

COMMUNION



SHIP AHOY!!!

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A L B I O N
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ALBION is a journal of postal Diplomacy, gradually expanding its frontiers to cover more and more items of general wargaming interest. It is edited and published by Don Turnbull, hidden in the sideboard at 6 St. George's Avenue, Timperley, Cheshire, England.

Game Fees for all ALBION games are announced at the start of such games. Games with places currently open are the Abstraction variant, a British regular game (70/4) and the business game. Applications welcome.

This is the first issue for which subscriptions are 2/- per issue (British Isles and Ireland), 50 cents per issue (USA) and pro rata elsewhere. Both figures include postage. For an explanation of this situation please refer to the early pages of issue 15.

All-for-all trade with other postal Diplomacy magazines is currently limited to those appearing in the trades list. No sign yet exists that this situation is prone to change in the foreseeable future.

ALBION exists primarily to record the progress of postal Diplomacy games taking place within the British Region of AHKS, or within the geographical area covered by the British Region, AHKS membership notwithstanding. The magazine also aims to develop into more of an all-round wargaming magazine, with the Diplomacy reports maintaining their hinge position.

Some ALBION games are designed for British players only; the current games reported in this issue are examples. Other games, which run on extended deadlines, are open to all, and in the next issue we will be proud to announce the first set of results for the first of such all-comers games (70/3). The policy of ALBION is to maintain a reasonable balance between single-length and double-length games in future.

ALBION is a member of the Diplomacy Division of the NPTF Games Bureau (Chairman - Don Miller; Division Chief - Rod Walker).

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Cover by George Forster. Cartoon at rear by Malcolm Watson.

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In spite of the fact that a gap of only two weeks exists between issues 15 and 16, this one is likely to be another large issue, for the good reason that there seems to be plenty to say. We have not had many reactions from the USA to the alarming announcement concerning the subscription rates, printed in issue 15, and suspect that the postal organisations have had something to do with this. At least, no-one has asked for his money back. yet...

GAME THEORY. Part 12. 3x3 games - the Crunch.

One might call this part of our series the principal climax of the whole affair. If one were prone to fanciful statements, that is.

As we said last time, we have advanced but a relatively short distance so far, and the fact that we have taken 11 parts to do so may be a source of some dismay to the less determined of our readers. Those who don't read the articles at all, of course, will not have noticed (nor will they see this pernicky indictment of them, of course.....)

However, to those who are still with us we say - Lo, the fruits of your labours are about to be revealed to you! I hope our readers will gain some satisfaction from this rather vague assurance, whether they are supremely confident of their ability to handle simple games, or whether they are clinging hopelessly to some mixed ideas about saddles and things.

Anyway, from now on, our problems are going to be more and more realistic - we may insert the odd problem about Bert, Fred etc. just to add light relief (such problems are certain to be odd, after all) but in the main we will attempt to approach realism.

I hope you think it has all been worth it.....

Last time we had our first look at 3x3 games. We pointed out, in our customary boring fashion, the need to examine the game matrix for a saddle point, and then to look for any dominance. In conclusion, we remarked rather ominously that there are games which won't reduce to a simpler form by any of these means, and it is into the secrets of such games that we now delve. Just before we proceed, let me advise you to have a quick look at the section on determinants. You will need them now.

Had a look? With it? Good - let's start.

Example 19.

		Red		
		1	2	3
Blue	1	8	2	7
	2	9	1	2
	3	5	8	6

On well-trodden paths we tread, as before.

Maxmin is 5 (Blue 3).

Minmax is 7 (Red 3).

No saddle point. However at least we know that the value of the game should be between 5 and 7; this will be a useful check when we eventually reach a solution.

Now for dominance. NONE!! Wailing and gnashing of determinants! Of course, you expected this, so why bother. But the fact remains that if you consider any pair of strategies open to either player, there are apparently merits in each strategy, depending on the play of the opponent.

Now, here are the rules for dealing with this sort of situation. We'll list them first, then follow them through on the above example, stage by stage.

1. For the sake of argument, consider the Blue strategies first. Form a 3x2 matrix by subtracting each number in each column from the corresponding number in the column to the left of it. Thus the first column in the new matrix will consist of the payoffs under Red 1 minus those under Red 2, and the second column will consist of the payoffs under Red 2 minus those under Red 3.

2. To get the required result for Blue 1, strike out the top row of the new matrix, and calculate the determinant value of the 2x2 matrix remaining. For Blue 2, strike out the second row and find the determinant of what's left. For Blue 3, strike out the third row and find the determinant value of what's left.

3. Proceed in like manner for the Red strategies, starting again with the original matrix, but this time form a 2x3 matrix by subtracting each row from the one above it. For Red 1, strike out the left hand column; for Red 2, strike out the centre column, and for Red 3 strike out the right hand column.

4. Reduce the results to the simplest form, and find the value of the game.

5. Pause to mop brow. Celebrate your first conquest of a 3x3 game.

6. Try another to make sure.

Got it? Fine - let's try it on the above example. Looks mysterious, doesn't it? Never mind - you will find it works, and we have an infallible way of checking the results. First, we form the 3x2 matrix by subtracting each column from the one on its left, thus:-

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{Blue} \\ 1 \\ 2 \\ 3 \end{array} \begin{array}{|c|c|} \hline 8-2 & 2-7 \\ \hline 9-1 & 1-2 \\ \hline 5-8 & 8-6 \\ \hline \end{array} \quad \text{equals} \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{Blue} \\ 1 \\ 2 \\ 3 \end{array} \begin{array}{|c|c|} \hline 6 & -5 \\ \hline 8 & -1 \\ \hline -3 & 2 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

For Blue 1, strike out the top row, leaving:-

$$\begin{array}{|c|c|} \hline 8 & -1 \\ \hline -3 & 2 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Determinant value of this is:-

$$8 \times 2 - (-1) \times (-3) = 16 - 3 = 13. \quad \text{This is the result for Blue 1.}$$

Quite easy, really, when you get the idea. We have to do this, of course, six times, but once the idea is planted, the process is semi-automatic. Ready for the next one?

For Blue 2, strike out the middle row, leaving:-

$$\begin{array}{|c|c|} \hline 6 & -5 \\ \hline -3 & 2 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Determinant value is $12 - 15 = -3$. You can forget the minus sign at this stage (but you can't forget any until you have reached this point). The result for Blue 2 is therefore 3.

For Blue 3, omit the bottom row:-

$$\begin{array}{|c|c|} \hline 6 & -5 \\ \hline 8 & -1 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Determinant value is $-6 + 40 = 34$. This is the value for Blue 3.

Summing up, for the Blue strategies, he should play in the ratio 13:3:34. Sorry about the large numbers, but that's life.

We can't check these results yet, of course, since we have to find out the ratio of the Red strategies. Working with rows, rather than columns, you remember:-

	Red		
	1	2	3
-1	1	5	
4	-7	-4	

For Red 1, omit the left hand column:-

$$\begin{array}{|c|c|} \hline 1 & 5 \\ \hline -7 & -4 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Determinant value is $-4 + 35 = 31$.

For Red 2, omit the centre column:-

$$\begin{array}{|c|c|} \hline -1 & 5 \\ \hline 4 & -4 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Determinant value is $4 - 20 = -16$. Omitting the minus sign, we get 16, the result for Red 2.

Finally, for Red 3, omit the right hand column:-

$$\begin{array}{|c|c|} \hline -1 & 1 \\ \hline 4 & -7 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Determinant value is $7 - 4 = 3$.

So Red plays in the ratio 31:16:3.

Notice that the sum of the numbers appearing in the Blue result is the same as that appearing in the Red result, which is another of these comforting checks on the result that I insert specially for the benefit of the readers. I hope you find it comforting.... Of course, the numbers must not be simplified for this check; in the case in question, no simplification is possible anyway.

Now, the test. You may say - "Whadderyer mean - test? I thought you told us that this method works?" Well, ideally speaking, it does. But some unfortunate cases arise in which there is dominance, although you can't actually spot it, and the above method produces absurd (sometimes not so absurd, unfortunately) results. The ONLY way to test against this situation arising is as follows.

You may think I insulted you in the last paragraph, by saying that you could not spot this particular type of dominance. Yet it is true, of course, since in these cases one strategy happens to be dominated by a coincidental mixture of the others, and no-one would expect you to spot this anyway.

Enough of the burbling. The test consists of finding the value of the game. To make certain that the results are right, this value must be computed by matching the mixed strategy of one player against each single strategy of the opponent. Time-consuming, perhaps, but necessary, I assure you. In this particular case, each player has three 'active' strategies, and therefore we must find the value of the game six different ways, and hope they are the same.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Blue mixture against Red 1 gives } & \frac{13x8 + 3x9 + 34x5}{50} = 6.02 \\ & \text{against Red 2 gives } & \frac{13x2 + 3x1 + 34x8}{50} = 6.02 \\ & \text{against Red 3 gives } & \frac{13x7 + 3x2 + 34x6}{50} = 6.02 \end{aligned}$$

So far so good. Now for the Red mixture against each Blue strategy.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Red mixture against Blue 1 gives } & \frac{31x8 + 16x2 + 3x7}{50} = 6.02 \\ & \text{against Blue 2 gives } & \frac{31x9 + 16x1 + 3x2}{50} = 6.02 \\ & \text{against Blue 3 gives } & \frac{31x5 + 16x8 + 3x6}{50} = 6.02 \end{aligned}$$

A sigh of relief is in order here, folks - we have got it right!! Here's the final solution:-
Blue plays in ratio 13:3:34. Red plays in ratio 31:16:3.
Value of the game is 6.02 (a nice little corner for Blue).

Quite a satisfactory conclusion to our work. Note that the final stage (of calculating the value in these different cases) is absolutely essential, in order to avoid letting an arithmetical error creep past undetected (mis-calculation can happen to the best of people, particularly mathematicians). Also to guard against a more fundamental difficulty which we are avoiding for the time being.

You may think that the above is a long process, and wonder what sort of time is spent in solving larger games. I can assure you, however, that a little practice soon reduces the process to simplicity and speed; when you try the homework questions, remember that I did the solutions for these three, and for a fourth which didn't turn out suitable, in around 10 minutes. This isn't anything to do with skill - it's merely the application of a simple process which has been learnt by constant repetition. A lot of mathematics is like that, of course.... Obviously you need to read the instructions carefully, and go over the above worked example a few times, but with practice you will find the process gets easier and easier. Particularly if, like Michael Nethercot, you happen to have a computer handy to do the arithmetic for you. In fact, Michael could programme the thing to solve the game without him lifting a finger, except to press the start button, but he has obviously thought of this and reckons it would give him an unfair advantage over other competitors for the ALBION prize.

Here is some practice for you to do, in the form of homework. I haven't set any for some time, which I think is extraordinarily generous of me, don't you? Anyway, try these, and next time we will have a look at some real-life applications, assuming we can find any real life in Timperley.

See you in issue 17.

Prof. Erasmus Thing.

Homework Problems set 5.

1.

3	2	4
4	3	2
2	4	3

2.

3	6	0
5	3	2
2	1	6

3. Try an analysis of the childrens' game Stone - Scissors - Paper. Remember the rules? Each player pantomimes one of the three symbols; if the same symbol is played by both, the game is drawn. However, Scissors cut Paper, Paper covers Stone (why, I wonder?) and Stone blunts Scissors. Form a game matrix, using 1 and -1 for the payoffs, according to whether Red or Blue wins, and 0 for the drawn results.

Those of you who have read the James Bond books will remember an incident when the magnificent 007 plays this game against one of his adversaries, and the author talks in a rather misguided way about personalities and their reflection in the choices they make in the game. He would have been well-advised to talk about game theory.

ALBION Game Review Number 4.

(Normal 'extra' circulation to AHIKS members will be given to this report).

FLYING FORTRESS I.

Published by Strategy and Tactics Magazine, Poultron Press, Box 396, New York 10009, U.S.A. PLEASE NOTE that S&T have changed their address to the above.
Price - 6 dollars plus postage.

Our thanks to Jim Dunnigan, who supplied the game reviewed in these pages.

Background.

A clear set of designers notes gives the background both of the game itself, and of the motives behind its production.

To deal with the former first, the game concerns the Allied Combined Bomber offensive against German war industry during the period 1944-45. The Allied player must bomb a particular target system (in the mission game he has no choice of target systems, but in the campaign game some limited choice is given). For destroying the system, the Allied player receives either points (in the mission game) or strategic advantages (restriction of German aircraft production, German fuel production etc.) in the campaign game. The campaign game is really a series of mission games played consecutively, with extra rules dictating continuity between missions.

What may come as a surprise to some readers is that there are three versions of the game available (not three versions of this game, actually, but three games which are within this overall classification). Hence the title Flying Fortress I, to distinguish it from FFII (which is a variant on this game) and B17 (which apparently is a completely different game based on the same campaign. I understand that Avalon Hill intend to produce a 'commercial' version of one of these games - which one depends on the reaction of purchasers to the games in the Test Series.

Thus, although we like FFI, as you will see, we tend to be more guarded in our judgement of the game, since we hope to be testing FFII and B17 before long. When all three have been tested, we will then attempt comparative analysis of them all, and try to give some indication of the popularity we think each will obtain.

Presentation.

Comments appearing in previous game reviews of the Test Series games are equally applicable here. We do, however, like the larger hexagons and larger unit counters. The latter are much easier to handle than the 'standard' size, and we would like to see this policy adopted whenever board space allows. However we wouldn't like to see game boards get much larger, merely to obtain the advantage of the larger unit counters - we think the 'standard' size mapboard is about as large as you can get without being cumbersome and rather awkward.

The hexagons are nearly 1" across flats, and the counters are $\frac{3}{4}$ " square. The counters are backed with thin card; however if anyone objects to the thin counters, an extra backing can easily be affixed.

The Rules.

The game is really six games in one. The two 'fundamental' game units are the mission game and the campaign game; these can be used with original orders of battle (games 1 and 4), with variable orders of battle (games 2 and 5) or with variable oob and a few optional rules (games 3 and 6). Therefore, the main bulk of the rules deal with the mission game, the other games being introduced on the basis of the mission game.

For once, we didn't find the rules entirely clear, and we still have some unsettled questions. These details will be listed later, under the 'other comments' heading. We can't really put a finger on the root of our dislike, however; everything is in the rules (with one or two exceptions) - it's just that they don't seem particularly well co-ordinated. In other words, it took us rather longer to find a particular reference than was the case, say, with Normandy.

This is only a minor gripe, luckily. Most of us are accustomed to finding some difficulty with the AH rule books, and the FFI rules are certainly no worse than those of, say, Anzio. However we think some tidying up would be in order if ever this game were to be marketed by AH.

The Play.

We have come to expect excellent play mechanics from the Test Series games, and this one is no exception. Since the campaign game is essentially a series of mission games, natural breaks occur between missions, and since one mission can be carried out in perhaps $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours, the player who finds it impossible to devote long periods of time to games will welcome FFI. Thus, most of us will enjoy the game from this point of view, since we all, at one time or another, have to do petty and annoying things like going out to work, mowing the lawn, taking the wife out shopping etc. etc. All of these jobs, and others, should have been made the prerogative of the women-folk long ago - they asked for equality, so why don't they act equal???

Back to the game. Action is swift, interesting and thought-provoking. German fighters struggle to knock the powerful Allied bombers out of the sky before they can drop their bombs, or to delay them in reaching their target by dispersing the group and forcing the Allied player to spend precious time in reforming. A dispersal is a prominent feature of the combat results table, and since it prevents the dispersed aircraft from moving on the next turn, it is quite a useful result to obtain. German fighters also have to protect themselves from destruction by the Allied fighters, since a lack of fighter strength means curtains for the German. German fighters have a very short duration (in terms of the number of turns they can stay in the air) which is another factor requiring careful planning by the German player.

The Allies must do their utmost to protect their bomber fleets from the Germans (although fighters are not allowed to provide close escort by flying in the same square as the bombers; this is, we think, a reasonable simplification, since the presence of combined bomber and fighter forces would force an over-complicated set of combat rules and results tables). They must also reduce the striking power of the German fighters by either destroying or dispersing them. Having reached the target, the bombers must undergo flak fire, drop their bombs more or less effectively, and flee for home before the Germans knock them out.

Both sides, therefore, have clearly defined objectives, and we found an interesting balance between straightforward strategy and strategic considerations which conflicted.

The play is very good, we repeat.

For the average mission, all bombs are dropped around turns 5 or 6, which means that the mission can be complete after 12 turns or less. This means, in turn, that each mission can be played in around 1½ hours, and we applaud the design which made this situation possible. Two or three missions can be played per evening, yet natural breaks occur at frequent intervals, and the game can be shelved at almost a moment's notice, with little expenditure of energy in re-setting up the game next time. The entire campaign can be played in one day, of course, but players who prefer a more leisurely approach to their games will find their requirements admirably fitted by FFI.

This factor also makes the game eminently suitable for postal play (see the article on this aspect of all the Test Series games reported so far, appearing elsewhere in this issue).

The mission game, in common with most basic games, is a good testing ground, but to get the real flavour of the game it is essential to play game 4 as soon as possible. Our test report was based on two games 1 followed by a game 4. (Shortage of time did not permit our investigation of the variable orders of battle, or of the few optional rules).

The German has complete freedom as to the placement of his aircraft units and his Luftgau (airbases), and he may also allocate flak to defend cities as he wishes. However all the Allied planes are forced to take off on turn 1 from a particular hexagon, and we found it rather strange that the Allies could not fly off advance fighter cover, which would allow them to protect bombers more effectively. However the designers notes point out that the game was designed primarily to deal with the bombing effects, not with air-to-air combat between fighters. Hence we regard the restriction on the Allied take-off time as a necessary one in order to preserve the aims of the design. Anyway, the more problems you have, the more you enjoy solving them.....

Thus the strategy of the game is biased towards the bombing, and away from fighter action, and this is how it should be.

In the campaign game, between missions, both sides obtain production of new aircraft. The German has considerable

flexibility here - he can modify his production lines to produce more powerful (even jet) aircraft, and careful planning will produce an optimally flexible fighting force. However the Allies are restricted, throughout the entire game 4, to the same aircraft types, and we found it rather surprising that the Allied player could not take advantage, in this game, of new developments in design and production which took place during the 18 months of the actual campaign. Other aircraft types are, of course, obtainable via the optional orders of battle, and British aircraft may be called in using one of the optional rules. However with the regular order of battle the Allies only have two types of bombers - B17Gs and B24Js. This is a minor point, of course, but one which we hope is set to rights in FFII.

There is one real gripe about the play mechanics, however, although it didn't reduce our enjoyment of the game. This concerns the combat results table, which is too harsh by far. Whole wings of aircraft fall out of the sky after attacks at low battle odds, and the French and German countryside is littered with broken planes. The entire shape of a mission can change drastically with a couple of the 'right' die rolls, and the balance of the game swings back and forth in a most alarming manner. Granted that this adds to the excitement, and leaves the result in doubt until the very last moment. However the fact remains.

We hear that FFII will have a step reduction system, and welcome this with open arms. The combat results table is our only real criticism of an otherwise excellent and most playable game.

Other comments, requests for information etc.

1. A dispersed unit cannot attack, and defends with only half its combat factor. However there is no mention of the rounding-off of fractions. We think that dispersed units should lose the benefit of any fraction.
2. If German aircraft attempt to take off from a Luftgau when Allied fighters are above, they attack with half combat factor, and this usually means at low odds. However there is no mention, in the rules, of the result of an A dispersed in these circumstances. We think this merely means the Germans can't get into the air that turn, but there could be an argument for the loss of one German unit here.
3. Normally, when attacking a stack of bombers, the German fighters only attack one unit in the stack (just as well, really, considering the enormous defensive potential of the Allied bombers). However what the rules don't make clear is that two units in a stack may be attacked separately, providing the German has enough units to make the two attacks. This fact was pointed out to me by Edi Birsan, to whom my thanks.
4. The rules state that a bomber gains an extra movement factor after bombing. However a bomber must not end its turn actually over the target, but must pass over the target during the movement portion of the turn. The rules are not clear on the situation when a bomber,

with movement factor 4, starts a bombing move 4 squares from the target city. We think that the extra movement factor should be allowed in these conditions, in order to allow the bomber to get off the target square in the same turn. Yet the bombs aren't actually drifting downwards until the last movement factor has been used up. Some clarification required here, we feel.

Conclusions.

Were this game the only one of its type, we would have no hesitation in recommending it highly. However, the idea of FFII lurks here, and we get the impression that the latter version will solve all the problems (all, did I say? Few, in reality) we found in FFI. Hence our conclusions are coloured by the fact that we think a better version exists.

Despite this, we found the game very enjoyable, and since FFII comes as a conversion kit (in other words, the map is the same as FFI) we would recommend you to buy FFI and then the conversion kit (assuming, of course, that our report on FFII is going to be favourable, which we anticipate it is). Certainly a good deal of enjoyment can be had from FFI - if you are thinking of avoiding it because of the combat results table, you are unwise; remember the arguments about the Stalingrad combat results table? And don't forget that Stalingrad is still one of the most popular games.

FFI is recommended, therefore, with the first reservation we have ever had to apply to a Test Series game.

Don Turnbull. Malcolm Watson.

A Few Observations on S&T, Test Series Games etc.

When Chris Wagner's S&T collapsed, this was a source of considerable disappointment on both sides of the Atlantic. We were therefore very pleased to hear that Poultron Press had taken over the magazine, and were intent on producing, not only a magazine, but also a series of games (which we now know as the Test Series Games).

Early contacts with the new S&T organisation were not, however, very fruitful. Letters remained unanswered, orders for games remained at the bottom of the pile for interminable months, and I have had cause to comment more than once, both in these pages and in the AHIKS British Region Members' Bulletin, on the frustrations of dealing with this organisation. I think it fair to add that the AHIKS members in Great Britain have almost certainly avoided subscribing to S&T and ordering Test Series Games purely because of the uncertainty involved in receiving games, issues of S&T itself, etc.

I am now glad to report that this situation has improved considerably during the last few weeks. AHIKS members who ordered games from S&T, despite my ominous reports of delays etc., had resigned themselves to a long wait, but discovered that this was no longer the case. I know of 5 Test Series games which have arrived in this country during the last four weeks - my own copy of Korea,

Eric Slack's Normandy and 1918, and John Poole's Barbarossa and Italy. Indeed, in the case of Eric's 1918, the entire transaction, from Eric's initial mailing of the order to actual receipt of the game, took less than two weeks! So not only are S&T moving like the wind nowadays, but they have also managed to persuade the British and American Post Office organisations to do likewise.

We of ALBION would like to record our sincere appreciation of this speeding-up on the part of S&T, and would like to announce that all the reservations we have made about them in the past are herewith removed. We strongly advise you to spend a small fortune on the Test Series games, and to get your orders in quickly. Don't forget the new address, at the top of page 7 of this issue.

You may think, incidentally, that our reports on the Test Series games are just too good to be true. You may think that Jim Dunnigan is paying Malcolm and I a fortune to say nice things about his games, in order to increase his sales. You may think that Malcolm and I are idiots anyway (you would be right in one case.....) and that our comments are therefore valueless.

Not so. Our reports are as genuine as we can make them in the time. We don't pretend to have covered every single aspect of every game we test - time is against us, for a start - but we do claim to have gained a reasonable appreciation of the game itself and of the impact it is likely to make on the game-playing public. If you want further confirmation, ask Chris Hancock and Harry Tucker how they found Normandy at the AHIKS British Region meeting last month. (Don't ask Harry his opinion of his own die-rolling, however....) I think you will find they thoroughly enjoyed the game, and found it very suitable for such a meeting, despite certain distractions like Cup Finals, beer and me pinching the rules every so often.

We need only a short word on the latest magazine itself, since a report appears elsewhere in this issue. In a word, then - magnificent! Well worth the subscription (although it is quite an expensive item for us impecunious British).

We strongly advise you to subscribe.

In future issues of ALBION, more Test Series Games will be reported in review for you. The list is quite a long one, and starts next issue with Barbarossa. Then Deployment, Tennenberg, 1914 revision, Korea, FFII, Italy, Bastogne, Anzio Beachhead. And probably more. We welcome your comments on these reviews, as exemplified by the letter from Dave Lindsay in the last issue.

We also hope to be reporting on a new series of games sometime in the near future, starting with Battle of the Atlantic. The list appears to be inexhaustible at the moment, and we hope you think these reviews are a useful part of ALBION, particularly in view of the announced policy of making ALBION more and more into a general war-gaming magazine, with Diplomacy playing a substantial part. We hope, also, that those in the British Region of AHIKS who do not at present subscribe to ALBION will be tempted to do so by this new policy. How about it, folks?

Page 12.
Test Series Games - suitability for Postal Play.

It is a fair comment on my intelligence that the notion of reporting on this aspect of the Test Series Games has only just wandered into my disorganised mind. I will attempt to rectify this situation by reporting on 'postal suitability' for those games already tested in this issue; in future reviews, postal suitability will appear each time, under a separate heading. Unless, of course, I forget to do so, which is quite on the cards.....
On, then, to the games already reviewed.

NORMANDY.

At the start of the game, each player is expected to arrange his initial dispositions in secret - in other words, for face-to-face play, the German player arranges his units on the board while the Allied player, out of sight, plans invasions, air drops, landing zones for the glider regiments etc. Planning charts for this purpose are supplied with the game.

A postal Normandy would therefore have to include some system for performing these activities with the right degree of secrecy, and the best way is, of course, via a third player, who needs only lend a hand for the pre-game preparation.

Both players should send their initial placement to the third party. When he has received both, the latter mails the plans to the respective players, who can then get on with the game without further assistance from him.

The rest of the game is perfectly suitable for postal play with no further modifications. Movement is in two impulses, and the game is 7 turns long, which means a total of 14 letters each way from start to finish. Not an expensive postal assignment, therefore, yet Normandy is a most interesting and enjoyable game.

We need a grid system, of course, and the one we would choose is simple - in fact it is the same as the Stalingrad system; if the Stalingrad board has Warsaw nearest you, and the Normandy board the invasion beaches nearest you, the two grids are then identical. Letters A - XX along the South board edge, omitting the partial squares at each end. A diagonal grid - numbers 1-58 - running from south-west to north-east. Reference points are:-

Fort on beach 14 is 0010.

Cartentan is QQ14.

Fort on beach 12 is CC18.

Fort on beach 10 is O27.

Fort on beach 3 is F34.

TACTICAL GAME THREE.

Here the play is slightly complicated by the fact that the defender is allowed to return fire during the opponent's turn. Obviously this can be handled quite easily by simple exchange of letters for each step.

However David Lindsay tells me that an American named William Freeman has already worked out a postal system for the game, so I have written to him about this, and hope to print the system when I hear from him. There's no point in having more than one postal system in operation, if we can help it.

1918.

The only difficulty here is in assigning artillery to defence fire. Obviously, if the defender is allowed to do this when he knows what the attacks and the die rolls are, he will be able to allocate corps for defence in order to maximise his results. Therefore it seems to me that a third player is required for this purpose.

Perhaps the best way of handling a move would therefore be:-

1. the attacker moves his units and advises the 3rd party of the attacks he intends to make; a copy of the attacks also goes to the defender.
2. the defender allocates his artillery to defence and lets the monitor know his decisions.
3. the monitor rolls the results, thus obviating the need for an icrk for the game.

FLYING FORTRESS I.

Very suitable for postal play, and mechanics absolutely straightforward with no special rulings required. Incidentally, this game is ideal for those who like mounting maps on pinboard, using pins to represent units. I'm pretty sure that's the way my game is going to end up, as Battle of Britain has done.

In the campaign game, the German should send sealed notes of his production etc. to the Allied player at the start of each mission, to act as a check. Similarly the Allied player should send a sealed note to the German as to which target system he is bombing. Obviously a third player could handle these details, and in fact a third player should be employed to pick target systems cards for the Allied bombing missions. However this sort of thing does not impose on a third player, who would be glad to perform these simple tasks.

Dammit! Grid system for 1918 (suggested):- letters A - MM down the east and west edges of the board; numbers 1 - 49 running north-east to south-west, starting at the north-west corner of the board. Check-points are:-

St. Pol is C3.
Doullens is M9.
Arras (sorry) is G16.
Peronne is V27.
Ham is DD35.

Grid system for FFI: Letters A - FF along the North edge of the board. Numbers 1 - 35 running from north-east to south-west, starting in the north-west corner (not quite in the corner, in fact). Check-points:-

Bremen is R11.
Mannheim is R 24.
Berlin is CC18.
Munich is Z31.

We hope that the suggested grid systems will be adopted as standard - not because we think they are the best that could be set up, of course, but simply in order to get unanimity in postal play, at least within AHIKS, at whose members this article has principally been aimed.

Strategy and Tactics - a report on Issue 20.

This issue is 32 pages, and sells for £1.50. However there are other things included with the issue - two games for instance! So it's not such an expensive business after all, considering what you are getting.

The articles, in order of appearance, are as follows, with brief explanatory comments.

1. Outgoing Mail. The S&T editorial, which outlines their thoughts and plans for the present and future.

2. The Luftwaffe Land Army. Written by Victor Madeja. A most impressive article on the organisation of what was originally an improvised fighting force, but which came to be known as a considerable force to be reckoned with. The article is excellently illustrated with organisation charts, tables of available flak etc. , and weapons used.

3. Bastogne. The rules for one of the games supplied with the issue. The full-colour mapboard, unit counter sheets and reinforcement rate cards for this game are supplied loose with the issue, while the rules are included in the magazine in an article by the designer, Jim Dunnigan. At the time of writing, the hard-pressed ALBION test panel has yet to get round to looking at this game, but a report will be forthcoming, we promise you. First impressions are very favourable.

4. Anzio Beachhead. (I think I have spelled this Beachhead elsewhere in this issue - sorry about that). This article by Dave Williams (the designer of the AH Anzio) gives the rules for the second game included with this issue of S&T. The game components are included as loose sheets, as with Bastogne. The rules are very clear, and the game looks to be an excellent example of the 'mini-game', the first of which was Crete. Again, the ALBION test panel will eventually get round to testing this one and producing a report on it.

5. If Looks Could Kill. An article by Redmond Simonsen, who designed the game components for Bastogne and Anzio Beachhead (Damn - done it again) Beachhead. Red deals this time with advice on making up your own unit counters (advice which is sorely needed by incompetents like me when trying to make up the counters for Bastogne or Anzio B.... - not trying this again.) A good, useful article.

6. Games. An article (indeed, a series of articles - a regular feature of S&T) by Sid Sackson, dealing with non-war games. As far as I know, these aren't available in Great Britain. However the article is very interesting, nevertheless.

Readers will be glad to know that Sid refers to the use of Game Theory as a useful adjunct to play of some of the games he deals with..... Perhaps you will read the articles now!

7. Pass In Review. An article by Albert Nofi on books of interest to the wargamer. This time the article is mainly concerned with the Featherstone books. I am glad to notice, in the context of the Featherstone books, that Mr. Nofi's opinions of some of the more exotic rulings suggested by the author coincide with mine. For instance, blowing of smoke rings should be permanently at the side of the wargamer to simulate AA fire. Also the strange idea Mr. Featherstone has of naming each soldier, giving him a rank (a pay-book? a night off?) and grafting a personality on to him.

Can I digress on this subject a bit longer? Try and stop me. In this country, the average person's idea of a wargamer is someone who collects toy soldiers, and who points them at each other, saying 'Bang Bang. You are dead.' It is often difficult to encourage the idea that we don't stoop to these depths. However such suggestions as Mr. Featherstone's 'personalised wargaming' don't help here. Just think about it! When we make our newest soldier, we call him Fred, give him time off to see his wife in Dulwich, and/or his illicit girl-friend in Acton, and of course you must make figures for these people as well, and his mother-in-law, and his Auntie Agnes. Not only that, but Fred MUST clean his rifle after the day's fighting.

Let's face it, folks - some people are just plain stupid. Thank goodness Mr. Featherstone has contributed a bit more to wargaming than these featherbrained puerile schemes.

Back now to S&T and sanity.

8. Diplomacy. A regular feature written by Rod Walker. This time Rod deals with opening moves, initial policies for the player etc. in a most interesting and instructive article. Unfortunately most of the players in 70/3 will also have read this.....

9. Wargamer's Notebook. A regular feature on miniatures by Ray Johnson. I don't know much about this subject, so can't really comment on the article. However it seems to be quite useful to the devotee.

10. Incoming Mail. Letters from readers. (They never print mine, which is perhaps just as well). A useful and interesting (and necessary) part of the magazine.

Summary.

A very good issue which represents a return to the standard we came to expect from Chris Wagner. Presentation is excellent (better than 19, and considerably better than 18) and contents are wide-reaching, informative and well-written. Very few misprints, which makes it a cut above ALBION in this respect also.

We strongly recommend you to take out a subscription to S&T which is indubitably the foremost of the current wargaming magazines. This issue was delayed in production, but the S&T staff promise to put this matter to rights, in gradual steps, in the future. We hope they will do this, and not keep us waiting so long for such goodies in future; and we confidently expect an even better issue next time.

FEEDBACK.

An Irregular Feature of this Most Irregular Magazine, Designed to Extract Printable Comments on the Magazine Sent in by its Poor Unfortunate Readers.

We include this feature of brief letter extracts this time in order to tell everyone of the reactions to our financial announcements in the last issue. The Mailing System has ensured, of course, that few comments have reached us from the USA as yet. However we will include any more which arrive later, either later in this issue or in issue 17. Here we go, then.

"I found your key. It was in the cat's litter box. NOW will you lower my subscription rate???" Richard Redd.

"I'd be interested to see your financial account myself." (Written before issue 15 arrived, obviously, but still relevant). "On the prices you charge you must be doing it for fun. Can't see any other reason. By the way - why use envelopes? Wouldn't you be able to save money if you followed Don Miller's method?" (Don writes the address on the back of the magazine, then staples it round and sends it without an envelope; I am consulting the British Postal authorities to see their reaction to it). Bernie Ackerman.

"Elaine is suitably impressed with your little piece, but she can't agree with your observation about 'swinging Romford'. To her eyes it is a town of remarkable squareness. I think your summary of the financial situation fully justifies an increase in the subscription. After all, there's no point in continuing the publication if you are going to lose money all the time. I don't think you can compare the subscription rates of ALBION with other magazines of the same ilk - these may have larger circulations and also be of a lower literary standard! Carry on with the good work at the new rates; if the subscribers are foolish enough to complain just tell them to get *****". Michael Nethercot.

"I think ALBION subscription rates are reasonable even after the price increase. Although perhaps I am more fortunate than those overseas in that I don't have to contend with airmail postal charges." David Jones.

"Don't let the rise in price bug you too much; consider it in the great tradition of American economics." Edi Birsan.

"Ochaye, the noo. Ye winna git ony Scoats muney, ye braw gleekit scroocher, wuth yeir muckle michtik rag, yon ALBION, ye ken, syne their be nae Scoats arrticles in yon, neether be their ony anti-British airticles o ony great litury stnnard. Ye o curse ken ye kreekly krocks will neer gain ony appreciachion nye Scoatlund the while ye enclude yon harsh an bitter remarks abboot yon Watson, the grate brode Scots caber-kreeler an bagpipe squeeeler. Git ye awa an prunt same decent stuff." An anonymous Scottish gentleman, who refused to give his name.

ALBION Status, Purposes etc. Revisited.

First, another extract from Michael Nethercot's letter.

"I know you have considered the future policy of ALBION and make your position quite clear on the first page of Number 15. I think you are correct in your aims, but suggest you may need some additional material if you are going to include articles of a more general war-game nature. Many moons ago I sent you something about game analysis - feel free to publish this if you want to fill up the odd couple of pages. I enjoyed your review of 1918 - this is the sort of thing which interests subscribers, particularly those who live in Great Britain and can't get much sense out of Poultron Press. Your ALBION Stands on the Touchline makes me appreciate the true British virtues of sound common sense and good manners. I am afraid I would have no patience whatever with these 'children'. Diplomacy is a hobby. Who the hell cares anyway? Frankly I would refuse to have any dealings with some of these idiots. Sorry to be a bit het up, but life is too short to go around arguing over a game."

Although Michael's reference to 'common sense and good manners' might have been written with a modicum of tongue in the cheek (although it needn't have been, of course), his letter expresses exactly what I, and hence ALBION, feel. Lest there is any misunderstanding, however, I must point out that he refers to the 'feuds' which were mentioned in the last issue of ALBION, not to the section written by Dick Holcombe and my reply thereto.

Michael's assumption about the amount of more general war-game material I will need if I am to develop ALBION onto more wide-ranged lines, is quite correct, although, with reference to his offer concerning the wargame analysis idea, I hope that David Wood and I will have a surprise in store for Michael in this regard before very long. Until then we will maintain a discreet silence, for the very good reason that our ideas may not come off the way we see them at the moment.

However I am very much in the market for any type of article concerned with games. Preferably wargames, and even more preferably Diplomacy. But games, at any rate. I hope the game reviews are going to fill the bill nicely for a while, and I also hope we will be able to dredge up more material of various sorts. Ken Norris has given me permission to reprint his excellent article 'Thoughts on Stalingrad' which appeared in S&T a year or so ago, and this will be fitted in as soon as space permits. More on these lines, from any source, will be welcome.

I should here make clear what my ideas are concerning the future 'status' of ALBION, with particular reference to the AHIKS regional bulletins, the AHIKS magazine Kommandeur, other Diplomacy magazines, and other wargaming magazines such as S&T. This is a slow process, of course, but perhaps you will be interested to hear what the 2000th issue of ALBION will be like. (I suppose it will contain an account of Malcolm Watson winning yet another game, and/or being sworn at, but we have to take the rough with the smooth.)

Before the great revelation, however, I would like to quote certain passages from a letter Dick Holcombe wrote recently. Dick is, as most of the readers know, the President of AHIKS, and was the person to save that Society from virtually certain extinction some years ago, when support from other areas was lacking, and before hard workers like Bob Johnson etc. joined the Society. Dick's letter is principally about the NFFF Games Bureau Diplomacy Division, and most of it is not germane to this particular issue. However certain portions indicate that the function and status of ALBION hasn't been made any too clear.

"Although I'm unfamiliar with the British expression 'on the touchline', I gather from ALBION 15 that it means something like 'on the fence' in the US."

Something like that, Dick, although 'on the fence' could be taken to imply something of a middle-of-the-road policy, while 'on the touchline' implies spectatorship - something rather more remote, perhaps. djt

"Be that as it may, am I to gather that ALBION will not support AHIKS? Naturally, no one can insist that you dedicate your 'zine to the Society as Bob Johnson (I hope) and I have. In fact, when I rid myself of Western Regional Directorship I would expect Pacific Diplodeur to go with it, unless the new Director were an active player, in which case the game could stay here or be transferred to Diplodeur. What I am trying to say is that I don't consider Pacific Diplodeur (as Rod considers Erehwon) to be my private domain; it is a natural part of AHIKS and no more my personal property than the ICRKs are the ICRK-Meister's. I had hoped you viewed Albion, and Bob Diplodeur, in the same light."

**I'm afraid you guess wrong here, Dick. At no time has there been any positive announcement in ALBION of an AHIKS parentage, although it is pretty clear, from our standard introduction on page 1, that strong links with AHIKS do exist, and that's the way I would like it to continue. But ALBION is my personal property, and the property of its subscribers, just as Don Miller 'owns' Diplomania, Rod owns Erehwon etc. Had ALBION been in any sense the property of AHIKS, then the latter would have to foot the bill announced in the last issue, which might not have endeared ALBION to AHIKS, to say the least; it has never been my intention that this should be the case - my loss is my own affair, and nothing to do with AHIKS.

In fact, I owe a considerable debt to Bob Johnson in the birth of ALBION, since it was through Diplodeur, and through Bob, that I first learned of the Diplomacy magazine world in the USA. I admit without shame that ALBION was founded in an attempt to follow the lead of Diplomania and Erehwon in particular, and if ALBION ever reaches the height of distinction achieved by these two magazines, then I will be proud of my efforts. However I must, of course, acknowledge my debt to Bob, and hence, in a roundabout way, to the AHIKS organisation, for giving me the ideas in the first place. And I must also acknowledge a direct debt to AHIKS in that the majority of the players and subscribers in and to ALBION are AHIKS members who I recruited as British Regional Director.

So ALBION does owe a considerable debt to AHIKS, but not a debt of parentage. This is, however, a long chalk from the statement that ALBION would not 'support AHIKS'. How Dick got this idea I cannot imagine. ALBION does support AHIKS. That much should be obvious from the continuous references to AHIKS in virtually every issue. ALBION (i.e. me) regards AHIKS as a first-rate Society, and a leader in the field of board wargames, particularly those played through the mail. AHIKS members are a mature, sensible crowd, just as we hope ALBION readers and players are mature and sensible. We do support AHIKS. I would hardly spend so much time working for that Society if this were not the case. djt**

"One last item..... You indicate that AHIKS would be better qualified to comment on the rules of Battle of Britain than Diplomacy." **This comment was made in a letter to Dick, not in ALBION 15. djt** "This is a highly dubious statement. What you say may well be true of your Region, but it is scarcely true of AHIKS as a whole. I know of no-one in the Western Region who could make this statement - the only two members who still own the game to my knowledge have never successfully completed a single game. While I'm aware that the same statement can not be made for the other regions, I doubt that Bob, or many others outside Britain could say they've given more thought to Battle of Britain than Diplomacy. This is brought out not to indicate that I think AHIKS should consider itself one of the prime authorities on Diplomacy rules - I leave that to the Diplomacy Division - only that there may be more Diplomacy players in, or interested in, AHIKS than you acknowledge."

** The comment on Battle of Britain was, of course, intended as a generalisation; Stalingrad, AK or Anzio would have been equally applicable in the context I intended. The point I wanted to make was more of a comparison. The NFFF Diplomacy Division contains (indeed, is led by) such people as Don Miller, Rod Walker, and others with considerable experience in postal Diplomacy, the ramifications of the rule interpretations of the game etc. On the other hand, AHIKS exists to provide facilities for the postal play of wargames, and principally those manufactured by Avalon Hill. This does not exclude Diplomacy, of course, although the letters of the title indicate a certain bias; this is now somewhat obsolete, since members are playing Gamescience games and Diplomacy, and we hope will soon be playing games marketed by Poultron Press. Nevertheless, the fact remains that members of AHIKS play, for the vast majority of the time, Avalon Hill games.

Thus, it seems reasonable to credit AHIKS with a certain degree of authority, based on experience, of AH games; AHIKS assume this authority, quite rightly, on the grounds of experience. And the AHIKS Judge, Omar DeWitt, must surely be the most qualified person to rule on AH games, or Gamescience games, or virtually any game under the sun except Diplomacy, where Omar would, I am sure, be the first to admit that others have more experience, and better access to precedent, than he has.

I don't intend to go into Omar's qualifications here - most of the readers are perfectly aware of them anyway, and very happy to accept his rulings on games of the AH genre. But Omar's verdict on Diplomacy would hardly be asked, let alone given (I am sure Omar himself would agree). When Bob Johnson started Diplodeur I, a rule dispute arose quite early in the game. Did Bob turn to AHIKS (his parent organisation) for a ruling? Of course not - he turned to Rod Walker as Diplomacy Division Chief. I think Omar is actually a player in the game in question.....

ALBION would also turn to Rod Walker (or Don Miller, if the question was concerned with one of the variants he runs) - we would never dream of turning to AHIKS, since ALBION is the second Diplomacy magazine to owe any allegiance to AHIKS; we would almost expect AHIKS to turn to us, after Diplodeur, if they hadn't other contacts in the Diplomacy world.

So - I repeat - AHIKS are competent to advise if someone wanted a discussion on the rules of, say, Battle of Britain. But not for Diplomacy. At least, not until we make Rod Walker, Don Miller and a few others members of AHIKS. This last statement is exactly the same as the one I wrote to Dick, and I see no reason to amend the thoughts therein.

The final point of Dick's remark, which concerns the number of AHIKS members interested in, or taking part in, games of Diplomacy via Diplodeur, Pacific Diplodeur, or ALBION.

As far as I can estimate, around ~~sixty~~ members in total, out of over 100 AHIKS members (active or partially so, or even downright inactive). Not that I am concerned about these proportions, particularly - I welcome the idea of AHIKS members becoming enthusiastic about any game, whether it be Diplomacy, Anzio or Normandy. What I question is the suggestion that AHIKS is becoming a Diplomacy-orientated Society - it isn't doing this any more than becoming Normandy-orientated. Even if the Society as a whole was fixed on the idea of Diplomacy (which it assuredly is not at the moment) this wouldn't be a bad thing - it would merely represent a slight deviation from the avowed intent of AHIKS. Anyway most AHIKS members welcome Diplomacy as a different sort of challenge, and make no comparisons between the relative merits of Diplomacy and AH games.

So - I wasn't aware I hadn't acknowledged the fact that quite a few members of AHIKS are interested in Diplomacy. It seems irrelevant, anyway, since interested parties aren't necessarily experienced parties. We might have, in AHIKS, a good deal of new interest, but that doesn't make the Society an authority on Diplomacy rules, in particular when compared with the Diplomacy Division.

I hope this clears up all these points to the satisfaction of people on both sides of the Atlantic, and that we can now get back to the matter in hand - the future of ALBION. If there are any further comments/questions/etc. on the above matter I would be glad to hear them, but I see no reason to print anything further on the subject in ALBION.

The Future (?) of ALBION.

I have already stated my intent to make ALBION broaden its shoulders, so to speak, in order to become a wargaming magazine of a more general nature. This will be a slow process, naturally, and it may be a little premature to talk about this sort of future development in issue 16. Nevertheless you will already have noticed that Diplomacy is not the only game with which we are concerned in these pages, even now; the first few issues contained only articles on Diplomacy, plus such miscellaneous nonsense (Hypertweedle and the rest) as I inserted from time to time, plus articles strongly related to Diplomacy, such as the Bourse and Parlement. However in issue 10 (I think) the first Test Series game review appeared, and since then there has been something on non-Diplomacy lines in each issue, perhaps with the odd exception here and there. In this issue, up to now, there hasn't been a single article on Diplomacy, and the reasons for this are quite simple - I have virtually no more material on the subject at the moment. We owe a considerable debt to John McCallum for the excellent articles reprinted from BROBDINGNAG, but now, as players in ALBION games seem quite happy about the rules and are asking no more questions, there seems to be little point in creating somewhat artificial articles just in order to make the majority of the magazine Diplomacy-orientated. Not only that, but I am not sufficient an authority on Diplomacy to do this, and I have already admitted without shame that the vast majority of articles on Diplomacy which have appeared in these pages are the fruits of the labours of other, more experienced, authors from the USA and Canada.

So, although the prime function of ALBION will continue to be the reporting of Diplomacy games, there is a lot to be said for structuring the rest of the magazine to cover a wider field, particularly since most of the readers are board-game enthusiasts in the widest sense.

Now, it is not my intention to form a magazine to compete with either the Kommandeur or S&T. To take the Kommandeur first, this is a Society magazine devoted exclusively to AHIKS and appears quarterly. The frequency of the production of ALBION requires that it contain less material per issue than the Kommandeur, and particularly that it should contain articles on a more transient nature. But in particular, ALBION is aimed primarily at a British readership, and hence to a readership at once less versed in general wargaming practices and remote from the centre of board wargaming in the USA. This should be a healthy co-existence, therefore, with no element of competition at all - indeed, I hope Bob will continue to accept, for the Kommandeur, articles which are more appropriate to that organ (the Battle of Britain forum submitted recently is a good example).

As for S&T - how could ALBION hope to compete? I will aim to produce a magazine of as near comparable standard as I can get, but ALBION will always be a purely amateur effort, whereas S&T is the most professional wargaming magazine there is.

The avowed purpose of ALBION will remain as 'to spread the logos of Diplomacy and board wargaming throughout the British Isles' and we hope that we can do this while maintaining a close and healthy relationship with the leaders in this field in the USA. We hope also that the magazine will help to swell the ranks of membership of the British Region of ANIKS.

I have been asked by a few people what my printing policy will become. In other words - am I going off-set? Well, I have rather limited access to an off-set machine, or at least hope to be able to arrange such access. Working with paper plates, rather than metal, I could produce ALBION almost as cheaply off-set as stencil. But there is a margin, and in view of the current financial status of ALBION I can't see any point in going for off-set printing at present. When we have a wider circulation, the time will be more appropriate.

Also there is the question of advertising space. Again, this is something I would like to go in for, ultimately, but the time isn't ripe yet. For one thing, no-one is going to advertise, even at the cheapest rates, to such a small readership as is presently commanded by ALBION. For another, the more paper I add, the higher the postage bill, and this is a factor I must reduce, not increase.

With regard comparisons with other Diplomacy magazines, this one has always been slightly different anyway, since it caters for a novice Diplomacy group in a country which, for the most part, hasn't even heard of the game. Obviously ALBION will be continuing on slightly different lines. We do wish to attract more subscribers from overseas, however, as well as in Great Britain.

Finally, there may very well come a time when short deadlines in the Diplomacy games means that I will not be able to keep up, editorially, with the demands of the games themselves and the demands of the rest of the magazine. The games must be kept alive, obviously, and if there ever comes a time that the entire magazine suffers because I just haven't time to do everything between Diplomacy moves, then I will publish a new magazine, whose sole function will be the reporting of Diplomacy games, in parallel with the main ALBION. At the moment there is no sign that this will become necessary - I am just preparing the ground against the possibilities as I see them at present.

Thus, if this situation ever became necessary, the new 'zine would be published for each Diplomacy deadline, whereas the main ALBION would appear perhaps monthly. Questions of subscriptions etc. are to be left until the need arises. I hope that the need will never arise, of course, but the chance remains.

Incidentally, may I acknowledge here that the idea for this future development is based on the development of Don Miller's magazines over the years. His DIPLOPHOBIA (for games only) and DIPLOMANIA (for general Diplomacy-orientated articles) and THE GAMESMAN (for general games articles) run on just this basis nowadays, and very sensible too. My thanks, Don. So there you are.

ALBION Trades and Subscriber List. Revised version.

This list has been up-dated from issue 13 to allow for the new subscription rates.

Correct (I think) as at May 11th 1970.

Symbolism: T = we have a trade agreement.

T? = have we a trade agreement?

S = you are a lucky subscriber to this magazine; the figures in () indicate the last issue you will receive unless you renew.

P = you are playing in 69/1 and/or 69/2 and/or 70/3. The figures in * * indicate the last issue for which you have paid postage.

A = you are Allen Calhamer and receive ALBION as a penance for inventing Diplomacy.

1. Michael Nethercot, 20 Moray Close, Rise Park, Romford, Essex. P. *56*
2. Malcolm Watson, 3 Hawthorn Avenue, Timperley, Cheshire. P. *N/A*
3. Colin Newcombe, 115 Longdown Road, Congleton, Cheshire. P. *N/A*
4. John Robertson, Upper Dunglass, Arbroath Road, Broughty Ferry, Dundee DD5 1QN Scotland. P. *32*
5. Chris Hancock, 17 Mallard Road, Chelmsford, Essex. P. *17*
6. David Wood, 60 Woodgate Avenue, Church Lawton, Stoke On Trent ST7 3EF, Staffs. P. *22*
7. Rod Walker, 5058 Hawley Boulevard, San Diego, California 92116. T.
8. John McCallum, P.O.Box 52, Ralston, Alberta, Canada. T.
9. Jeff Key, 4611 N. Pennsylvania, Apt. 1-D, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73112. T?
10. Dick Holcombe, 45 Kimberlin Heights Drive, Oakland, California 94619. T.
11. Ray Evans, 12 Mareth Road, Bedford, Beds. P. *29 plus 2d*
12. Bob Johnson, P.O.Box 134, Whippany, New Jersey 07981. S-T?
13. Don Miller, 12315 Judson Road, Wheaton, Maryland 20906. T.
14. Bob Thomas, 155 Coxford Road, Shirley Warren, Southampton SO1 6JX, Hants. P. *14!!*
15. Bob Stuart, 3 Millwood Road, Orpington, Kent. P. *34 plus 4d*
16. George Patton, 1841 Suffolk Road, Columbus, Ohio 43221. S. (12!!)
17. Eric Slack, 26 Hartcroft Road, Bestwood Park Estate, Nottingham NG5 5JF. S. (19 plus 1/10d)
18. Sheila Minion, 7 Beeley Close, Allestree, Derby DE3 2PY. S. (19 plus 1/6d)
19. Charles Wells, 3021 Washington Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44118. S. (17 plus 15d)
20. Terry Kuch, 7554 Spring Lake Drive, Bethesda, Maryland 20034. T.

ALBION Trades and Subscriber List (cont).

21. Larry Fong, 704 Alice Street, Oakland, California 94607. S. (14!!)
22. Edi Birsan, 48-20 39th Street, Long Island City, New York 11104. S (until issue 17) (14). P (as from issue 17). * * *
23. Bill Heim, P.O.Box 281, Mount Eden, California 94557. (30 plus 25 ¢)
24. John Lilley, 33 Brooklands Way, Redhill, Surrey. S. (19 plus 6d)
25. Buddy Tretick, 3702 Wendy Lane, Silver Spring, Maryland 20906. S (until issue 17) (16) P (as from issue 17) *17 with game-fee paid*
26. Fred Davis, 5307 Carriage Court, Baltimore, Maryland 21229. S. (25)
27. Richard Redd, K'vutzat Urim, Doar Na Negev, Israel. S (until issue 17) (16). P (as from issue 17). *35 plus 3/10d, with Abstraction game fee also credited*
28. Rod Blackshaw, 24 Oak Cottages, Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire. S. (17)
29. Bernie Ackerman, P.O.Box 6, Daggafontein, Transvaal, South Africa. S (until issue 17) (16) P (as from issue 17) *19 plus 4d, with Abstraction game fee also credited*
30. David Jones, 4/58 Deveron Drive, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire. S (until issue 17) (16) P(as from issue 17) *26*

That completes the list. However I should mention that, with reference to ALBION 15 page 25, it was Edi Birsan who had sent Bob Johnson an extra \$1 on my behalf, not Buddy Tretick as reported.

Curses! How much of a financial failure can you be? I have just remembered something that I have omitted from the calculations. Builds, and postage there-for. Players in ALBION games, besides having so much to suffer already, have been getting the builds reports free of any postage charge, and this fact should have been accounted in the relevant section last issue. Gnash!! Obviously I am not going to re-do the last two stencils again, so you have got away with it this time. But players - please take note - in future you will be charged postage for the builds reports etc.

ALBION deserves to lose a fortune - just retribution, it would be, for having me at the financial helm.

Anyone want to do my tax returns??

Would everyone please check their entry above, and let me know of all the mistakes I have made? No abusive language, please. Or at least, not in excess.....

A word of warning. Those who have the ominous symbol !! appearing against their name are behind with their subs/postage payments. We hereby warn them that they will continue to receive ALBION until they pay up. We can't think of a worse punishment.

REPORT.ALBION 69/1 (1969BG) Autumn 1908 orders.

Please note that the German order A(Pru) S A(Mun) listed in the Spring 1908 report should have been underlined as a failed order. There is no connection between Munich and Prussia. My apologies.

Austria (Nethercot); A(Ven) stands. A(Tri) S A(Ven)
A(Tyr) S A(Ven). A(Boh)-Mun.
A(Sil) stands.

France (Watson); F(ENC)-NTH. F(Ska)-Swe.
F(Nor) S F(Ska)-Swe.
A(Fin) S F(Ska)-Swe.
F(NWG) S F(Nor). F(Nap)-Apu.
A(Rom) S F(Nap)-Apu. F(LOS) stands.
F(TYS) S F(LOS). A(Pie) stands.
A(Tus) S A(Pie). A(Ruh) S German A(Mun).
A(Bur) S German A(Mun).

Germany (Newcombe); A(Ber)-Sil. A(Pru) S A(Ber)-Sil.
A(Mun) S A(Ber)-Sil. F(BAL)-Swe.
F(Den) S F(BAL)-Swe.

Russia(Hancock); F(BAS) S F(StP-NC). F(StP-NC) S F(BAS)
F(GoB) S A(Liv). A(War) stands.
A(Mos) S A(War). A(Liv) stands.

Turkey (Wood); A(Smy)-Con. A(Alb) S A(Gre).
A(Gre) S A(Alb). F(AES) S F(EMS).
F(EMS) S F(AES).

Retreats: The Austrian A(Sil) is displaced and must retreat to Galicia (only available adjacent place).

Notation: Underlined moves fail. S = supports.

Builds:

Austria controls: Vie, Tri, Bud, Ser, Ven. No change for 5.
France controls: Par, Bre, Mar, Por, Bel, Spa,
Lon, Lpl, Edi, Nap, Tun, Rom,
Nor, Swe. Builds 1 for 14.
Germany controls: Ber, Kie, Mun, Den, Hol. No change for 5.
Russia controls: Mos, War, StP, Rum, Sev, ~~Syr~~ Removes 1 for 5.
Turkey controls: Ank, Smy, Con, Gre, Bul. No change for 5.

DEADLINE FOR Winter 1908 BUILDS IS:-

Friday May 22nd 1970.

Late Press Release.

From the German Press: "Cartoons never won a Campaign" -
Kaiser Wilhelm.

Other press releases on the next page.

69/1 PRESS RELEASES.

From The Turkish Press.

A diplomatic note was delivered on behalf of the Eastern Powers to the German Embassy, in order to ascertain the Kaiser's future plans and to determine his position with regard to the French tyrant. However his reply left large and important questions unanswered; our sympathies are with you, Bülow.

That's all for the 69/1 press this time, which leaves me with a large blank space. Therefore, the most labour-saving device appears to be to move on to the

69/2 PRESS RELEASES.

(Please bear in mind that the game to which these refer hasn't been reported yet.....)

From the Russian Press.

Having recently purchased some splendid printing presses from the now defunct London Times, to replace the destroyed Hunnish ones, our glorious newspapers are now back in full production again.

In this issue, we print the details of the agreement between our glorious Motherland and the despicable arch-fiend Kaiser Bob, to show the world who the aggressor is, once and for all.

Our troops have never crossed the frontier, except to move into a territory which was threatened by the ravaging hordes of German barbarism. Let Germany scream about being betrayed - we are content to let world opinion be the judge as to who betrayed whom. Who assisted Norway against England? Who assisted Germany into Norway? Who, completely trustingly, left her northern frontiers unguarded so that other nations' forces could move in? NOT GERMANY! When Russia signs an agreement, she sticks by it. We do not believe in treachery and underhand dealings, stabbing friends and allies in the back, unlike certain individuals who shall be nameless. Although we perish for it, we will go down with our creed nailed to the masts. "Honesty and Integrity Through and Through". ('Made in Hong Kong')

From the French Press.

Some time ago the Austrian envoy, Count Down, made quite an impact in Paris; (we now have a new monument in Paris - the leaning tower).

Count Down is a distant relation of Von Down, who, it is said, died a hero when, with two other soldiers, he defended a very important bridge in Tyrolia against the Italian soldiers. When he was finally struck down, it is said the Italians fighting on the bridge quothed the immortal words: "Von Down; two to go".

REPORT.

ALBION 69/2 (1969CF)

Autumn 1904.

Austria (Wood); F(Alb)-IOS. A(Boh)-Vie.
A(Bud) stands. A(Bul) S Italian F(Ank)-Con.

England (Hancock); F(Hel)-Hol.

France (Evans); A(Lpl) stands. A(Bel)-Bur.
A(Mar)-Gas. F(MAO)-Naf.
F(Lon)-NTH. F(GoL)-TYS.
F(WMS)-Tun.

Germany (Stuart); A(Den)-Kie. A(Sil) S A(Mun).
A(Ber) S A(Sil). A(Mun) S A(Sil).
F(Swe)-Den. F(Fin)-Swe.
A(Liv)-Ukr. F(NTH) S F(Swe)-Den.

Italy (Watson); F(Ank)-Con. F(AES)-Smy.
F(IOS)-Gre. A(Ven)-Tri.
A(Tyr)-Pie. A(Gre)-Ser.
F(TYS)-Tun.

Russia (Robertson); A(Ukr)-Mos. A(War) S A(Gal).
A(Gal) S A(War). F(Rum) stands.
F(BAL) S German F(Swe)-Den.

Turkey (Thomas); F(EMS)-AES. F(Con) S F(EMS)-AES.

Retreats: Turkish F(Con) is displaced and retreats to Black Sea (only available place).

Notation: Underlined moves fail. S = supports.

Builds:

Austria controls:	Alb , Bud, Vie, Sil , Bul.	Removes 1 for 3.
England controls:	Hel , Hol.	No change for 1.
France controls:	Par, Mar, Bre, Bel, Por, Spa, Lon, Lpl.	Builds 1 for 8.
Germany controls:	Ber, Mun, Kie, Den, Nor, Swe, Edi, Alb .	Removes 1 for 7.
Italy controls:	Ven, Rom, Nap, Tun, Smy, Con, Gre, Tri, Ser.	Builds 2 for 9.
Russia controls:	Mos, War, Sev, StP, Rum.	No change for 5.
Turkey controls:	Ank, Alb .	Removes 1 for 1.

DEADLINE FOR Winter 1904 BUILDS IS:-

Friday May 22nd 1970.

As you pass, nod the head distantly, yet affably, and allow a loosely-folded £5 note drop onto the floor. Then pretend to examine the ceiling, floor and walls with convincing and concentrated interest, this giving the rest of the shifty goons present to remove themselves from the shop and leave your field clear. If you run out of things to examine, don't under any circumstances try the Mgr.

When the shop is clear, the time has arrived. You lean over the counter in a conspiratorial manner, allowing another fiver to move magically from your pocket to his. Say that Fred sent you, and the job is done.

You will be given a brown-paper parcel, heavily labelled 'Nether Wapping Sewing Circle Almanac 1873' and totally immersed in Sellotape, string and sealing wax. You then depart, leaving several gentlemen examining the ceiling, floor and walls in an unconvincing way.

Your next move is to find somewhere to read the thing, and if you take my advice you will go to an English restaurant, where you can be sure to get half an hours solitude before anyone comes to ask you what you want. This gives you a chance for a quick skim through the pages, and works up an appetite for the egg and chips which you will find is the only thing on the menu that hasn't apparently been stricken with some dread disease.

After leaving the haven of the restaurant, egg and chips firmly under the belt, and the wallet lighter by a further £2-8-6d, you convey your illegal purchase to your home, where you devour it ravenously and finally tear it up in an agony of self-loathing.

That's what you do to buy a magazine of salacious content, just in case you didn't know.

However, before you wonder what this meandering article is leading to, that has all changed now. England does it again!

It was recently announced in the National Press that a ship will be chartered to sail around the British coast outside the 3-mile limit. This is the fiendish plot. Not only does this allow the ship to purvey all known, and some undiscovered, forms of pornography, but it also allows this while letting fishermen steal Norwegian fish, if they have a spare hand to hold the rod with, of course.

WOW! GOLLYGOSH!! WHOOPEE!!! GADZOOKS!!!!

It isn't enough, I suppose, that the British film industries should currently be competing with each other to see how far, in the pornography line, they can go before Trevelyan leaps in with scissors a-kimbo. While no film worthy of the name gets much of a look in, and even less distribution.

It isn't enough, I suppose, that you can't tune in to Tom and Jerry on the tele without being regaled with semi-nudity, suggestive but totally humourless 'comedy' shows, so-called 'documentaries' on this and that aspect of sex, Human Relations etc.

It isn't enough that you can't find Roskill's War at Sea in the local bookshop because it isn't on display - the cover isn't sexy enough to attract the public. I would

just like to see H.M.S. Warspite look sexy.

Now we have to have quasi-matelots cruising round our shores taking loads of cash off tired business-men in exchange for titillating trash and pornographic puerility (if there is such a word).

Not only that, but I have it on good authority that they refuse to sell ALBION on board! That just about does it, as far as I am concerned. We condemn it.

Don't we make us sick, though? (If you see what I mean).

Pass a law which abolishes censorship, and in a year the whole problem would be solved. Other countries seem to have managed it without civil revolutions. Then people would have to do something else to get their excitement. Perhaps they will start going to church again, for instance, or think (for a change) about serious films, drama, music, literature. Perhaps they might even subscribe to ALBION, sublime all their surplus drive and emotion into wargaming, as we do, and incidentally give me a profit on the way.

Grrrrrr.....Fair makes you wild!

ALBION hereby announces that the CASTTIFT fund is hereby open. Contributions should be made, in even multiples of \$10 notes, to the ALBION offices. Green stamps will not be accepted.

What's that? What's the CASTTIFT fund, you say? Why - Cruise And Sex Trip Ticket For Turnbull, of course.

Can you see any reason why the ALBION editor shouldn't be the first up the gangplank???

xx

And so, dear reader, we bring this latest issue of rubbish to an end. Since I can't think of anything else to write, we'll adopt the usual policy of making an announcement.

ALBION number 16 ends



"THE BETRAYER SHALL BE BETRAYED"



FRANCE
ISSUES
FIRM WARNING
TO GERMANY

