

Battle Stations

October 1983

The fastest growing zine in Canada! For those of you who are even mildly interested, i'm Bob Albrecht, your editor. With this issue, the zine becomes bloodied with its' first gamestart, as well as an addendum to Conquest of Australia, letters, and other items of interest.

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Battlestations: is published monthy by Bob Albrecht, #1001-1239-12 Ave. S.W., Calgary, Alta., T3C 3P8. Phone # (403) 244-8402. All calls will be accepted on a you pay basis between 8:00am-1200pm. All items submitted become the property of the editor. The game of Diplomacytm is produced in Canada by Waddington games, and may not be reproduced without their express permission.

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Games: "Atlantic" has now filled. Orders are due December 2nd at 12:00 PM? The ~~happy/sad~~ valiant combatants are:

AUSTRIA: Rober Acheson, c/o Echo Bay Mines, NWT. XOE INO

ENGLAND: Dave Carter, 118 Horsham Ave, willowdale, Ont., M2N 1Z9

FRANCE: Steve Hutton, 2600 Don Mills, #707, Willowdale, Ont., M2J 3R4

GERMANY: Pete Gaughan, 509 Sandpiper Dr. #130, Arlington, TX, 76013

ITALY: Paul Watson, RR#5, Stony Plain, Alta., T0E 2G0

TURKEY: Rob Lowes, RR#9, Paisborough, Ont., K9J 6Y1.

RUSSIA: Blair Cusack, c/o General Delivery, Revelstoke B.C., V0E 2S0

"Baltic" the next regular 'dip' game has: Blair Cusack, Robert Acheson, Paul Watson, and Fred Weidenmeyer signed up. Pref lists are needed for Acheson and Watson. though.

Variants: The Conquest of Australia is open and requires 4 more players. Blair Cusack and Rob Lowes are already signed up.

Standbys: The unsung heroes of postal dip! These brave souls consist of: Dave Carter, Rob Lowes, Blair Cusack, Robert Acheson, Steve Hutton, Pete Gaughan, Paul Watson, and John Davies.

*(Note: House rules are available in issue #1 (Aug/83)). If you do not have or cannot find #1, write me for a free copy. Also, due to a change of policy (actually an addition), you must have a preliminary set of orders in to me by Nov. 4/83 or else I will call for a standby for your position. This change is due to the need to eliminate Spring 1901 NMR's and is elaborated on more in the following column.

UP ON A SOAPBOX

NEUTRAL ORDERS, FOR SPRING 1901? NO WAY!

The 1971 edition of the Diplomacy rulebook is quite clear on the status of players who fail to submit orders for their nation in Diplomacy. "All such units are placed in C.D., (civil disorder) and may be supported in place or dislodged by superior forces...", as note that there is no mention of any neutral orders...

Spring 1901 is a crucial season in Diplomacy. If a country does not move, it cannot take advantage of neutral countries nearby to grow. When a nation enters 1902 with 3 centres it is a disadvantage with respect to its stronger neighbors and will usually end up in a losing position. However, many other situations are also just as critical to the game. If there is a stalemate line set up in some later turn and one player does not have orders in for his position, (inadvertently causing that line to collapse), then the net result is just as a missed 1901 turn.

The basic premise, however, is that 1901 turns are even more critical than any other turns and will result in more warping of a game. Also it would be difficult to solve any other turns problem in as fair and equitable a manner as some solutions have proposed for 1901. Lets look at just one potential problem that could arise from neutral orders. In 1901 Spring, Player A, who has Turkey, fails to submit his orders on time. The GM consults his trusty filing cabinet and finds: Turkey, Spring 1901; A Con-Bul, A Smy-Con, F Ank-Bla. These orders are antagonistic towards Russia, to say the least. In 1901 Fall, Turkey could use 2 units on Rumania if the Black Sea order succeeds, and the army in Constantinople can either be ferried to Rumania or provide backup in case of Austrian trouble. These orders also can introduce another element into the game, semi deception of the players and GM. For example, the previous player, "A" has worked out a deal with

...and tells Russia he will order a ...
However, player A also knows what will happen to his country if he does not
send in orders. He conveniently "forgets" his Spring 1901 orders. He then
finds that the neutral orders have all succeeded in the next Game Report. So
he then writes Russia and says, "Gee, my brother left my mail on the front
seat of his car and his girlfriend stuck it under the seat. Those neutral
orders really turned out badly for me." This places Russia in the position
of doubting the fact that mail was unintentionally overlooked, a rather common
occurrence. This hardly seems fair, and in my view, I don't think that anyone
should benefit from an NMR, least of all the "NMRing" player himself.

The solution is one that still has one flaw, that is, the time-honoured
concept of the standby. The average pre-game negotiating period is two months
in postal dippy. After one month's time, if players don't have their orders
in, a standby should be called to submit orders for that position. If the player
does get orders in by the final deadline, then fine, if not his standby assumes
the position. Either way, no one gets the free-ride of a neighbor who misses
orders, or the dubious practice of intentional NMRs. The only problem is that
of both people NMRing. Even in that remote case, the spirit of the rules is
still more important than conforming to lazy players.

HOUSE RULE #8:

All positions in games prior to 1901 Spring are temporary. Players who
do not submit a preliminary set of orders will have their positions "standbied"
after the preliminary deadline has passed. If the 1901 Spring deadline
passes and said player fails to have his orders in, the standby player(s)
will assume that player(s) position for all subsequent turns.

LettersP

Paul Watson (Stony Plain, Alta): "I'll try anything once-especially if it
means 6 free ones. Looking forward to #1."

((No#3, Paul... after all, I am running an old and respected zine here...))

John Davies (Port Hardy, B.C.): "I have just finished reading your zine for
the second time and I've decided I liked what I saw... Please find enclosed
a subscription cheque and put me on your standby list."

((Blush. Quite a compliment for a zine with only 14 subbers... two of
which go to a Canadiana bureau in Ottawa. Thanks, I hope I can keep the same
enthusiasm a few, (I hope), years from now.))

((Speaking of which, did you know that a Bill from Ontario in Canada requires that, "... (11)1. Subject to this section and the regulations, the publisher of a book published in Canada shall at his own expense and within one week of the date of publication, send two copies of the book to the National Librarian, who shall give to the publisher a written receipt for the book... (11)2(b). In this Act, "book" means library matter of every kind, nature and description and includes any document, paper, record, tape or other thing published by a publisher, on or in which information is written, recorded, stored, or reproduced;..."

Talk about big brother watching you??)

Pete Gaughan (Arlington TX.) * I wish I could get decent repro with anything other than photo processes - hope your quality stays up there. I echo Ron (SNAPU) Brown's advice, that is, don't go over 3 games in the first 12 months variants included. Not because that is how I did it, but that is how the old successful "zines have done it."

((Thanks, Pete, but don't you think 3 games is a little low? Don't forget that I have been in this madhouse for nearly 5 years now... But if I fall on my face it won't be for lack of effort in trying.))

Steve Hutton (Willowdale Ont.) "I'll try to remember to give you a plug in the next NO FIXED ADDRESS... BS. (cute abbreviation - intentional??, looks good. You seem to have an idea about what sort of "zine you want to put out. That is important in a new zine.

I'll give you the same sort of advice I'd give to any new publisher: put out the sort of "zine you want, not the sort of zine you think others will want. And, I'll probably regret this, but sign me up for the next game of Diplomacy.

((No problem, see pg.1. About your comment as far as BattleStation's initials, a few others have also remarked on this item... It was one of the reasons I stole them from Ron Brown. I'm glad you noticed. Now Ron will probably sue me for copyright infringement. Sigh.))

Rod Walker (Encinitas CA.) "Thanks very much for the copy of Battle Station, as I appreciated getting it very much. You have some coverage in the UPCOMING #35, which went to the print Saturday. It will be in the mail a week from today, ((Sept.12)), we hope.

I hope that you will print this small correction: I'm sure that Ron Brown misinterpreted something that I said slightly. I did not say, or at least did not intend to say, that I would not cover your game openings in UPCOMING until you cleaned up and I saw help over the UPCOMING "the issue of

I am not in fact sure that there are any such debts. I did tell Ron that if there was any such uncleared business and you did not at least offer to take care of them in good faith I would have difficulty giving you publicity. But in the upshot I feel that you should have an opportunity before somebody lowers the boom or whatever. So DW does mention your 'zine and does indicate that I was sure that anyone burned by KOBOLD's fold could contact you and recieve satisfaction.

I suggested that you might also wish to give them a gamefee or subcredit, too. You will certainly recieve coverage in the next PONTEVEDRA, too. After all, I have no way of knowing wether there are any leftovers from KOBOLD, and I assume that if problems develop I will hear about them. In the meantime I consider your announcement in Battle Stations and my announcement in DW to have totally closed the matter.

I naturally wish you the best with BS-- hmmm O.K. name yeilds non O.K. initials (or was that deliberate?). ((Yes, see previous letter from Steve Hutton.)).

My you do have a nasty collection of blue laws where you live, don't you? I can understand your absolute aversion to censorship and of course I share it. However, I don't confuse it with the editorial function which is something else entirely. However your 'zine won't be the first with a rather more free-wheeling policy, but you're likely to get a rather first rate collection of awfuls, you know. But as for laws which regulate the behaviour of others where they do no harm to their neighbours, I have no use for them.

I'm also glad to see BS as I hope it's appearance heralds a revival of the Canadian hobby. It's been languishing for quite a while, you know. I hope you'll be able to drop me a copy now and then to keep us posted on how youre doing and to keep us posted on how your doing (OOPS!!), and to keep us current on your game openings. I will continue to give you coverage in PONTEVEDRA as long as you have game openings... although, alas, most of our inquiries are from the U.S. (What are your sub. fees in \$u.s.?)

Thanks too for your sending me the copy of your variant. I'll put that into the N.A.V.B. files. Ron Brown is N.A.V.B.-north so I assume he now has a copy. I'd be delighted with copies of any other variants you do, for our archive files. That way when the game is out of print, people can still get copies here or from Ron.

By the way when a game of "The Conquest Of Australia", does fill, and you apply to Lee knedter for a Miller number, be sure to tell him that the A.R.D.A. designator number for this game is od01. (That is a game set in one ofr the major oceans, specifically 'Australasia', first such game in the archive. Officially it is od001/006, but we drop the extra 'o' for the moment and the '06' just says that it requires 6 players. Lee doesnt use that latter part.

Again, my apologies for the misunderstanding regarding the KOBOLD fold. I was sure that you would take care of that, but I was just raising the hypothetical worst-case possibilities scenario with Ron and I didn't phrase my comments carefully enough. No problem; your announcement in the previous ES was great!

((You're welcome. I hope that now the infamous "Kobold fold" is cleared up and that I won't have to print any more on it.

Yes, I do feel rather strongly about censorship. It is often suprising to analyze the thoughts of these people who would play God with our minds. Most are of the "Do as I say, not as I do", school, anyway. Have you ever seen anyone say, "Please enact this law to prevent me, (not my neighbour), from doing something that I should not". Uh huh, right.

As far as the postal hobby languishing, the main problems have been the temporary folding of FOL SI FIE, and the permanent fold of RUNESTONE. This is what has affected the hobby in the four western provinces mainly, what with all the "zines", in the nation coming from Ontario, (except for two). Recently though, the general quality of 'zines in the great white north has been slightly better than the average of their southern counterparts, (just see a recent issue of SNAFU.).

Rod also sent me a letter that someone self addresssed to an address in Canada. The only problem was that it had a Canadian stamp on it. Remember that Canadian stamps are useless in the U.S.A. and vice-versa. By the way the going exchange rate for \$1 US is \$1.25 Cdn., and thats what I pay.))

Keith Sesler (Fraser MI) "Regarding your refund policy, since most people probably haven't saved their KOBOLD's after all this time, why don't you just print a list of all your former subbers and the amounts due them? You could send this list to some of the big name 'zines in the hobby such as, SNAFU!, EE, VofDoom, etc. and if all the people involved are interested, they can also step forward and claim the money. This would be a good public relations move on your part, and also it would remove any lingering doubts anyone might have about your 'zine. Do you feel that this would be possible?"

((Unfortunately, no. Now don't get me wrong, it's a great idea, but I don't have any of the pertinent information any more. I threw it all away when I went through a period of burnout immediately following the KOBOLD fold, two years ago. But as I have contacted Ron Brown, Rod Walker on this, and last issue stated that anyone burned will receive double their sub credit, I've done all I can.))

James Briggs (El Paso, TX.) " I found something wrong with your rules for THE CONQUEST OF AUSTRALIA. Please clarify: In rule six you say that, "Units may be built anywhere you have a home centre". Later you say that, "Home centers are simply centres that you occupy on any fall turn". Finally you say, "The centre

must be vacant at the time of building a unit." Now does this mean, "Centres you occupy at the beginning of the fall", or, "Centres you occupy at the end of the fall turn," or conversely, "Centres you now have occupied on previous fall turns?" In the second case presented, you would never be able to build at all?

You can easily see that this rule needs some clarification or rewriting. Otherwise the game looks very good, other than the map, of which my copy is rather faded. Thanks again for the sample, and I hope to see it again soon."

((Actually all I meant was you can build on any centre you own, O.K.? I will send you another map, too, sorry about that.))

XX

(Recently I received a letter from Fred Davis, and as he is the director of the North American Variant Bank East, I feel his comments to me are worthy of a printing here.0

The Conquest of Australia, revised. by Fred C. Davis 1983.

First, I feel that there is too much extraneous material on the right side of the board, too far away from Australia. In keeping with the Calhamer doctrine of "forcing the action to the centre of the board," I'd recommend removing the island SC's of Bora Bora, and Samoa. (There somewhat in the wrong place anyway). You have to keep New Zealand, and Fiji is O.K., but I'd suggest leaving only the Tonga Trench, and Margiai Sea spaces in the N.E. corner. A copy of my suggested map changes is enclosed. ((copies of this are availliable from me. ed.)) A copy of my changes include getting rid of the Isthmus of Kra SC and space. This would bring the SC total down to 39 from 42, and the V.C. from 21 to 20, and, more importantly, concentrate peoples' attention more on Australia itself.

There is also a misspelling of Torres Strait, which I have corrected. You also have the "e" and "w" designations wrong for Malaya and Kra, (and isthmus is also misspelled, but I've deleted Kra completely from my suggested alteration). You inaverdantly reversed the locations of Sydney and Newcastle on the east coast.

You need to clarify the status of New Zealand. They don't need two off-board SC's, since N.Z. is on the board. Why not simply start with Auckland and Cook as SC's? I'd also like to know why you used an obscure little town like Cook for an N.Z. SC, when the much more important city of Christchurch is available. If it's because C'church is on the wrong side of the island, I'd make it a double coasted province, with the initial position for the fleet on the F on the west coast. This also gets rid of the confusion between a "Cook Strait", and a "Cook Province" especially when they are so close to each other. I'd also permit Direct Movement between the Nelson and Wellington land spaces. Also, between Singapore and Pak

and between Jakarta and Palembang. (Direct Movement enables an A to cross a narrow sea space without need of a convey, without interfering with F movements and support can also be given across a Direct Movement.

Did you notice that you have two rule threes? I've made the second rule three into rule three "A".

...You may also want to write rule three over again, to say something like: "Each Great Power except the aborigines,, owns two off board centres in 1883 through 1885, to support the units on the board. (Note: Port Moresby supports the British army there, and the Phillipines supports the Spanish fleet there, and the third American unit is supported by the Truk SC, which is assumed to be already owned by the U.S.)

In Winter 1885, (end of third game year), only one off-board SC is available for each of these Powers for the year 1886. As of Winter 1886 these off-board SC's disappear."

If the elimination of Bora Bora and Samoa as SC's puts a handicap on the American units, they can always be moved closer to Australia. Incidentally, note that I've Adjusted the South Fiji Basin to touch Fiji, so as to have three sea spaces touching this SC island. This makes Fiji more valuable. I always like to try to have islands which are SC's touched by 3 sea spaces.

I hope my suggestions will be of some value to you. If you revise the rules or map, please send a copy of the revisions to me. Also, please send a copy to Rod Walker for the main North American Variant Bank.

((Very interesting, Fred. I appreciate constructive critism like this and it (your article), will be the basis for a revision of the C of A, down the road a bit, (probably over the Christmas Holidays). Thanks again, and this issue will go free to you, and Rod Walker.))

Well, here it is the end of another issue, and all I can say is take care, and remember, only you can prevent pet food seasonings....

Your sub runs until..... SAMPLE

You are in:

You are asked to standby for:

Larry, you are correct in saying that the hobby is over-pollled. In fact, I've never even heard of the "Peer" poll... and I've been in the hobby since late '78. But I will fill out your form and get it back to you, O.K.? The only thing is your NOV/83 sheet wasn't copied properly and I got only half of it. (P.S. Nice to see my name at the top of your pub list, heh heh) Bob.