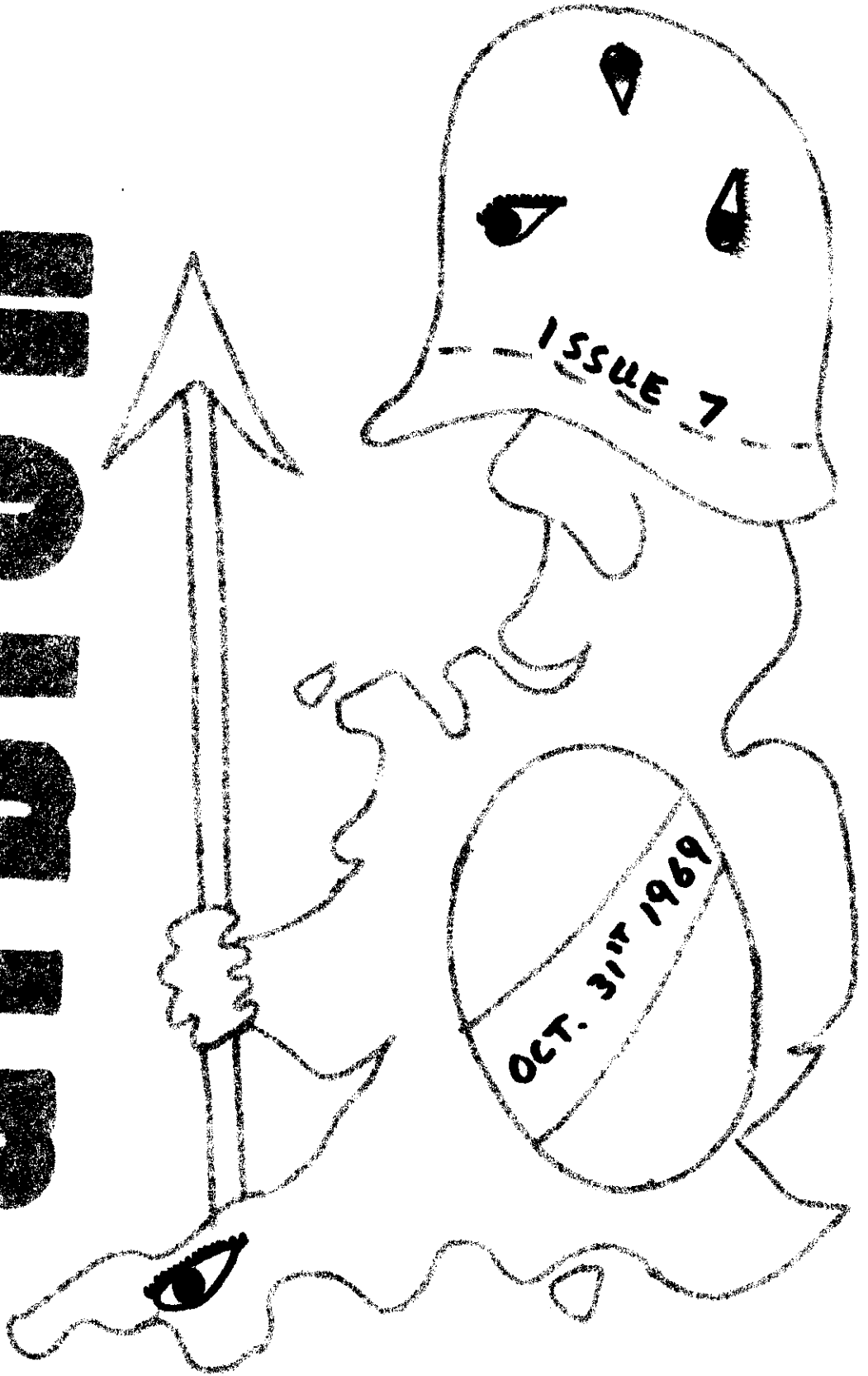


FORWARD



New Trades and Subscribers.

Add to the ALBION trade list:-

LONELY MOUNTAIN, edited by Charles Wells, 3021 Washington Blvd., Cleveland, Ohio 44118, U.S.A. Co-editor (in charge of trades) is Terry Kuch, 7554 Spring Lake Drive, Bethesda, Maryland 20034, U.S.A. The trade copies of ALBION will go to Terry, commencing with this issue. However Charles cannot bear the thought of someone else having his precious and priceless copies of ALBION.

Therefore, add to the ALBION list of subscribers:-

Charles Wells, address as above.

N.B. Charles is, of course, the inventor of PARLEMENT, and LONELY MOUNTAIN carries at least one game of postal PARLEMENT. This magazine will therefore be of tremendous interest to anyone who has the PARLEMENT rules and can't quite figure out how the game is played postally. Included in this category is your own editor, who blushes to admit that his grasp of the rules isn't by any means 100%.

Subscriber information (up-dated from issue 3).

British subscriptions stand as follows:-

Malcolm Watson.	Both game fees (69/1).	Copies by hand.
John Robertson.	Both game fees (69/1).	32 issues postage. (!)
Michael Nethercot.	69/1 game fee.	12 issues postage.
Chris Hancock.	69/1 game fee.	5 issues postage. **
Ray Evans.	12 issues plus 3d surplus.	
Colin Newcombe.	69/1 game fee.	Copies by hand.
John Munro.	69/1 game fee.	14 issues postage. 3d surplus.
David Wood.	69/1 game fee.	10 issues postage.
Harry Tucker.	6 issues.	Subscription temporarily discontinued.
Bob Stuart.	22 issues.	6d surplus.
Bob Thomas.	5 issues.	*

Those names with * or ** appended are either subscribers whose subscription has run out or players whose postage cash has run out. Both categories are invited to renew (this won't affect the despatch of future issues, incidentally - they will keep coming until you scream for them to stop).

Note that when subscription credit runs out, renewal takes place at the new price of 1/- per copy, inclusive of postage. Ray Evans has cannily booked up many issues in advance at the old price. That's diplomacy for you.

Please note that some players in 69/1 have not yet paid me the extra game fee requested. Hopefully they are not thinking of resigning on the spot because of the increase - don't forget that to do so would leave Malcolm and John a clear field for a certain win.....

Overseas subscribers - Bob Johnson still refuses to tell me how much his postage is costing him, so you are off the hook for a little while longer.

GAME THEORY!!

Yet another ALBION special - a new series of articles for general edification and enlightenment, written specially by a good loser.

Part 1. INTRODUCTION (as logical a title as any).

First of all it would be wise to dispel any hopeful thoughts which may have arisen in the mind of the reader on reading the title. Game Theory is really a very misleading title (I know - typical of me to use it). Therefore it is necessary at the very outset to say that Game Theory is NOT a do-it-yourself mathematical kit for winning games.

Articles on:-

'How to Win without Trying and against a Better Player',
'How to Win by telling your Opponent you will Punch him in the Nose',
'How to Win by playing Russian Marches in the opponent's Ear',
'How to write an article on How to Win',
'How to Win by Tipping over the Board by Mistake',
- all these belong in the General, not, repeat NOT, in ALBION.
(Apologies to Avalon Hill - but it's true, you know).

In fact, it might fairly be said that the theory to be expounded cannot reasonably be applied to any of our war games, at least in the initial period of foundation and explanation. Later on, we shall see how the basic principles can be applied to a war-game situation, but even then we will find that few, if any, games are capable of 100% analysis by the theory.

This fact should not, of course, surprise the alert reader - if games were capable of complete analysis, there wouldn't be much point in playing them. Take noughts-and-crosses, for instance (TIC TAC TOE for those across the Atlantic); has anyone ever bothered to play this silly game once they found out how to ensure at least a draw?

No, of course you haven't - you are sensible people. Thus hopefully the editor puts words into the mouth of his readers - a useful technique, if only to allow the article to continue with the assurance that you are with me so far.

Having said what the articles are not about, it would be wise, before everyone throws away the magazine in disgust and it gets eaten by the cat, to say just what they are about. This seems fair to the reader, who is made to suffer enough in these pages already.

I suppose a better title would be 'Theory of Decision Making', although even that sounds vague and abstruse, without defining the terms. Nevertheless, it is basically a question of choosing the best decision - of following the most favourable strategy out of a number of alternatives. Interaction with another player (be he physical or just Nature incarnate) is a vital part of the analysis. Indeed, for the purpose of this series, we shall consider only games involving two players, which we call, by a touch of genius, two-player games.

One or two final things before proceeding with part 2.

First, the games which we will be studying for the early part of the analysis will hardly be recognisable as games at all, since they will be represented merely by means of matrices (non-mathematicians don't panic - a matrix is merely an array of numbers; indeed, provided you can add, subtract, multiply, divide and read, you will be quite capable of handling the mathematics involved). These matrices represent the payment due to the winner in a variety of situations; this payment could be in cash, territorial gains, or what have you.

Second, we will only consider games in which the losses of one player become the winnings of the other. In other words, cash is not created or destroyed during the game. These games are called zero-sum games, for the obvious reason. In childish manner I should say that games which do not fit this condition are called non-zero-sum games. (One thing about this business is that it has little jargon, which is a disadvantage when trying to impress the wife, but which helps when writing articles).

In all the games to follow, we shall imagine two players, Red and Blue. Since it will help the continuity to follow the fate of one particular player, we shall associate ourselves with Blue and call Red the Baddie. Thus we will assume that Blue wishes to win as much as he can, while Red is anxious to lose as little as possible.

In each matrix, the Blue strategies will be listed down the left side, the Red strategies along the top. A strategy is merely one of the choices which a player will have to make each time the game is played - it may consist of selecting a card from a number of alternatives, of alternative methods of moving troops, of bidding at different levels in an auction. The explanation will follow logically, I assure you.

The payments in the matrix will consist of numbers; we shall assume that positive payments go to Blue, negative payments to Red. In most games, all the payments will be positive, which sounds a bit hard on Red, but this is another matter of convenience which will be explained when the time comes. For quick reference, we shall make the payments pounds sterling (£), much to the frustration of the American readers (assuming there still are some at this point).

Finally, a philosophical point. We shall see in many games that one side always has the advantage, and will win whatever the opponent does (the analysis is still not obvious, however, since we are concerned with winning the maximum amount, not just getting a glow of satisfaction). In such a case, the loser (we shall take care it is Red) might be pardoned for throwing the game at the winner and departing in search of wine and beauty. However we are going to be nasty and force him to play - we must assume each game is to be played, not to be ignored. I assure you we lose no generality by this. Although you must be wondering just what sort of nut scheme this is anyway. Patience!

Part 2. Simple games and silly games - the matrix - saddle points.

All right so far? Sitting in comfort? Then let's begin.

Let's first consider the game in example 1.

Example 1.

		Red	
		1	2
Blue	1	0	0
	2	0	0

This is a 2x2 game - each player has two strategies open to him; Blue must select one from Blue 1 and Blue 2, and Red must take a choice from Red 1 and Red 2.

It will be obvious to everyone that this must be the silliest game ever invented. Whichever strategy either player selects, no payment is made either way. However there is an important point buried therein - at least neither side loses anything. The significance of this remark will become obvious in the next example.

And we might as well pass on to the next example, since we don't want to waste time and energy on the example above. The next game looks just as simple:-

Example 2.

		Red	
		1	2
Blue	1	1	1
	2	1	1

Still a 2x2 game, but still rather stupid, apparently. Whatever strategy either player chooses, the result is the same - Blue wins £1 each play.

This looks about as stupid as example 1, but with one important difference - this time the game isn't a fair one for Red. This factor should cause no trouble, however, if Blue agrees to pay Red £1 as a side-payment for each play of the game. If Blue does agree to this, the game is fair and reverts to example 1.

Therefore, with the important rider about side-payments, we don't need to waste more time on example 2. So let's try another game.

Example 3.

		Red	
		1	2
Blue	1	-1	-2
	2	0	1

This is a bit more difficult, and it looks as though someone might actually gain something. Still a 2x2 game, though, so let's have a closer look.

Obviously Red would like to get the -2 by Blue 1/Red 2. Red would therefore like to play Red 2. But he sees there is a snag - if he does play Red 2, then Blue will play Blue 2, and the game will be worth £1 to Blue. Therefore Red cannot risk Red 2, and must perforce play Red 1.

We must credit Blue with equal intelligence. He realises the arguments which force Red to play Red 1, and therefore chooses Blue 2 in order to avoid the -1 in Blue 1/Red 1.

The game therefore has the following solution:-

Blue plays Blue 2, Red plays Red 1. No cash changes hands. So this is a fair game, despite the fact that there are more negative numbers than positive in the matrix.

Note the reasoning carefully. If Blue deviates from Blue 2, he immediately loses at least £1 more than the zero result which would arise from play of the above strategies. If he plays Blue 1, and Red doesn't know he is going to, then Red will win £1; if Red is aware of Blue's intentions, he can cripple our hero by playing Red 2 and winning £2 for himself.

Red is in a similar position. If he should decide to play Red 2 for a change, and Blue sticks to Blue 2, Blue will win £1. Therefore Red daren't try Red 2, and Blue knows he daren't.

Thus the analysis is complete as above. This example illustrates a very important basic principle in Game Theory; the zero position in the above matrix, which we have decided must occur each time the game is played providing both players follow the strategy best for them, is called a SADDLE POINT, and the strategies which lead to it as a solution are called (you've guessed it) saddle point strategies.

A saddle point can always be picked out of a matrix (assuming there is a saddle point; often there isn't) by a very simple procedure:-

1. Write at the end of each row the minimum number in each row.
2. Write at the foot of each column the maximum number in each column.
3. Mark in some way the largest of the row minima. Mark also the smallest of the solumn maxima.
4. If the two numbers marked are the same, there is a saddle point, which occurs at the intersection of the row and column in question.

Performing this on the above example:-

		Red		
		1	2	Row minima
	1	-1	-2	-2
Blue	2	0	1	0 *
	Column maxima	0*	1	

The largest of the row minima is 0 (Blue 2).
 The smallest of the column maxima is 0 (Red 1).
 Therefore there is a saddle point at Blue 2/Red 1, and both players should play the strategy associated with the saddle point. The payoff will be zero each time the game is played.

Definition: in every game, there will be some amount of cash which is paid across the table, on average, each time the game is played. We call this the value of the game, and we will usually deal with positive values (i.e. Blue wins this average amount from Red).

The value of a game with a saddle point is obviously the payoff in the matrix at that saddle point (£0 in the above example). Games without a saddle point are dealt with slightly differently, and this will constitute part 3 of the series.

In any game, the analyst should first test for a saddle point; if one exists, not only is it an easy solution to find, but it is a disheartening fact that more complicated analysis will often not reveal a saddle point, even if one is there. Thus

IMPORTANT RULE NUMBER ONE - ALWAYS TEST FOR A SADDLE POINT FIRST.

Just to show how easy it is, let's hunt for a saddle point in a more complicated game, where each player has more than two strategies to choose from; in this case Red has 5 strategies and Blue 4.

Example 4.

		Red					Row minima
		1	2	3	4	5	
Blue	1	3	1	2	5	4	1
	2	4	2	3	2	1	1
	3	4	3	5	4	6	3*
	4	5	1	0	3	3	0
		Column maxima 5 3* 5 5 6					

Largest of the row minima is 3 (Blue 3).
 Smallest of the column maxima is 3 (Red 2).

There is the saddle point, at Blue 3/Red 2. The players should play these strategies each time, and the value of the game is £3, which Blue wins from Red each play.

This is a game in which Red could reasonably require Blue to equalise by a side payment.

Dead easy, isn't it? The principle is quite simple and logical, and after a little practice everyone should be able to find a saddle point without any trouble.

Sceptics may try to find better strategies for one or the other player in the example above, but they will be disappointed. Just to recap, Blue wants to make sure he wins at least a

certain amount, and more if Red makes an error. Red wants to ensure that he loses only a certain amount at the most, and that he will lose less, or even gain, if Blue makes an error in choosing strategies.

Let's look for a moment at the outcome of some errors. Since we assume we can never make an error, let's say Red decides to play Red 4 for a change. Blue, of course, still plays Blue 3 according to the saddle point. The result? Red loses £4 per play instead of the £3 he would have lost had he done what we told him to do.

Now let's consider Blue becoming careless and playing Blue 1 for a change. Red still plays Red 2 according to the saddle point. Thus Blue wins only £1 per play - he has reduced his gain by £2 per play by being careless.

Of course, if both participants avoid their saddle point strategy there's no telling what might be the result. But either player could achieve a better result by playing his best strategy against the mistake of the opponent.

Sorry to stress this point at length, but it's important that you get the hang of this sort of thing before proceeding with more difficult examples.

If all Game Theory was as simple as this, there would be no need for this series of articles. Saddle points are almost a matter of intuition, or common sense - call it what you like. Thus players become adept at playing saddle point strategies without realising they are doing so.

Unfortunately, many games do not have a saddle point, and we will deal with the mysteries of the mixed strategy in the next issue.

In conclusion, let's look again at the important points to remember:-

- 1). We must assume that the players are intelligent and capable of following the arguments in each other's mind.
- 2). We must also assume that the players want to guarantee the best possible result for them - i.e. a minimum gain for Blue and a maximum possible loss for Red. Read this carefully, it makes sense despite what you might think.
- 3). In most games we make the payoff values positive for convenience. To make the game fair, a side payment from Blue to Red must be arranged. We will see the value of dealing only with positive numbers when we deal with more complicated situations.
- 4). The good guys are Blue, and positive payments go to the good guys.
- 5). A saddle point occurs when the largest of the row minima is the same as the smallest of the column maxima. The payoff at the saddle point is the payoff for each play of the game, i.e. the value of the game, and neither player can benefit by deviating from his saddle point strategy.

No Homework this week. More next time.

Prof. Erasmus Thing.

NEW ALBION GAMES!

ALBION 69/2 is already fully subscribed - weeks before the date requested! This game can now get under way. I have drawn lots for the countries in my usual unbiased way, and give the results below, together with names and addresses of players:

- Austria: David Wood, 60 Woodgate Avenue, Church Lawton, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 3EF, Staffs.
- England: Chris Hancock, 17 Mallard Road, Chelmsford, Essex.
- France: Ray Evans, 12 Mareth Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire.
- Germany: Bob Stuart, 3 Millwood Road, Orpington, Kent.
- Italy: Malcolm Watson, 3 Hawthorn Avenue, Timperley, Cheshire.
- Russia: John Robertson, Upper Dungleass, Arbroath Road, Dundee DD5 1QN, Scotland.
- Turkey: Bob Thomas, 155 Coxford Road, Shirley Warren, Southampton SO1 6JX, Hampshire.

Gamesmaster - me. Sorry about that, folks.

Note that all players are AHIKS members, British region. Starting date. Well, it will be very convenient to match the seasons of 69/2 with those of 69/1, so that issues of ALBION appear at the same frequency as before. This means that 69/2 should start when the next Spring move for 69/1 is reported, which gives players plenty of time for initial diplomacy etc. Therefore, deadline date for 69/2 Spring 1901 orders is -

*Wednesday December 3rd.

Before that date, 69/2 players are invited to pay the game fee of 10/- plus however many stamps they wish. These payments may be made at the AHIKS British regional meeting on November 15th if desired. Players who are already subscribers may put some of their credit to the game fee as they wish.

Right - there you are, folks; on with the diplomacy, and hope you enjoy the game. Your first moves will be reported in ALBION issue number 9.

ALBION 69/3 is not yet fully subscribed - indeed there are only three offers so far. These consist of one British player plus Bob Johnson, P.O. Box 134, Whippany, New Jersey 07981, U.S.A. and George Patton, 1841 Suffolk Road, Columbus, Ohio 43221, U.S.A.

Glad to have you with us! Regular and Hyperspace house rules will be sent with this issue.

Any more volunteers for Hyperspace? This game is open to all, don't forget, not just British players. The game fee is a mere 10/- and deadlines will be well spaced, leaving you time to get on with other things like earning a living.

DIPLOMACY RULE DISPUTES/ INTERPRETATIONS.

No. 5 - Brannan's Rules.

Almost the entire article that follows has been re-printed from BROODINGNAG number 84, by kind permission of John McCallum. John - if you had refused to let me re-print these things, ALBION would be virtually void; or you might have brought Hypertweedle back to life.....

In the early issues of WILD 'N WOOLY appearing at the end of 1964, Brannan published the set of rules to be used in his games. Among the rules was the following which has become known as Brannan's Rule.

"A. A convoy move does not cut support against the fleet in the body of water through which the army is convoyed last.

B. When one of the fleets in the convoy chain is dislodged, the attempted convoy does not cut any support at all."

The letters A and B do not appear in the original, but have been added for convenience, since it will be helpful to consider the two portions separately.

Part A. The first part of the rule is often quoted with the following amended wording:- 'For the purpose of support cutting, a convoyed army is regarded as coming from the space occupied by the last convoying fleet'. In fact many discussions have derived additional implications from this alternate wording without noticing it is not what Brannan actually said.

As an example of this rule:-

Austria has a fleet in the Adriatic Sea, Italy has fleets in Apulia and Venice. Italy plays F(Ven)-ADS, f(Apu) S F(Ven)-ADS. If Austria plays F(ADS)-Apu, then the Austrian move does not cut the support of Apulia, since this is not an attack from the side, and the Austrian fleet would be displaced.

Brannan feels that if Austria, instead of playing as indicated above, ordered A(Alb)-Apu, F(ADS) C A(Alb)-Apu, then the same principle should hold; this would still be a frontal attack and would not cut the support of the unit in Apulia. The Austrian fleet would be displaced and the convoy would not take place.

This problem is simply not covered in the rule book at all. The rule book says, on the cutting of supports:- 'If a unit ordered to support in a given space is attacked from a different space, the unit disregards its order to support, 'turns to face its attacker' and defends its own position'. The issue depends on the meaning of the innocent word 'from' - does it mean 'from the space the attacking unit originally occupied', or 'from the space used by the attacking unit to get to the battle area'? In most cases the two are identical, but in the convoy situation the two are different. Hence part A of Brannan's Rule plugs a real hole in the rule book.

ALBION would use Brannan's rule part A, in common with most Diplomacy magazines, and I don't think the question is really arguable - Brannan has very capably stated something the rule book intended but failed to recognise.

Readers who are less familiar with such discussions in Diplomacy magazines should note that it is part A of Brannan's rule which has been most discussed. In fact, many journals use the expression 'Brannan's Rule' to mean the A part alone.

Part B. It is clearly indicated in the rule book that if a convoy is attempted, and the convoying fleet is dislodged, then the move does not succeed and the convoyed army falls back to its original position. It has sometimes been argued that this makes part B of Brannan's rule superfluous, the view being that it is merely a re-phrasing of the statement in the rule book. This is, however, not quite true, due to the peculiar use we make in Diplomacy of the word 'succeed' - we use it of a move in the sense that the unit involved has been able to carry out the order given to it. Note, though, that many orders are made with no intention at all of their 'succeeding' in this sense. For instance, an attack may be made on a space merely to cut any support the unit in that space might be giving. Similarly a unit may be ordered to a space to stand off another unit similarly ordered by another country (or even the same country - see later) - there is no intention at all of the unit actually entering the space involved. Often plans go astray when a move succeeds unexpectedly. Players have often made the comment "My orders succeeded, damn it", and wives etc. within earshot must wonder just what sort of nut game this is anyway, when players bemoan their own success. As if they needed any convincing!

Anyway, consider the following orders and their effect on a unit in Apulia:-

Turkey: A(Smy)-Apu. F(AES) C A(Smy)-Apu. F(IOS) C A(Smy)-Apu.

Would the convoyed attack cut the support given by the unit in Apulia (we assume a support given to some other area, such as Venice)? Without part B of Brannan's rule it certainly would. And (this is the real crunch) that support would still be cut even if the convoy did not take place due to the dislodging of one or both of the convoying fleets. Therefore it seems that part B of Brannan's rule is a necessary inclusion - the rule book would almost certainly have ruled this way had the question been considered.

After all, if the convoying fleet is beaten in battle miles away from the area it was supposed to convoy an army to, why should that army's proposed move have any effect on a unit occupying that area? An army in Albania would hardly turn to face an attack being convoyed from England if the convoying fleet were sunk in the Channel.

Therefore, once again ALBION sides with the majority, and will use both parts of Brannan's rule should the situations arise. As John McCallum suggests, a re-phrasing of part B might clarify the rule even further - 'If an army is ordered to move by convoy, and one of the convoying fleets is dislodged, then the army has no effect on the space into which it was intended to go'.

LETTERS FROM AMERICA.

The following extracts have been made from a letter from Bob Johnson. They refer in the first paragraph to the rule disputes article on a unit attacked from all sides, in the last issue.

"The interpretive narrative to go along with why the German seems to stand off 2, 4 or 6 armies is - armies/fleets move to a space, they do not attack opposing units. Therefore, the German unit never took part in the conflict - it did not do anything".

Thanks for pointing this out Bob. It certainly clarifies quite a few situations. However, just one little point - if they don't actually attack other units, how do they eliminate them if no retreat is available? Merely fill up all the ground space and squeeze the poor lads to death? However even this problem would be solved if we regarded the units as extensions of diplomatic and political control, and not military units at all, to any degree of realism. Thus they would be representations of a set of consciences (which can be squeezed without dying) rather than a set of men (which can, after a time).

Bob goes on to set us a problem.

"Riddle me this - what happens if the German attacked French A(Ruh)? Right! Italian A(Tyr) gets into Munich and German A(Mun) has to retreat. But (the rule book) says that 'a country may not force one of its own units to retreat'. OK - now what? If Munich attacks Ruhr, he forces one of his own units to retreat, and the rule book says that is a nono! Somebody please answer this one!"

Now, it is one of the more reliable laws of nature that as soon as someone sticks his neck out, someone else obligingly chops it off. So, with this sort of risk in mind, we will attempt to answer the question on a number of different levels.

1. It might be said that the attack on Ruhr does not cut the support of the French army there (Koning's Rule, although I agree that Koning's rule states that 'a unit which is dislodged cannotetc).
2. Azimov's Laws of Robotics state, somewhere that 'no robot may harm a human being, or, by inaction, allow that human being to be harmed'. The rule book misses out on this important negative side - when stating that one unit of a country cannot cause another unit of that same country to retreat, it should add (but does imply) either by action or deliberate inaction. The emphasised word here is 'deliberate'. This argues that the attack on Ruhr would be a deliberate action which would cause Munich to retreat, and hence this should be disallowed BUT if we allow the deliberate inaction of Munich holding instead of making the attack, then we must rule for its removal if it makes the attack.

I am conscious that I have not phrased the above very well, and even after four attempts (luckily not on stencil). However I hope you get the point. I firmly believe that the gamesmaster must remove the Munich army, and not call a massive stand-off on

the grounds that the German attack only turned out to be against the rules when it was considered in conjunction with all the other orders. Right?

"Enclosed are two letters - I thought you might like them for your rules article. They are quite nice and informative. I have another question for you - when does a convoy not succeed in moving and/or cutting a support?"

Thanks for the letters. The relevant parts of them are reproduced on pages to follow. As regards your question, I think I must have had foresight when I decided to cover Brannan's rule this time - the answers are all there. Or are you hinting at something more cunning?

"ALBION (new Albion was the name for a part of the South Western U.S. - have fun with that won't you). I amaze myself that you keep up the high quality. Very few 'wines are of this high quality. ALBION has not been dull, and has had a hell of a lot of propaganda - maybe too much. One line propaganda is the most effective. Damned literate Britons! Sorry to hear of the demise of the Bourne - I wanted to join in and enjoy it. I am already in Miller's Bourne. If you need me, I will join in 69/3 Hyperspace. I have never played Hyperspace, but I am ready to demolish you."

New Albion, eh? Doesn't even get a mention in my book, although we have New Albany, Indiana, which is obviously derived from the same stem. Interested readers will find New Albany between NEVUS (see NAEVUS) and NEWARK, DAVID LESLIE, LORD, which should help on your general education no end.

Thanks also for the nice comments about ALBION - we try our little best over here. As for these marathon press releases, they take an age to type, but provide enjoyable reading. I also find underhand amusement in putting the most obvious lies next door to each other. You will see now why I write such a lot in Diplodour.

I had heard from Don Miller that he has got some Bourne games going (what hasn't he got going?). I still hope we will get one under way in ALBION (HINT to British readers).

Hyperspace. Sorry you can't demolish me, since I am gamesmastering the thing and attacks vertically upwards aren't allowed, even through Hyperspace. However you can have a crack at some other Britons, when we get a full house. You should have both sets of house rules by the time you read this.

All above matter in "...." by Bob Johnson. Rest by me.

The letters Bob refers to were from Charles Wells and Rod Walker, and both contained interpretations of a rule situation which had arisen in one of the Diplodour games. We certainly are interested. On the assumption and devout hope that neither writer objects to being quoted (we are short on letters anyway), parts of both letters are reproduced below. Note that both Charles and Rod are two of the most expert gamesmasters in the business.

From Charles Wells:-

"Many moons ago you asked me and Rod a technical question concerning Dip. Here is my answer.

ITALY: A(Nap)-Rom. A(Ven)-Rom.

TURKEY: F(Tun)-TYS. F(LOS) S F(Tun)-TYS.

FRANCE: F(TYS) stands. Retreat.

The question is, may France retreat to Rome? My answer, and I think most game masters', is 'No' since Rome is the scene of a stand-off, according to page 5 of the rules, under 'The Retreat'.

I believe your argument was that the double attack by Italy on Rome was nullified. But this is clearly contrary to the rules; see Conflicts, pp. 3 and 4. The Italian orders are NOT null, although they fail. There is therefore a stand-off in Rome, so Rome is unavailable for retreat."

Charles Wells.

Now straight on to Rod on the same topic:

"Contrary to your statement in Diplodeur, the self-stand-off is perfectly legal. The Rules specifically allow it. First of all, the definition of a stand-off always involves 'two units', not 'two units from different countries' but just 'two units'. Secondly, look at the Austrian moves for Fall 1901 in the sample game; the self-stand-off is used there.....So F(Nap)-Rom, F(Tus)-Rom by Italy are perfectly legitimate moves, standing each other off and making Rome unavailable for retreat as stated in the Rules."

Butting in at this point, the ALBION staff agree with both the arguments stated above. Two units of the same country can both attack a space between them, and thus stand off. Note also that the central space is thus defended from attack by a unit from another country, and this is a very useful tactical gambit. ALBION would follow the interpretation of Charles and Rod in this situation.

Rod writes more in his letter about similar situations. All these items should be of interest to us, and therefore I have no hesitation in reproducing them below, interspersed with my own comments where appropriate, and just to make it more difficult for you to read.

From Rod Walker again:

"Related to this is the Reinhardt Gambit, which first appeared in LONELY MOUNTAIN (and is therefore allowed by Charles Wells), which I allow, and which Al Calhamer says is legal. Using your situation as an example, we could have:

ITALY: F(Tus)-Rom. F(Nap)-Rom.

FRANCE: F(Tyr) S Italian F(Nap)-Rom.

TURKEY: F(Ion)-Nap.

"This is not contrary to the rules. They do not state that a

country cannot defeat one of its own units, only that it cannot dislodge one of its own units. Thus:

ITALY: F(Tus)-Rom. F(Nap)-Rom. A(Ven) S F(Tus)-Rom.

"I don't know why Italy would make a move like that, but if he did, F(Tus) would make it to Rome. This actually happened in one of my games, in which France had five units on Burgandy (A Gas, Par, Mar, Pic, Bel) and attacked it 3 against 2 (i.e. A(Gas)-Bur., A(Par) S A(Gas)-Bur, A(Mar) S A(Gas)-Bur, A(Pic)-Bur, A(Bel) S A(Pic)-Bur). To this day, I do not know why he did this; however my ruling in that case is perfectly in accordance with the Rules.

"I agree with your position - at least this seems to be your position - that the self-stand-off is not realistic, in that armies from the same country do not attack each other. However, the 'realism' argument, of which I have since 1966 been an exponent, is only valid (it seems to me) when an ambiguity in the Rules is being resolved (as in the Coastal Crawl, Koning's rule etc.) It cannot be used to justify actual changes to the Rules. Thus, on the grounds of realism, we could forbid Turkey to build a fleet in Ankara. At any rate, there are points, however unrealistic they may seem, on which the Rules are perfectly clear and must be the final arbiter.

"There has been a lot of confusion in the area of units of the same country attacking the same space or attacking each other. The 'Chalker Rule', for instance, in effect assumes that an order to attack a space containing one's own unit is illegal. His term for it was 'conditional' (i.e. upon the other unit's moving out). The Rules state only, however, that you may not dislodge one of your own units. It is important to observe what the Rules do not say. They do not say that the efficacy of an attack on a space depends in any way upon the nationality of a unit occupying that space or simultaneously also trying to enter it. The Rules clearly state that a unit may attack any space to which it can legally move and that this attack will produce movement or stand-off according to the prescribed conditions. This rule is absolute and has only one exception. That is, if an attack on a space already occupied would otherwise be successful, but the occupying unit happens to be of the same country as either the attacking unit or one of its supports, the attack fails."

This is a remarkable summary of the situation - I told you these guys are experts! The above argument is clear, logical and precise, and as far as I can see could have no opponents. After all, as with many other games, it's too late to start thinking of changing the rule book, for whatever reason, when the game has been available to the public for nearly ten years; there's no point in having different groups of players tackling the game in completely different ways. This same sort of argument is perhaps the most effective counter against those who want to revise Stalingrad or D Day. djt.

One more thing from Rod, before putting his letter aside.

"Now I will give you one. Consider:

GERMANY: A(Mun) stands. A(Sil) S French A(Bur)-Mun.

FRANCE: A(Bur)-Mun. A(Ruh) S A(Bur)-Mun.

ITALY: A(Tyr) S French A(Bur)-Mun. A(Boh) S French A(Bur)-Mun.

"The point here is that Germany cannot successfully defend Munich. He has tried a ploy to save the situation. Not counting the German support, the undefended A(Mun) is attacked 4-strong. Does the attack succeed? The Rules clearly state that if one of the units supporting an attack is of the same nationality as the unit occupying the attacked space, the attack fails. Would you let Germany get away with it?

"Actually, I think the Rules meant to say that either (a) the support of an attack on one's own unit is not legal (and not the attack itself), or (b) that the attack only fails if the supports of the units of the nation being attacked actually would make the difference between success and failure. But that's not what they say, and, as with the Boardman Dilemma, we are faced with a situation in which the Rules say one thing and probably intend another.

"My own ruling, by the way, is that the support given by the same nation is invalid, but not the attack; so that, in the example above, the German support fails as illegal and the French attack on Munich succeeds.

"My position on this too, is that the Rules say 'a unit moves with the strength of itself and its (valid) supports'. Thus, I say that there is no possible subterfuge whereby a unit with three uncut supports may be defeated by a unit with no support or with fewer supports. However it's a perplexing question, n'est-ce pas?"

This sort of argument is, I'm afraid, well above the heads of us poor Britishers; we thought we knew the rules to this darned game and could apply them to any situation which arose. Suffice it to say that when Rod asked me the same question - about the example concerning Munich - I didn't even realise at the time why the Germans had tried to make such a (to me) crazy order. Surely, no gamesmaster would let the German get away with this? Although great credit to the bloke who thought it up.

Any reader with views on the above situations is welcome to express them through the columns of ALBION. We will be continuing the series on rule disputes etc. for a few issues more, at any rate, although we have now covered all the really important and frequent situations.

Now to the game report, for those who have waited so long. Another question - do you think these articles should appear before or after the game report and press releases? The matter is of little consequence to me, if anyone prefers it the other way round.

Nasty stencil, this one. Hope it prints all right.

REPORT. ALBION 69/1. Winter 1903.

Austria builds A(Bud).
 England gamesmaster removes F(NWG), F(NTH).
 France builds F(Bre), F(Mar).
 Italy removes A(Boh).
 Russia builds F(StP-NC).

REPORT. ALBION 69/1. Spring 1904.

The moves:-

Austria (Nethercot);	A(Vie)-Tyr. A(Bud)-Vie.	A(Tri) S A(Vie)-Tyr. A(Ser)-Bud.
England (Munro);	No orders received. A(Edi) stands.	
France (Watson);	F(Liv)-Cly. A(Bel)-Ruh. F(ENC)-NTH. <u>F(WMS)-TYS.</u>	<u>A(Lon)-Lpi</u> (no conn.) A(Bur) stands. F(Bre)-MAO. F(Mar)-GoL.
Germany (Newcombe);	F(Den) S French <u>F(BAL)-Swe.</u> <u>A(Mun)-Sil.</u>	F(ENC)-NTH. <u>A(Ber)-Pru.</u> A(Hol) stands.
Italy (Robertson);	<u>A(Ven)-Tyr.</u> F(Apu) S F(IOUS).	F(IOUS) stands.
Russia (Hancock);	F(StP-NC)-Nor. <u>A(Pru) S A(Sil).</u> A(Liv) S A(Pru). F(Nor)-NWG.	<u>A(Swe) S F(StP-NC)-Nor.</u> <u>A(Sil) S A(Pru).</u> F(GoB) S A(Swe). F(Bul-EC) stands unordered.
Turkey (Wood);	A(Alb) S A(Gre). <u>F(Tun)-TYS.</u> <u>A(Con)-Bul.</u>	A(Gre) S A(Alb). <u>F(AES)-IOS.</u>

Notation: S=supports. Underlined moves fail.
 GoL=Gulf of Lyons.

Deadline for Autumn 1904 orders: Thursday November 13th.

Readers may wonder at the policy adopted for dealing with the English player, who has played no part since Spring 1902, and shows no signs of response despite repeated requests. We had a replacement player for this game, but since he had not played the game before, we thought it unfair that he should be saddled, as his first experience, with a country with no prospects at the time of taking over. Hence the English units have been merely allowed to stand and have been removed when circumstances demanded.

PRESS RELEASES.

Memo from the ALBION Central Press Agency.

News has reached us of a wide-spread dispute in the printing industry, which we understand was caused by a factory cat in East Dulwich pressing too hard against a row of buttons and setting the tea-brewing machine in motion during working hours. The cat is alive and well, but since it had not paid its union subscription for the day in question, the whole industry rioted in protest against this blow to their freedom.

Supporters from all over the world have been coming out in sympathy ever since, and we are not quite sure how far this terrible plague has spread. We know for certain that the printing industries in the whole of England, Russia, Austria and Turkey are non-operational, and since the telephone operators have also struck in sympathy (what has it got to do with them? well, the cat's name was Marconi) we are unable to make contact with the countries in question. We are therefore forced to print only the news which has reached us through the regular channels, as follows.

Berlin.

Total security still in force. All journalists and diplomatic correspondents have either been repatriated or interned to protect them from the wrath of the German people.

Bülow.

Reports from the French Press Agency are as garrulous as ever. Clearly the French do not see eye to eye with the East Dulwich strikers. Or perhaps they just haven't heard.

French Press Agency Reports.

PARIS.

His Most Majestic, Regal and Royal Highness, Emperor of France, Protector of Spain, Citizen of Portugal, Lord of Belgium, Duke of London, Duchess of Liverpool, C.D.M., B.S.C., T.W.I.T. and bar, M. De Gaul has announced the signing of a defence agreement between Germany and France in which both countries pledge their support to each other, and by which both countries agree never to encroach on each other's territory. "It has been very difficult", said M. De Gaul, "to come to this decision, but the incentives offered to us by Germany are far better than any offered by the other European Powers; consequently I have accepted this Treaty which is to the advantage of both France and Germany." He said further - "We are considering including Italy and Austria in this Treaty should they both agree to resolve their differences amicably."

On the subject of Russia's aggressive policy towards France M. De Gaul commented - "If Russia wishes to commit national suicide then I, the French, will be only too pleased to be the pistol

they hold to their own head." The Emperor scoffed at the Austrian and Italian versions of the naval battle of Apulia, and pointed out that due to a faulty telephone line between Apulia and Paris, Noir Sheep's report was printed incorrectly and should have read:

'A French lobster fleet caused the destruction of the mighty Austrian Fleet, and such a fright did we give the Austrians that they have not even attempted to launch another fleet'.

The Emperor finally voiced disapproval over Italy's desertion of the pro-French provinces of Tyrolia and Tunis, and said - "Italy obviously is not yet mature enough to take on the responsibilities of Empire building; she is a young nation not yet out of her nappies, and as Father of the Western World I feel obliged to take her by the hand and guide her. I have ordered my First Mediterranean Fleet to sail to the aid of the hard-pressed Italian Government and help them to restore law and order in the riot areas of Rome."

He refused to comment further when told there were no riots taking place in Rome at present. With a regal gesture he dismissed the press conference and went off to celebrate his birthday.

ENGLAND.

Here, in the bleak city of Liverpool, I sit among the men of the Second French Fleet, which sailed into this port on a courtesy visit at the end of last year only to find the place completely deserted. Perplexed officials have since been trying to solve the mystery of 'The Vanished Race' (now selling at your local newsagents). There is evidence that the population of Liverpool fled the city in great haste, but no-one has as yet uncovered a possible reason for this terrible disaster. An army band which arrived in London to appear in the Military Tattoo reports the same situation existing in the English capital. The theory which has now been accepted by most of us here is that some alien creatures from another planet have landed and taken over the country, but to date no proof of this has been found.

The only clue we have here consists of strange noises which can be heard at night drifting over the Cheviot Hills, the boundary between England and Caledonia (that mystical country hidden beneath an American regulation military helmet on the front of this pro-British magazine, much to the disgust of myself and my fellow Scotsman Giovanni Lollobrigida).

Sentries have reported hearing cries for help and such blood-curdling war cries as 'C'way the Dee, Doon Wi Celtic, S.N.P. for Ever', 'come to Robertson's bookshop, 38 King Street, Dundee', 'Scotland First', 'Death and Confusion to the Sassenachs' and 'Get this bloody helmet off our land'.

It is thought that perhaps the Pictish tribes known to roam in the North lands are responsible for this commotion, and the French commander here has ordered two volunteers to investigate.

All Europe awaits the result with bated breath.

Noir Sheep De Gaul. News at 10.10 p.m.

Editor's Note.

We have had many references in these pages to the fact that the helmet on the cover is not a British helmet. Such references have often compared the helmet shape with that of an American helmet.

This is, of course, not so. A number of facts led to the establishment of the helmet shape, the principal among them being:-

1. The helmet is just the right shape for the country in question. If the cap fits, wear it.
2. The editor is descended from a short line of Umpumpum tribesmen who, as everybody knows, inhabit the interior of a volcano just outside Bolton. This helmet has been used for centuries by the tribesmen to ward off falling boulders, molten rock etc. The front cover is therefore a tribute to the venerable editor's ancestors.

Correction:- 'to the venerable ancestors of the editor'.

It is hoped that this brief explanation of some of the facts which led to the cover design will curb the evil tongues which have dared to criticise once and for all. Ye Ed.

Rome.

Due to a strict security control recently imposed by the Italian Government, no news has been received from any source in the country. It is rumoured that plans for the complete annihilation of the Austro-Turkish forces, which are threatening Italy's beloved native soil, have been carefully worked out.

An unconfirmed report from the northern borders states that German troops have arrived in the Tyrol, to take over the protection of that province, while the gallant Italian army which has held off the Austrian attacks for so long has been sent on a secret mission.

News that the French fleet has entered the Western Mediterranean was received with mixed feelings by the Roman crowds last week. On the one hand is the hope that France, under that astout leader M. De Gaul, will hold firm to her treaty, and not enter Italian territories. But there is a fear that, overcome by the temptation, the French might lose their heads and attack their staunchest ally. In view of these feelings, it was learned that France undertook not to enter either the Tyrrhenian Sea, nor Tunis, but would support any Italian efforts to regain control over her normal spheres of influence.

ALBION SPECIAL FEATURE.

The term 'golfing widow' is a fairly common one in the British Isles; the explanation is self-evident. However a new word has recently been creeping into our language - 'war-gaming widow'. This new breed of female has exceptional qualities of patience and devotion, her single defect being her all-embracing criticism of anything to do with the war gaming activities indulged in by her partner.

ALBION feels that credit should be given to this excellent breed of womanhood, and with this policy in mind has persuaded a typical example to write a short article for these pages.

Pat White's main qualifications to fame are:-

1. She is engaged to be married to Malcolm Watson, which puts her on a par, at least, with the early Martyrs.
2. She is studying to teach religious knowledge, a fact totally at odds with her general demeanour.

We have great pleasure in presenting Pat's article to you, and hope that it will be the first of a series of such articles.

Love moves in a mysterious way
(Especially in the war games room)

by Pat White.

Since I met General McWatson this saying has taken on a new meaning.

At one time I used to drift happily from day to day, grasping excitement when it was offered, but after accepting an invitation from a BEING clad in bowler hat, orange jeans rolled up to the knees and a naked torso, my life has been irreversibly changed (especially in the war games room).

When one takes on the responsibility of becoming a war-games widow, life's role takes on a new concept (especially in the war games room), and I have had to learn to entertain my future spouse in ways which I never thought possible (especially in the war games room).

Many a time have I looked out of the window just in time to see McWatson's speedy chariot screeching to a halt. I know I will reach the front door just in time to see a tornado in the shape of a chuchi-faced Scotsman flying up the stairs to meet me. His face will glow with emotion and exuberance as he shoots past me (to the war games room).

Conversation never plays a great part in our relationship as my Scots General is a man of action (especially in the war games room). Life upstairs has taken on a new meaning.

My official capacity of looking after the morale of the troops usually takes the form of keeping an eye on both the General's spiritual and physical equilibrium. Helping concentration also

comes under my jurisdiction. Constant tickling of the navel causes him to gaze lovingly (at his war games). I have noticed that this glazed look often seems to be followed by inspired movement on the battle-field.

Many outsiders seem to have the impression that a war gamer must be totally insane - never mind the loved ones. I must say, however, that being engaged to such a gallant General does have its bright side because there are the times when, suffering from 'Battle Fatigue', he is really original (up in the war games room).

Pat White soon-to-be-Watson.

Our thanks are due to Pat for this article. Parts of it require explanation, though. (!) It must be pointed out that Pat used to live with her parents in peaceful seclusion until recently. Then Watson moved to the area, and promptly took over the best bedroom, threw out all furniture, and installed a large and massive contrivance designed to hold all the war game boards fully set up. This room, which is at the top of the three-storey house, is off limits to all but the war gaming community. I haven't yet learned whether Pat's mother and father have found somewhere to sleep.

XXXXXXXX

And so our latest ALBION comes to an end and the blonde typist (or 'general duties secretary', as she is officially known) is being packed away for another fortnight.

Just before we close, may we draw to your attention the Franch cartoon which does service as the back page? Our thanks are due to the artist who consistently turns out amusing and relevant cartoons for these pages. Unfortunately I can't mention his name, since NO-ONE HAS BOTHERED TO TELL ME!

Ta-ta until next time.

ALBION number 7 ends

JGH
MY DEAR SIR
THIS ISNT CRICKET

ISSUE 7

SILESIA

HAPPY
BIRTHDAY
MON GENERAL

SECONDS
AWAY -
ROUND
2

