

TO THE GREEN FIELDS BEYOND

The Battle of Cambrai, 20 November-7 December, 1917

- Realistic Game of the First Armored Blitzkrieg
- Highly Mobile Situation; Both Sides Take The Offensive
- Artillery, Air, Cavalry, Infantry, and *Stosstruppen* Infantry units

0610 hours, 20 November 1917

The pre-dawn darkness is shattered by the fire of 1,003 British guns hurling a devastating barrage at the German positions. The thunder of showering steel subsides as a new and unfamiliar sound rumbles across the countryside — tanks! The British, for the first time in history, are using massed tanks to break through the German defenses. The breakthrough to “the green fields beyond” that has eluded the Empire’s finest generals for three long and bloody years is to be sought with the combined weight of 476 of the powerful weapons, followed closely by infantry. Behind, with their sabres glittering and lance pennons fluttering, the cavalry waits, poised to exploit the breakthrough. Overhead, squadrons of the Royal Flying Corps bomb and strafe German rear areas, direct artillery fire, attack German airfields, and seize control of the skies. The dawn of 20 November brought light to more than just another day — it witnessed the birth of the *Blitzkrieg*. The era of modern warfare had arrived with the onslaught of British armor, artillery, and aircraft — a style of warfare as different from the fruitless offensives of preceding years as Waterloo differed from Marathon.

In the first days of the Battle of Cambrai — the first great armored battle in history — the British broke through the German trenches, driving deeper in hours than they had in months of previous offensives. Yet strong German resistance and crucial indecision over the commitment of British reserves held the armored spearheads back. For three days, the fate of Cambrai hung in the balance. The Germans evacuated the town, but reinforcements formed a line, the British pushed toward Bourlon, but the Germans shifted to meet them. In five days, the British took most of their objectives, but the Germans were not about to concede defeat. Ten days after the battle began, they launched a two pronged counterattack designed to envelop the British. One of the German pincers was halted by a tenacious British defense, but the other broke through, and *Stosstruppen* poured into

British rear areas. British reserves then attacked and stopped the German advance, but the fighting raged on until 7 December, when bad weather and exhaustion of supplies halted the fighting. One of the significant battles of history — and one whose lessons would be put to use by the Germans in another war — had ended.

To The Green Fields Beyond is an operational level game. The units range from companies (for tanks) to brigades and regiments. A 34" x 22" map, 400 back-printed counters, and a rules booklet that includes extensive historical and analytical commentary are included. Scenarios are presented for the Initial British Breakthrough, the critical Battle for Bourlon, and the devastating German Counterattack. The Campaign Game spans all phases of the see-saw, mobile battle in seven 24-hour game-turns. The game system is new, with each player-turn featuring double alternate movement and combat phases that put a premium on positioning reserves to exploit breakthrough or back up defense in depth. Rules cover the detailed use of aircraft, artillery (you can fire drumfire, rolling, interdiction, and hurricane barrages), tank breakdown, withdrawal and relief of troops, coordination of forces, and much more. While unique to the game, the system remains in the tradition of recent SPI simulations of 20th Century warfare.

To The Green Fields Beyond depicts one of the most mobile and challenging situations to occur in either world war. Both players must take the offensive in the course of the game. The British player must use his initial advantage to break through the German defense-in-depth. He must carefully utilize his tanks, artillery, and infantry in a combined-arms team to crack the German trench lines and send exploitation forces — including the cavalry — into the German rear. Meanwhile, the German player must fight a tenacious defense. In some sectors, he may choose to withdraw, while in other areas he will hold to the last round. Sometimes, the British can be stopped cold. But if the British do succeed,

the battle is by no means over. German reinforcements pour into the battle area, including many of the elite *Stosstruppen* divisions. These units are specially trained in infiltration tactics, and, in some cases, they can penetrate the British zones of control. With these units, strong artillery, and growing air strength, the Germans can deliver a counterattack that can take back all the ground the Germans have lost — and maybe more. *To The Green Fields Beyond* is a true test of both offensive and defensive skill.

One of the other strong points of the game is the wide and varied spectrum of functionally different units. The successful player has, above all, to master the interaction between the different types of units, including infantry, tanks (for the British), *Stosstruppen* (for the Germans), cavalry, light, medium, heavy and super-heavy artillery, special bridging engineer units. In addition, if the lull air rules are used, fighters, bombers, ground attack and observation aircraft all take part.

To The Green Fields Beyond should appeal to many different groups of gamers. Those looking for a situation and period that has not been “over-gamed,” as well as those looking for a game which depicts the interrelationships of modern warfare in a mobile environment, one that gives both sides the chance to attack and defend. It is also a game that rewards careful planning, in allocating artillery fires, in deciding which units will make the initial attack, and which will follow-up, and where precious supplies will be allocated. Thus, it should lend itself to solitaire play, where both planning and execution of the game are equally fascinating without an opponent.

To The Green Fields Beyond has the potential for being a “breakthrough” itself. The first operational level SPI game dealing with the First World War, it will hopefully, if successful, open up new fields for gamers. It is up to the players to break the deadlock of the trenches, to see whether they can do better than the men who held command in the grey November dawn some sixty years ago.

***To the Green Fields Beyond* will sell for \$9. Available 15 February 1978.**