

# B R O B D I N G N A G

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 Brobdingnag #61

1966AV (F'05)

17 May 1967  
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Game 1966AV

Fall 1965

## D A S R E I C H W I R D G R O S S E R CONFUSED FOUR WAY STRUGGLE IN BALKANS

### The moves:

GERMANY (Shagrin): Army Moscow support army Warsaw to Ukraine. Army  
 Warsaw to Ukraine. Army Galicia to Vienna. Army Mar-  
 seilles support army Tyrol to Piedmont. Army Tyrol to Piedmont. Army  
 Bohemia support army Galicia to Vienna. Army Silesia to Galicia. Army  
 Burgundy support army Marseilles. Fleet Holland stand.

ENGLAND (Wells): Fleet Sweden to Norway. Fleet Barents Sea to Norwegian  
 Sea. Army St. Petersburg stands. Fleet Edinburgh stands.  
 Fleet Irish Sea to Mid-Atlantic Ocean. Fleet English Channel stands.  
 Fleet North Atlantic stands. Fleet Spain (south coast) to Western Med-  
 iterranean. Fleet Portugal to Spain (south coast).

RUSSIA (Zelazny): Fleet Aegean to Ionian Sea. Fleet Black Sea to Sevasto-  
pol. Army Armenia to Sevastopol. Army Ukraine to  
Galicia. Army Rumania support army Ukraine to Galicia. Army Bulgaria  
to Serbia. Army Budapest support army Bulgaria to Serbia.

ITALY (Francis): Army Trieste to Serbia. Army Venice to Trieste. Army  
Tuscany to Piedmont. Fleet Gulf of Lyon to Spain (south  
coast). Fleet Ionian Sea to Greece.

AUSTRIA (Munroe): Army Serbia to Rumania. Army Vienna to Budapest.

Underlined moves do not succeed. The Russian army in the Ukraine is  
 dislodged, and is annihilated as both Galicia and Sevastopol are closed  
 to retreats having been stood off on the move. The Austrian army in Vienna  
 is dislodged and has only Tyrolia open for retreat. As a result of these  
 moves the belligerent powers control the supply centres listed below:

GERMANY: 3 home, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, Holland, Paris, Marseilles,  
 Warsaw, Moscow, and Vienna. (12). May build three.

ENGLAND: 3 home, Norway, St. Petersburg, Brest, Portugal, Spain. (8).  
 Must remove one.

RUSSIA: Sevastopol, 3 Turkish, Bulgaria, Rumania, Budapest. (7). May  
 build one.

ITALY: 3 home, Tunis, Trieste, Greece. (6). May build one.

AUSTRIA: Serbia. (1). Must remove one.

Deadline for adjustment orders is Wednesday, 31 May 1967. Players are

reminded that adjustment orders may be published ahead of deadline if all orders are received. This game is now running only four days behind the other game. It would be a great convenience to the editor if it could be brought into synchronism with it.

#### PRESS RELEASES

Brest, 30 Nov. (DPG) Prince Vlad and one of his close friends, Count Dracula, have fallen out. There is "bad blood" between them due to the Prince's habit of impaling a goodly minority of the subject peoples he liberates. The count objected, first on grounds of waste, "all that lovely blood", and because some of his compatriots were subjected to this form of punishment, which, oddly enough, is reputed to be final for vampires as well as humans. "The next thing that Dumkopf Vlad will do is to make arrangements with that American cowboy, the Loan Arranger, to use silver bullets," the Count is quoted as saying. Rumor has it that Luci Bordscha Vlad is attempting to patch up the quarrel. "I know Daddy is too fond of silver to let in make bullets out of it."

#### A CORRECTION

As indicated in the last issue, John Smythe has recently won the Wild 'n Woolly game 1965KM. The Boardman number for that game was erroneously reported. The true designation of the game is 1965H. The same error appears in a carbon copy letter which I sent to some gamesmasters about two weeks ago. In fact, the error crept in to BROB as a result of my quoting that letter instead of looking up the details afresh.

The true game 1965M is still going strong in ADAG, having been taken over from Costaguana. I am being trounced in it which may account for my listing it here by mistake for 1965H.

Graustark, (John Boardman, 592 16th St., Brooklyn, N.Y., 11218) has just announced that it will begin two new games. Fee \$3.50. This is, I believe, the first opportunity there has been to enter Graustark in about a year, an opportunity not to be missed.

Other mazines with openings include the following: Big Brother (Charles Reinsel, 120 8th Ave., Clarion, Penna, 16214), fee \$4 but to be raised to \$5 on June 1st. Lonely Mountain (The game to be run by Al Scott, 2769 Hampshire, Cleveland, Ohio, 44106. Fee unknown but probably \$3.). ADAG (Hal Naus, 288 Broadway, #139, Chula Vista, Calif., 92010: One position only is available.). Kalmar, Christina Brannan, 3044A Telegraph Ave., Berkeley, Calif., 94705, fee \$4.). Diplomania et al, (Donald Miller, 12315 Judson Road, Glenmont, Wheaton, Md., 20906, fee \$3.). Glockorla (Dave Lebling, 3 Rollins Court, Rockville, Md., 20852. Fee, I think, \$3.) Erewhon (Capt. R. C. Walker, FV3129356, TUSLOG Det. #138, APO, NYC, 09254. Fee \$2.). Cerebral Nebula (Douglas Beyerlein, 3934 S. W. Southern, Seattle, Wash., 98116. Fee \$2.). International Enquireer, Box 14021, University Station, Minneapolis, Minn., 55414. And Derek Nelson, 18 Granard Ave., Scarborough, Ontario announces a new 'zine. Entry to the first game is, for some reason, restricted to Canadians. I don't know the status of Euralia: it was looking for additional players but its editor seems to have vanished.

### The Victory Criterion

Both BROB games, 1966AQ and 1966AV, are developing so rapidly that it seems well to indicate the victory criterion here, lest one or other of them end before the matter has been discussed.

The rulebook states, "As soon as one player gains a majority of the pieces on the board, he is the winner." As there are 34 supply centres on the board, each of them able to maintain a piece in action, it is apparent that 18 forces will always be sufficient for victory. However, although the possession of 18 forces is a sufficient condition, it is not always a necessary one. Very frequently not all the supply centres will be represented by forces in play. For instance, a player entitled to a build may not be able to make it due to having his home supply centres occupied, either by his own troops or by hostile forces; or he may just neglect to submit a build order. Pieces, too, may be annihilated; if that happens on a Spring move, a half "year" must elapse before the power involved can build up to strength again. For these reasons the board will frequently be found to have fewer than 34 pieces on it. After the first year or two it is rare for there to be fewer than 32, but 33 is common, and cases of 32, and even 31, do occur sometimes. As can be seen, a victory can, in such a case, be won with 17 pieces in the hands of one power; with fewer than 17 if there are fewer than 32 pieces on the board.

It has frequently been objected that the book's criterion of victory is a bad one, that it gives rise to the possibility of a fluke win. Consider the case of two powers, each with 17 forces, battling it out. In the see-saw of battle an annihilation could easily occur. This would, under the rulebook, give an immediate win to the other side, although he may be in no position to maintain his momentary advantage. The induced effect is, in closely equal positions, to make the play of both sides overly cautious. Since neither can afford to risk the slightest loss, both will resort to a line of play where everything supports everything else. Neither can lose a force now in order to obtain a better strategic position for next year's play. All strategy is stultified and the players are virtually compelled to accept a draw. Forbidden to break a single egg, they must give up all thought of making an omelet.

The first to face this difficulty and to attempt to overcome it was Brannan. In the first issue of his Wild 'n Woolly house rules he laid it down that victory there could only be won by the possession of 18 supply centres. The wording of his rule is bad; it sometimes allows an actual minority player to win (see BROB #39, reply to a letter from Derek Nelson, for details) but the intention was plain. It was to prevent a win arising from a minor accident in the give and take of battle. Following Brannan, Miller has also declared for 18 as the determinant of victory, although in the better form of 18 forces rather than 18 supply centres. See Diplomania #14-15 for his explanation of his position.

My objection to the 18 force criterion is that it does not go far enough. The case where the difference is likely to be of practical

importance is where two major powers are only partially deployed against one another, with a sizable fraction of their forces engaged in running down the remnants of the minor powers. The result might be that they would end up with forces 17-16 with one centre not usable for a build. It might easily happen that the power with 16 forces could be in far the better position for the impending two-power struggle, so that the current rule would give the victory to the wrong side. If this is true of a 17-16 split, and it certainly is, it may sometimes be the case with an 18-16 split, that the numerically weaker power is in the better position. See "The Long Game" in BROB #30 for a more complete discussion of this. What should the victory criterion figure be? Derek Nelson, an excellent and experienced player, has suggested 19 (BROB #39); his view is that a power with 15 forces could never, if opposed by one with 19, go on to win if play were allowed to continue. He may be right. However, I do know of one position, one nearly achieved in an actual published game, where a power with 14 forces opposed to an alliance with 20, can make a certain gain of a supply centre, where as the opposition can take nothing from him. It is true, however, in that particular position, that he can't make any further gains, just the one.

Somewhere, probably in the range 19-20-21, there is an ideal victory criterion figure. By that I mean that no power, having that number of forces, could ever, given reasonably competent play, be wiped out by the other side. That figure, whatever it is, should be the victory criterion; 18 is inadequate for this purpose.

I see no benefit whatever in altering a clearly expressed rule in the rulebook unless a real improvement is to be achieved. A rule of 18 forces does not insure that a fluke win cannot be made. Therefore, in BROB DINGWAG, the rulebook criterion of a majority of the forces on the board, will be used as long as the current rulebook is official. If 34 forces are on the board, you need 18 to win; if 33 or 32, then 17; if, say, 31, then 16; and so on.

Having made this declaration in support of the rulebook, let me state that I don't know what the rulebook means; a question still remains. If, as the result of a spring move, there are 33 forces on the board, of which number one player owns 17, there is no doubt, that player wins. Similarly if, after the builds and removals, one has 17 out of 33, he wins. But there is a doubt about the Fall move.

Note that what we, in Postal Diplomacy, call the Fall move is not identical with the Fall move as defined in the rulebook. The builds and removals, customarily called the Winter move in Postal Diplomacy, are an integral part of the Fall move in the rulebook. So we are left wondering, does the rulebook statement, quoted at the beginning of this editorial, mean that the forces are counted, to see if there is a majority, on the completion of a move, or may the count be done at any time? If the former, then there should be no win with 17 out of 33 forces on our Fall move. On the other hand, if the count can be made at any time, even in mid-move, then such a win could occur as a result of our Fall move.

An example may make this clearer. There are 34 forces on the

board, 17 of which are owned by one player. On a Fall move he annihilates an opposing force. In a face-to-face game the builds occur immediately and are regarded as part of the Fall move. Suppose that the owner of the annihilated force retains all his supply centres and is entitled to a re-build. Would these 5 seconds during which a majority existed be regarded as constituting a win, or would they not? If they would, then we should allow such a win on our Fall move. But, if not, then a win with less than 18 forces, while possible on a Spring or Winter move, is only possible on a Fall move if a build, which would destroy the majority position, can not be made. I am willing to be guided by Mr. Calhamer in this matter. I hope he will indicate whether he regards such a momentary majority, existing for a minute only, within the Fall move, as giving a win or not.

And, you hopeful winners, I will clear up this remaining difficulty as regards the victory criterion, within the next three issues. If Mr. Calhamer writes we will abide by his decision. If he doesn't, I'll rule one way or the other, likely by flipping a coin.

Probably it is clear that I think the current rule is thoroughly bad. But it is the rule that we have, let us keep it unless we are prepared to make a genuine improvement, not just a minor one.

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SEALED BAG

Conrad F. von Metzke, 5327 Hilltop Drive, San Diego, Calif., 92114, writes to say that, contrary to statements appearing in the Diplomacy press, he does not intend to resume the publication of Costaguana.

William Lee Linden, Solebury School, New Hope, Penna., 18938.: I am confused by the rulebook's statement that if removals are to be made in the absence of orders, "the unit farthest from home comes off first, and the fleet before the army." Does this mean that all fleets are to be removed before any armies, or that if two units are an equal distance from home, a fleet is removed first?

((+(If a fleet and an army are an equal distance from home, the fleet is removed first. But the rule is a difficult one to apply, at best. What is meant by "farthest from home"? Farthest from the borders of the country concerned? If so, there is no way of deciding what to remove if both possible units are located inside their home country, as is sometimes the case. Some game masters have used the country's capital as the point from which to measure; others use merely the nearest home supply centre. Should the possibility of convoy be considered in counting steps? If not, every English army on the continent is an infinite distance from home and there is no basis of comparison for deciding between two such armies. Similarly for an army of any other power which is in England. But, if convoys are admitted, then a Turkish army in St. Petersburg is nearer home than is one in the Ukraine, since it can get to the former by a single convoy move. A fact which would surprise a Turk. And so on. It seems that in the original game, before it was manufactured commercially, all the spaces were numbered and there

was an extensive table for deciding what to remove first. The rule used in EROB is the following:

1. Steps are counted from the nearest home supply centre.
2. It is not necessary to count from the same supply centre. For instance, a Russian army in Finland would be counted as coming from St. Petersburg, one in Ankara as from Sevastopol.
3. In counting steps from the home supply centre convoys are only considered if the unit actually used a convoy in arriving at its present location.
4. If two or more units are an equal number of steps from a home supply centre, a fleet will be removed before an army.
5. If there is still a tie, a unit not in a supply centre will be removed before one that is.
6. If after all of this, there is still a tie, the gamesmaster will toss a die, draw a card from a well shuffled deck, or use some similar means of deciding the issue.

I might, perhaps, add that I don't have much sympathy for a player who neglects to submit his removal orders and leaves the matter up to the gamesmaster. It is proverbial that fortune favors the brave. An adjective hardly descriptive of a player who, faced with a difficult choice, refuses to make it but leaves the matter to the whim of some gamesmaster. -jamcc)+))

Michael R. Childers, Buckner Hall, San Marcos, Texas, 78666: Just as a sidelight, I noticed that three of the magazines carried titles derived from mountains of importance in the Tolkien series. It would appear that a rather large percentage of the editors and perhaps the players were familiar with this fantasy work, before it gained its present popularity. I was disappointed, though, to see that none had titles derived from the countries in the Conan series by Robert E. Howard. Until the recent publicity that Tolkien received Howard's Conan was certainly better known than Frodo Baggins.

((+(Does this mean that you are laying claim to the title Cimmeria for your Diplomacy journal? Best of luck with it.

The HFF Games Bureau used names from Tolkien for all three of its originally proposed publication, Barad-Dur, Orthanc, and Osgiliath, the latter of which did not appear. I think that they intended to use those names as a sort of trade-mark to distinguish their Diplomacy magazines from others. However, Charles Wells' The Lonely Mountain was already established before the Gamesbureau began. I think it may have been this fact which persuaded Charles to change the name of his journal, very briefly, to Magazine.

John Boardman, the founder of Postal Diplomacy is a student of, among many other things, the works of Howard. So that the neglect of his works in choosing titles of Diplomacy 'zines is by no means due to ignorance. He had a better idea, that is all: namely, romance laid in mythical turn-of-the-century Balkan kingdoms. -jamcc)+))

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ERODINGMAG, a journal of Postal Diplomacy, is edited and published by John McCallum, Ralston, Alberta, Canada. Ten cents a copy.