

AHIKS WEST

Volume III

July 1971

Number 5

* * * * *
* "AHIKS WEST" is the official publication of the Western Region of *
* the Avalon Hill Intercontinental Kriegspiel Society. AHIKS is a *
* society of mature adults dedicated to the enjoyment and improvement *
* of historical simulation map gaming. Founded in 1966, the society *
* has members scattered throughout the United States and across the *
* globe, and is independent of the Avalon Hill Corporation. *
* "AHIKS WEST" is edited by Ted Holcombe, Western Regional Director, *
* 10012 Valley Blvd Apt 38, El Monte Calif 91751; and is published with *
* the assistance of Wayne Harris, 10761 Andy St, Cerritos Calif 90701. *
* * * * *

LEADERSHIP CRISIS THREATENS AHIKS!

SEE "DO YOU CARE WHAT HAPPENS"

PAGE 2

DO YOU CARE WHAT HAPPENS TO AHIKS?

It is election time again, and (as is so often the case in volunteer organizations) there is a shortage of candidates. In fact as of last night (July 21st) when I talked to Bob Johnson on the phone, there were no candidates at all. Not a single one!

Bob has pretty well abandoned the hope of finding a new editor for the Kommandeur, and presently it is anticipated that the December issue will be the last. Meanwhile the number of US Regional Directors has decreased from five in 1970 to two directors today. Furthermore, unless someone is willing to take over the Western Region (See "A Word of Explanation" at the end of this issue), that will soon be down to one. So much for the Regional Newsletters. However that is not what is worrying us.

True, we've all enjoyed the K and the newsletters. True, the K did a great deal towards keeping the Society together. True, the regional newsletters added a great deal of personalization and comradeship to the society. But the fact remains that no one wants to do the work, and, after all, the K and the newsletters are not absolutely essential.

What worries us is that we don't have an ICRKmeister, and without an ICRKmeister AHIKS is kaput! Now everyone of you have enjoyed the fruits of others each time you have used an ICRK, and a case could be made that each of you have an obligation to put in some time as an officer in return. (The alternative would be to raise the dues and/or establish fees high enough so that we could pay our officers. Would you rather pay say \$2 for each game assignment and maybe \$1 for a ruling?) But I am digressing.

Now I was the ICRKmeister back in 1967, and really the job isn't that demanding. True, it does take a sizeable chunk of time to prepare and duplicate new master ICRKS, but once that is done each game assignment only takes about five minutes at the very most. Now in the past each ICRKmeister has made his own master ICRKs as they were needed. However, there is no reason why someone else couldn't make up a few master ICRKs, relieving the ICRKmeister of that chore.

The prime consideration to keep in mind is that the more workers we have, the easier it will be on each of them. This in turn will permit them to stay in office longer, and in the long run you'd get better services. It has been the concentration of too much work on the good officers we did have which has virtually forced those officers to call it quits sooner or later. Now by reducing the scope of the workload by minimizing the publication aspect and cutting out the frills, we have pretty much eliminated the impossible-to-fill offices.

But we still need about eight officers in order to make a go of it. I figure we need a President to handle correspondence with non-members and applications; a Judge to handle rulings; an ICRKmeister to make game assignments and at least two assistant ICRKmeisters to make up new master ICRKS; a treasurer to collect dues; an editor to type an occasional newsletter containing important notices, rulings, and a hard-to-find-opponent wanted column; and lastly a publisher to arrange the printing and distribution of the newsletter. With this we could continue to exist. With more workers assisting these officers (for instance Regional Directors assisting the President, regional editors assisting the editor, regional publishers assisting the publisher, etc) we could exist quite comfortably. IN THIS SORT OF A SYSTEM, NO ONE WOULD BE OVERWORKED. SO, HOW ABOUT IT? WILL YOU DO YOUR FAIR SHARE? WRITE TO BOB JOHNSON, PO BOX 134, WHIPPANY, NEW JERSEY 07981!!!

What I Am Doing - Gene Gardner

I got back from my vacation a couple of weeks ago. Went to Texas, Houston, Dallas, and El Paso (Gene lives in Idaho), thence to New Mexico and across the border to old Mexico. All in all it was about 4000 miles. While I was just brousing (?) through a toy store on vacation, guess what I found: right, Lufywaffe! Now you know that no real wargamer will pass up the chance to pick up same. So I had no choice but to tell my wife that I would save a bundle by buying it now, rather than waiting to buy it when I get home through the mails. The devil made me do it!

I think it is a great game. Easy to learn and easy to play. I played my first game (solo), and the second day I had it. I agree with S&T that it would be a drag to play the advanced games, but why play them? Because they're there? Bull! As in Anzio, one can have as much enjoyment playing the mini-games with none of the fuss or bother. And the mini games havn't any paperwork to worry about. Furthermore, the games only take about 60 to 90 minutes. It's really a good game if one can just stay away from all the advanced jazz that adds nothing to the fun or tactics, but only becomes a real draaag.

I've got 6 games going right now. Two are monitored games, and the other four are regular games. I have a match with Richard Netter, BOB; he took the first match as the Germans. We're now down to the 22PM turn and I've just been stopped cold at the river Muese. The tide is turning in his favor; he'll win the second one too.

I have three games with Mike Malone. In S-Grad as the German I suffered 55% losses and lost that one. We are testing a game of PB situation 2 and learning a lot about it. We plan to play situation 4 when this TSG is finished. Sure is a good game. As the Germans in a match of Anzio I just ~~did~~ won a game that was so close that it wasn't decided until the last move was made, and even then we got a ruling from the judge! Mike pulled a brilliant, sneaky, low down trick and almost snatched victory out of the jaws of defeat. Ya gotta watch that guy all the time man, or he'll be knocking at your back door while you're looking out the front! As the allies I'm now trying to break out of Salerno.

I'm monitoring a game of 1914. Steve Hanson and Chip Pharr as the Germans, and Glen Hertz and Joe Drummond as the French. Nothing to report as yet as we're just now setting up the units etc. We're using most of the variants, including hidden movement and inverted counter.

Lastly I am involved in a '8' man game of D-Day. This is also just starting and also includes a host of variants. Cheers - Gene.

MIDWAY MONITORING - Wayne Harris (10761 Andy St, Cerritos Ca 90701) is willing to monitor two midway games and possibly one Guadalcanal game. If you'd like to take advantage of the offer, drop him a note.

NUCLEAR DISTRUCTION - Dennis Hall (1431 Oxford Dr, Anchorage Alaska 99503) has three ND games already under way and will start another. See article in Dec K or in Jan AW, or write to Dennis for more information.

Change of Address: Gene Gardner, Box E, Inkom Idaho 83245.

DIPLOMACY PLAYERS and FACE-TO-FACE PLAYERS NOTE: DIPCON IV will be held in San Diego on Aug 26th-29th. It should be great. For full details write to Larry Peery, 816 24th St, San Diego Calif 92101 (ph 714-233-8321).

Where Am I? - Pete Menconi

Wish I knew! At the moment I am split between a wife, three game sets, a cat, finals, an article on artillery tactics, finals, and a summer job.

West Sacramento is a nice little bedroom community tacked onto one end of the state capitol. About a year ago, I finished three years with the army which gave me a curious mixture of experience in combat engineers, artillery, missiles, and nuclear weapons. I am currently looking at the light at the end of the educational tunnel: three quarters to go for a BS in Civil Engineering.

I work for the Division of Highways in the Summers - this one will probably find me living in Somis (Southern Calif).

Beyond games, my main interests are motorcycling (just riding, no racing) and camping. However, school eats so much of my time that I cannot devote as much of my time to my hobbies as I would like. (like maybe 100%.)

At the moment my first AK game finds me engineering an unparalleled disaster for the Brittish (I'm Brittish!). Jim Gleckler is proving to be an expert Rommel and has pushed me out of Alam Halfa escarpments, but he has run out of supplies. This wouldn't be so bad except that it's only August '41! As the German in P-Blitz #7, I hope to be firmly entrenched on hill 129 by the time that sly slav, Larry McDonald, reads this. My first arty position on hill 135 gave too much woods cover for Russian infantry, but 129 is pretty open. I find my main problem with the game is remembering the severe restrictions on arty fire: primitive, absolutely primitive! - Pete

The Continuing Saga of the Private Wars of Bob Garbisch

S-Grad: With the Russian front, especially my central area of command, rapidly deteriorating under the astonishing and brutal armoured fist of the German Panzer Divisions, and the close coordinated support of the Luftwaffe, we have been forced to patiently pull back and utilize what reserves we have for daming up the nazi flood. With potential expectation of receiving fresh reinforcements soon, our hopes are still high. However, the price of defeat must be paid, and Stalin selected me as his scapegoat. So I have been relieved of command and replaced by Bob Garbisch's next in command, Carl Nelson. (ie Bob had to resign because of other pressures and Carl took his place, now if I can just find someone to take over my place as monitor - Ted)

Midway: After the series of exchanged air attacks, a restfull lull was established while both sides seeked the other's weak spots. The next US airstrike struck with the determination to end the crippled Hiryu's potential as an aircraft carrier. Despite a fighter's screen, the US attack succeeded in sinking the Hiryu. Meanwhile, I had lost contact with the US fleet and had to wait to return the favor.

With the afternoon now in it's declining stage, a decision was reached to strike at Midway Island instead of the US fleet, and strive to eliminate his sole land base. Contact with the US fleet was regained, but we decided to stick with our original plans. While flying enroute to strike at Midway, static reports were coming in of a massive all-out air strike at our main carrier fleet! What a twist of fate if fortune should provide us with a victory over Midway only to be denied a safe haven to land on! (Continued next page)

Frank Nau (8145 Delgany Ave, Playa Del Rey Calif 90291) has transfered to THE Western Region. He's 46, married (no children), and owns S-Grad, D-Day, AK, Bulge, Guadal, 1914, and S&T games.

The US struck like an enraged eagle! The carriers Akagi and Kaga, while under pressing attack, succeeded in defending their precious bases and suffered only a single hit each. At the same time, the Chikuma and the Soryu also suffered a hit each. Alas, however, the Suzuya took a double blow, and now we had two ships severely damaged! While this was happening, our brave pilots struck the unprepared Midway defenses, and succeeded, in one bold stroke, in eliminating the entire island defensive value! The way was now open for our invasion fleet to strike!

But first both sides hurriedly prepared for one last strike before the day ended. The US attacked first by concentrating on the crippled Soryu and Suzuya. Both were mercilessly sunk! Meanwhile, we attacked his fleet in a unique all out effort aimed at destroying as much as possible and hopefully sinking at least one aircraft carrier. With the fast fading light our planes were only partially successful. While reducing another third of the US fleet to a crippled state, his carriers were successful in avoiding serious damage. Heavy air-losses were expected and received, however the sinking of at least one aircraft carrier would have been worth it!

With the concealing darkness the US fleet was able to successfully avoid our night search patrols and our initial day air searches. But also for him, his crippled ships were spotted, and the Atlanta, Astoria, and Northampton were soon reduced to nothing! Sooner or later we shall find the remaining US ships, now reduced to the only the damaged Enterprise, Hornet, and Vincennes. In the meantime, our flagship - the Atago, has begun the invasion of Midway.

AK: "Der Tag" has arrived! Operation "Powercharge" (Phase A) has been put into effect". With these opening orders direct from Gen Rommel, his elite Panzer Divisions and heavily protected Luftwaffe attacked! The entire Italian armored Divisions were also thrown into the cauldron! But alas, his expected Italian infantry "cannon fodder" failed to show up as previously arranged with the Italian transport naval commander. One Italian division tried to land at Bengasi, only to discover that it was occupied by the British and not friendly Italians! The welcome they received was warm, but not like they had expected! Two other Italian divisions were delayed due to lack of transport ships... thus Rommel's carefully laid plans lacked the essential close infantry support and his ill-fated Panzers fell into our carefully concealed anti-tank fire! Our new 25pdr AT literally tore his old Panzer II's and III's apart! Meanwhile the Italian "iron coffin" M-13's suffered the same reverses.

Rommel's plans called for a heavy Armour/Infantry breakthrough at a weak Infantry area, which unfortunately for him was flanked by strong mobile armored units and equally strong defensive positions. A modern "Cannae" slowly developed! The same devastating results that Hannibal inflicted on the Romans were duplicated by the British now maneuvering their entire armored strength, backed up with close coordinated support by infantry, artillery, and air units, in a giant double envelopment series of attacks. The result was a battlefield littered with the remains of the once proud axis units, and the surrender of the Germans.

Larry Fong is alive and well at 704 Alice St, Oakland Ca 94607. John Hulten Jr did join as our first Hawaiian member, and since then we've added our second Pacific Island member: HARRY A POOL Jr. Harry's address is: c/o UNIVAC, Box 1743, APO San Francisco Ca 96555; but don't let that fool you. He's working on the abm system at Kwajalein, Marshall Islands. HARRY has "owned and played every AN game that has come out", is 26 and engaged to be married. Welcome aboard Harry and happy gaming.

AT THE CONVENTION - by Ted Holcombe

Saturday morning the thought of a day filled with gaming and socializing enticed me out of bed at an ungodly hour. I threw a few things into my briefcase (which was to double as an overnight bag), grabbed an armful of games, and I was off.

After a brief stop at the local post office to deposit wargaming correspondence, I headed for the LA International airport where I was to pick up Bill Heim. At the airport (a singularly huge facility as one might expect) I parked my car and took the tram to the PSA terminal.

Just about the time Bill's flight was due to arrive, I realized that I couldn't remember exactly what he looked like, and that we hadn't coordinated recognition signals. So I scanned the arrivals very carefully. There were a great number of blind children on the flight (apparently coming home for the summer), but I didn't see anyone carrying wargames, or looking abandoned and muttering "Where's that blankety-blank Holcombe?" So I resorted to the paging system. When this failed to produce any response, my mind filled with visions of poor Bill lost in the immensity of the airport and being forced to take the next flight back to Oakland.

On the slim hope that he might have missed his flight and would come in on the next one, I bought a paper and prepared for a long seige. When the next flight started to unload, I positioned myself by the gate (perched atop the rail), and continued to read the paper. Thus it was that Bill found me, recognizing me from an earlier gathering at Dick's.

As we drove up the coast, Bill explained that he had made it in time for his flight, but that the blind children had pre-empted his space. He also remarked that the PSA officials had promised to contact me on the delay. When I told him that they hadn't, he was understandably upset. After one brief stop for lunch, and another at a store to pick up liquid supplies, we deposited ourselves on Carl's doorstep. (Carl Nelson and his lovely wife hosted the convention at their house near the Pacific Ocean in the city of Oxnard (that's on the coast between LA & Santa Barb).

We were the first arrivals (and as it was to turn out, the only arrivals), so we decided on a triangular format where each of us would play one game against each of the others, for a total of three games at a time. This way we avoided the need to wait while an opponent made his move, as we could spend that time making our own move on the other game.

Carl and Bill started a Bulge game which lasted all the way through Sat and Sun. Being totally unfamiliar with that game, I won't attempt to describe it except to say that it seemed like Carl, who commanded the US forces, was smiling more often than Bill.

Bill and I first faced off in a Midway game, followed by a Stalingrad game. In Midway I was the US player, in Stalingrad the Russian. Meanwhile Carl and I faced off first at Waterloo, then Luftwaffe, and finally at Midway (I was the french, germans, and japanese players respectively).

In the Waterloo game I took full advantage of my through knowledge of the game (as opposed to Carl's inexperience), to secure a glorious victory for Napoleon. Carl made the mistake of trying to hold the ~~WIA~~ open ground. By the time he realized the error of his ways and retreated behind the woods and hills of the Quatre Bras defensive position, he was too weak to hold it. In my opinion, the AA will always win, but only if they make full use of terrain and of the movement advantage provided by the Neville-Quatre Bras- Mont St Jean roads to maximize their attacks. That's right, attacks! As the AA in my PBM games, there have been turns where I have had virtually every unit under my command participating in one battle or another. I've won the games very quickly and very decisively simply by fighting more battles at better odds than did my opponent.

Carl decided to get his revenge at Luftwaffe. Since I had never even seen the game before whereas Carl had played a solitaire game, it was only fair. Anyway, after spending my usual long time trying to decide upon the optimum setup (I'm a perfectionist, which means I'm a terribly slow face-to-face player), I gave up and settled for something that looked fairly flexible. But as the US bombers arrived under Carl's command, I became aware of many improvements I could have made, and I moaned and groaned that all was lost. Carl, however, was not convinced, so we continued the play. I decided to avoid attacking the bombers with fighter escorts (so as to avoid releasing the escort), and concentrated my fighters against the unprotected bombers. When the last bomber had dropped its load, it turned out that Carl was one short of the US victory requirement, so the game was a draw.

I could go on and on, but let it suffice that we had a great time. I wish to thank Mrs Nelson for the great meals and for putting us up overnight; and I cannot begin to thank Carl for his fine performance as host (which included such fringe benefits as Victory at Sea music and his scale model collection, as well as downright excellent hospitality). My only regret is that more of you couldn't have been there to enjoy it.

SHOULD AHIKS GO PUBLIC?

Ahiks West thatis. I have received several requests for subscriptions to AW as a result of a notice someone put in the Avalon Hill General. I have turned every one of them down because of the addresses and perhaps other semi-confidential information contained herein. In fact, I haven't even sent AW to associate members for the same reason. However, now that you have all been notified of the requests, unless someone voices an objection to doing so, I will open AW to limited (at my discretion) public access for both current and back issues.

I have received an application from John Pergrin, PO Box 9874, San Diego Ca 92109. John is 29, a probation officer, and has played wargames since 1960. I'll hold the application while I talk to John about whether or not he'd like to reconsider in view of the current Ahiks ~~considerations~~ situation. If not, he will be our 26th full status regional member.

A WORD OF EXPLANATION - Ted Holcombe

My AHIKS career started while I was a graduate student at Cal. At that time I was the ICRKmeister, and some of the ICRKS I made back in '67-'68 are still in use today (look for the initials JTH).

The army put an end to this by drafting me and sending me to basic training, AIT, and OCS where I wasn't able to do much of anything for AHIKS. But upon completion of OCS, I was again in a position to help brother Dick out. Dick as you all know was understandably floundering with a combination of personal problems, Presidential duties, Regional Director duties, Stalingrad Tourney work, and Pacific Diplodour woes. Thus it was that I published my first newsletter last July.

Since then my efforts have been rewarded by enthusiastic response from such members as Wayne Harris, Mike Malone, Gene Gardner, Pete Menconi, Bob Garbisch, Martin Leith, and Carl Nelson (to mention just a few). Also, the regional membership has swelled from 16 a year ago to 26 today, (it will be 35 when the transfer of the Texas area membership to the Western Region is completed). There are also 4 new associate members.

A WORD OF EXPLANATION (continued):

Meanwhile, however, my personal situation has changed considerably. Whereas last year I was engaged to be married, that no longer applies; and it is a fact of life that one meets very few eligible females while he is indoors playing games, answering correspondence, and publishing such things as "Ahks West", "The Pacific Diplomat", and "Western Warfare". Furthermore, I am finally finding myself in a position where it is possible to relearn the engineering I've forgotten in the last three years, and perhaps to start work once more on the thesis that I didn't complete before I was drafted.

Therefore I have reluctantly decided that I must curtail my AHKS oriented activities for the present. What this means is that over the next few months I will gradually reduce my current officer involvement, with the eventual result that unless someone(s) comes forward, much of what I am currently doing will no longer be done. I will, however, continue to answer correspondence and publish a curtailed (one-page) PD for the foreseeable future. As for my games, I have not started any new ones (except for the MD Games) in ages, and will close down the shop as the existing ones come to completion.

I would like to thank you one and all for your cooperation and assistance in the past, and for the help I am sure you would render to any new regional director. I would like to add that I will be looking forward to the day when I will once again be able to take an active part in AHKS. I have enjoyed the last 12 hectic months, and I am proud to have been able to work for you and with you.

At this time I'm trying to pass the torch... Will you reach for it? Or will you let it fall?

Happy Wargaming



Ted Holcombe
Regional Director et al

PS: One of the things I want to do before I leave the scene is to publish an updated regional roster complete with the latest addresses and maybe a paragraph or two of description about each member. Anyone who would like to submit anything for inclusion is requested to return it to me within the next few weeks. Also there are one or two old members who still haven't given me their permission to print their addresses. Further more, I will need releases and data from all the members being transferred to the Western region. Don't be left out!

Ted