section 3.3.

Cavalry - Cavalry units are placed within two hexes of the keep.

Militia - Militia units are placed in or within one hex of any building hex.

METAGAMES

COMMAND AT SEA

LEVEL: Very advanced play for 2 or more age 18 and up.

PLAYABILITY: Complex learning, rapid play system. 3-8 hours playtime.

COMPONENTS: 24 ship counters, rules, 24 ship data cards, 3 turn guages, scenario map and sheet. Requires 20-sided die.

COMMAND AT SEA is a scale simulation of World War II naval battles. Units are single ships. Each ship is defined by its guns, compartments and combat factors.

You play by acting as commander of a ship or task group with a mission. You plot the moves, you fire the guns, you assess the damage.

1/4800 scale.

THE AIR EATERS STRIKE BACK

LEVEL: Advanced competition for two, age 14 and up.

PLAYABILITY: Moderate complexity. 3-6 hours playtime.

COMPONENTS: map, 240 counters, rules, die.

THE AIR EATERS STRIKE BACK is a strategic simulation of the alien invasion of the inner solar system in the 21st century. Turns are three months, planets move in orbit and spaceships move from planet to planet.

Separate ground actions occur on maps of Mercury, Earth, Mars, the Venusian poles, Ganymede, Callisto, Europa and Io - all in the same scale.

Counters represent mother-ships, novaships, escorts, fighters, quasarships, corvettes, transports and FTL units. A variety of ground units are also provided.

Rules cover production, technology, teleportation, combat and movement.

HITLER'S WAR

LEVEL: Advanced competition for 2 or 3 players age 15 and up.

PLAYABILITY: Moderate Complexity. Scenarios from 1 to 5 hours of play.

COMPONENTS: Map, 360 counters, record sheets, rules.

HITLER'S WAR is a grand-strategic level game of theatre operations in World War II. Turns represent four months and the map represents the European, Mediterranean, Baltic and Russian theatres.

Units are the armies, army groups, fleets and air forces; types include Infantry, Mechanised, Amphibious, Paratroop, Submarine, ASW, Bomber, Fighter, Air Defense, Missile and Atomic Bomb.

Rules cover morale, production, technology, continued advance, winter, supply, sea movement, lend lease and neutral countries.

TROJAN WAR

LEVEL: Average complexity for two players 12 and up.

PLAYABILITY: Scenarios play in 1 1/2 to 4 hours of rapid action.

COMPONENTS: Map, 240 counters, rules booklet.

TROJAN WAR is true to its source, **THE ILLIAD**. The map represents the area described by Homer. The play counters represent 56 Greek and 51 Trojan named heroes of three classes, plus chariots and status markers.

Rules cover combat with bow and spear, chariots, rendering aid, rallying and intervention of the gods. There are eleven scenarios covering different stages of siege plus a campaign game of the entire eleven years.

6.95 from...

Metagaming

Box 15346
Austin, TX 78761

letters...

I'm happy to see that Metagaming has started a new magazine, however I will refrain from subscribing until I'm sure INTERPLAY is printing what I want. To put it bluntly, what I want to see is TFT related material. I like strategic articles, variants, and designer notes about all games, but the game I play most by far is TFT. Because of the very nature of TFT, there is plenty to write about. I think a good way to handle this would be to have a TFT column which would be a collection of ideas from many TFT players. Instead of having to write a long article to be published in INTERPLAY the readers would be able to send in small ideas. Some examples: a new monster, a trap, a non-player character, an unusual magic item, a new spell or talent, etc. The column would be a good way to spread novel new ideas. However, it would be a good idea to have the TFT editor check each entry to make sure it is consistent with the TFT system.

Keep INTERPLAY as a blatant house organ. I read other gaming magazines which do a better job of covering other game companies than INTERPLAY can, so don't waste your space on things like reviews or articles about other company's games. INTERPLAY no.1 is a good start and if the next issue is as good you will be seeing by subscription check shortly.

Anybody remember STARMAN? Well I do! I've been waiting for its release since it was mentioned in "Designer's Notebook" in TSG no. 17. (That's three years ago!) I thought the game was a lost cause until Guy McLimore mentioned it (now STARLEADER) in "Crossroads: Cidri." If you guys need help chaining Howard Thompson to a typewriter, I've got lots of chain and a couple locks...

Bob Hensle
Palouse, WA

You have some good suggestions, Ron has already begun to assemble submitted questions and ideas for an upcoming issue.

Don't worry. INTERPLAY will remain as it is. I'm very happy to hear that that's just the way so many of you folks want it.

Look for STARLEADER before February. TH

Thank you very much for sending me the first copy of your magazine. I was pleased to see it because I felt quite detached from Metagaming after it sold THE SPACE GAMER. My check for a subscription is enclosed.

Your format and approach to the magazine are both very good. I approve of the designer's introductions to their games and am always interested to see what Howard Thompson has to write about Metagaming's progress. The inclusion of a micro-microquest was most welcome and I'm anxious to try it.

The letter in re SECURITY STATION perplexed me. I found SS to be the most challenging of the programmed labyrinths and one which gobbles up even the most powerful characters with regularity. I have lost at least four characters in it to date and am arming some more to face it even though I quake with fear at the prospect.

I have an article idea which you might like to consider. For the past several months I have been using a simplified version of TFT in my practice. Specifically, I've been using it to modify the behavior of an overly aggressive 10 year old. The ease of understandability of the game system, the rigidity of options, and the basic simplicity of play make it possible to do this. In addition the identification of the patient with the characters created and the situations encountered serve as a cathartic and as a way in which hostile feelings can be released in a benign environment. The results have been quite successful.

To submit an article on such a subject to a professional journal is out of the question. I would be merely reporting on a case study and not on a controlled experiment. Still, the technique is effective and might be worth while for sharing with other Metagamers who are in similar professions. If you like the idea I'll write it up for you in non-technical language.

I'm looking forward to future issues of INTERPLAY.

Mark Schulzinger,
Clinical Psychologist,
Springfield, MO

Sounds great! I can't wait to see the article. TH

Please send me two copies of your game A FISTFUL OF TURKEYS, for which I enclose my check in the amount of \$3.90 (2 X \$1.95). Although I learned of the game from Richard Berg's Review of Games, when I reviewed a friend's copy, I found it to be an incisive pastiche--a fun and interesting piece.

Please advise me if you have any other items like this (or any very old items), as I've something of a collection and am always interested in acquiring such items.

Darwin P. Bromley
Chicago, IL

I just finished playing SECURITY STATION. In my opinion, it is well worth the little bit of money that I paid for it. Although I had anticipated encountering some radiation--mutated creatures, it proved to be a very satisfactory adventure scenario.

There is one small problem, paragraph 17 directs the gamer to paragraphs 184, 256, and 90. Paragraph 256 is not another 3-way insertion, as it should be, but the characteristics of a

locked security game. I came across this flaw early on and it produced a fair amount of confusion.

The first issue of INTERPLAY was great. I'm looking forward to all the upcoming publications announced in it. As a "House Organ", it is a very effective skill. I haven't been this excited about gaming since I started.

Kyle O Beatty
Swanton, OH

Thanks. The errata section in this issue should solve your problem with SECURITY STATION. TH

I received Issue No. 1 of INTERPLAY last thursday. At first I was surprised. I thought that I had been sent someone else's copy. I have since come to the conclusion that I was sent a copy in order to obtain my opinions of it. Correct or not, here they are. I hope someone isn't missing their copy.

I knew from the outset that Metagaming was going to publish another magazine after they sold THE SPACE GAMER, but I was too polite to send a letter of protest at the sale to them. I must now comment that Metagaming is starting out better with INTERPLAY than TSG. It obviously costs less to publish than TSG, but the quality seems about equal.

I like the Editorial column; I always do, even if the rest of the magazine is crummy. But I also liked the Coming Distractions (nice touch on the title, Trace, Howard, or whoever thought of it) column; keep it. I also liked the Crossroads: Cidri column, and the choice of editor. But I think that I have discovered an error. On the inside front cover, Ron Hopkins is listed as TFT editor; but in the index and inside the magazine, Guy W. McLimore is listed as writing the TFT column. Who is it, please?

I also liked the articles, especially the Micro-Microquest.

I also the banter between Red (John Galt) Darnigame and Some Turkey, Esquire. Please carry some more, if any more happens.

I would like to see some short reader fiction, too. Not more than 4000 words per issue. I would also suggest that you set a base rate for recompensing submissions that are accepted. Say 1/5 to 1/8 cent per word. Then, the recompense is given as credit towards subscriptions of INTERPLAY or purchase of Metagaming products.

I am almost certain that the runes in THE LORDS OF UNDEREARTH game and on page 29 of INTERPLAY No.1 are a form of cipher translated onto cirth. I do know that "dhbgich" **ARPIK**, translates into "Orfin," the author of the cipher (acknowledged on the inside front cover of INTERPLAY), but that is as far as I have gotten. Maybe by next issue.

I would like to see at least one Designer's Introduction in each issue, if possible. Considering Metagaming's increased production and the advent of Metagames, it shouldn't be too difficult.

INTERPLAY has the spark, and is near the flame. A very little extra work will have a fire that will be very difficult to extinguish or dim. I hope that the extra work is put in.

Tracy Soldan
Colville, WA

Just to clear things up, Guy has been Metagaming's TFT editor and Ron is INTERPLAY's TFT editor.

TH

As spokesman for all insectoids, I have the privilege of sending you this letter of protest to the claims brought forward by one Red (John Galt) Darnigame and one Some Turkey, Esq., in your May-June 1981 issue, in which both of the above mentioned persons claimed to have been the one to have invented the hexagon.

We insects invented the hexagon.

Take a good look at the beehive or wasp's nest and note the shape of the cells therein. For those who do not have easy access to either: the cells are hexagonally shaped.

We insects are extremely incensed by the claims of the two above-mentioned upstarts who claim the invention of the hexagon. Indeed, some of our less-civilized species, and some of our more warlike species, i.e., wasps and primitive ants, are on the verge of launching a jihad (holy war) against these two detractors. The only foreseeable way in which they may be withstrained is if both of the above mentioned detractors publish withdrawals of their claims in INTERPLAY. We shall wait until September 1 to receive their withdrawals; if we have not received their withdrawals by then, we shall have no choice but to declare war on Darnigame and Esquire Turkey. The ultimatum is hereby issued.

(For those with insatiable curiosity, we read of their claims in an issue of INTERPLAY owned by Tracy Soldan after it fell asleep late one night reading it.)

One final note: we in no way claim to be the first to put hexagons on a board to create the first wargame mapboard; Darnigame and Esquire Turkey can squabble all they want over that distinction.

Untranslatable Scratchings
Queen Bee
Hive #29-3958-295002

We passed this to Some Turkey.
(response below)

Dear Scratchings,

BUG OFF!

signed, Some Turkey

Some letters were not so easy to typeset...

ታዲሳ፡ ለብሃላላ፡ የላታ፡ የተደ፡ ጸደ፡ ሃዳደ፡ ጸብሐሃ፡
 1. ታላሁ፡ ዋላባላታ፡ ሃላሃ፡
 ላላ፡ ህጸ፡ ለላታተኩ፡ ላሁ፡ የተ፡ ሃተሃባባላታ፡ ሃተላታላላ፡ ህባሃተተ፡ ጸደ፡
 ጸብሐሃ፡ የላታ፡ ሃላላ፡ THIS IS NOT ORFIN IT IS GUS፡
 ላላ፡ የተ፡ ህጸሃ፡ ላሁ፡ ዋባላላ፡ ላሁ፡ የተ፡ ላላሃሃተኩ፡ ጸደ፡ ሃዳደ፡ የላታ፡ ሃላላ፡
 T IS A GRAYT GAYM፡
 1. ሃላላ፡ ዋላታ፡ ላላ፡ ሃተኩ፡ 1ኩ፡ የተ፡ ጸብሐሃ፡ ላላ፡ ህጸ፡ ላባተሃተ፡ ላሁ፡
 ዋባላላ፡ ላሁ፡ የተ፡ ላላሃተኩ፡
 ላላላ፡ ሃዳደ፡ ጸደ፡ ባተሃ፡ ታላላላ፡ 1ኩተተ፡
 ላተ፡ ለብሃላላ፡ የላታ፡ የተሃ፡ 1ኩተ፡ ላ፡ ታተ፡ ላላ፡ ሃላሃ፡ የተሃ፡ ሃላላሃተ፡
 ላተኩ፡ ላ፡ ታተሃ፡ ባተሃ፡ ባተሃላታ፡ ላ፡ ላተላሃተ፡

ላላሃ፡ ላተሃተሃላላ
 ላተላላላላላላተ

• ላዲሃ፡

1. ታላላላ፡ ላተ፡ 1. ታላሁ፡ ሃላሃተ፡ ህ፡ ጸተተ፡
 ላሁ፡ ህ፡ ጸብሐሃ፡ ህተ፡ 1. ሃተተ፡ ሃተሃተ፡ ሃተሃተ፡ ህ፡
 ጸብሐሃ፡ የላላ፡ ሃላሃ፡ ላሁ፡ ህ፡ ሃተሃተ፡ የላሃላላ፡ ሃተሃተ፡
 የላላ፡ የሃላሃተ፡ 1. ሃተሃተ፡ ሃተሃተ፡ ህተ፡ ህ፡ ሃ፡ ሃ፡
 ላተተ፡ ህላ፡ ህተ፡ 1. የላላ፡ የላሃ፡ ሀተ፡ ባተሃተ፡ ህ፡
 1ኩተተ፡ ላሁ፡ ሀ፡ የላላ፡ ሃ፡ ሃተ፡ ታተ፡ ታተሃተ፡

ላተሃ

ህ፡

ባላ፡ ጸብሐሃ፡ ህ፡ ባተተ፡ ታተተ፡ 1. ታላሁ፡ ላተ
 የላላ፡ ህላ፡ ጸብሐሃ፡ ላተ፡ ላተተ፡ ላተተ፡
 ባተ፡ ሃተ፡ የላሃተ፡

ላተሃ

Metagaming

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