

B R O B D I N G N A G

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Game 1966AV

B R I T I S H D O C K Y A R D S A T F U L L C A P A C I T Y
FLEETS FORM AT PORTSMOUTH LEITH AND LIVERPOOL
O T H E R P O W E R S R A I S E A R M I E S

Fall 1904

The retreats:

RUSSIA (Zelazny): Army Warsaw to Galicia.

ITALY (Francis): Fleet Marseilles to Gulf of Lyon.

Winter 1904

The adjustments:

GERMANY (Shagrin): Build army Berlin. Build army Munich.

ENGLAND (Wells): Build fleet London. Build fleet Liverpool. Build
fleet Edinburgh.

RUSSIA (Zelazny): Build army Moscow.

ITALY (Francis): Build army Rome.

AUSTRIA (Munroe): Remove fleet Adriatic. Remove army Apulia.

FRANCE (Birsan): Remove army Tuscany.

Deadline for moves . . Spring 1905 is Saturday, . . 20 April 1967, noon,
local time.

PRESS RELEASE

Glatz, 28 Dec.(DPG.) Prince Vlad, known as The Impaler to his former subjects, and as "In" to his friends, is spending the holiday season in a hunting lodge some 8 kilometers south of this pleasant town near the old German-Austrian border. The lodge is well up in the mountains and the Prince is able to enjoy . . good skiing, his favorite outdoor sport. The holiday is also the Prince's honeymoon as it was only two weeks ago that he married Luci Bordscha. Any ordinary man would be fully occupied, settling in to married life, engaging in a sport of which he is passionately fond, and doing a little hunting, now and then. However, observers have noted . . the very convenient location of Glatz. Breslau, the headquarters of the Prince's Silesian army, is only 80 kilometers to the north. Brunn, the advance HQ of the Bohemian army is only a little further away to the south, and Cracow is not much further away to the north-east. It is in Cracow that the German army, in Poland has its main battle headquarters, not Warsaw, which has become more of a civilian administrative centre, behind the front line.

Your correspondent went out to the hunting lodge today, hoping that the Prince would grant an interview. Only to find him out on one of his daily cross-country skiing expeditions. However, the charming bride, Luci Bordscha Vlad (Take tea and see, with LBV) was quite ready to talk to the press:

"In is so, well, physical, I'm black and blue all over," she said. "Still, old fashioned techniques are sometimes best. Look at all the way they have taken in. But I am going to try to teach him to be more subtle."

Subtlety or force? The Prince may need both. The Russians are less than a week's march to the east, and the Austrians are close enough so that their artillery can be plainly heard.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

I will likely be away from Relston from noon on Monday 17 April until sometime on the week-end of 22-23 April. Players with late moves, or the like, should, therefore, avoid telephoning me during that period. A wire would, of course, still be satisfactory.

Some cash subscribers will find a number written on the right hand lower corner of the envelope bringing this copy of BROB. It represents the issue number with which the current subscription will expire.

Rod Walker, (Capt. R. C. Walker, EV3129356, TUSLOG Det. #X 183, APO, NYC, 09254), has recently mailed out maps for a revision of one of the variants forms of the game which he runs in his magazine, EREWHON. The maps represent Europe as it was during the middle ages. Anyone writing him about these maps, or about those for the Peloponnesian War variant, should note that all letters must be sent Air Mail, as he is stationed in Turkey.

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A SERMON BASED ON A PARABLE

Some months ago Richard Shagrin raised the question of the Shagrin Double Convoy in his 'zine, High Liver. The question was commented on in BROB #53 in an editorial called "The Alternate Route Convoy". Alan Calhamer, the inventor of the game, was asked in that issue to make his views on the question known. This he did with his sketch, or parable, "No Time for Decision", which appeared in the immediately following issue. Readers might be interested to know that that item arrived typewritten except for the last paragraph, which was handwritten. The main body of the sketch must be regarded, therefore, as indicating Mr. Calhamer's considered opinion on the question of the alternate route convoy; and, in the final paragraph, he links this question with another one.

The other matter to which the final paragraph refers is what is now called "The Mislaid Army" question. It was first raised by John Boardman, in Graustark #17, about three years ago. That issue carried a letter from Len Bailes asking several questions about convoys. After answering them, John extended the discussion to ask the question:

If an army is ordered convoyed by a foreign fleet, may that fleet deliver it elsewhere than to its intended destination? To take the example that is suggested by the Calhamer sketch, if Germany and England are allied, and if England orders army London to Belgium, having arranged with the player for Germany that the German fleet in the North Sea should convoy, would it be a legal double-cross for the German fleet to actually convoy it to, say, Denmark instead? Boardman's feeling at the time was that this should be allowed, but he agreed to abide by Calhamer's decision in the matter. Calhamer's ruling (in a reference which I have not been able to trace. Can anyone tell me where it can be found?) was that this could not be done. For the German fleet to order something else, rather than the agreed on convoy, is, of course, a legitimate double-cross. But in such a case the army is left standing at its embarkation point, it is not taken to another destination. Boardman and, following him, the Postal Diplomacy world in general have adhered to that decision. See Graustark #112, page 10, item #6, for Boardman's most recent statement on the matter. This ruling is also followed in BROEDINGAG.

That Mr. Calhamer links the Mislaid Army and the Alternate Route Convoy questions appears to imply that he thinks that,

1. Orders to an army to be convoyed should specify not only the destination but also the route, and
2. The orders should correspond, in detail, with those given to the convoying fleet(s).

Both of these conditions being fulfilled, the convoy is attempted; whether it is successful or not depending, of course, on the outcome of possible hostile action at the point of destination, and on the convoying fleet(s) avoiding dislodgment. But the convoy is at least attempted if the two conditions are met. If they are not both met, then the convoy is not attempted at all: in that case the convoy order is regarded as ambiguous and, under the rulebook, page 3, is not followed - it becomes a stand order.

Notice that this, taken literally, would mean, strictly speaking, that the set of orders,

Army London to Picardy
Fleet English Channel convoy army London to Picardy,

would be incomplete. They should be written as,

Army London to Picardy, fleet Channel to convoy
Fleet English Channel convoy army London to Picardy.

I know of no gamesmaster who would regard the first set of orders as being insufficient; I think that Mr. Calhamer himself would accept it in such a straightforward case. But, in principle, and in practice in more complicated cases, he is saying that the details of the route must be so specified in the convoyed army's orders and, unless these details correspond with the orders given to the fleet(s) doing the convoying, then the convoy is not attempted.

For example, suppose there is a coalition of the three northern continental powers, directed against England, and that Russia orders its army from Norway to Edinburgh. Suppose also that there is a French fleet in the Norwegian Sea and a German fleet in the North Sea and, through a mix-up in planning, that both the players order their respective fleets to convoy the Russian army from Norway to Edinburgh. In such a case Calhamer would rule, as I understand his parable, that the convoy order is ambiguous and the army would remain in Norway whether opposed or not. BROB, on the other hand, (see #53), would allow the convoy, provided that neither of the fleets was dislodged. Even in BROB, though, it would do the player for Russia no harm to add the route to the army's movement orders, although it is not demanded. Such an addition to his orders would help him if one of the fleets should be dislodged, provided he had specified the other fleet.

I must say that I find Calhamer's interpretation an attractive one. It is clear cut. It solves at one stroke both the Alternate Route question and the Mislaid Army question. It corresponds with the real life situation - units given unclear or incomplete orders do not move anywhere, they just mill about (a capsule summary of a sizable fraction of military history). There is only one thing against his interpretation - there is nothing in the rulebook to support it. We have now arrived at what is now an only too familiar situation: The solution which Mr. Calhamer "feels in his joints" is the one which most players must feel is the right one, only to find that his own rulebook does not support him. Please, Mr. Calhamer, when you do re-write the rulebook, include a statement that an order to an army to proceed by convoy must include in it an indication of the details of the route.

FAVORITE JOUSTING GROUNDS

Copies of most issues of BROB are sent to some ten or fifteen people not now playing Postal Diplomacy. Names and addresses are obtained from various sources which give some promise that the recipients might possibly be interested in the game if they have a chance to see it. Response is not very good. Close records have not been kept, but I think that the response is less than ten per cent.

Those who do respond favorably often ask about game openings. Which sometimes leads to a further moment of bewilderment when they learn that there are a score or more of magazines devoted to the game. I have sometimes been asked to recommend magazines; I have usually tried to avoid a direct reply to that question by suggesting that these newcomers should see samples of as many of the 'zines as possible, and then make their own choice on the basis of what they have seen. One character once tried to get around that evasion by asking "What 'zines do the champions play in?" Deciding who the "champions" are seemed just as tricky as deciding which magazines were best and the question wasn't answered. However, it does seem to me now that there is a way to answer it.

(Continued middle of next page.)

	4 S m y t h e	3 K o n i n g	M e b a n e	N e l s o n	W e l l s	2 M a c K e n z i e	M c C a l l u m	M i l l e r	1 B o a r d m a n	C l a r k	Total
sTab	x	E		x	x	x	x			x	6 & E
Wild 'n Wooly	x	x		x	x		x		x		6
ADAG	x			x	x		x				4
Big Brother		x			x	x	x				4
Diplophobia	x		x					E		x	3 & E
Graustark		x			x				E		2 & E
Lonely Mtn		x			E		x				2 & E
Brobdingnag				x	x		E				2 & E
Kalmar	x										1
Armageddonia				x							1
Miskatoni U.							x				1
Orthanc								x			1
Total	5	4 E	1	5	6 E	2	6 E	1 E	1 E	2	

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Four rating lists are now published and are regularly revised as games are finished. They are the Reinsel rating system, appearing in Big Brother, the Centre-Year Rating system which originated in Graustark and which now appears in Euralia, the mean rate of growth system recently proposed by Dave Lebling and appearing in Glockorla, and finally, the EROB Rating List. Seven are required for a game of Diplomacy so that if we take the top seven from each of these listings we get the top board for that listing. Using the latest published edition of the lists, Big Brother #24, Euralia #6, Glockorla #3, and EROB #53 respectively, we find that there is exactly one name that appears on all four top boards. We have one, and only one, Established Champion. It will come as no surprise to anyone to learn that he is John Smythe.

Five people had their names on three of the lists, John Koning, Banks Nebane, Derek Nelson, Bruce Pelz, and Charles Wells. Three appeared on two lists, James MacKenzie, John McCallum, and Don Miller. Four appeared on one list, John Boardman, Rick Brooks, Frank Clark and Earl Thompson. Let us call these the Aspirants. It appeared that a reasonable approximation to the answer to the question of the newcomer mentioned might be made by listing what 'zines the Established Champion and the twelve Aspirants are actually playing in. The resulting table is given at the top of the page and the list of 'zines down the left

hand side gives, in order, the preferred choice of playing field by these thirteen individuals. When 'zines are actually equal they are written with only single space between them; double space representing a true difference in frequency. The listing is confined to regular games as I don't keep records of who is playing in the major variants. The names of Bruce Pelz, Rick Brooks and K. Thompson don't appear on the table as none of them is enrolled in a regular postal game at the moment. Note also that this table refers to games that the people mentioned are currently playing in; it makes no reference to 'zines that they have played in in the past.

It should be unnecessary to point out that this listing gives no indication of the magazines' popularity, as a whole. If these players were polled as to their 'zine preferences, the results would be very different from this. In such a poll every voter would consider how much he likes to read a certain 'zine, and its entertainment value, or how informative it is, would be legitimate factors to consider. All that this table gives is the popularity, among these players, of the various 'zines, considered as Tournament grounds, or playing fields alone. But this factor is measured not by an empty vote in a void, as a poll would do, but on the practical basis of where the players were willing to send money to cover their game fees for actual games.

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The item on game fees, in EROB #54, brought two long and interesting letters from Hal Maus (editor of ADAG, 288 Broadway, Apt. 139, Chula Vista, Calif., 92010) and from John Moning (editor of sTab, 318 South Belle Vista, Youngstown, Ohio, 44509). Both of them obviously keep much more detailed accounts than I do as they were able to say to a cent how much an average issue costs to produce.

They both count postage as being slightly over half of the total cost. I have always, in making rough estimates, considered postage to be half the cost of an issue. As postage costs are slightly lower in Canada than in the USA, and as price of ink, etc., is slightly higher here, I think that their testimony gives strong support to my earlier rule of thumb that the total cost is just double the cost of postage of EROB.

Strangely, neither commented at all on the main point of the article, which was the necessity of guarding against allowing players to disrupt games by saying they will enter a game and then failing to do so.

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ERODING is a journal of Postal Diplomacy. It reports on the progress of games 1986AQ and 1986AV. It is edited and published by John McCallum, Ralston, Alberta, Canada. The price is ten cents per copy. Copies of most back issues, since #25, are available at the same price. Subscriptions can be entered for any number of issues desired.