



ARMISTICE DAY 2

A Diplomacy zine from Stephen Agar, 47 Preston Drove, BRIGHTON, BN1 6LA.
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Well, I think I can consider the launch of this new zine to be a qualified success – inside you will find two gamestarts – one for 4-week Regular Diplomacy, the other for 4-week Abstraction. This is excellent – games are essential to help maintain a regular momentum to get the zine out every 4 weeks. I'm well on my way to my target circulation (this issue being sent to approx. 70 people incl. trades) – so if any of you know of someone I could send a sample issue to, please let me know. Also, there's two people needed to the 4-week Diplomacy list and one needed for the 2-week Gunboat Diplomacy list – so don't hesitate if you fancy a game. I'm hoping that the variant in this issue – Don Hessong's *Ancient Mediterranean* will be well received – and as it is only a 5-player game, we may even manage to start a game. I've done an issue on Abstraction II in this issue, partly to whet our appetite for the game just starting, but also to see if another four people want to join the list to make up a second game.

No one made any suggestions as to how I should name the games, so in keeping with the modern spirit behind postal Diplomacy, I nearly opted for scurrilous archaic words. I seriously considered calling the first Diplomacy game **Arseling-Pole** (the pole with which bakers spread the hot embers throughout the oven), but then settled for the more mundane **Ambodexter** (unethical lawyer). I thought that the Abstraction game could be the very appropriate **Balatron** (rascal, thief). But then I changed my mind as this all sounded too clever by half

Instead I thought I would opt for the Womble-method of naming things. As all well-read readers will know, Great Uncle Bulgaria named the Wombles by randomly putting his finger on a page of the *Times Atlas of the World* – hence, Orinoco, Wellington, Tomsk, Bungo etc. Well, if it is good enough for Great Uncle Bulgaria it is good enough for me, so... here goes. [*lifts down Atlas from top shelf of bookcase*]. The first game of Diplomacy shall be called... **Esslingen am Neckar**. The second game shall be called... **Whangamomona**. Err... maybe not.

So let's take the coward's way out. This zine is called *Armistice Day*, the lay-out is a copy of the layout used by *Punch* during the First World War, so it seems appropriate to name the games after conflicts during the First World War. So the first game shall be **Mons**¹ and the second **Tannenburg**². I don't know how many of you are interested in the First World War itself, but I would heartily recommend *The Guns of August* by Barbara Tuchman³. The book itself only deals with the first month of the war, but it is gripping stuff. Until I read it I certainly hadn't realised how very close Germany came to getting a very quick and decisive victory. It is tempting to speculate that if Germany had won the war in the first five weeks, then the British Empire might have survived, World War II (and Hitler) would not have happened, and communism

in Russia would have been crushed. Almost enough to make you feel sorry that they didn't win.

The death of my grandmother last week reminded me how until recently war frequently touched almost everyone. My grandmother was 98, being born in 1902, she was only 16 when the real Armistice Day occurred and went on to run her own dressmaking shop in the 1920's. There cannot be many of her generation left – indeed, none of her friends attended her funeral, because they were all dead. I am not aware of any of my close relatives having died in either world war. One of my grandfathers was a batman in the First World War, while a great uncle was pronounced “missing in action” while fighting with the 8th Army in Egypt – only to turn up a few months later in hospital. Fortunately, my father was not old enough to have to fight in the Second World War, but Esme's real father and adopted father (she has two fathers, so to speak) were both pilots. She has her real father's log books and it shows he flew many special missions to occupied France – presumably dropping spies or supplies for the resistance. Our generation has been lucky – the nearest thing to war being the Falklands, which was played out half way across the globe and didn't directly touch the lives of many here. Nowadays we fight our little wars at long distance, and are often frightened to use infantry for fear of casualties – still it is infinitely preferable to what went before. I hope my children's generation will be as lucky.

I'm sorry to say that many of the letters I received this issue have disappeared into the big random access memory in the sky – lost when my computer crashed and I had to go back to a back-up of my emails which was two weeks old. So don't feel aggrieved if I have appeared to ignore your contribution, an act of God intervened. Well, not so much an Act of God, but me messing about with Beta software when I should know better. Still, those that did survive are inside – and many thanks for everyone who took the trouble to write. More please!

The cover drawing is *Die Granate (Shell)* by Max Beckmann, 1915, dry-point on paper, 38 x 28.8cm. In a letter to his wife on October 11th 1914, Beckmann wrote: "When an enormous salvo lands here, it's as if the gates of eternity have been opened. Everything is suggestive of space, distance, infinity. I would like to paint the din if I could." The spacefillers from this issue are taken from the Theatre Royal, Haymarket programme for *The Second in Command* on 15th February 1901. I guess I just like the period feel!

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¹ 23rd August 1914

² 26th August 1914

³ Paperback - 511 pages Reprint edition (April 1994) Ballantine Books; ISBN: 034538623X

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OXCON 2001



James Hardy doing his Stan Oliver impression

There is something truly awful about having to get up on a Saturday morning earlier than you would normally have to get up to go to work. So when the alarm went off at 6.30am I seriously considered turning over and going back to sleep. Only the knowledge that my weakness would humiliate me in Esme's eyes persuaded me to stir. So I forced myself out of bed and even made it out of the house by 7.30am. Torture indeed.

Of course the motorway was empty and I could easily have had another 45 minutes in bed. I got to Oxford by 9am, so I had plenty of time to buy a paper, enjoy a pain au chocolat with a large cappuccino, and even do a spot of shopping, before getting to Keble for 10.00am. Didn't have time to chat much as the Diplomacy was soon underway, with me stuck playing Italy. I decided to ally with Austria (Kieron Quirke) just for the hell of it and was quickly under attack from France (James Hardy). Elsewhere England (Chetan Radia) and Germany (Gihan Bandaranaike) just kept dancing around each other. The fact that James and I were slogging it out had nothing to do with me dragging James halfway round Oxford in the rain (I had a coat – he didn't) in search of my favourite sandwich bar at lunchtime. It turned into a very hard-fought game – I eventually ended up on 7 centres (as did England and France) behind an 8 centre Austria when time was called after 1909. The Tournament itself was won by Simon Bouton, with Kieron Quirke second and yours truly just scraping a Best Italy. Nice to see four boards, which isn't at all bad for a con this size.

I only had time for a quick drink with James Hardy, Mark Stretch, Kieron Quirke and Steve Cox, before heading back for Brighton. I gave James and Mark a lift back to Mark's house in Didcot, as I couldn't bring myself to let James have to walk all the way from Didcot railway station. My conscience wouldn't allow me to inflict that much exercise on anyone. Especially James. ☺

SOME ZINES

Underneath the Mango Tree No.22 was a chat-only special, consisting largely of reprints of old articles (a couple of them by some upstart called Stephen Agar). Most of the articles concerned hobby history and were taken from the <http://www.diplomacy-archive.com> website. Personally, I think that's fine – especially as Alex went to great lengths to state where they were originally published. Some of you may remember that I had a spat with Chris Palm over much the same thing (and which he blamed as being the incident which caused him to leave the hobby) – but in that case Chris actually altered the articles to disguise the fact that they were reprinted from elsewhere. One original piece is a review of all the zines Alex receives (all 26 of them) which should at least provide John Harrington with a lot of material for the next *Mission from God*. Alex is a dab hand at lay-out and this zine hangs together well – lists open for all sorts of games (Breaking Away, Dream Mile, Great White Hunter, Gutterpress, Mish-Mash, Rauschmeisser, Titankhamun and Sopwith). Recommended. Alex Bardy, 29 Harrier Way, Evelyn Mews, Beckton, London, E6 5YP.

I don't see Clive Palmer's *Pigbutton* mentioned much in other zines, even though it is one of the old-timers being up to issue 131. Most of the last issue is taken up with the sub-zine *Ratadan* from Rob Mulholland (which itself is up to issue 118). Unusually for a sub-zine it has a full letter column – it will be interesting to see how the zine copes when Rob emigrates to Australia later in the year. Clive Palmer. 36 Ravensfield, Barstable East, Basildon, Essex, SS14 1UG.

I have to mention issue 717 of *Graustark* – yes, the granddaddy zine of them all is still alive and kicking. And for a zine which has been around for 38 years, it is still surprisingly fresh. However, even John has spent a year trying to fill a Colonial Diplomacy waiting list, so things are tough over there as well. A friendly literate zine – a long review of a recent Lindsay Davis novel (I'm a fan too) and the odd illuminating snippet on American culture make it an entertaining read. John Boardman, 234 East 19th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11226-5302, USA.

The White Cat is an experience. Life at John Wilman's pace, interspersed with features such as *What's In My Fridge?* (A new game for everyone to play), chess puzzles, book reviews and history articles. John is n a bit of a recruitment drive, looking for 3 names to fill the Diplomacy list. A recommended and eccentric zine. John Wilman, Flat 3, 7 Eden Street, Dundee, DD4 6HL.

Another zine not mentioned much, but still doing a sterling job, is *Bloodstock* from Mick Haytack, now up to issue 138. Slimmer than it used to be, it still has a good mix of different games (lists open for Acquire and Outpost). I particularly like the description of the George Hotel in Crawley, if only because I coincidentally had to spend a half day there recently. Definitely somewhere to be avoided. Crawley, that it. Mick Haytack, 43 Swanmore Road, Littleover, Derby, DE23 7SD.

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LETTERS

JEREMY TULLETT

I was intrigued by Toby Harris's letter. Am I the only person to have received a salacious flyer from him for a Surrey-based con in May? I've not seen anyone else mention it. Am I the victim of a hoax mailing? As the document contains pictures of several naked women, I am reluctant to forward the email lest I get accused of disseminating inappropriate material from the company email account.

SA Now you know Toby. He isn't the sort of person to do a wind-up like that, is he? What bothers me is that I didn't get one! Toby???

TOBY HARRIS

I spent New year at Duncan Adams place in Lowestoft. Great fun. There's no "Red Lion" in Lowestoft... it is the name of Dunx' house! Been there about 4 times now in the last couple of years (ever since seeing Ayshea, who turned up at MidCon a few years back) and it's always the same agenda: pub, gig (live music - usually Irish folk), games (settlers of course - his friends are all really good players), cheese (Duncan "grows his own" and it is STRONG!), gambling (cards with friends or on Dunx's own £150 jackpot fruit machine), breakfast (there's a local breakfast bar which serves a breakfast which I guarantee you - £10 backs my words if you want to take me up on it - would not be completely finished by Simon Hornby), and much more. The guy is a "big fish in a little town" and frankly the whole town knows and loves him. Funny really, but then he was always a happy soul deep down. Into stock car racing these days - sheesh, 2000cc of engine in a small frame ... they don't half shift. Had a go myself last summer in Gt Yarmouth stadium.

Point is this though ... you cannot go to Duncan's place without him mentioning the "Get Dunx" game of Settlers at ManorCon a few years back. Himself, myself, Nick Parish and Stretchy. The whole idea being to stop Duncan from winning the Settlers tournament (for what must have been the 29th year running, aside from the year that tosser Len George won it by duffing in a load of newbies. Nope, all credit to Duncan, unlike others he never chooses his "opposition" and would always welcome a challenge. So, Nick, Stretchy and myself all agreed to give Duncan a good "working over" and Duncan was happy to play ball. Would Len George do the same? No no no no no.... relatives of Danny Collman only need apply to play him ☺

So, the game is afoot and we're all well on our way but then Dunx pulls ahead and any one of Nick, Duncan or myself could win (whilst good ole Stretchy is still stuck with his two weedy shacks... all credit to the guy, he had built an extra piece of road by this stage - ha ha ha ha ha !!!) . The next one of us to take a turn would surely win... if (big IF) we got the right trade. Duncan spins Stretchy the old "it won't make me win" line, Stretchy falls for it (despite protests from the back bench), Duncan wins the game and Stretchy is rewarded by a bombardment of

rotten fruit (a.k.a. commodity cards) from Nick and myself. Duncan just will not forget this game, the tournament in question and his (rather weedy) trophy... which, I will add, he casually lends his open and beckoning arm to as he regales this proud tale in glee to his admiring group of Lowestoft buddies. And, in all fairness to these guys - they all play Settlers really well, but just cannot quite get to the level of Duncan who is, in my view, the best Settlers player there is.

SA And a good Dip player as well. Duncan is just so two-faced you have to admire him.

All I can do by way of retort (and you have to retort because Duncan is second only to me when it comes to gloating!!) is to remind him (in front of his admiring hippie friends) that the original Settlers game in the UK was German and then they brought out an English version. Soooooo, Duncan being Duncan, got in a game with myself, Cyrille Sevin and Pascal Montagna (two French ex-world champs at Dip) at ManorCon '97. So he says to Cyrille, wanting to make light conversation, "so, Cyrille, which version do you have in France ... the German or the English?" And Cyrille's fine response "We play ze French version"

Whatever ... it curtails Duncan's gloating a treat.

Thinking of Mark Stretch - fact of the matter is that no matter how old Stretchy gets, no matter how much or how little facial hair he grows on his upper lip, no matter how much body-building or weight training he does, no matter whether he smokes, drinks (alcohol, not barley water), shags women or gets arrested by a policeman ... he will ALWAYS have a "mummy's boy" aura about him. I guess the only way he can shake the image off is to win ManorCon (team or individual) through genuine reasons and gasps from the crowd. "And then, then you will be a man my son" kind of springs to mind.

Well, issue 1 of *Armistice* Day turned up and a solid start it was too. That said, I am surprised at you Stephen: I would have thought a guy with your experience and style of editing would have kicked off with more letters offering juicy gossip instead of the typical "welcome backs" from oldies and stuttering comments like "are you sure you know what you're doing?" Riveting! I guess the Dip hobby has turned a little flat. Either that or you're slipping - which I doubt. Whatever, I did find most of it a very good read, including the bit about that Jesus fellow being born 3 months premature.

SA Well, I decided that while I don't mind printing controversial stuff, I thought it prudent to edit your last letter a bit. I mean, they may be children reading this...

I do find some degree of amusement when you print up the stats on "Greatest Zine of All Time". I'd not argue with the results; they seem a pretty fair and orderly representation of the better zines of the era. The amusement is more that it rates *Smodnoc* higher than *Fungus*. It might have lasted a little longer and gotten a high zine-poll placing one year, but I don't think that made it a better zine.

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*SA Well, going on Zine Poll results alone really favours zines with longevity – often some of the most entertaining zines haven't fared well in the Zine Poll, as they may not have been good players zines – e.g. **Thing**. Zines like **Fungus** will never do well with a scoring system based on Top Ten Zine Poll results.*

I'm one of the unfortunates to have seen that Trivial Pursuit question ... asked of me in a game some 10 years back. The question was in the original set. I gave the answer Turkey and the friends I was playing (who all knew my fondness for the game) took some delight in saying I was wrong in that it was England. Your analysis, Stephen, is little more than you adding a space-filler to your zine by playing with some numbers. ☺ Don't get me wrong - they do hold some weight, but not as much weight as the fat kid at a Diplomacy convention. England is great when it has the 7s.c. combo of Den/Nwy/Swe/StP, and no northern Russian or German fleets... that leaves her 4 units to tackle the west with and three to hold Den/Nwy/StP. But that's hardly "defence" ... that's more of a "how to win" position. There are more back doors into England, and it's a whole lot easier to land a convoy onto the homeland, simple as that. No nerdy analysis or proof required. I guess the only real way of settling the dispute would be to get every recorded game (where info is available) and look at which country was eliminated the least ... to my mind that would be what "defence" means. Perhaps the answer is England (or France), but I doubt it.

No, what's happened here is that some Oxford / Cambridge fresher has not only signed up for the Dip Soc (way back in '85 or whenever *Triv* was made) but also a whole load of other societies too: "Real Lemon Barley Water Soc", "Spectacles & Acne Soc", "Skipping Soc", "Oxbridge Boat Race - Apply Here to be the Cox Soc", "Bamber Fan Club Soc"... "Who wants to help write a question for this all-new Trivial Pursuit Game Soc" etc. So, two days after playing as a newbie for his University in the Manorcon Team Tournament, our fresher's mind turns to Diplomacy to help finish off his contributory requirement to complete his 100 questions for the *Triv* game (for which he receives by way of payment a free voucher to try out the all new and exciting pineapple barley water, new to the Uni bar that week and already in danger of running dry). No doubt he was playing Turkey himself for the team (and his elimination created the paradigm that Turkey was a weak country to defend) whilst some other star of the era was playing England, under threat in the early days of the game, made a great recovery and hence the question was born.

So what we are looking for, Watson, is this: 1) The year that the *Triv* questions were written... and then go back to the prior ManorCon to search the results booklet. 2) Search for the two boards which have the Oxford & Cambridge Team's Turkey. One of these two games will have an eliminated Turkey and a strong finish for England.

I put it to you, that THAT's the guilty board where you will also find the author of this question for *Trivial Pursuit*.

Alternatively, Nick Parish could just own up now before ballistics return with the proof

Ok, time to do some work. As you can gather, I do miss editing ... but not enough to do anything about it !!

SA Yeah, that's what I said. What do you say Nick, did you do it?

NICK PARISH

I hope **Thick As A Brick** was not one of the albums on last issue's playlist that you regarded as embarrassing. Not their greatest album, but still damn fine stuff that beats **Westlife** (or whatever they're called) into a cocked hat.

*SA I even bought an S Club 7 CD the other day – for my six year old daughter, you understand... Still, I maintained my old fogey credentials by getting ELP's **Tarkus** at the same time (incidentally, one of the few albums to have had a Diplomacy zine named after it).*

BRENT MCKEE

The piece about ADSL is quite current around in this area. There is a big battle ongoing between the telephone companies, who offer ADSL as well as dial-up service, and the cable companies who offer their own high-speed service. They're both selling their system as fastest by claiming that the other source is slow (which is a bit laughable when you're using a 33.6k modem that rarely goes faster than 24.0k). The thing is that they are both right and wrong. ADSL becomes slower the further you are from your local office, and cable modems do slow down as more people in an area go on line with them, but according to my brother who is taking a course in electronics, cable tends to be faster overall. Both are \$39.95 Canadian, which is about half of what you're paying (if I'm doing my exchange rates correctly).

SA Yes – ADSL is expensive here. The brand of ADSL BT is offering is 512Kbs download, with 256Kbs upload. In the UK that makes it about the same as cable for downloads, but far faster for uploads. No doubt it will get cheaper once competition gets going.

It seems that both you and I had the same toys when we were kids, although I'm slightly older than you are (44). I had the Johnny 7 OMA (One Man Army) gun with the bullets (that got lost) and the grenade launcher (although the plastic on my grenade got to such a state that the spring on the launcher would get inside the collar that it was supposed to butt up against). I also had the spy outfit too (in fact I still have the attaché case around here someplace but nothing else). Not only did it have the pistol/rifle (with two kinds of bullets and "silencer") and the camera, both of which could be used from within the case, but there was also a periscope that attached to the top of the gun.

SA Ah yes – the periscope. I seem to remember I played with that most. I only ever used the camera once – to take pictures of a local fire – I bet my father still has them somewhere. Odd that we had the same toys given you are four years older – either I was precocious or it took four years for them to get across the Atlantic.

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I didn't have metal soldiers though -- in fact I don't recall ever seeing them for sale around here -- we had those plastic ones like in "Toy Story". From a collector's point of view though I wish I had the Matchbox and Dinky Toy cars and trucks that I played with as a kid. Watching the "Antiques Roadshow" I am aware (and astonished) by how much some of those go for.

I got into Airfix figures years after you did (the brother of a friend owned a hobby shop where painting models was a major activity). There were several tricks with them. To flatten the base I'd use a knife or a screwdriver heated on the kitchen stove to melt off the bit at the bottom where it attached to the sprue. To paint them you first had to give them a bath in near boiling water to remove the oil that was used to make them easier to take from the mould. You could kit-bash them by heating the tip of a sewing needle and applying it to the joint that you wanted to move - I confess that I wasn't very good at that. On the other hand I did replace heads - I once turned a troop of the 7th Cavalry into a squad of German pseudo-Uhlans, but armed with sabres instead of lances.

SA Yes, I got as far as switching heads – turning some ordinary French Artillery into Old Guards units. Never tried the boiling water trick – perhaps, just as well.

As a Canadian I know, of course, about the significance of "Armistice Day". We call November 11th Remembrance Day over here. We commemorate it on the day complete with the silence even though stores have been opening over the past few years. For many years Newfoundland had its own Remembrance Day commemorating the attack that essentially wiped out the Newfoundland Regiment on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. The provincial government changed this a year or so ago (over numerous protests) since the first day of the Somme happens to have been July 1, 1916 and the rest of Canada celebrates that as Canada Day - the anniversary of the founding of the Dominion of Canada.

SA We call it Remembrance Day over here too. The Americans used to call it Armistice Day, but changed it to Veterans Day after World War II.

ALLAN STAGG

I also had - and still have - lots of the little Airfix miniature soldiers, as well as some of their slightly bigger Britain's cousins. Japanese and German Infantry, Commandos, US Marines, American Civil War (both sides) - all now mixed together in a box in the attic. I have passed over the plastic zoo and farm animals to my sons, but have never gotten round to passing over the toy soldiers. One other thing we came across recently were the miniature gardens that were made by Britains - after 17 years of marriage my wife's set and mine have finally been joined together!

The only thing from my childhood that I have retained an interest in, and nurtured, is my collection of tea and bubble gum cards. Again, the prices for these are now quite staggering.

SA I remember having a complete collection of Thunderbirds bubblegum cards – Freddie would love those now.

BRUCE EDWARDS

I have only just (March 2000, I think) discovered this section of the hobby after Alex Bardy wrote an article in *Flagship* and I'm currently playing games in *BUM* and *Cut & Thrust*. I've been in play-by-mail games for a number of years (too many to count) and it all started after leaving polytechnic and losing touch with most of the Chess & Wargames Society (mostly AD&D and Diplomacy – despite the title!).

I believe it was one of the KJC Games cards on a *White Dwarf* that started me off, and now, as finances and family (and shift work!) eat into my game time, I find myself drawn towards the slower turnaround of the amateur zines, especially as it is possible to play a number of different games in one zine, for the same price as one "professional" game. Indeed, some zines look almost professional themselves, the best I've seen so far being *For Whom The Die Rolls*.

SA I agree that FWTDR is a very impressive zine, though it is so perfect that I am convinced that Keith must be some sort of perfectionist control freak. I have never known any other editor include pre-printed return address labels with a zine. It is a formidable piece of work and, of its type, must be one of the best zines ever. Keith's old zine, Griffin was in many ways the 70's mimeo equivalent – but now the technology allows Keith to do all he couldn't do back then.

Buying a computer in July, and thus getting access to the Internet and email has also opened up the hobby. No more telephone calls at awkward times, just send an email... even to Australia or New Zealand! Awesome!

SA Yes, it has certainly broadened international contacts for me – hopefully I can get more international subscribers, maybe using PayPal⁴ to receive the subscriptions.

Christmas Presents took me back. I even have memories of Airfix HO-OO scale soldiers, including the Ancient Britons you put in the zine. Then I also had some of the 1:32 scale figures too, including the Japanese, Australians and Americans. My brother and I spent quite a few hours creating battles between them all. I guess it was because we had no GameBoys or Pokemon... digital satellite TV? Wazzat??

SA Looking at my two kids (Kate (6) and Freddie (4)), they have far more toys than I did at their age. I guess society is generally more prosperous now.

My favourite toys? Well, we both used to have a load of Corgi and Dinky cars, well vehicles, that we played with a lot, and took with us when we went to visit relatives. I even think the box is still in my mum's house. Scary! If only I'd kept the boxes though... It's quite incredible what some people will pay for them. Comics are also a source of amazement. I remember a whole host of comics that are

⁴ <http://www.paypal.com>

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no longer around, but if you'd kept the first issue or two with accompanying free gift... Let's not go there, or I'll be getting my cardie out. I'm still the right side of forty... just!

HOWARD BISHOP

I liked your feature on Airfix soldiers. I had quite a few of these, although I had more of the bigger 1:32 scale ones, which we used for a long-running Kelly's Heroes style skirmish wargaming / role-playing campaign. My favourite toy was *Subbuteo*, although we had to play on the floor, so most of the players got knelt on, glued, knelt on, glued etc. until they became torso and head sticking out of a golf ball size blob or araldite.

SA I too remember the sickening SNAP! when some poor full back was flattened. My father still has quite a few (10+) of my subbuteo teams, in their original boxes. Mainly the 1970 World Cup series if I recall. Surprisingly Subbuteo teams don't seem that collectable – around £5-£10 each in good condition with original box.

ELLIS SIMPSON

Your reminiscing about presents struck a chord with me. I, too had an enormous number of Airfix soldiers. They went to be replaced by vast unpainted metal armies that have, over the years, slowly been turned into cash or patiently waiting painted pieces now doing battle in my study every so often.

I remember Johnny Seven as being the ultimate toy - though I had to do without - until Secret Sam came along. If I remember correctly, that was the name of the attaché case you describe. My best friend had one and we played it to death.

SA Secret Sam! – I knew it was Secret something

The other toys I remember are *Action Man* and *Subbuteo*. And comics and comic annuals play a large part in my reminiscing: Lion, Tiger, Hotspur, Victor and my all time favourite, Batman.

SA My father still has my Action Men – including the Action Man spaceman and Apollo spacecraft produced to cash in on the moon landings. It is noticeable how modern Action Men – and I think this goes for toys generally – are made to a lower specification these days. No doubt Freddie will enjoy inheriting my WWII Action Men – they don't do historical uniforms anymore, just silly fantasy stuff.

Although the mention of these delights brings back pleasant memories I have no intention of ever buying them. (I can understand people wanting to, though, as the physical possession may bring back enough youthful memories to turn back the clock even if it is only temporary.) Another reason is that, as I grew up, I replaced these hobbies with boardgaming. It has been my main interest for over 25 years. That amount of gaming is reflected in a pretty good collection. Some waiting for me to retire so I can play them!

SA I've just been doing the opposite and having a clearout. This weekend I put 24 items up on ebay – 10 issues of various 70's pop magazines and 14 games. Within 24 hours 9 had reached the reserve price, so looks like I'll at least be getting some cash for getting rid of them. Esme reckoned I should sell all my "old junk" and put the money towards a new PC.

NEIL HOPKINS

Thanks for the copy of *Armistice Day* - it made me feel quite nostalgic for the good old days of play-by-mail. I currently only see one other zine (*Pigbutton*) and I must admit that I have no idea what sort of shape the PBM hobby is in at the moment. I got back into playing diplomacy via the Diplomatic Pouch and the Bounced website and I think it will be interesting to compare and contrast Internet games with games in your zine. As far the content goes it was an interesting chatty read - ideal for those idle moments in the smallest room ☺.

SA The PBM hobby is not in good shape. It needs to find a new niche for itself.

You asked for comments on favorite toys - without any doubt, Lego is the toy for me. I don't have any of my original collection, but my kids both have collections that I raid from time to time. I have been drooling over the collectors edition lego Tie Fighter in *Toys 'R' Us* and wondering how to justify spending a hundred quid on it! There is something inherently satisfying about those little plastic blocks and the process of sorting through a heap trying to find the right piece for your model.

SA I always enjoyed lego, and had a lot of it, but it doesn't have the same nostalgic feel about it for me. That said, I am jealous of all the fancy bits and pieces they makes these days – didn't have all these little yellow people when I was growing up.

ALEX BARDY

The 'Happy Holidays' piece was mildly amusing, in a cathartic sense — it was definitely good reading, and it looks like you did your homework but how many people (esp. teenagers and children) actually give a shit about the religious (in)significance of Christmas? Our society has become so obsessed with the apparent value of possessions, and so completely immersed in media advertising and hype, that religion just doesn't get a look in anymore. Not that I myself am particularly religious, but that doesn't mean I approve of the way things are going — kids are so worried about keeping up with Jones Junior that the cost of the latest trendy 'must have' (in terms of money and the actual hard graft required to earn said dosh by put-upon parents) becomes completely immaterial. One year it's a mobile phone, the next a Playstation, the next a PC, then a car — where does it all stop!? I'll tell you where — it stops when parents start taking a more responsible approach, and start sticking up for themselves more. It's about time we returned to the days when children got a bloody good hiding now and again, and were taught to be grateful for what they have got, rather than constantly chasing what they haven't.

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SA Ever worried you are turning into your father? ☺

In a related matter (albeit loosely), I read something very interesting t'other day, and I'll broach the subject through your pages if I may. I quote: *"Fifteen years ago, if a boy stole apples from a farmer's field and he was chased by the farmer with a stick, there would be no action [taken against him]. Today, the youth would be charged with theft and probably trespassing, while the farmer would be charged with carrying an offensive weapon, using threatening words and behaviour, and probably assault too. This is why crime figures are spiralling out of control, not because young people are any worse... if you treat an impressionable young juvenile like a criminal, you will create a criminal."* Similarly, if a parent continually gives in to the whims and wants of their children, you create not only a whining spoilt brat, but another young adult that doesn't appreciate the value of money. At least, not until it's too late... Anyways, I'm not denouncing Christmas or the commercialisation thereof, just the parents that continually cave-in to their bloody demands — perhaps it's easy for me to say this, not having any children of my own yet, but I really hope that it's not too late to educate young children on the rights and wrongs of keeping up with the Joneses.

SA As a parent, the urge to make your child happy is something that you have to struggle with the need not to give in to silly whims. However, I must confess that I like "spoiling" my children!

You asked about favourite toys? I remember being a HUGE collector of matchbox cars, and had one of the biggest and finest collections in the whole of the flats where I lived as a toddler (about 16 blocks of 24 flats each). Unfortunately, a horrible episode as a child put paid to any ambitions I had of expanding the collection — I'll explain... I used to have one of those big trucks with pedals that you could sit in and ride on, and for some reason or other, my parents wouldn't let me ride it up and down the hallway of the house (being on the 3rd floor and having wooden floorboards might have had something to do with it). Anyway, being the cheeky little monkey I was, I got up in the middle of the night, sneaked my truck out of the cupboard, and proceeded to ride it through the house, albeit ever so quietly. Well, somehow I managed to run over our little kitten during my travels (he was called Lucky I think!), and he was found dead in the morning with a squished neck.

Understandably, I had to be punished, and thus my Dad took it upon himself to throw my entire collection of matchbox cars (and one of those big plastic garages) out of the house, and I wasn't even allowed to keep any back, not even from the newly-purchased ones! They were thrown into one of those big round metal roll-bins, much to the delight of all my 'mates' who were fighting amongst themselves for various makes and models as they raided the bins. Needless to say, I wasn't allowed to grab any for myself, and forbidden to have any more — thus ended my potentially glittering collection of matchbox motors. I think my attention turned to plastic farm animals shortly thereafter, followed closely by computer nerdery (!?) on a 4K black & white PET, remember them?

SA You'll have the animal rights fascists picketing your home if you're not careful. Shame about the cars...

JOHN WILMAN

I have read *Journey's End* so would have caught the reference, but I didn't think much of it and wouldn't go to see it. The best World War I thing in recent years was *The Monocled Mutineer*.

SA A good book. I am reading John Keegan's First World War at the moment.

My favourite toys as a child were a scythe and a felling axe. Does this make me unusual?

SA Yes. Downright weird.

JOHN BOARDMAN

Best wishes for the success of *Armistice Day*. The postal Diplomacy scene has shrunk considerably here in the past few years, and I see that the same is true in Great Britain, and possibly elsewhere in Europe as well. Last August I got a new 'zine from Timothy R. Haffey Sr., in California, who had in the middle 1970s published a 'zine called *The Diplomat*. He was out with a new 'zine called *Who Do You Trust?* and announced postal Diplomacy game openings in it.

At that same time I had opened in Graustark a new game, to which Conrad von Metzke gave the Boardman Number "2000D". This meant that it was only the fourth postal game to be opened in North America in 2000. Upon learning this, Haffey decided that the field had shrunk to the point where it would be very difficult for a new 'zine to start a new game, so he closed out *Who Do You Trust?* after its third issue.

SA That's a shame – I don't think this zine will go the same way, but you do have to put quite a bit of effort into getting subscribers. I don't think we have had a new Diplomacy zine in the UK for 2-3 years.

I am at present completely out of touch with postal Diplomacy 'zines in Europe, although I trade with several North American 'zines. I am therefore interested in trading *Graustark* for *Armistice Day*. If you could give me the addresses of a few of the better European 'zines, I would try to open trades with them as well. I can read German and French.

SA All the French and German zines I used to zine have folded in recent years. I am not aware of a single extant Diplomacy zine in Germany or France – anyone else know of one?

I concur with your doubts that 25 December could actually be the birthdate of Jesus, and your reasons why this date was chosen. We can be more specific if we recall that "shepherds watched their flocks by night. They do this only during the lambing season, which is late February and early March. This was the season of a triple conjunction of Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn, which took place in 6 BCE, and may have been the "Star of Bethlehem".

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Incidentally, note that the bible nowhere says *how many* "Wise Men" (*magoi*) followed that star.

SA I wonder where the Three Wise Men came from then – a deduction based around the fact that three gifts are mentioned?

JOHN COLLEDGE

I was interested to read your reply to Chris Martin, especially the "provided you appreciate the inherent differences" bit. I had heard some pretty grizzly tales from postal hobby members who had moved on to play by e-mail, but last year I reluctantly joined Brian Frew's Old Contemptibles team for the World E-Mail Championships. As it turned out, it wasn't too bad and I actually quite enjoyed it. The GM was a bit wet behind the ears but took reasonably kindly to gentle hints.

This year however I have been really unlucky. The GM is a Belgian by the name of Vincent Graux, who according to him, has been playing Dip for 16 years. The guy is clueless but what is worse, he takes any sort of suggestions that he might have made a mistake as a personal insult and kicks out with such venom it just staggers belief! Things have become so bad that one of the players has resigned. Unfortunately he is my neighbour and close ally, so things may be about to get even worse.

What really alarms me however, is the fact that having appealed to the TD, (who disappeared without trace for six weeks) about a unit that had been misquoted for two successive seasons, our beloved GM then sent in a counter appeal to the TMC after the new TD agreed with me. Guess what? They decided to overturn the TD's ruling, despite the fact that this subject is clearly covered in their own rules and has been accepted in the FtF and postal hobby for years.

So, a word of warning to anyone who might be thinking of moving to e-mail Diplomacy. Do not expect the same standards as you are probably used to in the postal and ftf scene, as I fear you will be disappointed, unless of course you are fortunate enough to use a site that has evolved from the postal scene in the first place, (Diplomacy 2000 being a fine example).

SA Well, you have to remember that there aren't many experienced GMs on the Internet – many games are played via Judges which do all the adjudication stuff, and as NMRs aren't allowed, there isn't even discretion over that sort of thing.

Mind you, this may suit some erstwhile would-be hobby legends with the initials TH but far be it from me to try to stir things up. No, no, perish the thought! And to think that I was prepared to sign my units over to said wannabe a riffraff while Denny was in hospital. Fortunately the TD's disappearance coincided with when I was most needed elsewhere so the other players in the game were saved having to put up with such a disillusioned old crock! I would have loved to see how Toby and Vincent Graux would have interacted though.

Speaking of riffraff, what is that chappie Parish on these days? Presumably the cold weather in Canada has rather

dulled his brain cells! He mentioned -20 degrees at one stage. No wonder he's not thinking straight!

SA Well he likes Jethro Tull... yes, I see what you mean.

I wonder if you are actually right in saying that zines have more of a sense of community about them than any web site. I suspect it is all down to the site owner. After all, you can visit a web site many times in a month and see changes in it. You can't do the same with a zine. I guess it's a bit like the difference between LPs and CDs. Flicking your CD out of its holder, just isn't the same as sliding an LP out of its sleeve. Ludites rule! OK?

SA From the point of view of the person doing the web site, you just don't get the feedback on the web. If I had put out Armistice Day No.1 on the web, I doubt I would have had a single email of comment.

Eek! Better get on with some work. Good luck with the zine. It's great to have you back. By the way, I have been banging my head against a brick wall, on behalf of our street, with the local Planning Department and Planning Sub-Committee over the past year so I'm afraid the odd outburst from you will seem quite tame by comparison! There's a challenge for you! Needless to say we have been wasting our time as these guys all stick together, despite the facts. I was considering legal action or going to the local press, but I am advised that I will do so without my head and probably a couple of other bits of my anatomy if I even think about it any more! This comes from someone who is recovering from a nephrectomy operation. Scary or what?

SA Even the hint of physical violence is enough to bring the unprincipled coward out in me. I'd forget it unless it is going to hit your pocket. You could always resort to anonymous letters, but I'd stay away from lawyers.

IAN COLEMAN

I was interested to see that you are starting up Armistice Day - I knew you wouldn't be able to keep from running a "proper" zine for long. I'm in a game of Machiavelli and a game of Dip at the moment but when I've finished I'll sign up for one of the variant games.

The reason I'm mailing you though is to ask a favour. I've recently started up an En Garde game called King & Cardinal - it is available at <http://www.thera.org.uk/engarde.htm> I have about 20 players at the moment but I'm looking for about 10 more so is there any chance in mentioning the site in one of your editorials, link or letters pages? It's a free game run via email and the web with 3-4 weekly turns. As a Diplomacy player myself I would say it's good therapy/respite from some "serious" Diplomacy - but can still get nasty enough to keep "Dip" players interested. If anyone is interested can they contact me on ian.coleman@ukgateway.net or have a look at the web site.

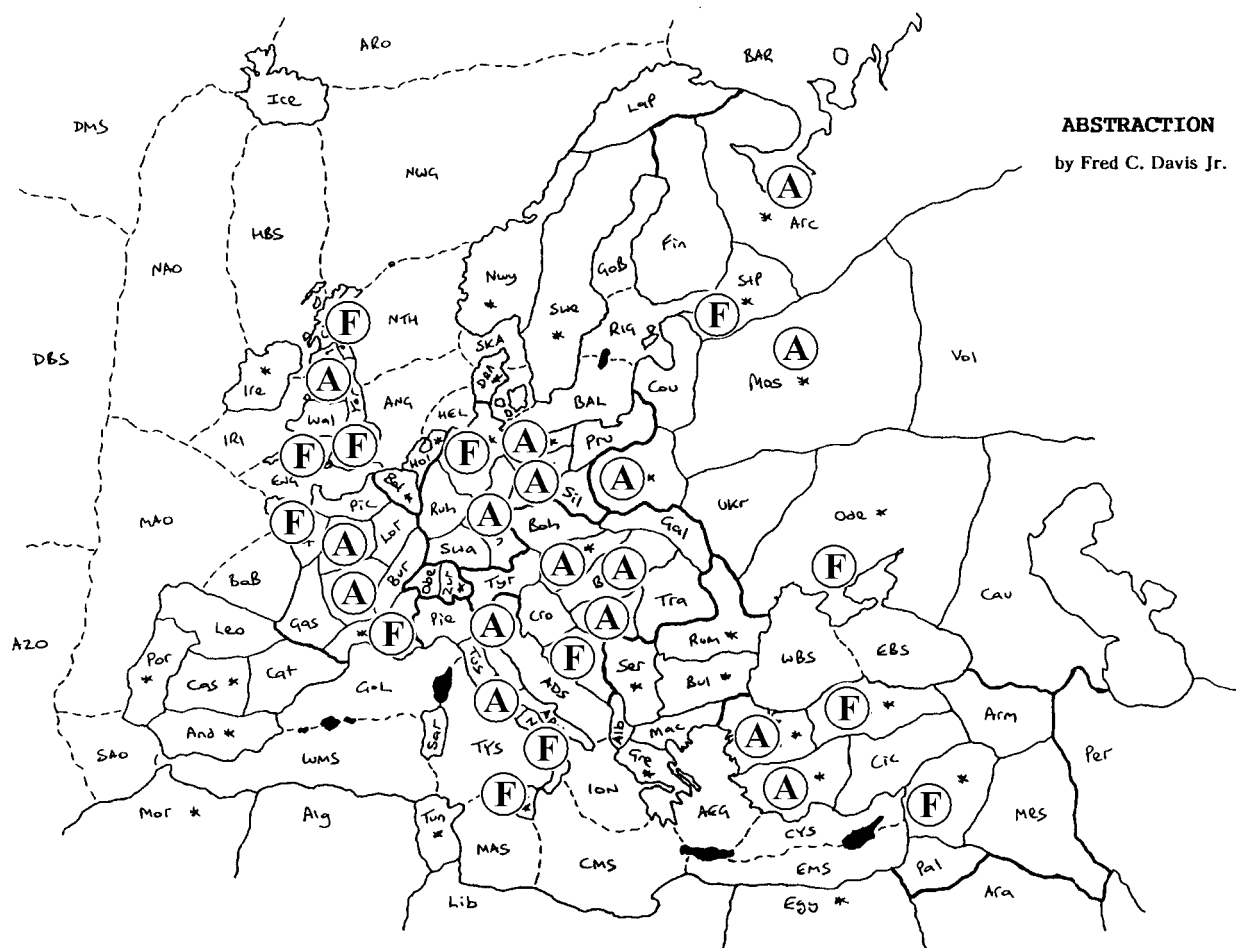
SA Consider it plugged.



ARMISTICE DAY 2

HOW DIFFERENT IS ABSTRACTION II?

BY STEPHEN AGAR



ABSTRACTION
by Fred C. Davis Jr.

SA: This review is based on a review of Abstraction I (written by Andrew Herd and published in Hannibal No.3 (December 1973). I have had to substantially re-write the original article, so much indeed that there isn't that much left! However, I thought the exercise was worth doing, if only to point out some of the interesting aspects of this variant to the players who are about to give it a go (and to those of us who are mere spectators).

The first thing which strikes me about *Abstraction* is that it is a game for stabbers. The long reach of the A/F rules, mean that an army can be convoyed over two spaces of water by a single fleet in one move. Think of it – on the second move of the game, France can land an army in Naples and be stood off by a Turkish army coming the other way, while Italy can put an army into Smyrna, Germany can convoy into London and Russia can convoy into Kiel. This is not a game for players who get stressed out easily.

The game itself is full of movement, it is a war of movement in fact. A/F rules, and the number of provinces, makes for much more mobility. There are 2½ provinces for each centre in *Abstraction*, whilst in regular *Diplomacy*, there is only just over 2 provinces per centre.

Play is rarely static and the obvious stalemate lines have been removed by making Switzerland passable.

The time limit which states that the game must finish in December 1918 (the equivalent to the end of 1909 in regular *Dip.*) is rather arbitrary, though I appreciate the neatness of the idea from a historical point of view. I would suggest players vote on whether they want this rule before any game begins.

For me, the fun of *Abstraction* is the freedom to try out new ideas and strategies that just wouldn't stack up in regular *Diplomacy*. It is a game which appears to reward those who are prepared to try out bold strategies – indeed, the A/F rules make it very difficult to play completely safe.

RUSSIA

Russia starts the game with two units in the north, which means she can threaten both Norway and Sweden on the second move. Alternatively Russia can use her two units to get a supported attack on Sweden – which will succeed.

In the South, Russia has been weakened, as she is surrounded by potentially hostile units – two German and three Austrian armies. A combined Austro-German assault

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in Russia is a real possibility now and something Russia will have to work against. Indeed, Austria is now in a position to force Galicia on the first move if she wants – which does reduce Russia's ability to withstand an early attack. The division of Trieste into two provinces, which removes the Trieste-Venice confrontation between Italy and Austria, means that it is much harder for Russia to launch a successful attack upon Austria; with the consequent increase in the defensive strength of Austria posing another threat to Russia in the South. Given that Turkey has also been strengthened, Russia needs to actively diplomate to make up for this weakening in her position. Unlike Regular Diplomacy, a move to Rumania on the first move will always succeed, while the division of the Black Sea in two opens up the possibility that the Russian and Turkish fleets may pass in the night and threaten each others centres simultaneously.

Russia has very little ability to make use of the A/F rules in the early stages of the game, though she could launch an attack on Kiel on the second move utilising A(Mos) and F(StP).

ENGLAND

England can establish herself in Scandinavia, although she will face opposition more quickly than in regular Diplomacy. To secure Norway against a Russian army she would need to use three units (A(Yor) boards F(ANG), A/F(ANG)-NTH, A/F(NTH) disembarks A(NTH)-Nwy S by F(NWG)). With the addition of Ireland, England can be fairly sure of two builds. However, she is vulnerable to an early attack before she has had an opportunity to station her fleets in the seas around her. The only change in the board around England, is the division of the North Sea into two provinces, which works to England's disadvantage since it is another route through which the other players can get to the English home supply centres.

The positioning of the fourth English home centre does not add to her defensive strength. Making Plymouth adjacent to the English Channel makes England even more vulnerable to a French attack than in the regular game. It means, that if France does choose to attack England by moving F(Bre)-ENG in July 1914, England will find it very difficult as covering her home centres could mean no builds at all.

The A/F rules mean that England's Western flank is also fairly weak. Take, for example, what would, in regular Diplomacy be a perfectly innocuous situation: a French F(MAO) and a French A(Por) - from there, France threatens Liverpool, Plymouth, London and Ireland.

GERMANY

The creation of another supply centre in Switzerland, means that Germany has plenty of supply centres to choose from and should get strong early builds.

Equipped with her builds, Germany is now in position to hold off any attack that she is likely to face in the early years. Burgundy, is no longer adjacent to a German home centre, thus adding to Germany's defensive strength. The centre in Switzerland, adds a new dimension to play in the South, making it not unlikely that Germany will turn her

attentions southwards in the early stages, something that it rarely seen in the regular game.

Overall, Germany seems to have been strengthened and her options broadened. Indeed, a more proactive alliance with Austria is a possibility, though the possibility of Austria attack Germany has also been increased. The better defensive position means that there is no longer the possibility of Germany getting three builds in the first year, attracting too much attention and being eliminated three years later. Unfortunately, the main weakness of Germany, her central position between France and Russia, has been increased, and could lead to problems for the German player in the later stages. That said, land powers have every reason to feel more secure than coastal powers in *Abstraction*, as they are not paranoid about A/F attacks coming out of the blue.

AUSTRIA

Everyone knows that Austria is not too good a country to play in the regular game. Well, in *Abstraction* Austria has been brought up to scratch! The division of Trieste into two provinces, a non-centre province being adjacent to Venice, removes the old Venice-Trieste border, which is the cause of so many troubles for Austria and Italy in the regular game. Freed from the problem of constantly looking over her shoulder at Trieste, Austria can now take care of herself against Russia and Turkey, and in the scramble for the Balkans. Indeed, in a reversal of the normal situation, Austria can even launch a doubly supported attack against Venice on the second move if she wants to.

Austria's only loss in the game, is that there is now the possibility of Germany attacking her in the early stages. The new centre in Zurich, may tend to get Germany embroiled in a southern war and could well work to Austria's disadvantage. However, the three armies she starts with gives Austria a big punch in the first few moves, especially if she chooses to use them together.

ITALY

Italy has a challenging position. Being in the middle of the Mediterranean means that she can move to a large number of different centres on the second move of the game, but finds it difficult to make supported attacks. Italy could go for centres as far afield as Morocco and Andalucia to Egypt and Damascus (while Tunis remains a guaranteed build or something which can be left for later).

A(Ven) now has to possibility of going for Zurich instead of attacking Austria, while being able to pass through Switzerland means that attacks westwards are a bit easier. This works both ways – meaning that Italy is potentially a lot harder to defend from land attacks than in regular Dip.

Deprived of the quick and dirty attack on Austria, Italy seems to be a Power who needs to be bold in her ideas, but may need an ally to really get off the ground. As France now starts the game with a F(Mar) a deal with the French is needed from the beginning.

The positioning of Italy's fourth centre is a little unfortunate. As it is an island, it is almost impossible to

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defend without maintaining a unit there, and with the A/F rules it is vulnerable to surprise attacks (as is Naples). Indeed, a Turkish A(Bul) and F(AEG) threatens both Sicily and Naples.

With the weakening of her defensive position, I would predict that Italy will either do well in Abstraction or be an early casualty – probably being more vulnerable to an early elimination than Austria. Perhaps this is a good thing – we all know the horrors of being a 4-centre Italy for the first six or seven games years, while the Powers around us grow large. Give me victory or an early death anytime.

FRANCE

As in the regular game, France is in a strong corner position. With a modicum of skill, and a little luck, France can quite easily get three builds in June 1914.

England is no longer a serious early threat to France's Iberian possessions (which amount to three in Abstraction, as opposed to two in regular) since the Mid-Atlantic has been split into two provinces. That situation is a little ironic as one would have expected the A/F rules to present a grave threat to France's possessions there.

As France can only reach two of the three Iberian neutrals in the first two moves, she has the advantage of an easy neutral in the Oct-Dec 1914 phase.

To summarise, France has probably benefited from the board changes in the SW corner of the map more than Italy and England. Indeed, the Gibraltar bottleneck is probably easier to hold now than in regular Dip.

TURKEY

Life as the Turk is much easier in this game than in regular Diplomacy. The division of the Black Sea into two provinces, provides some badly needed manoeuvring space. Also the new centre in Egypt, should mean that Turkey will often get two builds in September 1914 – which takes the pressure off finding an ally to help you get past the Bulgarian bottleneck.

The A/F rules make it a lot easier for Turkey to strike west against Italy and make conflict between Turkey and Italy very difficult to avoid.

The expanded area around Turkey gives her far more interesting strategic possibilities, and makes her far less likely to get stuck in the corner. This should make Turkey a far more interesting country to play, without over correcting for her weaknesses.

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THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN (REV.7)

BY DON HESSONG

The normal rules of the game of DIPLOMACY (Copyright Hasbro Inc.) apply, with the following additions, exceptions and clarifications.

Home Supply Centers and Starting Positions

Rome (red)	F Neapolis	A Roma	A Ravenna
Carthage (dark blue)	F Thapsus	A Cirta	A Carthage
Greece (green)	F Sparta	A Athens	A Macedonia
Persia (black)	F Sidon	A Antioch	A Damascus
Egypt (yellow)	F Alexandria	A Memphis	A Thebes

Note that on the map, home supply centers are designated by a dot with a circle around it, whereas supply centers which start the game unowned, are designated by a plain dot. As in the normal rules, a power may build new units only in its home supply centers.

Victory Criteria: 18 supply centers.

Move Dates and Adjustments: As in the normal rules, each turn alternates between Spring and Fall, starting the game on a Spring turn, with adjustments being made after a Fall turn. Each successive Spring the year increases by one. The game's first year is 01 AD.

Impassable Spaces: Any areas that are not named on the board are not passable. The Atlantic Ocean can not be occupied by any units.

Islands: Islands are distinct spaces. An island may be occupied by an army or a fleet. Each island has one continuous coast, therefore a fleet on an island may move to any space adjacent to it. For example, a fleet could move from the Egyptian Sea to Crete in one turn, and then move to the Aegean Sea in the next turn.

Movement Across Narrow Straits: Arrows on the board indicate two adjacent land spaces. An army may move from one space to the other in one turn without being convoyed. Because they are adjacent, fleets may also move from one space to the other in one turn.

Athens: Athens has two coasts (east and west). When Greece builds a fleet in Athens, the player must designate which coast the fleet is being built on. An order for a fleet in Sparta moving to Athens must designate which coast it is moving to.

Byzantium: Byzantium is one space which straddles a waterway. The waterway allows movement of a fleet in Byzantium to any adjacent coastal space or sea space. The waterway does not impede the movement of an army through Byzantium. And it is a supply center. In other words, it works just like Constantinople in the standard game.

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Baleares:

Baleares is a single space which consists of the islands and the water around them. Since it contains both land and water, it can be occupied by a fleet or an army. However, it is still considered one single space and can only be occupied by one unit at a time. Although an army can occupy Baleares, it can not move there directly from the mainland spaces since the islands are too far from the coast. For an army to enter or leave Baleares, it would have to be convoyed by a fleet in the Berber Sea or the Ligurian Sea. Since Baleares consists mostly of water, it is considered a sea space for the purposes of convoys, therefore a fleet occupying Baleares may be used to convoy an army using the normal convoy rules. Baleares is a supply center.

Four-way Intersection in the High Seas:

In the middle of the board there is an area where four sea spaces come together at one point. They are the Ausonian Sea, Messenian Sea, Gulf of Tacape and Libyan Sea. All four of these spaces are adjacent to each of the other three at that point. Therefore, a fleet in one of these spaces may move to any of the other three.

Also, by virtue of the expanse of the open seas, fleets can pass each other in a criss-cross fashion without impeding each others' movement. For example, a Roman fleet could move from the Ausonian Sea to the Libyan Sea and a Greek fleet could move from the Messenian Sea to the Gulf of Tacape on the same turn and both of these moves would be allowed. Note that this criss-crossing is not the same as two units exchanging places. For example, if a Roman fleet tried to move from the Ausonian Sea to the Libyan Sea and an Egyptian fleet tried to move from the Libyan Sea to the Ausonian Sea on the same turn, these moves would not be allowed due to the normal rules.

The Nile River and Canal: The Nile River acts as the boundary between the spaces on its east and west banks. The river is not a space on the board. It can not be occupied by any units. However, it is considered to be navigable. Therefore, a fleet may move between spaces that are adjacent along the river. For example, Sinai to Thebes, Thebes to Memphis, Memphis to Alexandria would all be legal moves for a fleet. Memphis to Cyrene would not be a legal move for a fleet. Egypt can build fleets in any of its home supply centers. Armies can freely move across the Nile River. There is a canal that connects the Nile River to the Reed Sea. It acts as the boundary between Sinai and Thebes. It is also navigable and therefore allows fleet movement between Sinai, Thebes and Reed Sea. Alexandria is not adjacent to Reed Sea. Notice that due to the various waterways and coasts that Sinai and Thebes each have one continuous, uninterrupted coast.

There actually is much precedence for a canal connecting the Nile River to Reed Sea in ancient history. I was surprised to learn this and found it fascinating. See Pharaonic Egypt: Canals and Ancient Economies. (This second article is long and does not deal with the canal directly. Search for the word "canal" using your browser's find command.)

The Nile River Delta: The Nile River Delta is not a distinct space on the board. It can not be occupied by any units. There are four spaces which are in contact with the delta. They are Alexandria, Thebes, Sinai and the Gulf of Pelusium. All four of these spaces are considered to be adjacent to each of the other three by virtue of the multiple water channels in the delta. This provides increased flexibility concerning the movement of fleets. A fleet in any of these four spaces may move to any of the other three. The delta does not impede the movement of armies. An army in any of the three land spaces in contact with the delta, may move to either of the other two.

The key to remember is that Thebes is always adjacent to the Gulf of Pelusium AND Alexandria is always adjacent to Sinai (in addition to the obvious adjacencies). For example, a fleet could move from Thebes to the Gulf of Pelusium and, on the same turn, an army or a fleet, could move from Alexandria to Sinai.

Convoy Clarifications: As in the normal rules, no fleet in a land space can convoy armies. This includes any coastal space, island, Byzantium and land spaces adjacent to the Nile River or the delta. Baleares is considered primarily a sea space, therefore a fleet occupying it may be used to convoy an army using the normal convoy rules.

Abbreviations for Ancient Med Names:

For almost every space on the board, the first three letters of the name are used for its abbreviation. This includes spaces which have two words in the name. So the Egyptian Sea is Egy and the Cilician Strait is Cil. None of the letters in the words "sea" or "strait" are used. However, names that have three words in them use the first letter of each of the three words. So the Gulf of Pelusium is GoP. There are only a few exceptions to these guidelines due to redundancies. The following is a complete list of the exceptions to the "use the first three letters" rule.

Gulf of Pelusium = GoP ; Gulf of Syrtis = GoS ; Gulf of Tacape = GoT ; Sardinia = Sad ; Sarmatia = Sam ; Sinai = Sii ; Sinope = Sip ; Tyre = Tye ; Tyrrhenean Sea = Tyn

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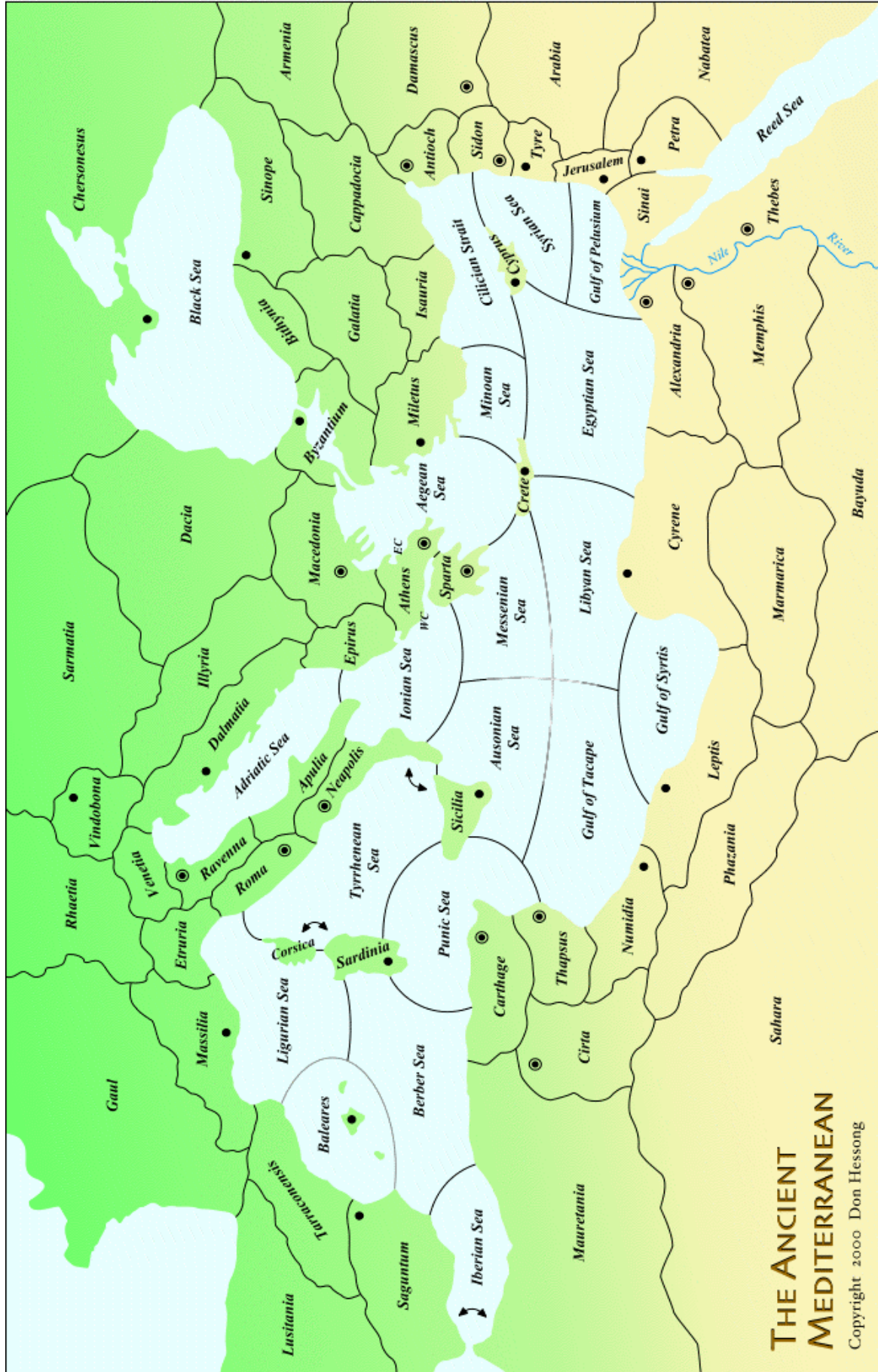
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MONS REGULAR DIPLOMACY

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Gentlemen – I'm sure you all know the rules etc., but House Rules are enclosed. Please note the rule regarding Anarchy. If any player NMR's for two moves in succession his units will be placed in anarchy according to the "Retreat Home" rule. What this means is that immediately after the move in which a power goes into anarchy, I will remove all that Power's units and replace them with armies standing in all unoccupied supply centres owned by that Power. The aim of this rule is to minimise the advantage a dropout gives to adjacent players – I believe it is the fairest outcome possible.

THE BATTLE OF MONS

The British Expeditionary Force arrived in France on 14th August, 1914. On the way to meet the French Army at Charleroi, the 70,000 strong BEF met the advancing German Army at Mons. The British Commander Sir John French, deployed the British infantry corps, under the leadership of Sir Douglas Haig, east and west of Mons on a 40km front. General Edmund Allenby and the cavalry division was kept in reserve.

To stop the advancing Germans, orders were given to a group of Royal Fusiliers to destroy the bridges over the Mons-Conde Canal. The men came under heavy German fire and during the operation, five men, including Private Sidney Godley, Captain Theodore Wright and Corporal Charles Jarvis, won the Victoria Cross.

On the morning of 23rd August, General Alexander von Kluck and his 150,000 soldiers attacked the British positions. Although the German First Army suffered heavy losses from British rifle fire, Sir John French was forced to instruct his outnumbered forces to retreat. French favoured a withdrawal to the coast but the British war minister, Lord Kitchener, ordered the British Expeditionary Force to retreat to the River Marne.

TANNENBURG ABSTRACTION II

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Apologies to Tim Deacon who was the 8th name on the list. Sorry Tim. House Rules enclosed. Please see the rule on Anarchy mentioned under *Mons* above. Also note that the map published last issue should have had a SC in Archangel.

THE BATTLE OF TANNENBURG

General Alexander Samsonov was given command of the Russian Second Army for the invasion of East Prussia. He advanced slowly into the south western corner of the province with the intention of linking up with General Paul von Rennenkampf advancing from the north east.

The commander of the German Eighth Army, General Maximilian Prittwitz, was dismissed for ordering the retreat when faced with the Russian Second Army. General Paul von Hindenburg and General Erich Ludendorff were sent forward to meet Samsonov's advancing troops. They made contact on 22nd August and for six days the Russians, with their superior numbers, had a few successes. However, by 29th August, Samsonov's Second Army was surrounded.

General Alexander Samsonov attempted to retreat but now in a German cordon, most of his troops were slaughtered or captured. Only 10,000 of the 150,000 Russian soldiers managed to escape. Shocked by the disastrous outcome of the battle, Samsonov committed suicide. The Germans, who lost 20,000 men in the battle, were able to take over 92,000 Russian prisoners. In Britain, all news of the Russian defeat at Tannenberg was kept from the public.

DEADLINE

FRIDAY 23RD MARCH 2001

ARMISTICE DAY 2

BACK PAGE

FORTHCOMING UK CONS

MasterCon North

MasterCon North will be held on Friday 2nd- Sunday 4th March 2001 (hosting the 2001 UK Masters Diplomacy Championship) at The Danum Hotel, High Street, DONCASTER. To register write to [Shaun Derrick](mailto:Shaun.Derrick@mastercon.org.uk), 313 Woodway Lane, Walsgrave, Coventry CV2 2AP and enclose £8.00 per person payable in advance or £10 on the door. Free to overseas residents. Please make cheques payable to "S. Derrick" For details see <http://www.mastercon.org.uk>

BayCon

Baycon 2001 will be held at the Comfort Inn, Kennford, Near Exeter from 1.00pm Thursday 19th April to 3.00pm Sunday 22nd April 2001 (the weekend after Easter). Bed & Breakfast accommodation will cost £25 per person per night in a shared room or £38.50 per night in a single room. There is a convention fee of £12.50 per person, which is payable in advance (£6 for children under 16; children under 5 free). Accommodation should be paid for at the hotel on departure. Hotel accommodation must be confirmed at least 6 weeks in advance (by Thursday 8th March) to guarantee a room. Currently we have booked the whole hotel but we will have to release any rooms that are not filled after the six week deadline. Send your requirements and registration fee to Rob Chapman, PO Box 98, Paignton, Devon TQ3 2YJ (cheques payable to Baycon), or email: rob@downbeat.demon.co.uk for more details or information.

ManorCon XIX

20th –23rd July 2001 at Chamberlain Hall, Birmingham University. One Day Registration - £6 before 31st May, or £8 from 1st June Full Weekend Registration - £12 before 31st May, or £20 from 1st June. Accommodation - £21.50 per night for a single room. £20 per person per night for a twin room £28 per night for a single en-suite room. To book, please return this form to Neil Duncan, MANORCON, 25 Sarum Hill, Basingstoke, Hants RG21 8SS UK. Cheques should be made payable to "The Universities Diplomacy Tournament".

WAITING LISTS

2 Week Deadlines – Email Games

Regular Diplomacy: GM: Stephen Agar. Apply to me with country preference. Jimmy Cowie, John Boocock, Bob Pitman. 4 needed.

Blood & Iron (Rules in issue 1): GM: Dylan O'Donnell. John Boocock. 4 wanted.

4 week Deadlines – Postal/Email Games

Regular Diplomacy: Howard Bishop, Neil Hopkins, Ellis Simpson, Mike Dommett, Bruce Edwards. Only 2 needed!

Gunboat Diplomacy: GM: Stephen Agar. 6 on list – only 1 needed! Apply to me with country preference.

Abstraction II: Tim Deacon, Mike Dommett, Bruce Edwards – another 4 and we can have a second game!

The Ancient Mediterranean: GM: Stephen Agar. Rules inside, 5 needed.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Dylan O'Donnell to 118 Basing Way, Finchley, London, N3 3DA
Nick Parish, 1a Wilna Road, Earlsfield, London, SW18 3AY

DEADLINE

FRIDAY 23RD MARCH 2001

Playlist for this issue: Genesis – A Trick of the Tail; Cumbawamba – English Rebel Songs 1381-1914; ELP – Tarkus; Mary Margaret O'Hara – Miss America; REM – Automatic For The People; Ron Sexsmith - Ron Sexsmith; Manic Street Preachers – The Holy Bible; Peter Hammill – Skin; Kirsty MacColl – Titanic Days; Kirsty MacColl – What Do Pretty Girls Do?; Alan Price – Performing Price

A Diplomacy zine from Stephen Agar, 47 Preston Drove, BRIGHTON, BN1 6LA.
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