

# Devising a new scenario

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and I managed to rip up the demonstration copy in our eagerness to fully investigate). SPI had run out of 'Mod. Quads II's' in ten minutes and 'Kesselschlacht' at SDC was conspicuous by its absence (but they still offered \$2.50 discount on it). A marvellous booklet on the Yom Kippur War was on sale there and Fire & Movement 7 was out in time for the convention, while Battleline had 'Fury in the West' and 'Dauntless'.

GDW as well as 'Case White' had 'Pearl Harbour' and a new improved version of 'Bar Lev' (look over the air rules sometime).

Back in the Student Union block Hal was waiting with Victory in the Pacific — after four hours and three opponents he had cracked the system. Third Reich, after twelve hours, had just reached 1942. Wacht Am Rhein was up to turn three.

For the rest of the evening Hal proceeded to grind my US forces into dust, between cartons of the famous US beer. The game is much better than the infamous 'Victory at Sea' partially I think because the Pacific is a more interesting theatre than Europe for the naval aspect. By this time one o'clock had rolled around again and time for another six hours kip.

Sunday morning dawned bright and clear once again. Metamorphosis Alpha was the tournament for the day, as planets were being incinerated faster than even the umpire could keep pace.

The quadrigame seminar proceeded apace with Fred Georgian expanding on his Moves articles as well as giving the rationale behind having games with the same basic rules. Meanwhile 'Diplomacy' had really taken off with five games in progress.

Hank Halley had finally started a game of 'A Mighty Fortress' in which, as the Jesuits, he had problems with the other Hank, of England. 'Indianapolis 5,000' is a car race simulation which is memorable since that was the game that the local TV station fixed on to take their allotted length of film (the game looks superior to Waddington's 'Formula One' a similar idea).

The high spot of the convention was Sunday afternoon and the auction. After half an hour of sheer apathy, Dick Berg managed to organise the fixing of the P.A. system but lost his voice in the process (someone shouted "we never had this problem in Baltimore"). A swift beefburger and a carton of beer and we were off on the bargain trail (or sour lemon run to all you cynics).

I managed to outbid even Avalon Hill's retail prices by bidding eleven bucks for a ten dollar game of 'Panzer Leader' which I had been reliably informed cost twelve. Brad Hessel, feeling generous, charged me the list price.

There were more games of AH's 'Guadalcanal' on auction than I thought had ever been sold. Dick reckons that the same dozen go from one Origins to the next being sold for more each time.

A copy of Taurus's 'Raiders of the Sea' went for \$25 complete with a one hundred page rule book, while the famous and elusive 'Trafalgar' made two appearances.

The Charlie awards gave prizes to 'Russian Campaign 'Avalanche' and, of course, 'TSS' and not to be outdone I have decided to take a leaf out of 'Fire & Movement's' book and award my own Soggy Counter awards, after much soul-searching as follows:-

The 'If I can't forget, why should they?' Award to Tom Shaw for saying when receiving his Hall of Fame award — "Thank you all my loyal Kriegspiel fans".

The "best-dressed gamer award" to Redmond Simonsen for being the **only** gamer in a suit (and a pretty good one at that).

The 'privilege of rank' award to Jim Dunnigan for passing all the difficult questions in the seminars to Frank Davies.

The 'sun never sets' award to Phil Kosnet for consistently calling the Pan Sentient League the Americans.

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It is in all our natures to want to go a little further — what boardgamer has not surveyed his latest acquisition only to mutter "they've left out the Battle of ....."? The military historians among us might seek to replay a battle outside the popular periods e.g. Fehrbellin, 1675, between the Swedes and the emerging Prussians. Whatever your reason, careful consideration of a number of important points should ensure success.

## Choose Your Battle

This is where you need to do a fair amount of research. You will need to know at least:-

- (a) the strength and composition of each force involved.
- (b) the terrain fought over.
- (c) the objectives, both tactical and strategic.

To find these things, a good precise account is needed of the battle with clear maps of the battle area. This may be difficult to obtain especially for modern battles, where Orders of Battle (OB's) tend to be vague and the maps show only the general area without reference to terrain (try regimental histories here). Read up the "Sources" or "Bibliography" sections of the books you can find on your subject and get your local library to track them down for you — if they haven't already got them in stock. More than one source always helps — especially in the Napoleonic period, estimates of unit strength vary from account to account (some will justify their figures, which can help in choosing).

It would serve no purpose to list suitable books here — some periods are outside my ken and it would be daft to recommend anything for them. Use the appropriate simulation as a guide, find out how the units are constituted and then determine what data you need to match them.

**Example:** You are constructing a "Musket and Pike" scenario. You will need to know the military value of your pikemen and musketeers in order to compose your armies and the quantity of each. Thus untrained levies would rate as "Militia Pikemen" or "Militia Musketeers", trained infantry would rate as "Professional" and Elite units e.g. Newcastle's Whitecoats would rate "Elite" status (note that there are no Elite Musketeers reflecting the infancy of this weapon as a decider of battles).

Examine your forces regiment by regiment to decide their appropriate category — most accounts reveal in some detail the gathering of the armies and their constituents.

Naval scenarios are at once more difficult and easier to stage. Open-sea battles are fairly simple in that you require no terrain data: you do need to know relative positions and speed however and this may be

more difficult. Most modern accounts give positions of the ships at given times and the narrative usually outlines the state of the ships at various times throughout the battle, including speed and damage state. The difficulty usually occurs either when speed and relative position are missing, or in the ships themselves, which may not directly compare with the counters available e.g. British or German vessels in a 'CA'-based scenario.

**Example:** In a recent extra scenario (based on 'CA') depicting the Battle of the River Plate, the writer found himself with the following problem(s):

HMS Exeter — no available counter  
HMS Ajax — only one CL-6 counter  
HMNZS Achilles — only one CL-6 counter  
KMS Graf Spee — no available counter  
Although the ultimate solution was four new counters, a comparison had to be made with 'CA' parameters to determine what was needed. HMS Exeter had 6 x 8" main armament but was otherwise similar to HMAS Canberra which had 8 x 8" main armament. Solution: reduce attack factor by 25% to 9.

KMS Graf Spee is a bigger problem — no 'CA' counter covers a vessel with 11" guns and cruiser mobility. On reference to "Strategy and Tactics" number 50, the article on Dreadnought contains data on the guns of the German Battlecruisers "Scharnhorst" and "Gneisenau" whose main armament was identical in type to that of Graf Spee. A comparison with either the "King George V" or "Renown" class, both of which appear in the 'CA' counters mix will give sufficient data to approximate an attack factor for Graf Spee:

Renown = 6 x 15" guns. Weight of explosive in shells — 875 kg.

Scharnhorst/Gneisenau = 9 x 11" guns. Weight of explosive in shells — 315 kg. The first factor, number of guns, can be dismissed — Graf Spee had six 11" guns. The second factor, calibre of gun, affects penetration of defensive armour i.e. the ability to obtain a hit (Graf Spee:Renown = .73 to 1). The third factor is the weight of explosive i.e. the ability to cause damage once penetration has been achieved (Graf Spee:Renown = .36 to 1).

Renown's attack factor is printed on the 'CA' counter: 22. After careful balancing of the two significant factors, it was decided to give Graf Spee an attack factor of 14 i.e. 63% of Renown's — which favours more the ability to hit than to damage.

A later article in this series will examine the important factors in bringing your chosen battle to the simulation stage.