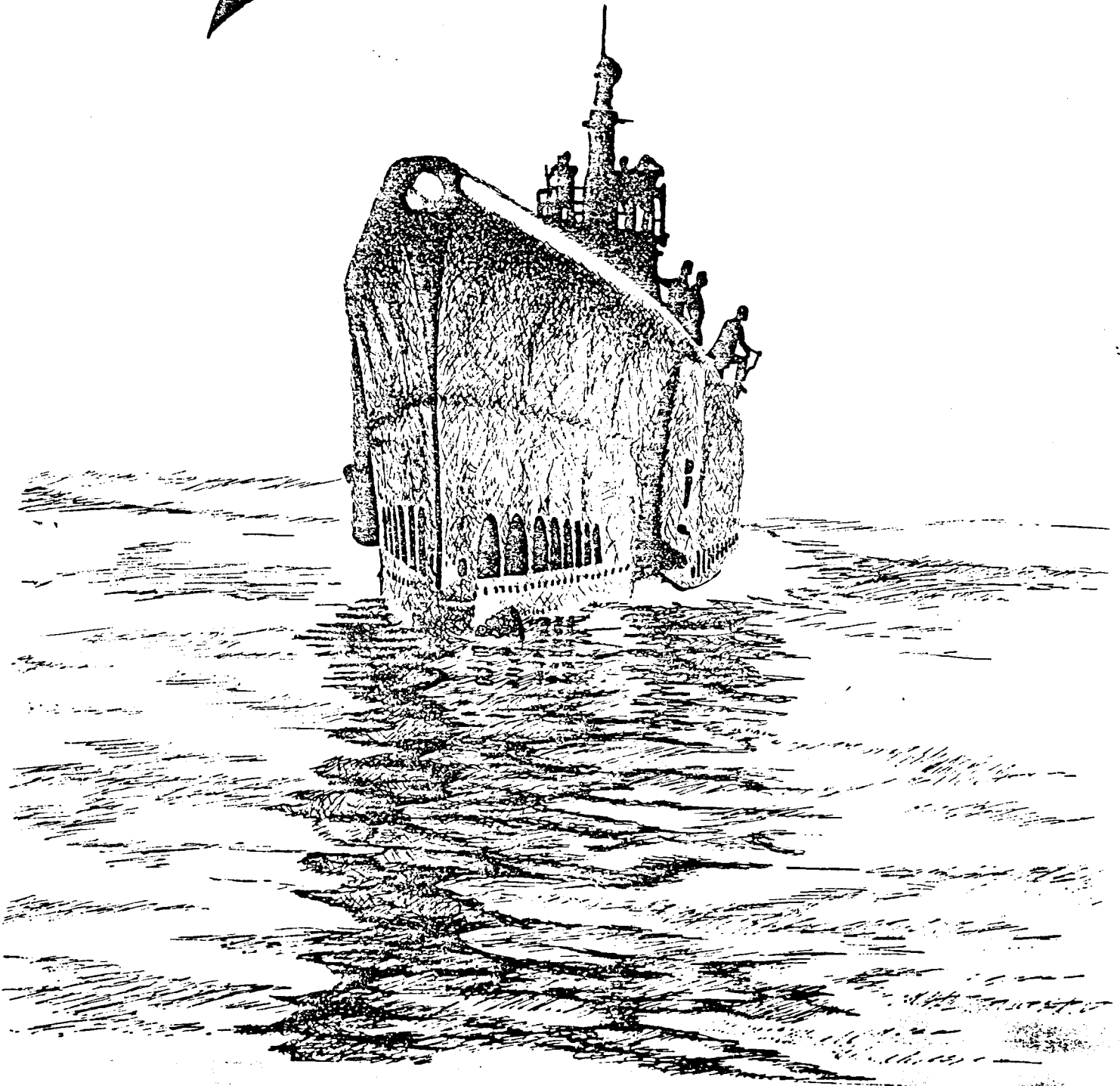


Command



Welcome to COMMAND, a publication dedicated to the game of Diplomacy. This is the second time around for this zine; COMMAND first appeared in late 1975. In it's original form (Issue 0), COMMAND was intended to be a wargaming magazine which offered free gamemastering services to it's subscribers. Unfortunately, my partner (who was the wargaming expert) had to resign after the first issue was published, leaving the entire operation to me. I made the decision to scrap everything but the Diplomacy section, and things took off from there. I started 2 games in issue #1, 2 more in issue #2, and another 2 in issue #5. By issue #9 my circulation list had 54 paid subscribers. Issue #17 saw me start my 16th game of Diplomacy and issue #20 had my 17th game and my 89th subscriber. At it's peak, COMMAND had 124 subscribers and was running 24 postal Diplomacy games (plus assorted other PBM multi-player sections like Nuclear Destruction, Origins of WW II, Diplomacy variants...). Things started to fall apart as means my means of reproduction became harder and harder to manage - when I first started, the zine was offset printed. After moving from Virginia to New Jersey, this type of printing became economical suicide, so I invested first in a ditto machine, the in a mimeo; this was the beginning if the end. By late 1979 I began winding things down and made my exit from the hobby.

That was the past... what about the future?

I intend to run COMMAND on a three week schedule. All of the games run here will of course carry Boardman Numbers, and I promise to maintain a high standard of gamemastering. I'd also like to fill these pages with more than just games - game reviews, articles on strategy and tactics, just about anything of general interest will find itself printed here. How successful I am depends upon you the readers, and how much you're willing to contribute.

Well, that's it for the introduction. My rates for subscriptions from now until the end of the year will be \$4.00 for 12 issues. Game fees are \$5.00 per game. I hope you'll subscribe; I think you'll find COMMAND enjoyable. If you were a subscriber to COMMAND in the old days, write to me - your first 12 issues and game are FREE.

COMMAND Houserules:

Each player is responsible for sending in his own moves; moves will be accepted by mail only, unless other arrangements are made in advance. You may change your moves as often as you wish, limited only by the published deadline. Under no circumstances will moves be accepted after the deadline.

Countries will be assigned using a preference list. Each player submitting a preference list must list all 7 countries; I will try to assign everyone a country no lower than 4th on their list.

Games are run for COMMAND subscribers. You may continue in a game after your subscription runs out without re-newing, but in this case you must pay your own postage.

The first player to gain control of 18 supply centers wins the game. A player may be awarded a win earlier than this only if he has the consent of all of the players still in the game. A draw must also have the consent of all remaining players and the gamemaster.

If any player misses a total of any 3 moves in a five game year period, or any two consecutive moves, he will be replaced or his units will go into civil disorder at the discretion of the gamemaster. On any turn that no orders are received from a player, his units will be considered as holding - moves will not be made for them.

Press releases will be printed, though we reserve the right to edit unusually long press, obscene press, or press of a nature that personally attacks another player. Handwritten press will be printed only if it is very short.

Winter builds and spring moves will usually be combined. Spring orders may be made conditional upon builds. A separation of seasons may be requested, but I do not guarantee to grant the request; you must submit at least one set of conditional orders for each move. Winter and fall moves may similarly be made conditional upon retreats from the previous season.

GAME REVIEWS - TABLE TOP BASEBALL

Diplomacy is not the only game which has a very large PBM following - all over the country people are managing paper baseball teams in leagues which usually run spring through summer (although some are run during the winter). Three of the most popular games for this kind of activity are Strat-O-Matic Baseball, APBA Baseball, and Replay Baseball.

Each of these games features cards for all of the players who had more than just a few at-bats or games played in the major leagues the previous season. The cards have numbers and codes based upon each players statistics which generate play results based upon the roll of 2 or 3 dice - over a full season of play, these games produce statistics very close to what each player actually did in real life.

Strat-O-Matic Baseball (available from Strat-O-Matic Game Co., Box 541, Great Neck, N.Y. or in retail stores) uses game results printed directly on the player cards for most of the game's action. S-O-M uses a 3 die system, one red and two white. The red die indicates which card column to find the result, the two white are summed to produce a row number - columns 1,2,3 are on the hitter's card, 4,5,6 on the pitcher's card. In addition to dice, S-o-m Uses a split deck of cards numbered 1-20. The split deck is used to split card results (1-17 SINGLE, 18-20 FLY OUT CF), and to resolve fielding plays based on defensive ratings and stolen base attempts.

S-O-M is a great system for face-to-face play - a manager has every option available to him. He decides when to steal, when to take an extra base, etc. For PBM play it is a bit weak as it gives the home field manager too much control over the game's outcome. S-O-M's cards are the easiest of the three game's to read. However, since half of the play results are on the pitcher's cards, there are statistical inaccuracies introduced which cannot be avoided in the basic game. A player who did not hit a homerun in real life can hit several in the game if he rolls right against certain pitchers. S-O-M's hit and run and sacrifice system are fairly crude when compared to the other two games. Lefty-righty does not figure into the basic game. An advanced version of S-O-M may be played which does take this into account by using the reverse side of the cards - the advanced game cards are more difficult to read, however.

APBA Baseball (APBA Game Co., 1001 Millersville Rd., Lancaster, PA 17603) is the most popular of the three games for league play. APBA uses a two dice system, one red & one white to produce 36 intermediate results, with all plays being keyed from the hitter cards. The codes read from the cards are cross-referenced on large charts - one chart for each baserunning situation - and adjustments are made for pitcher grade, fielding ratings, and/or infield positioning. Pitchers fall into 4 basic grades A,B,C,D (there is also an A&B and an A&C grade, but these are rare), and each pitcher may have one or more control modifiers to distinguish the strikeout artist from the average hurler from the rag arms. A separate book of charts is used for sacrifice plays (one for each baserunning situation except bases empty) and hit and run plays (runner on first or runners on first and third). Stolen base attempts, attempts for extra bases, plays based on fielding and running ratings are all built into the charts and do not require separate resolution as in S-O-M.

APBA is a very easy game system to master, and after you've played awhile, the numbers on the cards become recognizable as specific types of plays and results. The game flows easily, and PBM play is a breeze. The only real flaw to APBA is the ability of a manager to warp statistics by taking advantage of some of the games structures. For example, a card code of 5 is a double with the bases empty, but it is a homerun with a man on first; by batting high on-base percentage hitters in front of a player with one or two 5's on his card, you can get that player to hit many more homeruns than he actually got in real life (1980 Dave Kingman hit 64 for me in an APBA league using this technique). Stolen bases can be warped by proper use of hit and run in a similar manner. APBA does sell a separate advanced version of their game (the APBA Master Game), which brings in a lot more detail. It is very difficult to play, however, involving a lot of look-up and calculation to resolve play results.

Replay Baseball is the best of the three games, in my opinion (Replay Games INC, 560 Route 88, Carmichaels, PA 15320). Replay also uses a two die system, one red on black, and all intermediate results are found on the hitter's cards. The pitcher cards are cut longer than the hitter cards, and are designed to fit behind the hitter deck with the top of the card extending above. For each die roll, a number from the appropriate column of the pitcher card is added to the number from the proper row and column of the hitter card - this result is translated by look-up in a play book with one page per base running situation. All play results are found on these charts, with supplemental charts for hit and run, sacrifice and rare plays.

Replay plays very much like APBA, but does not suffer from statistical inaccuracies introduced by manager actions. Defensive abilities, bunting and bat control, throwing strength and accuracy are all integrated into the Replay system in a very clean manner. Replay does not have an advanced games - all of the advanced features of S-O-M and APBA Master Game are built into the basic game and are used with no difficulty.

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