

Time Tripper

This one came up astonishingly well on the last Feedback. I asked Brad to give me a few days to come up with something and, sure enough, after about an hour of wrestling with the basic problems, I did come up with something. Rather than go through some long-winded explanation, why not read the introduction to the game?

Vietnam, 1971

It's about 3 a.m. on a jungle trail in South Vietnam. A few meters from the trail sits a lone American soldier. He is spec/4 Tiomid Zapetski, "Timmy the Zap." He's on ambush patrol again. He's not very popular with his platoon sergeant. The company first sergeant doesn't like him very much, either. Timmy has three hobbies (aside from the one shared by most grunts in Vietnam, that of surviving until they fly out): chemistry, electronics, and military history. The military history he got interested in after he was drafted. He always liked to read, and here he was with plenty of time and a little "history in the making" before him. He's read a lot in the last two years.

The electronics hobby causes him to experiment with any piece of electronic equipment that comes into his hands. His knowledge of the black market allows him to obtain many esoteric parts and devices. He has customized the radio he normally operates. His superiors don't know exactly what the radio's capable of doing, but they do know that it will do more than the normal radio. Tonight, Timmy's radio is wired into most of the sensor systems in the area as well as an as-yet untested link with the local satellite communications system.

Timmy was indulging in his chemical interests earlier. He is stoned out of his mind. He should have known better than to ingest a new batch without first testing it back at the base camp. But what the hell, this batch was so powerful that even if Charlie found him he probably wouldn't feel a thing when the AK 47 opened up. It was a strange feeling he had. He was starting to hallucinate. Off to the right, there was this column of light, like a phosphorescent tornado. He started playing with his radio. It began to dawn on him that the column of light was fluxing and moving apparently in response to what he was doing with the radio's customized controls. Well, let's make the old flux dance a little bit. And dance it did. Well, let's bring the old flux in for a closer look. And so it came. Well, let's get inside the old flux. And so he did. Well, let's make the old flux change colors. And so it did.

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All of a sudden it was daylight and there were no trees. The flux, which he could still make out in the sunlight, was about 30 meters away from him off to the right and, holy Jesus, here comes a cop. Wait a minute. A cop? Some guy in front of him, about 50 meters away, wearing a leather jacket and a leather helmet. Wait a minute. This guy is also wearing a skirt and he's carrying a pole. No, wait a minute. That's a spear. There's a

whole bunch of 'em! I think I'll go back to reefer, says Timmy the Zap. This chemistry's a little too heavy.

Slowly it begins to dawn on Timmy that he is no longer stoned. That wherever he is, it's real. About that time he's knocked on his back as one of the spears hits him in the chest. Fortunately, his flack jacket absorbs the blow. Timmy, as is his custom, is armed to the teeth: M16, maybe a dozen magazines, .45 calibre automatic pistol with 20 extra rounds of ammunition, .357 magnum revolver with a dozen extra rounds, six hand grenades, three flares and one claymore mine. A few more of those funny guys with the skirts are coming at him with their spears so Timmy lets off a burst with his M16, and the three leather men drop. Another one stands there sort of transfixed. He then coughs a little blood and keels over.

"I don't think these guys have ever seen a rifle before," Timmy thinks to himself. Timmy stumbles over to the flux which was moving around across the battlefield. He has to snuff a few more leather men plus some kid wearing no armor, but slinging rocks at him, one of which damn near knocks his helmet off. Timmy gets inside the flux, plays with his radio again, and

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finds himself right behind a sabre-tooth tiger, attempting to bring down what appears to be the largest water buffalo in Vietnam. Timmy thinks to himself, "All of this wouldn't be happening if I'd stayed in college." JFD

Hastings, 1066

The blindtester reports have come in and, for the most part, they seem to find the game quite playable. However, some of their suggestions to further enhance the game have been assimilated and will be included. We have changed the definition of the Saxon Army Wings to one that is a little easier to discern, as well as placing more control in the hands of the player. A further addition to player control will be the alternate, player-oriented battle-card distribution method. The more historically-minded system placed a premium on prior planning which then became a blind draw as the game progressed. This was based on the fact that medieval battles often went far afield of the original plans, much to the dismay and surprise of the commanders.

This system works fine solitaire (as a matter of fact, it makes Hastings an excellent solitaire game); however, several players felt too restricted by it. So we have added a system wherein the battle cards are shuffled and dealt blind, but once in the players' hands they may be played as desired. (Of course, the player may not get exactly what he wants for his strong wing, etc., but that's what makes it fun.) We have also loosened up the restrictions on Attack and Pursue, so that the Saxons aren't as rigidly channelled into certain maneuvers. Rich Berg

Battle Over Britain

Research has just begun on our first game covering the famous aerial campaign in

1940. As you may recall, the Feedback question (which received a very favorable response) for *Battle Over Britain* presented a strategic level game covering the entire battle, in which individual pilot quality and experience would have an effect. Although still up in the air, the game will work something like this: Both players will have "tote boards" similar to the ones at the opposing headquarters in England and France, on which the status of each squadron will be visually presented. Thus each squadron will be either on alert, refueling, vulnerable on the ground, or committed to action with its current location and altitude shown. The effectiveness of each squadron will change as the game progresses. History shows that if a pilot survived one or two aerial battles, his future chances for survival increased dramatically, not only because of his experience, but his "seniority" enabled him to acquire better ground crew and equipment. He also got the "feel" of his particular aircraft (no two Spitfires were exactly alike). Crucial battles will be resolved in a detailed air combat system highlighting the qualitative differences between the opposing airplanes. More next time.

John H. Butterfield

The Division Series

I've been kicking the idea around with various military types this last year of doing a series of capsule games based on the army training program. The army has training programs (ARTEPs) for just about everything, including the primary forms of ground combat such as cavalry operations, mech infantry, artillery, and so on. Sitting around one morning sort of collecting my wits after taking care of a raft of business-type problems, I got the idea of taking the original map for *NATO Division Commander* (a 1:50,000 scale) and simply having a capsule-size map made of one area. Matt Ruff, one of our part-time R&D assistants, found himself going past my office just at that time (the wrong time for him, it turned out), and two hours later he had the map finished. Meanwhile, a few days previously, Redmond had been talking to me about an idea a writer in *MOVES* had for a movement system based on "frames."

Now, I already forget exactly how this original frames system worked [see Antonio Leal's article in this issue], but what I eventually cooked up was a system whereby a game, roughly analogous to *Wurzburg*, is played with all units having a movement allowance of four (on 800 meter hexes). The maximum MP costs for terrain are four, and as each side moves one of its units, the unit is flipped upside down to indicate that the unit has moved (or, as I call it, "pulsed"). It also costs four movement points to attack. Now, there is a combined movement-combat phase in which the designated first player moves one of his units. The other player then moves one of his units. This goes on down the line until all units are moved. The only exception is when a unit moves within three hexes of an unmoved (or unpulsed) enemy unit in which case said enemy unit may exercise opportuni-