

BROBDINGNAG

 Brobdingnag #42

"1900"

25 August 1966

Second New BROB Game

Applications for game 1966AQ were so numerous that it is possible to begin a second game. This game, which will bear the above designation until the Boardman number for it has been announced, has the players listed below. Country assignments were made by lot, as usual.

ENGLAND: Charles Wells, 3678 Lindholm, Cleveland, Ohio. 44120.

FRANCE: Edi Birsan, 48-20 39th Street, Long Island City, N. Y.
 11104

GERMANY: Richard A. Shagrin, 2407 24th Loop, Sandia Base,
 Albuquerque, New Mexico. 87116.

ITALY: Dave Francis, 1612 7th Ave., New Westminster, British
 Columbia, Canada.

AUSTRIA: James L. Munroe, 10 Maguire Road, Lexington 73, Mass.

RUSSIA: Monte J. Zelazny, P. O. Box 1062, Melbourne, Florida.
 32901.

TURKEY: Dave Lebling, 3 Rollins Court, Rockville, Maryland.
 20852

A word about the addresses shown above. One of them is a business address; if the player concerned would prefer his home address to be used he should inform me of it as I do not have it on file. Also one of the players will soon be using his college address; the sooner I am informed what it is, the sooner I can advise the other players.

BROBDINGNAG's rules were listed in the last issue, a copy of which has been sent to all players, so there is no need to repeat them here. The usual three weeks is allowed before the first move, to allow for initial setting up of alliances and so on. So the deadline for moves for Spring 1901 is the 15th of September, 1966. See you then, as Dick would have said, and best wishes for an enjoyable game to all.

sTab, (John Koning, 318 South Belle Vista, Youngstown, Ohio. 44509),
Wild 'n Wooly, (Charles Brannan, c/o General Delivery, Berkeley, California.
 94701., and Big Brother, (Charles Reinsel, 120 8th Ave., Clarion, Penna.
 16214), all announced that BROB was forming new games. I would like to
 thank the three editors concerned, also any others whose announcement I
 have not yet seen. As a result of their efforts applications are still
 coming in; I am within two of having enough for a third game. However,
 I do not expect to form one: no additional game is contemplated in BROB
 in the foreseeable future.

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Editor's Absence.

I expect to be away from Ralston for about ten days in September. The exact dates are not yet known and they will depend, to some extent, on developments in the rail strike now threatening in Canada. The deadline for the opening move in Game 1966AQ is now set at September the third, and publication of that set of moves is not expected to be affected. Publication of the opening moves in the game announced in this issue may be disturbed, however. I hope to be able to give more precise information in the next issue. In any event, players should regard the announced deadline as binding, but should not become unduly alarmed if an issue appears to be late. The delay should not amount to more than a week, at worst.

SEALD BAG

ALLAN B. CALHAMER, 201 West 21st Street, New York City, 10011.:

Regarding your article on the "Coastal Crawl", ((+(BROB #41)+)), as far as I am concerned the moves, Fleet Portugal to Spain (south coast) and Fleet Spain (north coast) to Portugal, both go. Naturally, they go in the reverse direction also.

This was a good job of sharpshooting. The more of these problems that can be brought to light the better it will be in the long run, I think.

I note that you permit a dislodged piece to disband in the field rather than retreat. ((+(This refers to BROB House Rule #15)+)) I suppose this rule is a logical deduction from the situation in which a player, intentionally or otherwise, writes an illegal retreat. The ruling is very interesting. Suppose France is deadlocked in a naval war with Italy when Germany piles in on France from the north, getting off of Austria, who is then free to attack Italy. "Bump me home", says France to Italy, her new ally. Italy thereupon dislodges a French fleet. France scuttles it and raises an army in Paris.

"You raised too many fleets," says England to Germany.

"O.K., bump one", says Germany brightly. "I'll turn it into an army."

In my extensive experience in over-the-board play, nobody ever refused to write a legal retreat. They did, sometimes, let an ally capture a supply center, remove a fleet, accept the center back, and then raise an army. The operation takes two moves, and either an unusually reliable ally or a very strong position vis-a-vis that ally.

This type of operation did not bother me because it did not come up often enough. The Bump Me Home rule, however, might come up frequently enough that it would seem to call for a rationale. The rationale, of course, is in terms of supplies necessary to maintain a unit; the effort necessary to build a fleet, as well as lag time, being disregarded as undue complications, arriving too late on the scene, and tending to make the game too rigid.

Now, the supplies necessary to maintain a fleet probably are not as great as those necessary to maintain an army, but it seems to me that they would fall into the same neighborhood somewhere, inasmuch as a single battleship carried 2000 men, and supplies for

the machinery and shore support have to be considered.

The real problem comes when we ask why a piece would have to be bumped in order to be dumped. Why can't the French disband an army or put a fleet in mothballs any time they please?

The best rationale I can think of is that it is up to Clemenceau to decide what forces he will put into the field, but once he has put them into the field, various internal political forces, including the services involved and the public, demand that he back the boys in blue. If they have recently suffered a "defeat", however, he has an excuse to disband them.

It is also true that Napoleon left an army at the Nile and went home to raise a new one. The above rationale also has the merit of explaining why a player can, in effect, trot a piece six spaces or so home in one move, but he can't trot one out to the front at the same speed.

It might be objected that population is not inexhaustible, and the only concession to this problem is the requirement that raises take place at home. This problem has never reached the irritation level before, but under the Bump Me Home Rule, things might reach the point at which they would begin to seem "silly". I would like to hear about any experiences on this point.

There is a related problem if a player refuses to drop. One can assume a temporary hiatus in civil government, but the rules then are not unambiguous. Originally the rule was unambiguous, but referred to numbered pieces. With the demise of numbered pieces, the rule was rewritten by Games Research, calling for the drop of the piece furthest from hom. At risk of overcomplicating a relatively obscure point, I think at least that pieces not situated on supply centers should come off first. Subordinate to that, alphabetical order would be unambiguous and simple, and all the players would have equal opportunity to anticipate it in their play. Better suggestions will be entertained.

((+Well, as regards the "Coastal Crawl" it seemed to me, as I said, that the case could be argued either way. Since you have declared in favour of allowing the move, then, under EROB House rule #2, the "Coastal Crawl" move is allowable in EROB games.

The question of the dislodged force voluntarily vacating the field rather than retreating, probably calls for more comment. It is not so much making a logical deduction from the case of a player making an illegal retreat order, but from the case of his making no order at all. This is one situation where there is a considerable difference - and an inevitable one - between over-the-board play and postal play. In an over-the-board game, if a player is present to make his move, he will also be present two minutes later, to make a retreat arising from that move.

In postal play, on the other hand, time must necessarily elapse between the move itself and the retreat arising from it. The player must be informed of the fact that one of his forces has been dislodged, and that such-and-such spaces are open for its retreat, further time is needed for his reply. The retreat becomes, therefore, something like a move. In most magazines retreats arising from Fall moves are combined with the builds in what is called the Winter move. In a few journals retreats from Spring moves are called the Summer moves. But whether the retreat period is called "a move" or not, it must, in postal play, be treated more-or-less as a distinct move. In particular, machinery must be available for dealing with the case when the player

concerned does not mail in any reply. You state that, in over-the-board games, you have never known a player to refuse to make a retreat. In postal play it occurs frequently. Usually it is the case of a player who has shot his last bolt; he must now retreat, but sees nothing but defeat staring him in the face. He loses interest in the game, and neglects to send in his retreat order. The game can't just stagnate at that point forever, and it is universal practice in postal play to remove from the board a dislodged force when its retreat order is not received by the deadline. No other possibility really exists, given the conditions of postal play.

Note, however, that this creates an anomaly. It has also been the practice in most diplomacy journals for the Gamesmaster to himself order the retreat of a unit which has only one available retreat open; this is done in the interests of speeding the game. What happens now is that the man with two possible retreats has, in practice, three alternatives: To retreat to A, to retreat to B, to submit no retreat, remove the piece, and build at home, immediately, if this is a Fall move, on the next move, if it is a Spring one. If the piece with only a single opening is ordered there by the gamesmaster, the player owning it has no alternative at all.

The opening sentence of my rule 15 is not, therefore, really an innovation as regards the player with two available retreats open; it is merely an attempt to restore equity by giving the player, with only one retreat, the same possibility that the other player already has.

There is no doubt that the best way to handle this is the way that Brannan does in Wild 'n Woolly. He publishes 5 issues of his journal per playing "year": Spring moves, Spring retreats, Fall moves, Fall retreats, Fall builds, in exact conformity with the basic game. A player who wishes to retreat must himself order that retreat, regardless of whether there is only one, or several, spaces open. He is able to follow this procedure by publishing on a nine day schedule, a rate that most of us would find impossible to maintain. All that I am doing by the first sentence of Rule 15 is to try to make my game equivalent to that, and still keep to the more usual 3 issues per playing "year" schedule.

I must say, though, that I think that this view is implicit in the basic game, and not merely produced by the oddities of postal play. While it is undoubtedly true that there are far more missed moves, retreats or otherwise, in the postal game than in over-the-board, surely the case must occasionally arise in the basic game as well. What do you do in the following example? It is, let us say, the Spring move, in mid-game. Moves are turned up and the settling of conflicts begins at the west side of the board. One of the French units must retreat, and the player will decide where to retreat to after the rest of the moves have been settled. There is a complex situation in the Balkans, and it will take a minute or two to resolve the conflicts, cut supports, and so on there. The player for France is not directly involved in the Balkan area and he decides to pay a visit to the bar, while the hassle is thrashed out. When everything is finally settled, the other players notice that he has left. There are a few shouts, "Hey, France, come back and make your retreat."; but he doesn't return. What do you do, drag him back bodily? Surely you must declare that civil government has collapsed in France and remove the piece in question? Some minutes later, then everyone is deep in

"diplomacy" for the Fall move, the French player comes back. Civil government is restored, according to the rules of the game. He makes his moves, retaining all his supply centres. On the count he will have one more centre than pieces, as a result of the Spring annihilation, and so he builds at home.

Once this has happened, anywhere, and the players know that it will happen in like circumstances, then the alternative is there, for every player, in every game, who has a dislodged force, to opt for submitting no retreat order, to remove the piece, and then to build at home on the next build turn. A player need no longer employ the subterfuge of removing himself, physically, to the bar or what not, he just turns up a blank sheet of paper on the retreat turn. And I feel that this has always been implicit in the game, as the rules are printed. No doubt the peculiar circumstances of postal play, where all too many orders, retreat, ordinary, and build, are not submitted, has brought it into more prominent view; but it was there before.

Deliberate refusals to retreat will be rare. There has been one case of its occurring in Postal play. Bramman, playing Turkey, in the Grantor I (1964D) game refused to make a retreat that was open to him, and signified ahead of time that he would do so. The gamesmaster, John Koning, accepted that refusal. In that instance there were factors, other than the purely tactical, in consideration. On a purely tactical basis it will practically never happen on a spring move. A force in being, even if it faces immediate annihilation, is always worth something; it can, for example, cut support as it dies. On the Fall move, though, there will be a few cases where the removal of a dislodged distant force, and its replacement by another at home, will be to the player's advantage.

This has, of course, a parallel with real life. You mention Napoleon deserting his army in Egypt and raising another on his return to France. Instances of governments leaving forces unsupported, with a view to using the resulting inevitable defeat as a spur to revenge the insulted national honour, are by no means unknown. There is a school of historians who believe that the sinking of the USS Maine was a case in point; they believe that it was deliberately blown up to give a plausible excuse for a war already decided upon. Whether this view is correct or not, I don't know, but such things have certainly happened elsewhere.

Incidentally, I feel that this view of the retreat order, tends to destroy the force of one of your arguments in your recent article in Diplomania and Graustark. You there state that if a power has two dislodged forces, both of which have only the one and the same retreat open to them, then they both must come off. I would say that it is open to the player to order one of them to retreat, and not the other. The one not ordered must come off, of course; but the other is now unopposed and should make the retreat. Even in the case of two different powers, each with a dislodged force, and only the one and the same space open to both, it might be to their mutual advantage for one of them to make the retreat and the other to disband. In over-the-board play there is, of course, no "diplomacy" prior to a retreat, but the powers concerned might have foreseen this eventuality and have reached prior agreement.

Your last paragraph, I feel, falls in a very different category. By refusing to move on a retreat turn, a player gives himself an additional option, i.e. to remove the piece and build at home, which

may, under certain circumstances, be to his advantage. Refusal to make a removal order, on the other hand, creates nothing new. The eventual removal, whether made by gamesmaster's whim, by a flip of a coin, or by an exhaustive and pre-arranged list of priorities, would be one that he was previously free to choose in any event; so I can't get very excited about this. It has been the practice in most postal games for a gamesmaster to remove a piece not on a supply centre, in preference to one that is so situated, other things equal. This is presumably on the principle of tempering the wind to the shorn lamb. I suppose that this could be incorporated in the rule in explicit form, if desired. Or any order of priorities could be set up. But the present rule, that the player himself may choose what to remove, must be kept.

In those Diplomacy/Crauthark paragraphs of yours I was amused by your account of "The Flying Dutchman". What would you call the opposite swindle, when a piece that should be on the board, isn't. Dian Pelz used that device, and quite legally too, to end the game in Buritanica. Perhaps, "The Vanishing American"? --jamcc)+))

MONTE J. ZELAZNY, P. O. Box 1062, Melbourne, Florida. 32901.: I have a comment to make on your "Coastal Crawl" - as an Avalon Hill wargamer involved in postal competition - I have always followed a path of strict observance of the rules. Mainly, I think, because there is not a gamesmaster ((+(in Avalon Hill games)+)) who can lay down the law to his players. So I have found that the only way to play Avalon Hill games so that all is not a mass confusion is to be "legalistically minded" (borrowing an expression of yours). In becoming involved in Diplomacy - it still follows that one must be legalistic to be successful. Now Charles Wells has stated that he would not allow - Fleet Portugal to Spain (north Coast), Fleet Spain (south coast) to Portugal. ((+(See Lonely Mountain, #21, Page 4.)+)) I refer to Charles' opinion because you have written in an earlier issue of PROB that he is the expert on the rules of Diplomacy. But is Charles correct as a legalist in disallowing the move? He sure is! In the paragraph headed "Other Provinces Having Two Coasts" it is clearly stated that a fleet on one coast occupies the entire province. (Fleets must have a complement of dirigibles). But of course the "realists" are just going to turn their noses up at the thought of not enough air room for dirigibles. I don't believe that anyone will ever be able to get the two camps together (not even Calhauer) because Diplomacy is a game where the gamesmasters make the decisions - not the game-makers as in the case of Avalon Hill. Main point finally made. This is also a major obstacle to the IDF.

How would you rule on the "Coastal Crawl"?

Concerning Press Releases - Do you accept press releases from one player with the intent that they appear to come from another player?

((+(First, let me say how refreshing it is to find a reader who advocates the legalistic point of view. If you will read those back issues you asked for, you will find in them several letters from Derek Nelson, in which he accuses me of being too legalistically minded. So thanks for your views.

However, on the main point, I fail to see the force of your argument. The rulebook states, as you say, that a fleet which is in either coastal region of a divided province occupies the whole province. What, though, is the meaning of the word "occupies"?

It means that if a fleet is in the "space" called the north coast of Spain, no other fleet can simultaneously be in the south coast of Spain. And reciprocally. And similarly for the other provinces with divided coasts. What is the operational definition, the effective definition as far as the play of the game is concerned. Of course, the word has far wider connotations than that. You may picture prisoners being dragged from their homes as hostages, or what you will; very useful for press release purposes but not affecting the play of the game. If you substitute the sentence, "A fleet in one coastal region of a province, prevents any other force from being in the other coastal region" for the rulebook sentence, "It occupies the whole province", you will see that there is nothing incompatible between the rulebook and acceptance of the Coastal Crawl moves. There is nothing incompatible with the other interpretation either, of course. This is just one of several cases of omission in the rulebook, the case not having been considered when the book was written.

Note, too, that Charles Wells does not say that his interpretation is the only possible one. Quite the contrary. He says, "In Lonely Mountain the moves will fail. I agree, however, that there is something to be said for the other interpretation."

Fortunately, Mr. Colhamer came through with his views, published in his letter above. The matter is, therefore, taken out of my hands and in PROB I'll go along with his decision. Had he not written, your question as to which view I would support, would have been embarrassing. On the PRO Coastal Crawl side there are two arguments. 1. It corresponds with what has happened often enough in real warfare. This would carry some weight with me but not a great deal. 2. There are two regions on the board where a stalemate often develops, neither side being able to move. One of those regions is the area around the Straits of Gibraltar. I feel that this rule will, very slightly, loosen up the game there and is, to that extent an improvement. On the COI side I expect that the rule that it doesn't succeed is easier to administer. The gamesmaster can just say, Spain is Spain, and let it go at that. The tautology has no real relevance to the point at issue, but it sounds as if he knew his own mind, and players would be inclined to accept it without argument. Also there is the fact that I received Lonely Mountain two days before your letter. I like to see uniformity in the standard game, and Wells is certainly one of the most knowledgeable gamesmasters. Probably this last point would have carried the day, and I would have gone along with the IM ruling.

There are nine relatively new people in the two PROB games, new to magazine postal Diplomacy at least, and I think I may, next issue, list all the known uncertainties in the rulebook.

For Press releases. Provided I have space they are usually printed pretty well as received, unless I feel that they might give offence, or unless I think them just plain dull. If the player for England, say, feels like putting a Moscow dateline on his despatches, that is all right with me.-(jamcc)+))

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With so much space devoted to the Coastal Crawl perhaps I should say how the question arose. Last fall and early winter, Ken Davidson and I played a number of two-man games, taking three countries each. There were about fifty of these games, I think, perhaps more. The question of the legality of the moves came up twice, Spain, not Bulgaria, being

the region involved both times. At first Ken would not believe me that the rulebook did not really cover the question, though he was eventually convinced. We dubbed the thing the "Coastal Crawl" and I planned to write an editorial on it. The article "What is the game of 'Diplomacy'?", in BROB #29, 10 Dec. 1965, was intended as an introduction to one on the Coastal Crawl which should have followed shortly. However, other items intervened and the projected note was not written.

Several weeks ago I had a letter from Derek Nelson. He raised the question as to the legality of the moves and the item of the "Coastal Crawl" in the last issue was the result.

By the way, I feel that tactical points of this nature, are more likely to arise in two man games than in regular ones. In the regular game so much attention is devoted to grand strategy, alliances, and so on, that points of this nature are likely to be overlooked.

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There has been a delay in typing the final pages of this issue. As a result the deadline for Spring 1966 moves for the game announced here in, is set back to 30 September 1966. Players wanting to know how to reach me by phone or telegram, will find the information given in the last issue. By the way, the strike mentioned on an earlier page has now (23 August) commenced. This means that there will be no delivery of telegrams in Canada, until it is over. Be guided accordingly.

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Das Glück . ist eine leichte Dirne
Und weilt nicht gern am selben Ort;
Sie streicht das Haar dir von der Stirne
Und küsst dich rasch und flattert fort.

- Heine

Fortune is a fickle lass
Who gives both pleasure and sorrow,
For the man who wins her today
Is the man who must lose her tomorrow.

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BROODINGMAG is a journal of Coastal Diplomacy, published and edited by J. A. McCallum, Redston, Alberta, Canada. It currently carries Game 1966AQ and a new game, not yet numbered, announced in this issue. Subscriptions are available at the rate of 10 cents a copy. \$2 will bring all issues to the end of any designated game.