

# God Save The Zine



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# Contents

Intro	Page 2	Golden Years	Page 30
A Page of Zines	Page 3	It's No Game	Page 31
Letters	Page 4	Kooks	Page 32
Black Hole Dip Endgame	Page 11	Lazarus	Page 33
UK NDC Interview with Bradley	Page 14	ManEater	Page 34
The Grace System	Page 15	Jean Genie	Page 34
Avoiding Stabs 101	Page 18	Moonage Daydream	Page 36
Star Wars: Order 66	Page 21	Sopwith	Page 37
The 1971 Rulebook	Page 25	Bingo	Page 38
		New Gamestart	Page 39
		The UK Zine Poll	Page 40

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## Intro

Last weekend was the National Diplomacy Championship in Warrington - indeed, the cover picture of this issue shows Dan Lester weaving his spells over Theo Fox and Brian Frew in the first round.

The Warrington Geek Retreat proved to be a great venue again - they gave up about half of their space to us and provided food and drinks throughout the weekend. I'm a sucker for cute animals, so I particularly liked the shop French Bulldog, called Hazel.



The main reason I go to Diplomacy get-togethers is to meet people and socialise. The NDC did not disappoint in that respect, we enjoyed a meal with about 30 of us on the Friday evening and enjoyed many other trips to the Barley Mow. I really recommend that everyone tries to play a face-to-face game occasionally, just to meet people with whom you share a common interest. If I was a better player, I might obsessively note the scoring systems and take Tournaments very seriously indeed, but, like most people, I don't. That's is

partly why I sat out on the Friday and Sunday, as Bradley had slightly too many people and when that happens not everyone can play.

Bradley did an excellent job as organiser and Tournament Director for which he deserves a lot of kudos and many thanks. Incredibly, Dan Lester managed to repeat his victory from last year and thus became the first person to win the NDC twice in a row and also the first person to win the NDC three times. There's an interview with Bradley and the full results later in this issue.

While I was at the NDC I got chatting to Chris Woolgar about variants and Chris mentioned that he had created what we both believe to be the first Star Wars Diplomacy variant. You'll find it inside. It is quite a step change away from the regular game in that it is played by three teams of two players, but only one player can win, it has carriers and fighters (rather than armies and fleets) and carriers can move to anywhere on the board. I am opening a list to see if we can find six Star Wars fans.

Chris's variant put me in mind of 4000AD, which I really enjoyed as a teenager. Perhaps the game mechanics of 4000AD (3D board, hyperspace) could be adapted to make a SF Diplomacy variant? I will have to give that some thought.

Most of you will remember the **Diplomatic Pouch**, the website/zine that used to be main hobby institution on the Internet. There was a lot of good stuff in the **DP** which deserves to be remembered, so this issue I have reprinted an old article by Simon Szykman on how not to get stabbed. I remember Simon as a keen collector of old Diplomacy sets - anyone know where he is these days?

Attached to this issue is a short supplement containing a progress report on the Intimate Diplomacy Tournament, Man-Eater maps and more Bingo info.

# A Page Of Zines

Alex Richardson's *Obsidian* remains my overall favourite zine and issue 318 was no exception. I think the reason I like this zine so much is because Alex's personality comes through and he seems like such a likeable bloke. He has a few different Railway Rivals games on offer, so if you fancy playing RR instead of Diplomacy, this could be the place. In this issue Alex reports that one-time *GSTZ* player Simon Langley-Evans is about to publish his first novel, *Love and Anger*, a crime story, next month. Check out Amazon.

While I am talking about *Obsidian*, the previous issue (317) had a particularly fascinating article on the interrelationship between the postal Diplomacy hobby and its role in the creation of D&D in 1974. You can get recent issues of *Obsidian* from the UK Diplomacy Archive if you want to check them out. My introduction to D&D was playing it at Ian Waugh's house (along with the likes of Willy Haughan, Henry Olsen, Tony Hetherington, Richard Gooch and Ray Gale) in 1978 - so there was clearly an overlap with the postal games community.

Alex is also the custodian of the UK Games Zine Poll. This year he has opened the Poll up to non-UK zines with a "foreign zines" category. I'm not sure when the last Runestone Poll for North American zines was held - the last results I seem to have were for 1997.

Great to see that *Damn The Consequences* is still doing well despite Brendan's move to Chicago. Issue 224 completely confirmed my belief that the USA is (surprisingly) a bureaucratic nightmare. Brendan has a 5-page description of how he obtained his Ohio driving licence. And I used to think France was bad. The new PDF format suits *DtC* as it allows Brendan to include far more photographs to illustrate his various travelogues. A lovely zine.

*Cheesecake* is always endearingly confusing, putting the game reports at the front and back of the zine, with the editorial and chat somewhere in the middle. In issue 441 Andy discusses the trials and tribulations of adjudicating Diplomacy games and how easy it is to make mistakes. My most common error is to forget to update the Season in the game title - because I create the zine from an edited copy

of the previous issue. The other main problems are order changes or multiple sets of orders - it is so easy to use the wrong ones, especially if one email has orders for multiple games. Escape from Cheesecake Island finished this issue - I must confess I didn't give the game the attention it deserved, particularly after I was thrown overboard. Sorry, Andy.

*Dane's Games* is a HTML webpage-based zine, originally part of *Cut & Thrust*. Issue 255 had touching obituaries for Jeff Edmunds and Chris Dawe, both of whom we lost to cancer. Very sad, they will both be much missed. Dane is brilliant at keeping an up-to-date list of UK games cons and existing zines. There's also a thriving letter column and a long list of different games available. Perhaps not the most visually appealing zine, but I like the old school feel.

Like *Dane's Games*, *S.O.B.* is another webpage-based zine. It is easy to miss the Zine completely if you are not careful, as it is just a single one-word link on the homepage. I suppose the zine is what in the old days we would have called an impressive multi-games warehouse zine. Chris has multiple waiting lists and the zine covers a wide range of games. And he's only 1 short for a game of Downfall XIII.

*back of the envelope* 51 from Tom Howell is always welcome. Buried in the letter column is that the north American zine-based Diplomacy hobby has only had 16 game starts in the last 10 years. How the mighty have fallen. I wonder how many online games are being played these days across the various platforms? I suppose no one keeps count. A good zine for Railway Rivals as well as Diplomacy.

*Fury of the Northmen* is the last zine I regularly get as a paper only zine and it was wonderful to see issue 143 discuss the life of the late great Vivian Stanshall. I have been a fan of the Bonzos and Sir Henry since my youth and of course have all the LPs. Vivian was a comedy genius, he could be gross, and he could be intelligent and subtle. But he was never boring. Colin also continues the story of his 2024 American roadtrip, which he should really write up into a travel book and get published. Winner of the last two Zine Polls, can Colin make it three in a row?

Rather than include contact details many times over, I've set up a web page which lists all the zines I am aware of and has either sample issues or contact details. You can find it [HERE](#).

# Letters

## Pete Swanson

Thank you for scanning *Der Krieg* (with my subzine *Flashpoint*) into the archives. Perhaps some backstory will be of interest.

I met Graham Jeffery at school at the age of 13 and was introduced to the postal Diplomacy hobby and wargaming by him. The former stuck harder with me than the latter. *Der Krieg* developed from Graham's wargaming hobby and his following of Don Turnbull's *Albion*, a wargaming zine which started running Diplomacy games. Graham had a mimeo duplicator until we jointly bought a Gestetner duplicator which lived in my bedroom.

He and I were both accepted to read Mathematics at Jesus College, Cambridge (he got a scholarship, I think) in 1976. Joined by another schoolmate who read English (and now a Professor at UCL), it was very unusual for three people from the same school to be accepted into a single Cambridge college. Nevertheless, there we were at the alma mater of John Piggott, Andy Davidson and Geoff Corker.

Graham stuck with his subject, while I peeled off into reading Law (a story for another time). Graham went on to get his MBA from LBS, and founded a startup making business software for the nascent PC industry, ultimately unsuccessful. For a short time, his company rented offices in a building I was also in. We lost touch and he became a business consultant. He died very young in 2011 from a thrombosis. Andy Davidson was also at Graham's funeral.

*SA: That's very sad. My mother died at the age of 53 from a leg thrombosis that went to her heart. Graham must have been the original "schoolboy editor".*

Serving J D Vance: a singer/songwriter friend of mine (actually, a friend of my kids - she sang at my son's wedding), Dolly Mavies (<https://www.dollymavies.com>) made headlines (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c9vd7m mdd9yo>) by pulling out of a gig at a pub in August after learning that J D Vance would be there. She garnered much support, including from the pub who said they completely understood. The publicity didn't hurt her career much either! I am sure that she and her bandmates were very surprised by the positive and very public reaction.

## Mike Pollard

Interesting ethical question re serving people like JD Vance in restaurants. I'd go along with the section in the article that supports the individual's right (customers, staff and business entity) to eject or refuse to serve anyone. There are plenty of people who've been treated this way for all sorts of reasons - dress code, noise, hygiene - so I don't see why it can't be extended to people with "extreme" or "offensive" views. I wouldn't expect a Muslim waiter to serve Netanyahu, or a Black waiter to serve a KKK member. As (slightly noisy but well-behaved) teenagers we were often thrown out of country pubs by snooty owners because we didn't fit in with their posh local crowd.

But It can be argued both ways. If the whole point of your business is to make money out of serving people, most of whom you don't know, should you accept that there will always be customers you don't like for whatever reason? Many of them are bound to be in a certain demographic or social class, if they're able to afford fancy restaurant prices. Unfortunately, these sort of debates often end up with the right wingers shouting for their own right to free speech, no matter how offensive or inciteful, but they're not so keen on the other side doing it. Then, apparently, it's just woke. Rank hypocrisy.

*SA: Yes, it is a difficult call. As you say, it can cut both ways i.e. a white waiter who refuses to serve a Black Lives Matter activist, or a Jewish waiter who refuses to serve someone wearing a Plasticine Action T shirt? Do you remember the Asher's Bakery case - where a Northern Ireland bakery refused to make a "Support Gay Marriage" cake. The Supreme Court held that they had the right to refuse the customer's order, overturning the Court of Appeal.*

I loved the Plasticine Action T-shirt! But I broadly support Palestine Action and regard it as political cowardice and massive overkill to classify them as terrorists. The examples you give, like damage to property and people, can be dealt with quite adequately under pre-existing legislation. We're 2 years into the Gaza conflict and the UK is still supplying the Israeli government with arms, despite overwhelming evidence of genocide & corruption. So what are protesters meant to do when they're not heard?

As we know, today's terrorists are tomorrow's freedom fighters, e.g., the Suffragettes and Tolpuddle Martyrs. Conversely, maybe those who stormed the capitol building felt the same way? Everyone must make their own judgement

based on the information available and their own moral compass. But information today is so easily falsified and disseminated, usually by wealthy, vested interests. And many people get their information in silos, unaware of, or disinterested in, alternative views.

**SA:** *The Suffragettes are an interesting one. The hunger strikes and Emily Davison throwing herself under the King's Horse at the Derby have gone down in the public folk memory. But we seem to have totally forgotten that the Woman's Social and Political Union planted bombs, set houses on fire, sent letter bombs (indeed, they invented the letter bomb!), used acid as a weapon, bombed commuter trains (with bombs containing nuts and bolts as shrapnel to inflict maximum casualties (another suffragette invention)) and attempted assassinations. They even bombed a theatre, setting it on fire, mid-way through a performance. Overall, at least 4 people died and scores were injured. In 1913-14 there were over 300 such incidents.*

*Some have said that their focus was just on damaging property - though sending letter bombs and using shrapnel suggest otherwise and people did get hurt and killed. Private houses were targeted just because they were owned by a man - the reasoning being that as men had the vote, they were responsible for the actions of the government and thus they were legitimate targets. Both the suffragettes themselves and the government described it as a "terrorist" campaign, and it certainly sounds like terrorism to me. Interesting that this has all been generally forgotten and is rarely mentioned. If anyone is interested, read all about it at [Wikipedia](#).*

*All the Tolpuddle Martyrs were ever charged with was swearing a secret oath when they formed the "Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers". They were victims of a legal system that was intolerant of Trades Unions - though it is also true that they were pardoned two years later, so it didn't take that long.*

*A better example of terrorists who have come in from the cold may be the Nelson Mandela and the ANC, though the apartheid regime in South Africa was undoubtedly far, far worse.*

Personally, I abhor violence and have an in-built respect for the law. I've been on peaceful protest marches before, but I've no confidence that I'd be treated honestly or fairly by the police and courts if I attended one today. It appals me that some climate change protesters are still in prison today (and under a Labour government)

servicing longer sentences than the thugs who inflicted harm to people & property during the Southport riots.

**SA:** *I think if you calculate the economic damage done by closing the M25 for a few hours (not just to business, but also things like flights missed, hospital appointments missed, funerals missed, ambulances delayed etc etc) there is at least an argument to say that was more serious and anti-social than a bit of rioting that probably caused a fraction of the "damage". Of course, the solution would be to make people pay for the economic losses they cause to members of the public, but then you would need very deep pockets if you disrupt national transport infrastructure.*

*At the end of the day if you want deliberately to break the law in order to demonstrate a political position, then I think you have to accept accountability when/if the law is used against you. When the law itself is morally objectionable (as it was in South Africa) then breaking the objectionable law is clearly morally justified. But I'm not sure it justifies inflicting hurt on strangers. A difficult moral dilemma.*

### Toby Harris

Over the last 50 years or so, racism has gone from being tolerated to a criminal offence; and the BBC were surely one of the worst offenders! Similarly, sexual misconduct has gone from tolerance to a criminal offence. In this case, James Bond 007 was one of the worst offenders (*Thunderball* is cringeworthy).

**SA:** *Arguably, Goldfinger is even worse... [Check this out!](#)*

Drunken drivers were told by police to "drive home safely" rather than being arrested on the spot. And cannabis smokers have skipped between being tolerated to being branded criminals.



Being gay was once illegal, slowly changing in public attitude (via TV programs like Black Adder commenting “*why should I care – it just leaves all the more rampant totty for us real men*”) to what we have today as a protected characteristic within the democratic world. Disability discrimination has changed massively too. The list goes on.

The T-shirt in support of Plasticine Action is a work of genius. Standing up for the rights of Nick Park, creator of *Wallace & Gromit*, and other plasticine model-makers gets my vote.

Regarding Palestine, I feel qualified only to comment that the lack of basic human rights (food & water, the right not to be killed etc) is despicable. But if the UK Government has made support of Palestine Action a criminal offence, then I could not join any public protest.

Now here is the point: as you rightly stated, many or most of the UK’s public protestors in favour of Palestine Action are middle-aged. To be honest, many are of retirement age. And so, they may quite rightly take the view that they are hardly going to be dismissed by their employers if judged as “criminals”, when all they are doing is standing up for their beliefs. But I would urge these septuagenarians to think again. Such action (and a criminal conviction) could have a major impact on the rest of their lives. For example, when applying for a visa for their next cruise. Or in terms of insurance policies which require the policyholder to declare any criminal convictions.

We live in a world of ever-changing tolerance levels (and thankfully, most changes are for the better) with many countries ruled by megalomaniacs. Sadly though, the democratic world is not immune to the political pendulum swinging into extremes.

*SA: I think politics can go to extremes when the centre fails to meet the public’s expectations (whether or not those expectations are reasonable). The centre is not holding in the UK at the moment, or in much of the western world. Financial crises compounded by Covid have put paid to that. The fact that no politician has had the nerve to raise the basic level of income tax since 15<sup>th</sup> April 1975 (50 years ago!) is a big part of the problem. Interestingly, that tax rise was from 33% to 35% - since then the only way has been down. VAT hasn’t increased since 2011. Our politicians have competed with each other to say that they won’t tax us more, while taxing us a lot more through a myriad of little taxes here and there. No wonder people are cynical.*

### Ian Watters

I completely forgot about last month's deadline, so thank you for the reminder of this one.

In my defence, I was rather busy in August. For once, I was able to be in Edinburgh for the full main run of the Fringe and managed to see 217 different shows over 23 days. (There were also three duplicates and I went to five that didn't actually happen, for one reason or another and it wasn't possible to go to something else in the time slot.)

*SA: That sounds like a lot of fun, if rather exhausting. Over 9 shows a day!?!*

The sweet I could eat loads of were **Meltis Newberry Fruits**. One memorable time in the early 1990s the local Woolworths had a “two for the price of one” offer on them, and the 400g boxes had a free 200g box attached to them. That was 1.2kg of mostly flavoured sugar for something like three quid at the time. That lasted me two days.

I didn't do things like that very often, but when I did, I can just not eat much for a day or two afterwards, so it doesn't really affect my weight.

Sadly / fortunately, they're long gone as a thing. Someone bought the name and has done something “two colours in one sweet” like with it, but it's really, really not the same and one packet was more than enough.

*SA: I really miss the drink that was called Cresta. It was advertised by a cartoon bear using the slogan “It’s really frothy man”. Anyone else remember that?*



I always liked Mark Cavendish's reason for not drinking alcohol - given the diet plans pro cyclists are on, he'd rather have the calories via eating dessert.

*SA; I think I am the other way around.*

I can absolutely understand why people might leave New Zealand, particularly when young. There're loads of attractive things in the UK / Europe. What I find harder is why they wouldn't go back later.

*SA: I tend to agree. Even I have toyed with the idea of retiring to the North East - after all it is where I am from. The North East is where my "tribe" is.*

### Andy Lischett

As did you, I disagree with Richard Sharp's answers to #5 and #7 on his "What Kind of a GM are you, Anyway?", but I disagree with both of you on #6 (that is, with a 3-way battle among France, Italy and Russia, the GM accidentally reported an Italian unit in the wrong place and nobody noticed until after the next season had been adjudicated). Richard said that the *southern part of the season should be replayed*. Way wrong. Nothing should have been replayed.

I have a houserule that if the GM is not told of an error before that season is adjudicated, the error will stand.

A GM cannot decide, as Richard's did, that there are two separate and theatres that have no connection to each other. And the players cannot guarantee that their new orders would not be influenced by seeing each others original orders. Even the new orders down south may be influenced by the results of the not-replayed north. To replay any of the season would likely compound the error.

It was an unfortunate but unintentional mistake that not even Italy saw. The GM should apologize and everyone should accept the error as "the fog of war."

Besides, Diplomacy can be devious. It is possible that Italy or another player noticed the mistake earlier and decided NOT to tell the GM because they saw it as an advantage to themselves. Then, when the season didn't turn out as hoped, they could get another shot by telling the GM, "Hey, you goofed. Replay the season."

*SA: All good points. Certainly, in FtF I have always played that a mistake cannot be re-run after the next season is played. I will amend my House Rules accordingly.*



### Lindsay Jackson

Re. famous Hull residents, you omitted the controversial poet & librarian Phillip Larkin.

*SA: Yes, the author of the immortal lines:*

*"They fuck you up, your mum and dad.  
They may not mean to, but they do.  
They fill you with the faults they had  
And add some extra, just for you.*

*But they were fucked up in their turn  
By fools in old-style hats and coats,  
Who half the time were soppo-stern  
And half at one another's throats.*

*Man hands on misery to man.  
It deepens like a coastal shelf.  
Get out as early as you can,  
And don't have any kids yourself."*

Incidentally, I loved the "Plasticine Action" T-shirt item, and the old Steve Bell cartoon. I still have several books of those.

*SA: Steve Bell was truly excellent, shame he was sacked by **The Guardian** in 2023 for his portrayal of Netanyahu as Shylock.*

### Dane Maslen

Chris Tringham need not be impressed. I've only once suffered a 'headache' in order to escape from a group meal that was going to be ridiculously expensive as a result of being split N ways, and that was the occasion in Iceland that I described two issues ago. The one thing I did fail consider when making that escape was that the other members of the group would pay for our tour guide's meal, so alas I made no contribution towards thanking her. If I recall correctly, there were about ten of us in the group, so I should have paid about an extra 30%, which would have reduced what each other member of the group had to pay by about 1%.

*SA: Yes, that would have bothered me. I think I would be more likely to avoid a large meal due to my inherent shyness and difficulty in making small talk. Rebecca just says I'm anti-social.*

### Chris Tringham

A minimum spend per hour in a restaurant is a simple idea. I'm not sure whether it might be counter-productive (I've spent £100, I can stay here for another 20 minutes). I was having lunch in Dishoom recently and the waiter did tell us that we had 15 minutes left, though I'm not sure what they would have done if we had tried to stay beyond that.

Absolutely, the large group meal is a disaster waiting to happen when trying to settle the bill. Happened to me at Manorcon two years ago - luckily, I can't recall exactly what happened, though fortunately they didn't sell alcohol, so that helped. One of my pet hates is large numbers of poppadoms being "offered" by the waiter or even ordered by other people. Sure, you're hungry when you arrive, but have thought about how much a poppadom costs compared to a naan? Mad.

*SA: The meal for 30ish at the NDC was sorted out remarkably efficiently. Two waitresses just went round adding up what each individual had had and everyone paid individually. It sounds crazy, but they did it remarkably quickly.*

This probably won't help you, but I do find it interesting how people in the UK view property prices. You're probably familiar with the argument that a property is only worth what it's worth, and it's irrelevant what you paid for it. Also, no-one knows whether this is the bottom of the market, prices could stay at this level or continue to go down. But people are reluctant to sell at a loss, and it tends to bring the market to a halt. In Hong Kong it is normal for prices to be reduced in line with the market. Perhaps it's because it's unusual for people to borrow more than 70% of the purchase price.

I've never been faced with this dilemma - when I sold the flat I owned in Thornton Heath it was worth 50% more than I paid for it, though I remember checking the market price a few years earlier and being quite upset that it was worth less than I had paid it.

I suppose it depends on what you would do with the money if you do sell one of them: either pay down other loans or invest the money somewhere? Holding on to the property is either costing you money or depriving you of income, so unless the price is going to increase

significantly in a short time you might be better off selling. But I guess you know that!

*SA: All true, we would definitely be better off selling, but not at any price. We've already knocked almost 30% off from the original estimate. My worry is that things could be bad for many years yet - thanks to a poor economy and the likelihood of a disastrous Reform government. We could just hold on, but we will soon face Inheritance Tax issues as we become more decrepit.*

Of course, I have no recollection of your "feud" with Pete Sullivan...but I don't think most of those involved were bad people. Perhaps it depends a bit on the relative power of the people involved - Richard was clearly very influential at that time. As I've said before, it's possible I was a unfair to some editors back in the day, writing dismissive reviews of their best effort.

On the other hand, the publicity might actually have been good for Will Haven, and there were other "independent" zines and people who disagreed with Richard on one thing or another and so might have wanted to support someone he was criticizing?

*SA: I don't often re-read something I wrote over 30 years ago, but sometimes when I do, I cringe. Maybe some of the people currently posting on social media will feel similarly if they look back at their social media accounts in 2055.*

After *GTSZ* 28 I did start reading old issues of *Victor Ludorum* (which you had kindly updated) and *Dolchstoß* and maybe I'll write a follow-up to your article about the NGC when I have some time. It seems that DesConTent lost £300 for the NGC (equivalent to £2,350 today, yikes), not helped by spending £50 for a chemical toilet, and hiring tents can't have been cheap either.

Pete Birks was telling me about some sort of shambles at a Science Fiction Worldcon (that Nicholas Whyte had recounted on Facebook), and it seems that the organizers had attended previous large SF cons without fully understanding all the complexities and hard work involved. Maybe we are better off having the large boardgame cons being so well established - it means that new people can join the various committees and learn from people who've done it a few times previously.

Interesting that supermarkets in the US put healthy products on the perimeter, presumably because they generally have lower margins than junk foods. UK supermarkets used to put

confectionery next to the tills, leading to children picking them up, but that was outlawed. "Nudges" like that can have a big impact.

*SA: There is probably a lot of research on the optimum way to design customer routes through supermarkets and where to position the goods with the best margins on the shelves. All I know is that I hate it when our local supermarkets decide to reorganise their aisles and then I can't find anything.*

I do despair of the US when unhealthy food is almost the default, but with everything else that is happening there I just feel grateful that I don't live there, don't have to go there, and don't even know many people who do live there, so I can (try) to put it out of my mind.

*SA: To say nothing about guns...*

I believe you're right about that strange "Not for EU" designation, but what is a tub of "Seriously Strong Cheddar"? Oh, it's "Spreadable cheese made with 54% extra mature cheddar", the rest being water, Skimmed Milk Powder, Butter, Emulsifying Salts (E331, E452, E450), Milk Proteins, Pectin, and Potassium Sorbate. Luckily it's "expertly hand selected by Tesco's cheese graders in Southwest Scotland to bring its distinctive taste to elevate any occasion". Just wondering where the hands come into the expert selection. On the keyboard?

*SA: You shouldn't knock anything until you've tried it. 😊*

### **Pete Sullivan**

I think the letters between us in 1994 was primarily because you got me on a weak spot, putting me in the untenable position of having to defend Andy Bate as a member of the Manorcon committee. Neither I nor Iain Bowen had much time for him, but I felt somewhat bound by a sense of collective cabinet responsibility and loyalty to RJW. Why Richard gave the archives to Andy I still have no idea, but it all worked out and they ended up in responsible hands in the end.

*SA: Perhaps, but I over-reacted and was a bit of an arsehole.*

During my tenure as Orphan Games Re-houser, **Froggy** was an ongoing issue, as Andy was always saying it "would be out next week." After much discussion with Iain, I finally decided to move in and rehouse what I could, mainly the Diplomacy games. (One of the things that makes Dip re-housable is that there is no "hidden" information in the game - a bit like

chess.) I rang Steve Doubleday, but he made it clear that he and Richard Sharp wouldn't recognise the OGRE's version of the game as the official one, at which point it all became a bit pointless.

With the benefit of 30 years hindsight, I wonder if this was a hangover from the NGC / Independent mentality, in that if games didn't belong to the NGC. they must, like an independent game, be the exclusive property of the GM, who was free to do what he liked with them. I always took the view, both as OGRE and GM, that the game belonged to the players.

This is, of course, all far too long ago to matter anymore...

*SA: True, but the older I get, the more I enjoy reminiscing.*

### **James Hardy**

It was great to see you at the weekend. Bit of a "When is a Diplomacy convention not a Diplomacy convention?" scenario for me mind!

I had a friend in Torquay (still do, though he's in Exmouth now). He was a real ladies man and eventually he got caught out and ended up with a dose of the clap. On a visit to see him (I went down there a lot for long weekends in the late 80s early 90s) he had an appointment at Torbay Hospital, so I went along with him. The waiting room was large and well lit with big windows and had about half a dozen blokes in there chatting to each other, though all with magazines open on their lap which I found curious. Their real purpose soon became clear as every time a door opened the jovial inter-patient banter would abruptly cease and they'd all lift the magazines up in front of their faces until they knew who was entering. I found this both amusing and a bit OTT, but a few weeks later that opinion changed...

My friend, on a trip home to Liverpool, had an appointment at the Royal so again I went along out of curiosity. This was a rather different experience - the room was small, no windows just plasterboard walls, it was hot and stuffy and standing room only with everybody avoiding eye contact and keeping very much to themselves. Then the doors swung wide open like in a wild west saloon and in marched a woman dragging a sobbing girl along behind her who she thrust into the middle of the room and said menacingly, "Is he here?". The girl looked around the panic-stricken faces and shook her head, so the woman grabbed her by her hood and marched her out again. "I wonder what would have happened if she'd pointed

someone out?" I thought to myself as the rest of the room heaved a palpable sigh of relief.

Anyhoo, the appointment card for the Torbay appointment was just a plain postcard with the hospital name and "Genito-Urinary Department" (or something like that) printed on one side and the date and time added in biro underneath. At that time I worked in a print shop and thought "I can create those postcards dead easy, and on various coloured card too...". I don't know why I thought of it and I can't remember why I picked Toby as the target - presumably he'd been talking about this kinda stuff in *Smodnoc*?

And so I went into production, keeping the exact outlay of the Torbay card just changing the name of the town - everywhere from Carlisle to Crawley and Exeter to Edinburgh. On the reverse side I printed Toby's name and address. Posting them was easy, I travelled around the country a lot at that time (music and diplomacy were the drivers) so the idea was to post each card in the printed town so it should get franked (remember those?) as being from there for extra credibility. Each appointment was for the same date sometime in the future, but five minutes apart.

Going the extra mile, I remember on a train journey to London I'd prepared one for Milton Keynes Hospital and asked a random alighter (alightee?) to "pop this in a postbox for me please?". I also remember my mum went on a coach tour in America so I prepared one for each city on her itinerary (Denver, Las Vegas, San Fran etc) and she dutifully bought stamps and posted some of them for me. I gave some to others who went on holiday abroad too, mostly Spain.

Anyway, the crunch came at MidCon where I'd spotted Toby had a bag of games in the corner of the main room, so I slipped in an appointment card for MidCon Hospital. When he discovered it, I could see he looked shocked and confused and angry all at once. He headed for a con organiser (Monsieur Toolay I think) who made a very dry announcement over the PA about whether there was a doctor in the house and could he please speak to Mr Harris. I headed over to him and said I knew who put the card in his bag. "You saw who did it?" he asked excitedly. "No, but I know who did it" I replied and got a quizzical look. Then I said "It was me." At first there was a very confused look which turned to angry as the cogs in his head turned and for a few seconds I really thought he was going to thump me, but the frown then broke back into the usual cheeky grin (but no gold

tooth - that came years later) and he just hugged me. Awwwww!

He then produced all the cards he'd received out of the games bag with two elastic bands around them - and it was huge stack, inches deep! "OMG" I thought, "did I really send that many!". I wouldn't have blamed if he had thumped me but 30 years on, he's still talking to me, so I think he was ok with it in the end.

### **Toby Harris**

I fully support Niall's view on the Austria-Turkey alliance.

My best experiences of this A/T alliance came at Manorcon with Bob Kendrick, where we were equally happy playing either country. And when both countries get to 10 - 15 centres apiece (i.e., the alliance has crossed the stalemate line) and a prospective stab for the 18 is considered, from the experiences I've had it is clear that both Austria & Turkey have a relatively equal chance of gaining the upper hand. It really is a superb alliance model, favouring both countries equally.

I was gifted a copy of Richard Sharp's book "*The Game of Diplomacy*" in my youth and even back then considered it to be flawed in some of its arguments. Such as Turkey being the enemy of all.

There is no doubt Richard Sharp was one of the leading forefathers of Diplomacy, and for that he deserves oodles of respect. However, he was not a Diplomacy player I would consider ranking inside "*the World's top 50 of all time*" and so I never considered his book a set of gospels.

*SA: It would be great if you could write an article on who you consider to be the top 50 players of all time, and why!* 😊

Regards Richard's article on "*What Makes A Good Player?*", I would add a new paragraph: a good player is someone who can adapt to all modes of play, including postal, face-to-face, online (real-time) and by email. By contrast, Richard famously declared that anything other than postal Diplomacy was little more than a variant! So, to my mind his article is self-contradictory because he was not a fan of any Diplomacy other than postal play. But I have witnessed first-hand some super-talented Diplomacy players in all four of the above modes and can only conclude that face-to-face is the best (but not the only) way to play Diplomacy where the opportunity for laughter is greatest. But it can also be the worst mode of play for anyone having a bad or boring game.

In summary I had oodles of respect for Richard Sharp but just don't think he (or indeed any of us) got everything right every time.

*SA: I'm not even sure that Richard got it right most of the time, but he always had an opinion.*

### Martin Davis

This afternoon, I was just flicking through some old books, seeing what I could pass on to liberate a bit of space, when I stumbled across the fact that Winnie the Pooh is a centenarian! I promptly found a graphic to celebrate.



Winnie-the-Pooh at 100

And then my mind roved on. Could the inhabitants of the Hundred Acre Wood provide templates for styles of play in the Great Game? I thought further (while still sorting books!). Well, I've certainly supported a few Eyoers, gloomily decrying their chances while notching up the supply centres. And bouncy Tiggers, jumping into rash choices of alliance or stabs .without thinking through the consequences. Me? I'll confess to being a Piglet. I'm always grateful for a reassuring paw to check my feelings about the way the game is going. I don't want to flog this analogy to death, but it's given me some fun this evening. I hope that you enjoy it!

Oh, and I meant to write more fully about some of the issues raised in issue 29, but events have got in the way recently. The red paint job on the RAF aircraft was, I'm sure, direct action, intended to make the protester(s) feel pretty radical. Better than donating to a charity or writing to your MP.

However, two points about the action interest me. The first is the cost. £5 million to clean three noses? Come on! And more importantly, how were the protesters able to access the aircraft so easily? I'd have expected a higher level of security at a private flying club, never mind an RAF base at a time of international tension. I haven't seen any mention of a reprimand for a member of staff.

*SA: I think the substantial cost was because they also sprayed red paint into the engines, which means they need to be taken apart, pieces replaced etc. I agree that it should be a wake-up call with regard to the quality of security at a key military base. They shouldn't have been able to get close to any aircraft or buildings.*

*I do wonder if this isn't all about the power of labels. What if Palestine Action had just been proscribed as being a "organised criminal conspiracy" rather than "terrorist". No one could really have argued with that.*

Having heard the first three of the podcasts covering the rescue of a Royal Marine who'd been separated from his comrades and left behind during the assault on a Taliban command and control centre in Helmand Province in January 2007, I feel strongly that I should bring it to your attention. It's one of the most riveting broadcasts I've heard in a long time.

It's calmly told for the first time by the soldiers who were involved - all his colleagues volunteered! - and I defy anyone not to be stirred by their quiet loyalty to a comrade and determination to get him back. Brilliant!



BBC Sounds - The History Podcast - Available Episodes - [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk)

*SA: Yes, I have been listening to the podcast as well. Very sad that the soldier they went back to rescue was already dead, apparently from friendly fire in the original attack.*

### Brian Frew:

It was good to meet you at the weekend. I hope you did better than I did! Saturday morning was just vile for me when my Russia was stabbed by every one of England, Germany, Austria and Turkey in Autumn 1901. There was no coming back from that start! I could take no more and decided to retire hurt.

*SA: Great to meet you too and I didn't do very much better!*

# Everyone Says Hi! - Black Hole Dip II

Started GSTZ #5 (May 2023) - Finished GSTZ #27 (August 2025)

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	
AUSTRIA (John Tait)	3	4	4	3	2	1	0						OUT A06
ENGLAND (Christian Dreyer)	3	5	5	5	5	7	6	6	5	5	4	4	=1 <sup>st</sup>
FRANCE (Alexandre Marcondes)	3	5	5	5	4	1	1	1	0				Dropout S04
GERMANY (Kevin Wilson)	3	4	4	5	5	5	6	5	3	2	0		OUT A10
ITALY (Mog Firth)	3	4	5	6	7	7	6	7	7	7	9	10	=1 <sup>st</sup>
RUSSIA (Philip Murphy)	4	5	6	4	4	4	3	2	2	2	1	0	OUT A11
TURKEY (David Partridge)	3	4	4	4	4	6	7	7	9	9	10	8	=1 <sup>st</sup>
SCs left on the board		34	33	32	31	31	29	28	26	25	24	22	

The Black Holes appeared in the following spaces in the following order: BALTIC SEA (S01); Ukraine (A01); Marseilles (S02); AEGEAN SEA (A02); NORTH SEA (S03); Trieste (A03); Sweden (S04); Silesia (A04); TYRRHENIAN SEA (S05); GULF OF BOTHNIA (A05); Venice (S06); Edinburgh (A06); NORWEGIAN SEA (S07); St Petersburg (A07); Spain (S08); Naples (A08); Rumania (S09); EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN SEA (A09); Sevastopol (S10); ADRIATIC SEA (A10); Warsaw (S11); Smyrna (A11). In total 12 SCs disappeared

## Stephen Agar:

This was a beast of a game to GM. I think the randomness of the Black Holes is the biggest problem, in that it can end up handicapping some players more than others.

I suppose there are a couple of ways around this issue. It could be possible to have a published set order in which the spaces disappear, so players could plan in advance - this is what is done in Deluge. Deluge is a great game in which sea levels rise (thus foreseeing global warming 20 years in advance). Another possibility is to give players Points (as in Intimate Diplomacy) and allow players to spend their points each season voting for the space to be destroyed. Perhaps link the numbers of points to the number of centres (e.g. 10 points + no. of centres).

I was particularly impressed that Philip and Kevin stayed with it to the bitter end, despite having impossible positions.

## Mog Firth (Italy =1<sup>st</sup>):

Mark Firth (Italy - drew). There are certain Diplomacy variants which attract me, though I don't have an immediate description to quite say which. With its vague resonance of Deluge, Black Hole Dip certainly lies amongst them. So, when the list opened in GSTZ, I was up the front of the queue.

Before the game began, we had to decide whether we wanted a disciplined, vote-based approach to where the black holes (BH) would appear, or instead to have them randomly allocated. I strongly petitioned for the latter approach. On reflection, this was perhaps the wrong option: it was, well... too random.

I won't focus on the moves of the game too much. Rather, it's general flow and then on how the mechanics played out. A quick synopsis from my Italian perspective would be: early peace with France; early cooperation with Turkey; little comms generally; French anarchy leading to clashes with England; I/T continued successes, leading to an agreed cessation of hostilities in 1911 with E sharing in the draw.

As for the Black Holes... early on these presented small opportunities and bigger conundrums, as defence became trickier. I was happy to have a strong alliance with Turkey (Dave) whilst remaining on good terms with R, G and F (Philip, Kevin and Alexandre).

The trouble was, every time I managed to gain a slight edge on my ally, I seemed to get a Black Hole on either a centre or a unit, or both - I almost felt a bit persecuted!

With anarchy besetting France, Christian's England became a new threat just as the Black Holes ravaged my defences. Yet Turkey continued with our alliance, and we pushed on northward. Once Turkey took a lead in centres, and with my new borders almost indefensible, I was resigned to what seemed an impending stab. The victory conditions require only a majority of units at any season if I remember rightly and that number was descending steadily.

But the vagaries of the Black Holes suddenly saw Turkey hit at last. I cheekily put some prods in against my ally (these were genuinely intended as defensive, hoping to somehow repair the borders and perhaps gain a unit lead to help in negotiations).

Even with a draw proposal on the table, I did wonder if Dave would press on for victory. But then, that old Random Number Generator was always there in the background, threatening to send plans askew.

The draw duly passed and thanks to Dave, Christian and also Philip for that.

As for the variant? I'd be interested to see it with some control on Black Hole distribution. Voting by centres would be viable early on, but mid-game might just see a leader dominate. Then again, combined defence could mean a repeated pulling of that leader from their pedestal. That would need good comms across the board though.

Thanks to all the players, particularly Dave for our staunch and unbroken alliance. Many thanks too to Stephen for GMing and mapping

what must have been quite a tricky little number. Now, anyone for Deluge?

#### **David Partridge (Turkey = 1<sup>st</sup>)**

This game started out a lot of fun. I never heard much from Austria but was working hard to make both the I/T and the R/T real options. We managed to keep the peace between the 3 of us while dismembering Austria and I had hopes that the black holes would allow us to set up a way to keep going. Fate intervened with some bad turns for Russia, and it just became a matter of keeping the I/T going.

Unfortunately, as seems to happen all too often, the communications basically died at this point. I never really heard from the other side of the board, and Mark and I would send frantic notes out the day before the deadline trying to coordinate. I did consider taking a stab at Italy and trying for the win, but it took more diplomatic skill to keep the alliance alive, that would have just turned the game into Gunboat, so I got more satisfaction from doing that.

The first few years were fun and reminded me of why I used to play a lot of Diplomacy. The last years just dragged along and reminded me of why I stopped playing Diplomacy, although Mog and I did at least keep up communications.

Thanks, Stephen, for running the game. Brought back good memories of Conrad von Metzke who taught me the variant many, many years ago.

#### **Christian Dreyer (England = 1<sup>st</sup>)**

I don't have very much to say about the game. I never did very much diplomacy because I didn't really have the time for it which I regret, but also no one else tried very hard to talk to me. I voted no to the draw without me and thought I'd rather fight to the end and suggested a DIAS instead, which to my surprise was accepted. I think the idea is fun and would play another game, but maybe gunboat.

An alternate to random black holes would be a pre-defined list where the black holes appeared at given places at given times. As it was now it was very hard to have any kind of strategy at all, more that "more centres is better than fewer centres". With a predefined blackholeness one could still fight for important positions.

# The UK National Diplomacy Championship 2025

## An Interview with Bradley Grace

*How do you think this year's event compared to last year?*

In terms of numbers last year's event was great for it being the first tournament in the country for two years as we had 20 people playing a total of 6 boards across a weekend. This year, that number increased to 32 people playing 15 total boards. So a sizeable increase in growth.

Included in that was the decision to have two rounds on Saturday, and then a top board round on Sunday. Not only did this increase the number of boards but also the spectacle. Last year I think everyone went to sleep Saturday night knowing who the winner was going to be, this year all we knew was that we would be able to watch a fantastic game.



*What were the highlights of the weekend for you?*

For me I think there were two big highlights that come to mind, the first being the dinner on the Friday evening. Being sat in the same place in the same restaurant (*Ask Italian*) we had a year prior and seeing just how much space we were taking up in comparison was a feeling of accomplishment in a way.

And the second was the awards ceremony on the Sunday after the games were finished, knowing people had a good time and handing out all the awards and trophies was certainly a special moment.

You devised your own scoring system for the tournament. How does it differ from other common systems such as C-Diplo and were you pleased about how it worked?

The scoring system was designed last year and really stress-tested this year. It essentially rewards board topping and topping by large margins. In my mind showing that level of control of a board deserves it's rewards the system creates.

It differs from other systems like C-Diplo because the rewards for players who aren't topping are about closing that gap to first and gaining growth, which is entirely the opposite of what first place is playing for since they want to increase their lead. So instead of having games where an alliance just accepts first and second, you are given incentives to not arrange such things (but that doesn't stop players doing so, as people will play in their own ways). It also differentiates between the board toppers in a way I prefer, as we all know, not all board tops are equal, so why not have a system that reflects that.

*The games were in theory until 1909. Why do you think so many are called early?*

This is just my opinion but having a deadline to a game is all about making sure the players know what the potential limit is, not that you have to keep playing until that point. Just knowing how long a game can go is an element in itself.

I've been to events with 1907 deadlines where it was common to draw in 1905, when I went to the world championships this year the games were untimed and yet I believe the longest a game lasted was 1912. So games were called early because that's when players felt like it was the right conclusion to end their games.

*There were a few prizes other than just 1st, 2nd, 3rd and best countries. What were they and what were they awarded for?*

We had some fun awards this time around, mostly just to reflect things that can't be shown by looking at a list of results. There was the Best Rookie award for someone playing in their first tournament won by Cameron Taylor, the best move award to celebrate something really

impressive that someone did, which was won by Günther Bedson.

Other fun awards was the best Australian (who isn't actually Australian) award, as there was one and almost two people who travelled all this way for the event so in some ways it was to celebrate that. This was won by Jeremy Tullet as chosen by our resident Aussie Darcy. We also had the best British player (who isn't actually British) as a way to celebrate there being five people who travelled from overseas for the event, and funnily enough this was won by Darcy Morris.

On the DBN stream of last year's event a phrase was coined "the Dan Lester Peace Prize", for holding all your units because you are in control. So this year we made it an actual award, won by Maaïke Blom for getting the entire board to do all holds in the last turn accepting her board top.

We also had the best Toby Harris, won by Chris Woolgar. And lastly there was the player's choice award, which after asking around for nominations on the Sunday morning went to David Wigglesworth.



*Günther Bedson, Dan Lester, Conrad Woodring*

*Do you think Dan was a worthy winner and why?*

What can I say about Dan, he's incredible. That top board had incredible players everywhere, Conrad was playing at the best I've personally seen from him, Günther came in as the reigning SpireCon champion, Darcy was showing us all that Australians sort of know their stuff, Mikalis is the current DBNI diplomat of the year and the 2023 North American dipcon winner, Bernard is a wonderful player who always seems so calm and easy to work with, and Maaïke is incredible

having won multiple tournaments in the last twelve months.

So, for Dan to not only win that board, but to have it drawn in spring 1908 on 13 centres with the next highest on 9 shows a level beyond almost anyone else in the world, and that's all that can be said really.























*Next year you are passing over the NDC to a new Tournament Director. What's the story?*

When I ran the NDC last year, I was able to use the title because there had been no other events in the country for nearly two years. I am not the most organised person in the world and much prefer being a player than an organiser. But someone needed to step up and I guess I was the only one wanting it bad enough to just do it.

Now this year we have had three events so far (SpireCon making it's return in February ran by Chris, Manorcon in July with Dan Lester running it, and then the event in Warrington), so there is space for the baton to be passed to other interested parties.

What that'll be, well you'll have to wait and find out but expect big things. I will still be running an event in Warrington once a year and I have plans of starting more regular house games in the area to bring in new players, but having other people who have the passion to run events and have their event be "the big one" for that year is no issue in my mind, and in fact should be welcomed if the hobby is to thrive.



Rank	Score		Player	Prizes
🏆 1	207.5		<a href="#">Dan Lester</a>	<b>Best Russia</b>
🏆 2	300.0		<a href="#">Conrad Woodring</a>	<b>Best Turkey</b>
🏆 3	270.0		<a href="#">Gunther Bedson</a>	<b>Best Austria</b> 🏆 Best Move
4	250.0		<a href="#">Darcy Morris</a>	<b>Best Italy</b> 🏆 Best British Player
5	237.5		<a href="#">Mikalis Kamaritis</a>	<b>Best England</b>
6	232.5		<a href="#">Bernard Andrioli</a>	<b>Best France</b>
7	202.5		<a href="#">Maaïke Blom</a>	🏆 Dan Lester Peace Prize
8	117.0		<a href="#">Nathan Lester</a>	
9	202.5		<a href="#">David Wigglesworth</a>	🏆 Players Choice Award
10	172.5		<a href="#">George Mork</a>	
11	170.0		<a href="#">Richard Bolton</a>	<b>Best Germany</b>
12	135.5		<a href="#">Richard Froom</a>	
13	117.5		<a href="#">Cameron Taylor</a>	🏆 Best Rookie
14	115.0		<a href="#">Matt Smith</a>	
15	110.0		<a href="#">Phil Johns</a>	
16	102.5		<a href="#">Spyros Dovas</a>	
17	52.0		<a href="#">Graham Dent</a>	
18	95.0		<a href="#">Jelte Kuiper</a>	
19	87.5		<a href="#">Hugh Edmonds</a>	
20	77.5		<a href="#">Jeremy Tullett</a>	🏆 Best Australian
21	67.0		<a href="#">Ryan Inwood</a>	
22	61.5		<a href="#">Isaac Jukes "Nexil"</a>	
23	56.0		<a href="#">Stephen Agar</a>	
24	55.0		<a href="#">Toby Harris</a>	
24	55.0		<a href="#">Chris Woolgar</a>	🏆 Best Toby Harris
25	45.0		<a href="#">Theo Fox</a>	
27	35.0		<a href="#">Anastasia Styles</a>	
28	30.0		<a href="#">Ian Wilson</a>	
29	11.0		<a href="#">Brian Frew</a>	
30	8.0		<a href="#">Tim McArdle</a>	
31	4.0		<a href="#">Kai Harris</a>	
32	0.0		<a href="#">Bradley Grace "Grayson"</a>	

# The Grace System

(as used at NDC 2025)

## Game Length

17 minutes per turn for the spring, 15 minutes per turn for the Fall, drop dead restrictions and a rolling clock (central clock). All four rounds will have a winter 1909 deadline.

We are operating on strict deadlines; this will be subjective but if there have been any warnings regarding this and it continues to happen there may be situations where you have no orders entered for that turn. This will be assessed on an individual basis, mostly dependent on your level of experience.

## Scoring System

I will be referring to this system as the "Grace System" as that seems like a cool name.

Solo 18 centre victory: 300 Points

If eliminated, players receive one point per year of survival.

Fifteen points for survival

Five points per centre at the end of the game

In the case where there is a shared board top, a sixty-point bonus will be split evenly between the toppers. In the odd occasion where five or more players share the top, the bonus is ten points.

In the case that there is one lone board topper, that person will get a bonus of fifty points plus an additional ten points per centre they are ahead of the player in second. So, sixty points for being one centre ahead, seventy for being two centres ahead and so on.

Smaller bonuses for being close to the board top, these do not apply in games where there is a shared top of four or more players. These bonuses are one or the other, they do not stack on top of each other.

- Five points for being two centres behind the leader.
- Fifteen points for being one centre behind the leader.

The score after rounds 1-3 will be used to determine the top board and seed the other boards.

## Notes

1. Any fair play decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Tournament Director (Bradley Grace), there will be input from a few other experienced tournament directors to ensure all decisions are fair. The safety and well-being of all attendees are the priority of any decisions made.

## 2. Tiebreakers for the event:

- (a). Head-to-Head Scores (i.e., what is the total score in games both players are in)
- (b). Best Individual Game
- (c). Board Top Percentage
- (d). Average Centre Count
- (e). If all of these are tied, a way to break the tie will be in place at the tournament director's discretion.

3. The venue we are using is free for us to use, but they have a fair use policy to buy something from their café area every hour or so. Due to this being a tournament and people being busy playing the games we will have arrangements for this without taking any time out of your negotiations but please keep this in mind.

4. The venue is accessible to anyone but if you have any concerns, please contact me.

5. Countries will be assigned randomly; we will be using a system to ensure people do not play the same nation twice and to ensure no one is neighbours for three consecutive games. This is only different in Round 4, in which the Paris Method will be in use.

6. The winner of the top board in Round 4 will be the winner of the Tournament. The winner of the second Round 4 board will come 8<sup>th</sup>. Round 4 results do not get scored for additional points. There will be a prize for the winner in each game in round 4.

7. In the event of uneven players, people may be given the opportunity to play two boards at once or if that is not enough to make up the gap the tournament director may play for no score. If people play two boards at once, both games will count towards the standings should they be in those players best two games. If playing two boards is needed, the first people to be offered this will be people who have sat out of a round.

This will not be the case for Round 4 as I want to give everyone a proper top board feel, so if there are sit-outs needed and I do not have enough volunteers, I will have to choose people at the bottom of the standings.

**Bradley Grace**

# Avoiding Stabs 101

by Simon Szykman

## Background

Last month, there was a message posted on [rec.games.diplomacy](#) by somebody who was a repeat stab victim and wanted some advice. Now everyone who plays Diplomacy enough is a repeat stab victim in the sense that every is going to get stabbed sometimes, and the more you play, the more often those "sometimes" come up. However, this player was stabbed a lot, and by a lot I mean eight times in eight games. The message ended with an appeal:

*"No matter what I do, I'm stabbed by my ally. I'd just like to know why it is that this happens. [...] While I love the game and will continue to play, I'd just like to know what prevents everyone else from being stabbed."*

Now that's an extreme case, I present it not to draw negative attention to this one player. Quite the opposite, actually--I comment the player for feeling compelled, by virtue of his track record, to attempt to identify a source of what was obviously a problem.

It was clear to him that he was doing something wrong. However, there are people out there who are at times doing things wrong but may not be as aware of it if their record is not quite as consistent. So, I thought I'd share some of my own thoughts on the subject of avoiding stabs.

First off, let me preface my remarks by drawing attention to the title of the article: Avoiding Stabs 101. Note the 101. That means this is introductory-level reading. Not necessarily only for the complete newbie but aimed more at the novice players than experienced players. I have a high level of confidence that the advice which follows will be helpful for many of the people who get stabbed often, and don't always know why. If you don't have a problem with being stabbed (many novices don't and more experienced players even less) then this article will not be of great use. It will either seem pretty obvious to you, or you will think "I don't do any of those things but I still don't get stabbed." Well, good for you; it means you've found a different set of solutions on your own that work for you. You don't need this article.

I should also reiterate that you *\*will\** get stabbed. Even if you follow my advice, you will get stabbed. I get stabbed. It's inevitable if you

play enough, simply because an allies actions are fundamentally not something you have complete control over. All you can do is nudge, guide, and influence. You can do everything right and still get stabbed, but if you get stabbed a lot, then you are probably not doing everything right. You can't avoid stabs altogether, but you can avoid walking around with a big red bullseye painted on your back. And that is what I hope to help repeat stab victims do better.

Back to the original thread on [rec.games.diplomacy](#). I was surprised at how many of the responses to the question of how to avoid being stabbed went something along the lines of "Stab first!". Yikes. That's a really silly reply. That kind of reasoning can lead to a trigger-happy power who is liable to stab unpredictably out of fear of being stabbed.

Yes, if you plan to stab first, you will end up being stabbed less often. However, the time to stab is when it is in your best interest to do so. Obviously if you have good reason to believe you are about to be stabbed, then stabbing first can be in your best interest. But stabbing only in order to be the one to stab first will often not be in your best interest. If you stab merely to avoid being stabbed, then you may not be stabbing for the right reasons, nor at the right times, and if you do not stab for the right reasons nor at the right times, then you will not be as successful in your games as you might otherwise be.

Now I am not saying that I've never been stabbed, but I have gone full games, online and in tournaments, allied with cutthroat players for the whole game and not been stabbed. Why? Because good players only stab

when it's in their best interest, so the best way to avoid being stabbed is not to stab-just-to-stab-first, but to make conditions such that it is not in your allies best interest to stab you. Ironically, if you can do this well, you will be less likely to be stabbed when playing with good players, and more likely to be stabbed when playing with trigger-happy newbies who stab-just-to-stab-first.

### **Lesson 1: Don't make yourself a target**

If you want to avoid being stabbed, then the first thing you need to learn is to not leave yourself ripe for stabbing. If you are being stabbed in every single game you play, then the most likely problem is that you are leaving your allies in a position that is too good to resist. Some players will ally with you and stick with you for the entire game no matter what. But you cannot rely on that occurring. You cannot assume that you are playing with somebody who will be faithful to the end. If you do, you will find that you are wrong much more often than not.

Most players only pass up so much in the way of potential gains before they take action, whether you are their ally or not. If an ally can stab you for multiple centres, with good prospects for more gains to follow, and leaving you in a position where you are too crippled to hurt him back, then that ally is often going to take the opening you've left available. You need to keep enough of a defence up that you are not ripe for a stab. That doesn't mean a putting up a solid defensive line like one you would put up against a power you are at war with. If you did that, you'd commit so many of your resources defending against your ally that you couldn't afford to commit units on a different front in a real war, making real gains. It means having enough of a defence that the payoff for your ally of attempting a stab is questionable rather than overwhelming. Whether you realize it or not, if you are getting stabbed every single time, it's at least in part because you are inviting your ally to do so by leaving yourself open and inadequately defended.

### **Lesson 2: Create incentive for sustaining an alliance**

The second thing you need to do to avoid being stabbed is use diplomacy. When you talk to your ally make it clear why your ally should not stab you. That does not mean you should threaten to retaliate or to throw the game if you are attacked. It means making clear to your ally why it is in his best interest to keep you as an ally? Why does he need you? Why is he better off with you than without you? Why would stabbing you be a bad move?

I am not suggesting that you write a message saying, "Hey ally, you should not stab me because..." A message that lacking in subtlety is unlikely to do the trick. Don't tell him "You need me because..." Instead, inject these things into your general discussions so that they make a case for why the alliance is in your ally's interest. Giving your ally reasons to remain

allied with you will be more effective if you aren't outright telling him that you are giving him reasons why he should remain allied with you.

If you make a convincing enough case, then a good player will not stab you. The issue, obviously, is that you don't always know what to say. What might convince one person may not be the same argument that would convince another. And as I said above, you will not always be playing with a player who stabs only when it's in his best interest, in which case offering reasons to remain allied, even good ones, will not always be successful. With players such as these, you rely more on Lesson 1 than Lesson 2, since even a more erratic stabber will be less likely to stab you the less likely he is to gain from it.

### **Lesson 3: Be a "good" ally**

I mentioned above that while I don't advocate stabbing merely to stab first, stabbing first is in somebody's interest when they have reason to believe they are going to be stabbed. Therefore, the flip side of everything mentioned above also applies. You should, in the course of diplomacy, attempt to convince your ally that it is in your best interest to remain allied with him. The simple reason for this is because the less worried he is about you stabbing him, the less it is that he thinks it is in his best interest to stab you. And you can bet that there will be times when other powers are trying to convince your ally to stab you, and that sometimes the argument they will make for why your ally should stab you is an assurance that you are about to stab your ally. The less your ally is worried about you, the safer you are.

### **Lesson 4: Conflict resolution**

There will unavoidably be some conflict in the options that face you if you decide to follow the advice given above. You want to be well defended enough to make the payoff of a stab low, and yet you want to convince your ally that you are not a threat to him. This is sometimes hard to do when you are trying to use some of your units to defend against an ally since your ally may see your defensive units as potential offensive units.

Overinvesting in defence not only makes it hard for you to carry out offensive actions against real enemies, it is also a source of concern to an ally that if sufficiently strong, could lead to a stab. But it is equally important to note that while demilitarization can be part of making yourself less threatening to an ally, do not

demilitarize yourself to the point where you are open to attack and unable to respond. As pointed out in Lesson 1, you'll only be inviting trouble by doing that.

There is not much I can say specifically about resolving these conflicts, other than drawing attention to them. You need to figure out the right balance between these conflicting suggestions, and that needs to be done on game-by-game basis because there is no one right balance.

### Lesson 5: The Post Mortem

The most important lesson you can learn is one that applies to all aspects of Diplomacy: to learn from your mistakes. As I've said before, stabs are inevitable, so the best thing you can do when they do happen, is to analyse the situation and find out why it happened. Did somebody convince your ally to stab you by convincing him you were going to stab him (and could you therefore have done a better job at getting across your commitment to the alliance)? Did you get stabbed because you made yourself too attractive a target (and could you therefore have done a better job at making yourself less vulnerable)? Did an excessive number of defensive units result in a pre-emptive strike by your ally who was paranoid about the possibility of you attacking him (and could you therefore have done a better job at ensuring your safety in a manner that would appear less threatening to your ally)?

Of course, in some cases, being stabbed will just be "one of those things". You may get stabbed because your ally thinks he's in a position to successfully go for a solo or shrink a draw by getting rid of you. When an ally believes that, it's hard for you to make a convincing argument for why he needs you. Sometimes you get setup from the start and it turns out that your ally was never really your ally to begin with. While the advice imparted in this article has to do with how to avoid being stabbed by somebody who is at some point really your ally, it is still worth asking yourself why it happened even in other cases. For example, if it turns out that you are being set up quite often by a neighbour who pretends to ally with you only to stab you early on, that may point to the need to improve your negotiation skills for how to establish an alliance early on in the game (something that is outside the scope of this article).

The point is, the advice given above is not clear and crisp. I fully acknowledge that everything I've said above is easier said than done. Every

game is different, and every player is different and has different levels of trust, different levels of paranoia, different levels of temptation or fear he's willing to tolerate before stabbing. You need to not only know the information I've presented above, but you need to know how to read a situation and/or a player in order to apply it at the appropriate level. You need to know how to find the right balance between the conflicts I highlighted. In order to improve your ability to do that, every stab should be a learning experience. Do not allow a stab to happen without learning something from it that will make you more likely to avoid a similar mistake the next time around.

### Homework

I personally, have found the above lessons invaluable in my own play, and I've learned from experience. In my early days as a Diplomacy player, I learned these lessons the hard way--I got stabbed a lot. So, I distilled what I've learned since then into Avoiding Stabs 101. I cannot guarantee that you will never be stabbed again if you follow the above advice. But if you've had a problem being the victim of stabs in an excessive percentage of the games in which you play, I think the above advice may be of help. If you are such a player, your homework is to apply the above knowledge in the next few games you play and let me know if it makes a difference.

*[Reprinted from The Diplomatic Pouch Fall 1999]*

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# Star Wars: Order 66

by Chris Woolgar

## INTRODUCTION

Star Wars: Order 66 is a Diplomacy variant for six players set in the Star Wars universe in 19 BBY. Players work primarily in teams of two to achieve a supply centre count of 19 or more, but each player is trying to outdo their partner to score the most points overall and be declared the winner.

Except as otherwise indicated, the rules of standard Diplomacy apply.

## 1. VICTORY CONDITIONS

As soon as exactly one Pair of Powers controls at least 19 SCs AND one of those Powers has more points than the other the game ends immediately and the Player with the most points in the controlling Pair is the winner.

Two Pairs cannot control at least 19 SCs at the same time as there are only 36 SCs in total.

If the two Powers in the controlling Pair are equal on points at the time that Pair achieves control of at least 19 SCs then the game continues until any Pair gains control of at least 19 SCs and the Powers in that Pair are not equal on points.

## 2. DRAWS

From 14 BBY onwards any Active Player may propose a draw and vote shall take place on a draw. The options are to either accept or reject a draw. The proposal does not contain any stipulation on inclusion of Powers in the draw. The Powers that will automatically be included in a draw shall be the one Player from each Active Pair that has the most points, however since points are kept hidden the participants will not be known until and if the draw is accepted by all Active Players.

If the Players in any Pair are equal on points and a draw is approved, then neither player shall be a participant in the draw. This can result in a solo victory being awarded.

## 3. POINTS

Each SC is worth 100 points for the controlling player and in addition each player starts the game with 500 spendable Diplomacy Points. Points can be spent, in secret and in increments

of 25 points, to influence Minor Power Units to submit orders. Spending points in this way will reduce the likelihood of having the most points but may increase the likelihood of capturing more SCs.

Work with your team mate to capture SCs but remember to finish the game with more points than them!

## 4. POWERS

### Great Powers:

White: Jedi and Red: Rebel Alliance

Black: Sith and Brown: Empire

Blue: Bounty Hunters and Green: The Hutts

### Minor Powers:

Dark Green: Sernpidalians

Light Blue: Keganites

Pink: Reeceen

Yellow: Naboo

Teal: Ewoks

### Other Planets:

Orange Planets are unoccupied and Dark Orange Planets are SCs. 5e Lwhekk Asteroid Field is also an SC.

## 5. UNITS

The units are no longer armies and fleets but are now fighters and carriers. A fighter is capable of moving from one space to any adjacent space in one turn. It can move from a planet to another planet, or from planet to space, or from space to planet. It cannot move from space to another space region. A fighter may be convoyed over space squares by a carrier (as an army may by a fleet in standard diplomacy), provided that if it ends the convoy in a space square then it MUST move to a planet in the next turn (it can hold or support, but cannot convoy again). A fighter is capable of occupying and controlling any supply centre on the board, except for the Lwhekk Asteroid Field, which it can only occupy, because this is a space region.

A carrier is capable of moving anywhere on the map (provided that that space is not already occupied, obviously!). A carrier can occupy any supply centre, but can only control SCs that are not a Great Power's Home SCs. A fighter must be used to control any Great Power Home SCs (yours or an enemies).

## 6. SPECIAL RULES

### Dates:

The first turn of the game is Spring of 19 BBY (Before Battle of Yavin). The years count down to 0 BBY (the date of the battle of Yavin). After the fall retreats of 0 BBY the game ends in a draw (see Draws above).

### Minor Power Units:

There are five Minor Powers in the game, each starting with one Fighter Unit. Should any Minor Power be awarded a build the GM shall build a Fighter Unit in the longest standing vacant SC that that Minor Power controls. If no SCs are vacant for that Minor Power, then no build shall take place for that Minor Power. Should more than one SC be vacant and have been held for an equal duration then the build location shall be determined by die roll.

Minor power units prevent the Great Powers from simply moving into an unconquered minor power SC without support. To occupy a minor power, a Great Power needs to move in with support.

If a Great Power attacks a minor power and dislodges the minor power's unit, the GM immediately disbands the minor power unit. If a Major Power moves a unit into an unconquered minor realm and then either moves, retreats, or disbands that unit before the Major Power establishes control of the minor power, the GM rebuilds the minor power's unit as part of the adjustments that take place during the Fall turn.

The Great Powers may use Diplomacy Points to influence a minor power.

## 7. DIPLOMACY POINTS (DP)

At the start of the game each Great Power is given 500 DP. They are never replenished or recovered.

Players use their DPs to influence the actions of minor powers. Players allocate their DPs when they submit their movement orders for the Spring and Fall turns. Each player may allocate none, some, or all his or her DPs in any Spring or Fall movement turn. Points must be allocated in increments of 25. When allocating DPs, the allocating player submits an order telling the GM how to use the DPs (i.e., to have a minor power unit hold, move, or support). A Player may allocate DPs to more than one Minor Power or more than one unit of the same Minor Power so long as the allocation to each Unit is in increments of 25. A Player may, if they wish, allocate all 500 DPs to one Unit in one turn.

Players do not have to tell each other how they allocated their DPs or honor their agreements with each other. Only the GM will know how the players allocated their DPs. The GM does not publish DP allocations in the adjudication. Instead, the GM only publishes the results.

If, during a Spring or Fall turn, a player allocates more DPs than he or she is entitled to the DPs allocated will be cut to the entitlement amount.

If two Great Powers allocate DPs to the same Unit and order differing orders then the order with the most DPs allocated will be processed. Should two Great Powers allocate DPs to the same U it and order the same order then those DPs will be added together to potentially outbid any other DP allocations from other Players. Where there is a tie in DPs allocated to different orders and no other DP allocation to that same unit exceeds this tied value then the order to be processed shall be determined by the GM by die roll.

Should the processed order be invalid it will still be processed and therefore the Minor Power Unit will hold.

### Limitation on DPs:

If a Great Power is attacking (or supporting an attack on) a minor power Unit, that Great Power may not allocate DPs to that minor power Unit during the turn the attack or support is taking place. This rule prevents a Great Power from allocating DPs to a minor power Unit for the purpose of having the minor power unit move, thereby making it ineligible to receive support during the Great Power's attack on that minor power.

## 8. BUILDS

Great Powers may only build in Home SCs. They may build as many Units as the number of vacant Home SCs allows, provided that their number of Units in the game never exceeds their number of controlled SCs.

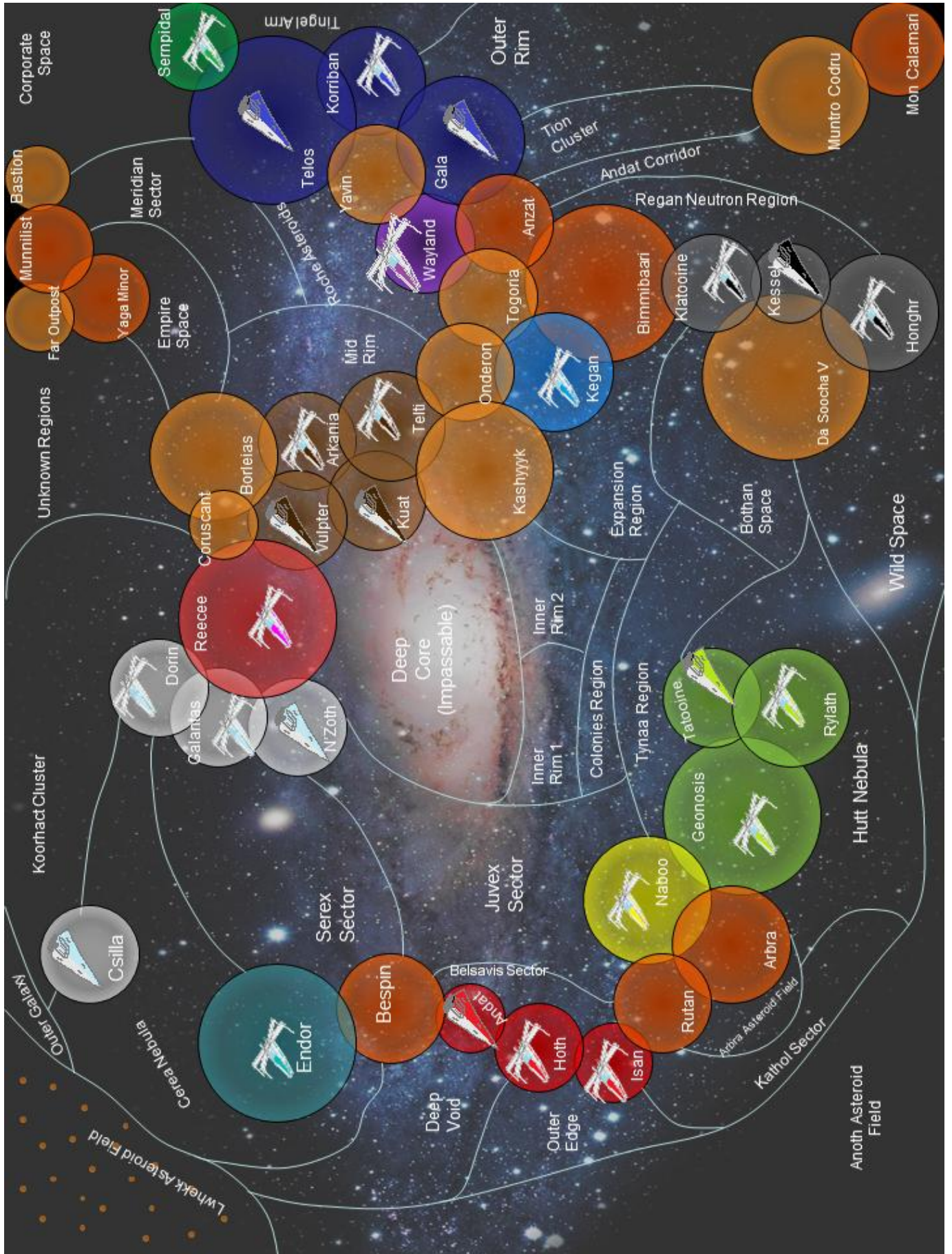
## 9. CIVIL DISORDER

It is the responsibility of a Player to provide a substitute should they not be able to continue. If they cannot, the GM will assign a substitute to them.

### NOTES ON MAP

Lwhekkk Asteroid Field: This SC can only be reached by Carriers and therefore requires a Carrier to capture it.

Inner Core: The Inner Core is not a traversable region and is impassible.



# The 1971 Rulebook

by Stephen Agar

The history of how Diplomacy came to be published is well-known. In 1961, Games Research acquired the rights to Diplomacy from Allan Calhamer and brought about the first widespread release of the game. The box was redesigned, but the map and the rules used were the same as Calhamer's 1959 version.

However, during the 1960's many ambiguities and problems were discovered with the rules – mainly as a result of the explosion of PBM Diplomacy in the USA. Consequently, postal GMs had to have quite long house rules detailing how they ruled on these ambiguities – and as different GMs had different views, this led to a degree of divergence in how Diplomacy was actually played.

For those of us who started playing Diplomacy after the major rules revision in 1971, it can be quite surprising to find out how it was played in the 1960's. Indeed, I have a whole A4 folder full of excerpts from US zines in the 60's discussing various house rules issues. For example, **Brobdingnag** No.84 had an article some 26 (!) pages long commenting on the various issues on which leading US GMs interpreted the rules differently. The various different interpretations were named after their originator (e.g. Koning's Rule, Boardman's Rule, Beshara's Rule etc.).

During the summer of 1970 two different draft revisions were prepared – one by Rod Walker (publisher of **Erehwon**) and another by Stephen Manion (a Harvard student commissioned by Games Research Inc.). In the autumn Rod combined the two different drafts into a working draft, which Stephen Manion then refined into a final draft over Christmas 1970. All of this was done taking on board suggestions from Allan Calhamer. The rules finally appeared at the end of 1971. Whereas the 1961 rulebook ran to 8 pages, the 1971 edition was 11 pages long. Once it appeared in the US, it was quickly adopted in the UK.

The new rules were more detailed and a lot clearer than the 1961 version – so what were the areas of uncertainty and what was decided?

- It was finally settled that a dislodged unit attempting to move could not stand-off another unit (Koning's Rule adopted).
- A dislodged unit cannot give a valid support (Miller's Rule adopted, Boardman's Rule

(which said the converse) not followed even though it was preferred by Rod Walker).

- A convoyed attack does not cut the support for an attack on the body of water containing the convoying fleet (Brannan's Rule adopted).
- The convoy of an army with two or more possible convoy routes will fail if any of the convoys is disrupted (e.g. F(NTH) C A(Bel)-Lon\* [DISLODGED]; F(ENG) C A(Bel)-Lon; A(Bel)-Lon; F(Nwy) S F(Den)-NTH).
- If two units try to retreat to the same space, neither succeeds and they are removed. Allan Calhamer preferred giving the player's a second chance to retreat elsewhere, but the postal GMs didn't like the idea as it would delay the game.
- Support in Split Provinces: The new rules clarified that (for example) a F(Mar) can support an action anywhere in Spain, even though it could only move to Spa(sc) itself.
- Retreats: Players were now allowed to remove a unit rather than retreating it (called by many the "fast retreat home"). This was included largely to help out the PBM GM's who didn't know what to do when no legal retreat was ordered. Until then various US zines had various rules for bringing about automatic retreats.
- Exchange of Spaces: This was permitted (a) where three or moves pieces were involved (e.g. F(AEG)-Smy; F(Smy)-EMS; F(EMS)-AEG) or (b) where convoys were used (e.g. F(NTH) C A(Bel)-Lon; F(ENG) C A(Lon)-Bel). However, the coastal crawl (F(Spa)sc-Por; F(Por)-Spa(nc)) was not allowed (contrary to the practice of most US GMs).
- The Beleaguered Garrison rule was adopted: namely a unit attacked from superior but equal forces from two sides was not dislodged.
- Victory: The original rules stated that the winner was the first to have a majority of the pieces on the board. This was altered to the first player to control 18 supply centres – a very unpopular decision with US GM's at the time (including Rod Walker).

To give you a flavour of the debates that were going on, here is a letter from Rod Walker to Allan Calhamer concerning the 1971 Rulebook, dated 12<sup>th</sup> July 1971 (which came from Allan's files). Long, but interesting. The pencil annotations are Allan's.

5058 Hawley Blvd.  
San Diego CA 92116  
12 July 1971  
Caivs Ivlivs Caesar, 102 BCE

Dear Allan:

Thanks for yours of the 8th. You are right; there are more problems in the draft than I thought. I must confess that I had not looked at the examples--and, in fact, I looked only at sections which had been at issue in recent discussions. I was studying like made for my French exams--inasmuch as I had to teach myself the language. I just, last Friday, finally passed them. Which means we eat next year.

Well, on to Example 14. You are right, that one is mine. There is a bit of background to this. About two years ago, Dave Lebling was working on a "Diplomacy Gamesmaster" program for a computer. He wrote me about it and we exchanged several letters. We discussed several of the major rule interpretations. I had a smattering of computer logic, anyway, and it was at this time that I became more concerned with internal consistency of rules because of the fact that you always have to tell computers things as a priori rulings. Thus, if you set up the damn thing for the Coastal Crawl, it will also then allow such things as dislodged F Mid retreating to Spa(nc) even though there has been a stand-off between two fleets attacking Spa(sc). And that is the way I ruled when I allowed the CC.

The same is true of Brannan's Rule. The logic behind the BR is that when we say, e.g., A Spa-Nap C by F Lyo & F Tyr, we are really saying A Tyr-Nap. And this turns out to be the way the computer will have to be programmed for it to rule correctly on convoys. But this also creates the situation in Example 14.

In a way, I think this is realistic, too. The convoy rule in Diplomacy assigns a rather passive role to the convoying fleet; however, this does not really seem to be so. Consider, for instance, the most famous convoyed attack of all, that of 1944 upon Normandy. The fleet there had to prepare the way for the army--and if there had been a major German naval force at, say, Rouen, the English fleet would also have had to secure the Channel.

That is what I think is going on around Naples in Example 14. The fleet has an offensive role in preparing the way for the army against the hostile fleet in port. Thus, A Spa-Nap is a simple way (with the convoys added) of expressing the complex ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ plan of neutralizing the enemy fleet, securing the convoy route, securing a landing zone, securing a beach-head, and finally marching on the city and taking it. Of these, the first three actions are obviously carried out by the fleet, not the army. And when the force is equal on each side, the Rules say there is a stand-off. The fact that the army is the unit which accomplishes the stand-off is a technical result of the way the game itself is structured.

I will agree that this would be more realistic if the supporting units are fleets, but it seems awfully complicated to note that "we get this result if an army supports and this other result if a fleet supports" and so on. For simplicity's sake, and consistency's, it seems to me better to rule as is done in Ex.14 (A Spa-Nap, F Nap-Tyr).

Rule XII.5 seems to me very important. Boardman has long observed that it is implied in the Rules, and I agree; however, it would be better to make it explicit. Once you do, I think the concept is sufficiently abstruse that it needs quite a bit of explanation; hence, Examples 13-15. The implications of this rule are broad. One could rule the other way, of course, but it does not seem to me that it would be consistent with the situation. If, for instance, we were to rule the other way in examples 13 & 14 (and by implication in 15), then we are saying that the attack of the army on Naples is

coming from somewhere other than the Tyrrhenian. But where? I find it difficult to answer that question.

This situation has arisen in actual play, by the way. I have had it happen in one of my mail games and have seen it in FTF play. But it is a rare occurrence.

I suppose one can argue the playability of the thing both ways. From my point of view, it is sufficiently incongruous that a player who is employing three units toward his enterprise (excluding F Lyo, which is just a sort of transmission belt) should be stood off by a player using only two. To rule that he might actually be defeated would probably discourage the use of the convoy, which ~~adds~~ would in turn detract from the flexibility of the game. But I can see arguments on the other side, too.

And the realism argument undoubtedly has two sides. I've taken one. Your statement about an army defending a body of water is certainly a point on the other side.

However, I am not sure that the argument can really be resolved in either instance in favor of one side or the other. The question which seems resolvable, and determining in my mind, is the question of consistency in the Rules.

All other arguments aside, I dislike allowing a convoyed army to do something its convoying fleet could not do (e.g., cut support for an attack on that fleet).

My orientation toward the Coastal Crawl, as you know, is that once "space" is properly defined, the CC is impossible. John Beshara is then right in suggesting it is an exception to the Rules, even though it was originally proposed (John McCallum, BROBDINGNAG 41) as something which was within the Rules [you replied to this proposal in BROB 42, calling it a "nice bit of problem shooting", or something like, which it certainly was].

It seems to me that Beshara/Manion's rewording of the CC is a simple as we can get, and that we have thereby eliminated the complication involved. I have mixed feelings about the CC, because I like the flexibility it gives to the game without doing violence to any other portion of the Rules. From the point of view of consistency, I don't care for it.

As to Rule XII.5, I personally think that it is clear as it stands and that the intent ~~xxxx~~ is what is needed--the opposite would introduce inconsistency (I believe) and undue complication.

However, now that I think about it, there is a problem in XII.3. It says, "If a fleet ordered to convoy is dislodged during the move, the army to be convoyed...has no effect on the province to which it was ordered." This last phrase could lead to the Pandin Paradox I have previously written about. As I have since noted in EREHWON, however, changing the Rules to eliminate this rara avis (not yet seen in actual play that I know of) will reverse the effects of the rules in hundreds of actual situations.

But if the phrase is allowed to stand, as I think it should, it is unclear. What does it mean? I think two examples should be inserted:

Example 12: FRANCE: A Bre-Lon, F Eng C A Bre-Lon (F Eng is dislodged)  
ENGLAND: F Mid-Eng, F Iri S F Mid-Eng, F Edi-Nth, F Lon S F Edi-Nth.  
RUSSIA: F Nth H (F Nth is dislodged). Note that the French attack on London, via a disrupted convoy, does not cut the support of F Lon for the attack on Nth. Of course, even if F Eng had not been dislodged, the attack on London would have been a stand-off, but it would then have cut the support and the Russian unit would not have been dislodged.

Example 13: FRANCE: A Bre-Lon, F Eng C A Bre-Lon (F Eng is dislodged).

"no effect on the province"

3.

ENGLAND: F Mid-Eng, F Iri S F Mid-Eng, A Yor-Lon. Note that the same disrupted convoy in this case fails to stand off the English A Yor. Of course, if F Eng had not been dislodged, there would have been a stand-off in London and neither army would have moved.

These examples do not change the intent of the phrase quoted, but do make it clear what it means. Examples 12-15 would then be renumbered 14-17.

As to ~~XII~~ XII.5, it seems to me that there are three possible choices.

1. Leave it as is. The intent and meaning are clear and the examples are consistent with it. It is further, I believe, the best possible answer to "where does a convoyed attack come from?" and is consistent with what seem to me to be the underlying premises of the Rules.

2. Delete it. However, the question, "where does a convoyed attack come from?" is going to arise, and it seems to me that some guidance should be in the Rulebook. It is a very common situation.

3. Change it to say that the convoyed attack does not come from the direction of the last convoying fleet. This would reverse the rulings in examples 13-15 (or 15-17). But this may introduce more confusion than anything else. Since the army follows a demonstrable and discernable route through the convoying fleet(s), the mind can easily grasp that the attack is coming from the convoying fleet (or from the last of them). It would be harder to understand what principle might underly the statement that a convoyed attack, even though moving through a fleet, is actually coming from somewhere else. ("Where?" "From Spain, of course." "Yes, but how does the army get to Naples?" "By convoy, of course." "Through the convoy?" "No, just by means of the convoy; it is still coming from Spain".) Maybe I am misstating the case, but for me it is hard to follow the logic involved in showing that Brannan's Rule does not apply.

Re: GRAU #242. Actually, my plan preserves the important features of the status quo: the expansion of Israel, the present joint possession of the Suez Canal, joint occupation of the Jordan Valley, the total dependence of the Middle Eastern "powers" on outside military assistance, present Russian predominance in the area, concern of oil-consuming countries for the fate of the Middle Eastern oil-producing countries, and so on. The one real change in the sq is an enforced disarmament in the area and the creation of a supergovernmental agency responsible for administration. This is important because, if we are ever to achieve a world government, we are going to have to experiment with forms and techniques of supergovernmental power.

Anent your comments on the DD ballot. The problem, as I see it, is to avoid even the appearance of rivalry. It is not a question of people being able to go to one group or the other as they wish. The membership requirements are quite different. In many instances, the aims are different; that is, each group hopes to accomplish different (but not mutually exclusive) things. There is already considerable interpenetration of membership. It is my hope that the two groups can work together. At the moment, John Beshara is too hooked on his own ego and on the notion of rivalry to get the message, but I have gotten through to most of the rest of the Board of Governors (one of whom is already a DD member; Buchanan). My hope is now to find ways of useful cooperation which will benefit everybody, while at the same time delimiting areas of exclusive concern to that jurisdictional

disputes will not crop up later~~n~~ and cause problems.

If we were to create a situation in which people who object to one organization can turn to another, there is the IFW Diplomacy Society, whose outlook is something like that of the DA. One thing that I dread, however, is the proliferation of organizations which, ~~arise~~ out of the mere fact of their existence, and out of the need for attention and membership, may create senseless rivalries.

Anyway, what I am now trying to do is to downpedal the whole rivalry angle. Len's motion does not help things, but it may not even come to a vote. If we can create an atmosphere of cooperation and, when necessary, positive criticism, I think we will be very much better off.

Your comment does not bear on the censure motion. However, given room, I will want to print it and at least a portion~~of~~ of my reply, since I think it is important that this issue ultimately will need to be thrashed out.

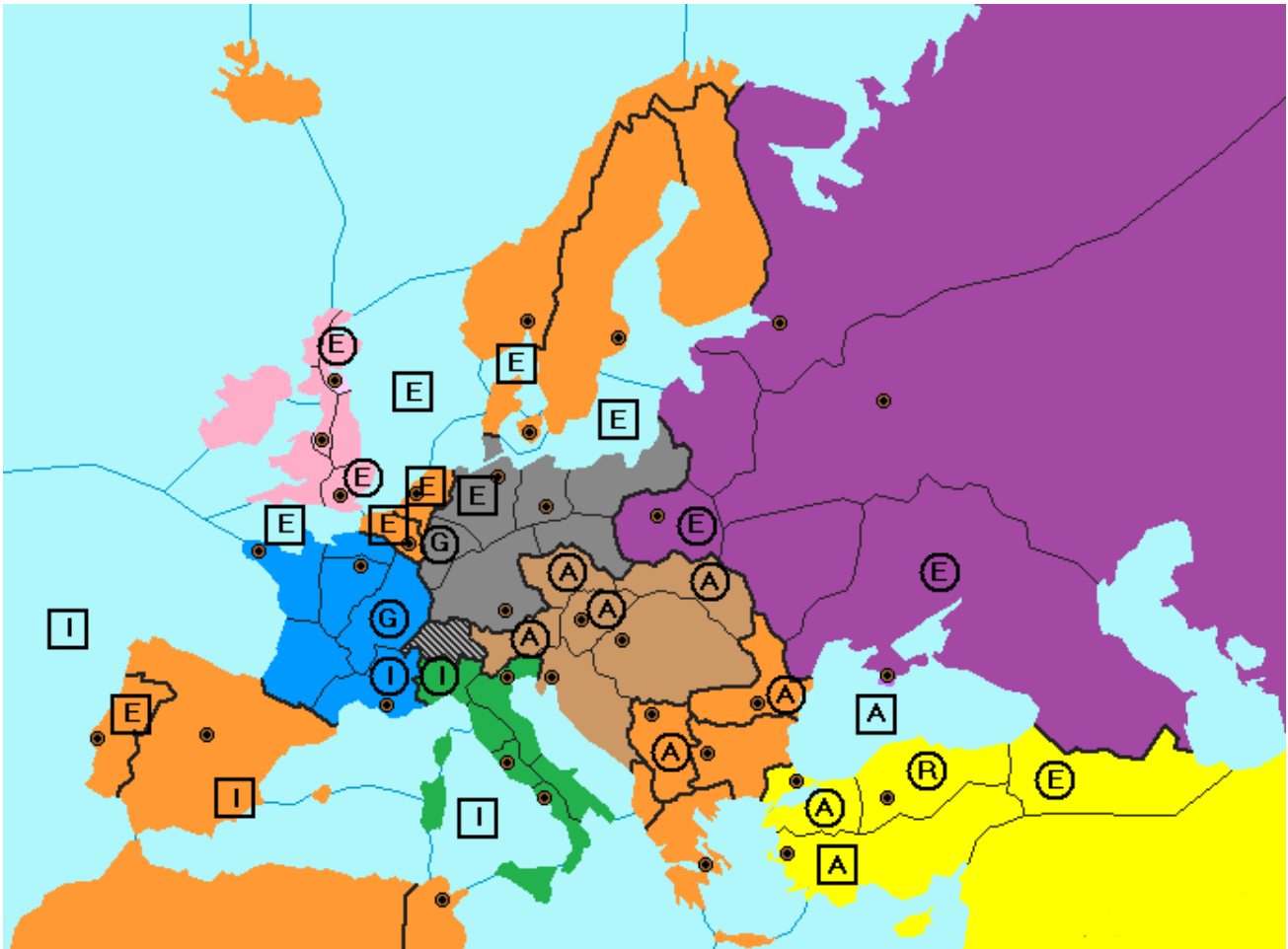
Well, this has rambled on and on. I think I have probably not dealt with all of this satisfactorily. Let's see...this is now the 13th, and the letter will go out at 1:00. That means it should reach you not later than the 16th. I will try to call you Sunday night the 18th, just to say "hello", if nothing else, but also to hit any items which I failed to note herein. By then you will have had a chance to digest all of the above and we can talk briefly about it. Hope that is all right with you.

In fact, because of the rate difference, I will try to reach you Saturday after 5 (after 7 your time). If that is inconvenient, and you wish to call me, fine. Call direct and I will then reimburse you for the charges; just let me know what they are. Otherwise, sometime between 7 and 10 your time I will try to call. Probably between 7 and 8. I'd say, ~~exactly 7:10~~, but I'm not absolutely positive I'll be here then. I usually am, but things happen.

Hope all is well with the family and so on. I also hope the above is some help.

Best,





## Golden Years 2024BA (Spring 1909)

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Mike Pollard)  
F(Con) - BLA; F(Smy) s A(Bul) - Con; A(Bul) - Con;  
A(Ser) - Tri (FAILED); A(Tyr) - Tri (FAILED); A(Vie)  
- Boh; A(Bud) - Vie; A(Gal) s A(Rum); A(Rum) s  
A(Gal)

ENGLAND (Colin Smith)  
F(Edi) - NTH; A(Lpl) - Edi; A(Lon) Stands; F(MAO)  
- Por; F(NTH) - ENG; F(Nwy) - SKA; F(Swe) - BAL;  
F(Den) - Kie; F(Hol) s F(Den) - Kie; F(Bel) s F(Hol);  
A(Mos) - War; A(Ukr) - Sev; A(Sev) - Arm

FRANCE (Anarchy - ex-Icalar Black)  
F(Spa) sc Stands\* (DISLODGED - DISBANDED BY  
GM)

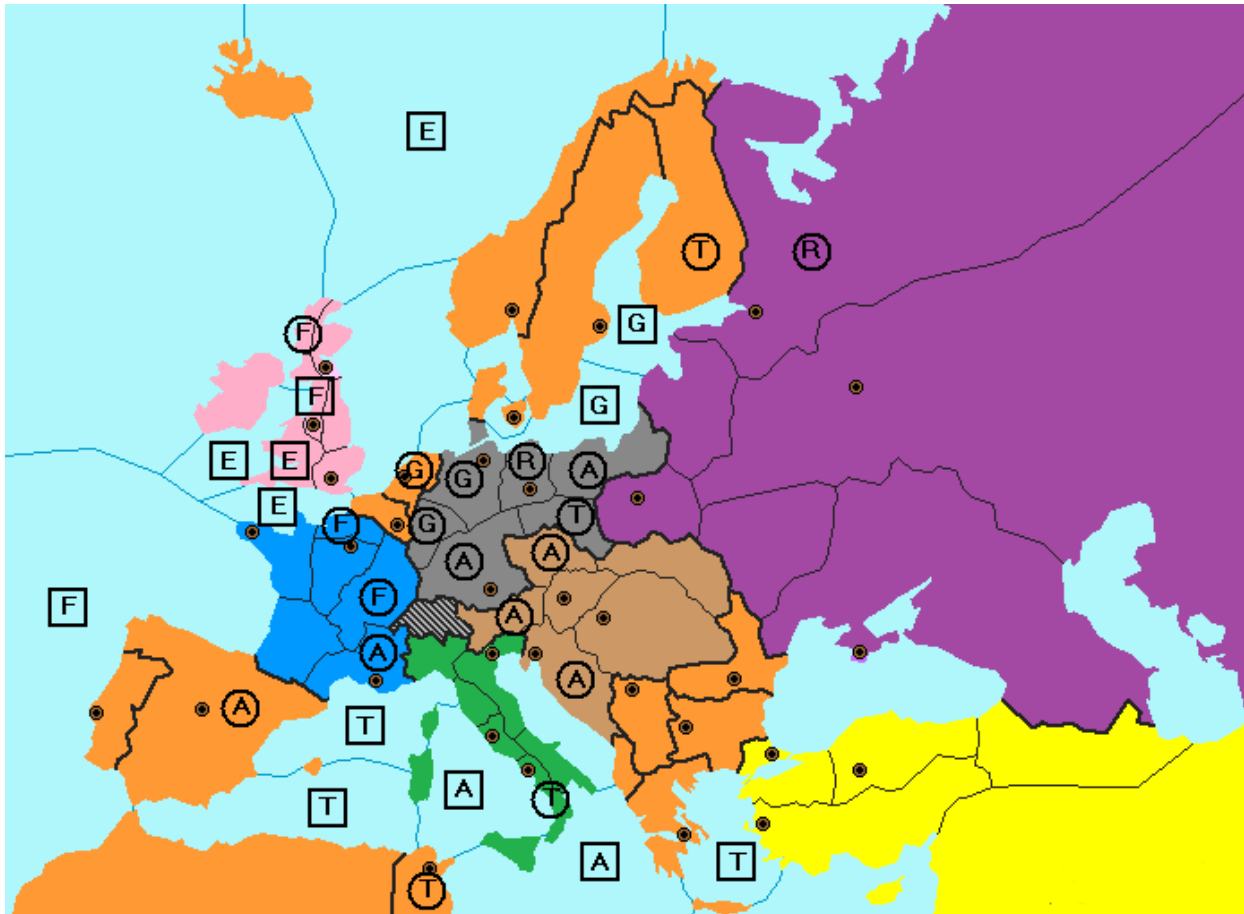
GERMANY (Nathan Deily - NMR!)  
A(Bur) Stands ; A(Ruh) Stands ; A(Kie) Stands\*  
(DISLODGED - DISBANDED BY GM)

ITALY (Ian Bond)  
F(GoL) - Spa sc; A(Mar) s F(GoL) - Spa sc; A(Ven)  
- Pie; F(WMS) - MAO; F(Nap) - TYS

RUSSIA (Hans Swift)  
A(Arm) - Ank

Versailles: We had an endgame proposal of a 3-  
way draw A/E/I. **Narrowly defeated** - 3 votes  
"yes", one abstention = "no". It is repropoed,  
this time unanimity required, abstention = YES.





## It's No Game 2024BB (Spring 1907)

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Edwin Hutton)  
F(TYS) c A(Rom) - Spa; A(Rom) - Spa; A(Pie) - Mar;  
A(Mun) - Ruh (FAILED); F(ION) c TURKISH A(Smy)  
- Tun; A(Boh) - Mun (FAILED); A(Tri) Stands;  
A(Pru) s RUSSIAN A(Sil) - Ber; A(Tyr) s A(Boh) -  
Mun

ENGLAND (Sean Cable)  
F(IRI) s F(Lpl) (CUT); F(Lpl) Stands\* (DISLODGED  
TO Wal); F(NTH) - ENG; F(Nwy) - NWG

FRANCE (Will Haughan)  
A(Cly) s F(NAO) - Lpl; F(NAO) - Lpl; F(MAO) - IRI  
(FAILED); A(Bre) - Pic; A(Bur) s A(Bre) - Pic

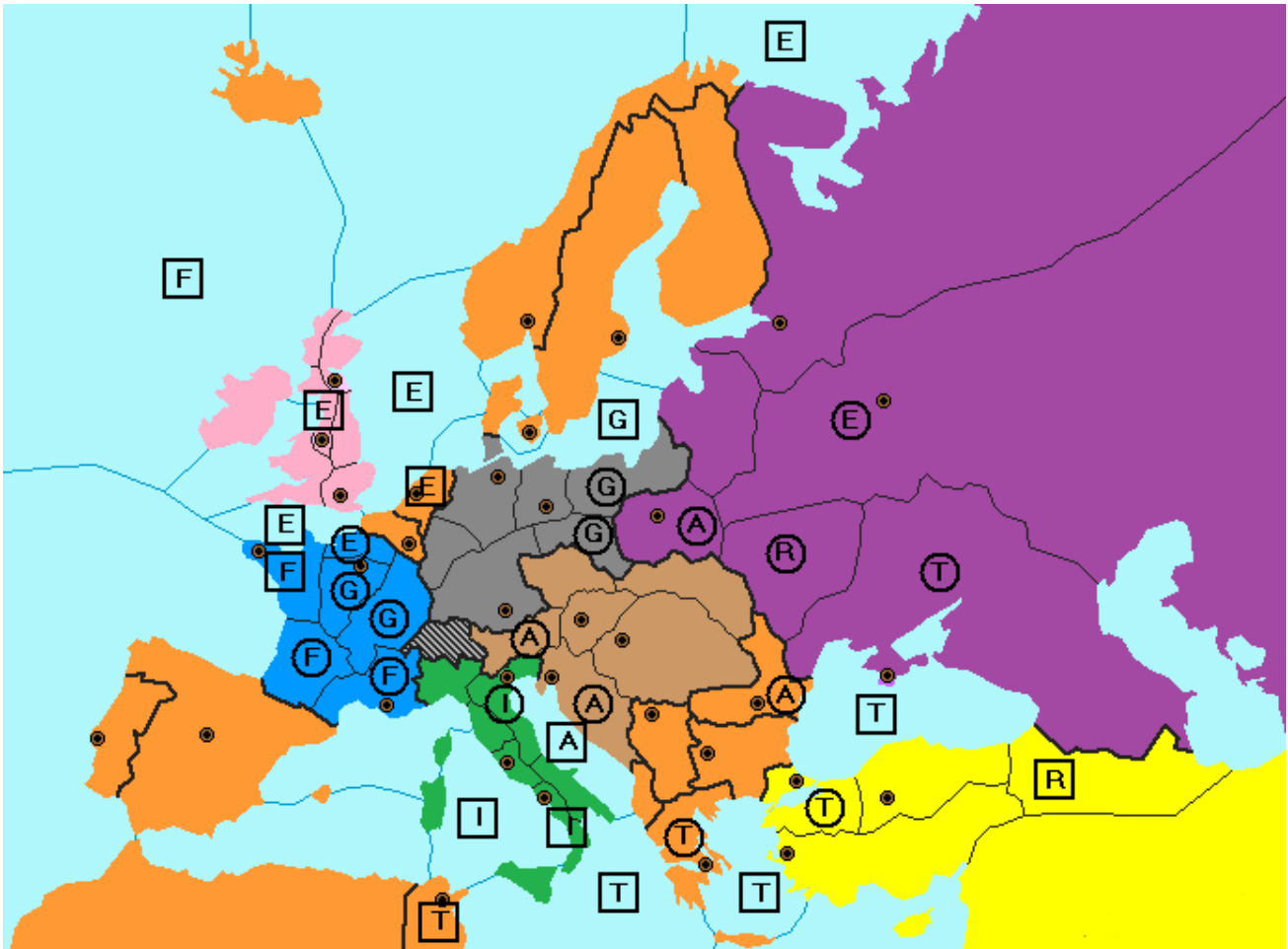
GERMANY (Leif Kjetil Tviberg)  
F(Swe) - GoB; F(Den) - BAL; A(Hol) - Kie; A(Ruh) s  
A(Hol) - Kie (CUT); A(Bel) - Hol; A(Ber) Stands\*  
(DISLODGED - DISBANDED NRP)

RUSSIA (Gerry Bayer)  
A(Sil) - Ber; A(Mos) - StP

TURKEY (Ron Fisher)  
A(Nap) Stands; A(Smy) - Tun; A(Gal) - Sil; A(StP) -  
Fin; F(WMS) - MAO (FAILED); F(AEG) c A(Smy) -  
Tun; F(GoL) c AUSTRIAN A(Rom) - Spa

**Versailles:** We have an endgame proposal of a  
5-way draw E/F/G/R/T, Austria 6<sup>th</sup>. Votes please,  
NMR = yes, abstention = no. Yeah, I bet this one  
passes... 😊





## Kooks 2025BA (Spring 1904)

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Simon Hemsley)  
F(Tri) - ADS; A(Vie) - Tyr; A(War) - Ukr (FAILED);  
A(Ser) - Rum; A(Bud) - Tri

ENGLAND (Vick Hall)  
A(StP) - Mos; A(Pic) s GERMAN A(Bur) - Par;  
F(ENG) - Bre (FAILED); F(Wal) - Lpl; F(Lon) - NTH;  
F(NTH) - Hol; F(BAR) Stands u/o

FRANCE (Ron Fisher)  
A(Pie) - Mar; A(Par) s A(Mar) - Gas\* (CUT,  
DISLODGED - DISBANDED NRP); A(Mar) - Gas;  
F(Bre) - ENG (FAILED); F(IRI) - NAO

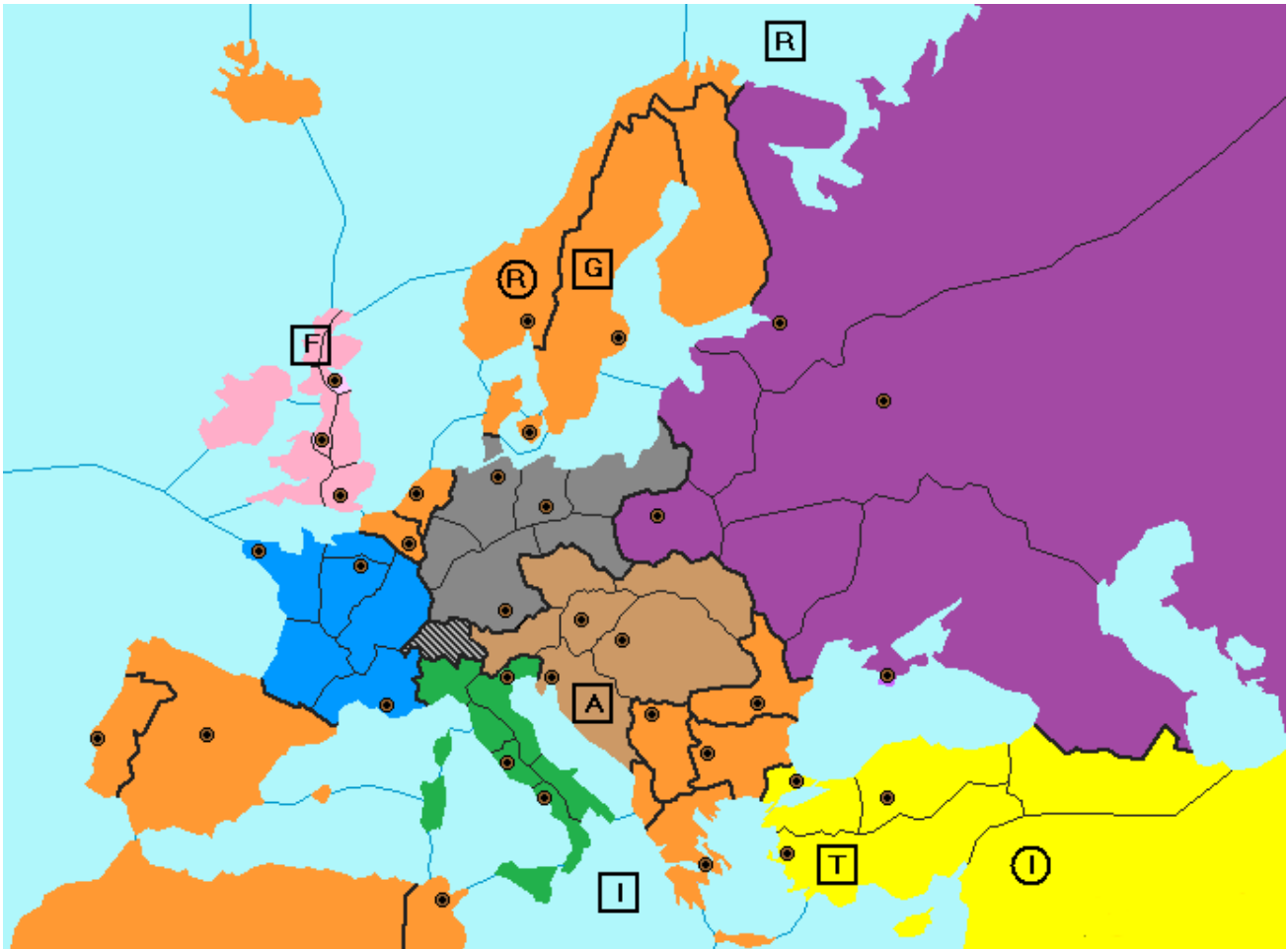
GERMANY (Martin Davis)  
A(Bur) - Par; A(Ruh) - Bur; A(Sil) - Pru; A(Mun) -  
Sil; F(GoB) - BAL

ITALY (Elle Doerr)  
A(Tus) - Ven; F(TYS) s F(Nap); F(Nap) Stands

RUSSIA (Will Haughan)  
A(Ukr) s GERMAN A(Sil) - War (MISORDER); F(Sev)  
- Arm

TURKEY (Mike Benyon)  
A(Gre) - Nap (FAILED); F(ION) c A(Gre) - Nap;  
F(Tun) s F(ION); F(Smy) - AEG; A(Con) Stands;  
A(Rum) - Sev; F(BLA) s A(Rum) - Sev





## Lazarus – Gunboat Stab! (Spring 1904)

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Noris The Brain)  
F(Tri) - ADS (FAILED);

FRANCE (Griffin)  
F(Cly) - NWG (FAILED);

GERMANY (Fraternal Order of Belligerent  
Pacifists)  
F(Swe) s F(Kie) - Den;

ITALY (The Ugly)  
F(ION) - ADS (FAILED); A(Syr) - Smy (FAILED);

RUSSIA (Mangelwurzel)  
F(BAR) - NWG (FAILED); A(Nwy) - Swe (FAILED)

TURKEY (Bismarck)  
F(Smy) s F(Con)

### Press:

No press from any of you!

### Versailles:

I have made one tweak to the rules. As drafted, the rules say that all failed moves should be reported, except for self-standoffs. I think it is true to the spirit of the game to say that a failed move that fails purely because the space to which the unit was moving is occupied by another unit belonging to the same power should also not be revealed.

And maybe I need this new rule? Every now and then the GM will make a cock-up and accidentally reveal information which should not have been revealed. This will be unfortunate. However, what is done is done, so we will assume that such accidentally released information is due to successful espionage activity by whichever country it helps.

This is an easy game for me to make mistakes in – so please make sure that everything seems to stack up, at least as far as you know.



### Game 1

Red (Mark): (25) – 10

Red Herring – Bad 5 - **Jellyfish!** You may not move forward or diagonally forward next turn.

Blue (Mark): (211) – 223

Red Herring – Bad 4 - **Shark Heads For You!**

Green (Jed): (Beach B) stays there sunbathing

Yellow (Jed): (225) – 224

Red Herring – Good 5 - **Flashback!** Shark cannot hurt you this turn

Shark (Patrick) (166) – 179 – 189 – 200 – 211

**Shark punched on the nose by Yellow and cannot attack**

Shark = 0 points.

### Game 2

Red (Patrick): (102) – 123 (loses leg)

Red Herring – Bad 2 - **Cramp!** You may not move next turn.

Blue (Patrick): (134) – 132

Green (Mark): (39) – 11

Red Herring – Bad 3 - **Phew!** You may only move one space next turn

Yellow (Mark): (225) – 223

Red Herring – Good 2 - **Freak Current** – you are carried to Beach C

Shark (Jed) (76) – 88 – 100 – 112 – 122

**Chomp, chomp, chomp. Shark eats one of Red's legs (Blue has a lucky escape)**

Shark = 1 point.

### Game 3

Red (Jed): (25) – 10

Red Herring – Bad 5 - **Jellyfish!** You may not move forward or diagonally forward next turn.

Blue (Jed): (Beach B) – 113 (loses leg)

Green (1 leg) (Patrick): (87) – 86

Red Herring – Bad 5 - **Jellyfish!** You may not move forward or diagonally forward next turn.

Yellow (Patrick): (177) – 175

Shark (Mark): (100) – 123

**Chomp, chomp, chomp. Shark eats one of Blues's legs**

Shark = 2 points.

Remember: the Shark may not attach the same Swimmer two turns in a row. Man-Eater maps can be found at the back of the zine.

## Jean Genie (Autumn 454)

### Excalibur

**BRITISH** (Brian Frew): A(Lincoln) Std.; A(Deira) S A(Lincoln); A(Malvern)\* S A(Caerwent) [CUT, DISLODGED to Mercia]; A(Caerwent)\* S A(Malvern) [CUT, DISLODGED to Caerleon]; A(Deva) S A(Lincoln)

**PICTS** (Martin Davis): A(Lothian) – Tweed [FAILS]; A(Edwinsburgh) – Lothian [FAILS]; A(Cleveland) Std.; F(GERMAN SEA) S BRITISH A(Deira); F(Tweed) Std u/o; F(FORTH) Std.; F(DOgger) Std.

**SCOTS** (Kevin Wilson): F(North Wales) S F(Wexford)-LUNDY; F(North Irish Sea) S A(Cumbria)-Lancaster; A(Galloway) Std.; A(Seguntum) S F(North Wales); F(SOUTH IRISH SEA) S F(Wexford) - LUNDY; F(Wexford) - LUNDY; A(Cumbria) - Lancaster

**SAXONS** (Graham Tunnicliffe): F(MIDDLE CHANNEL) Std.; A(South Gyrwas) S FRISIAN A(North Gyrwas) - Malvern; F(FRISIAN SEA) S ANGLES F(WASH); A(Glevum) S FRISIAN F(SEVERN) - Caerwent; A(Dors Aetan) S A(Glevum);

**ANGLES** (Neil Duncan): F(North Folk) - Crowland; F(WASH) S F(North Folk) - Crowland; A(Crowland) - North Gyrwas

**FRISIANS** (Andrew Greco): F(SEVERN) - Caerwent; F(LUNDY) Std\* [DISLODGED to ATLANTIC].; A(North Gyrwas) - Malvern; F(West Wales) S F(LUNDY);

### Autumn 454;

BRITISH: -Cae, Dev, Elm, -Mal, Dei, +Lin = 4. GM Removes A(Caerleon).

PICTS: Mea, Fif, Edw, Sud, Alc, Twe, Cle, +Lot = 8. Builds 1, no build ordered.

SCOTS: Dub, Uls, Gal, Man, Seg, Cum, NWa +Lan = 8. Builds F(Dublin).

SAXONS: Dur, Can, And, Pad, Gle, +SGy = 6. Builds A(Portus Andurn)

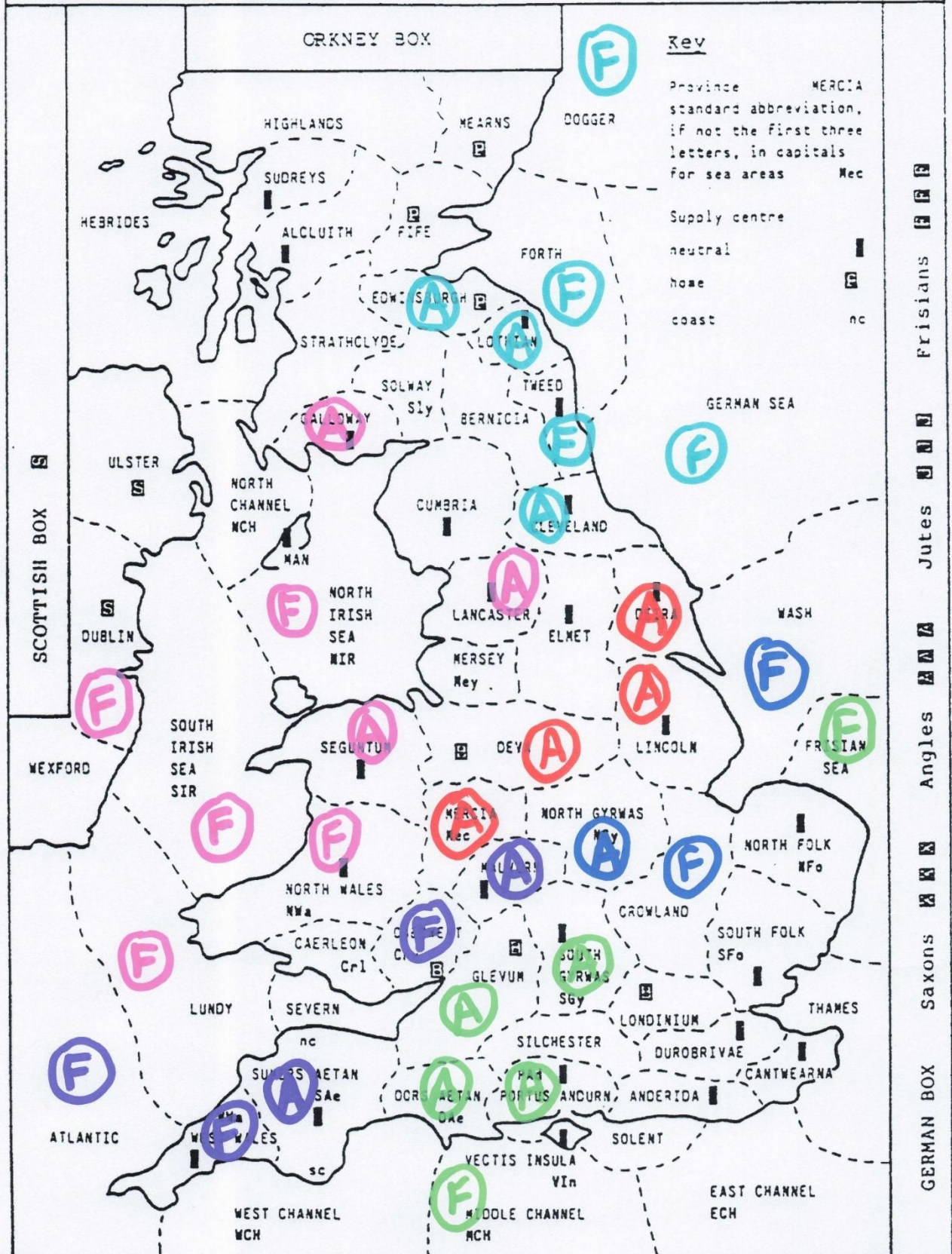
ANGLES: SFo, NFO, Lon, -Lin = 3. No change.

FRISIANS: SAe, VIn, WWa, -SGy +Cae, +Mal = 5. Builds A(Sumers Aetan)

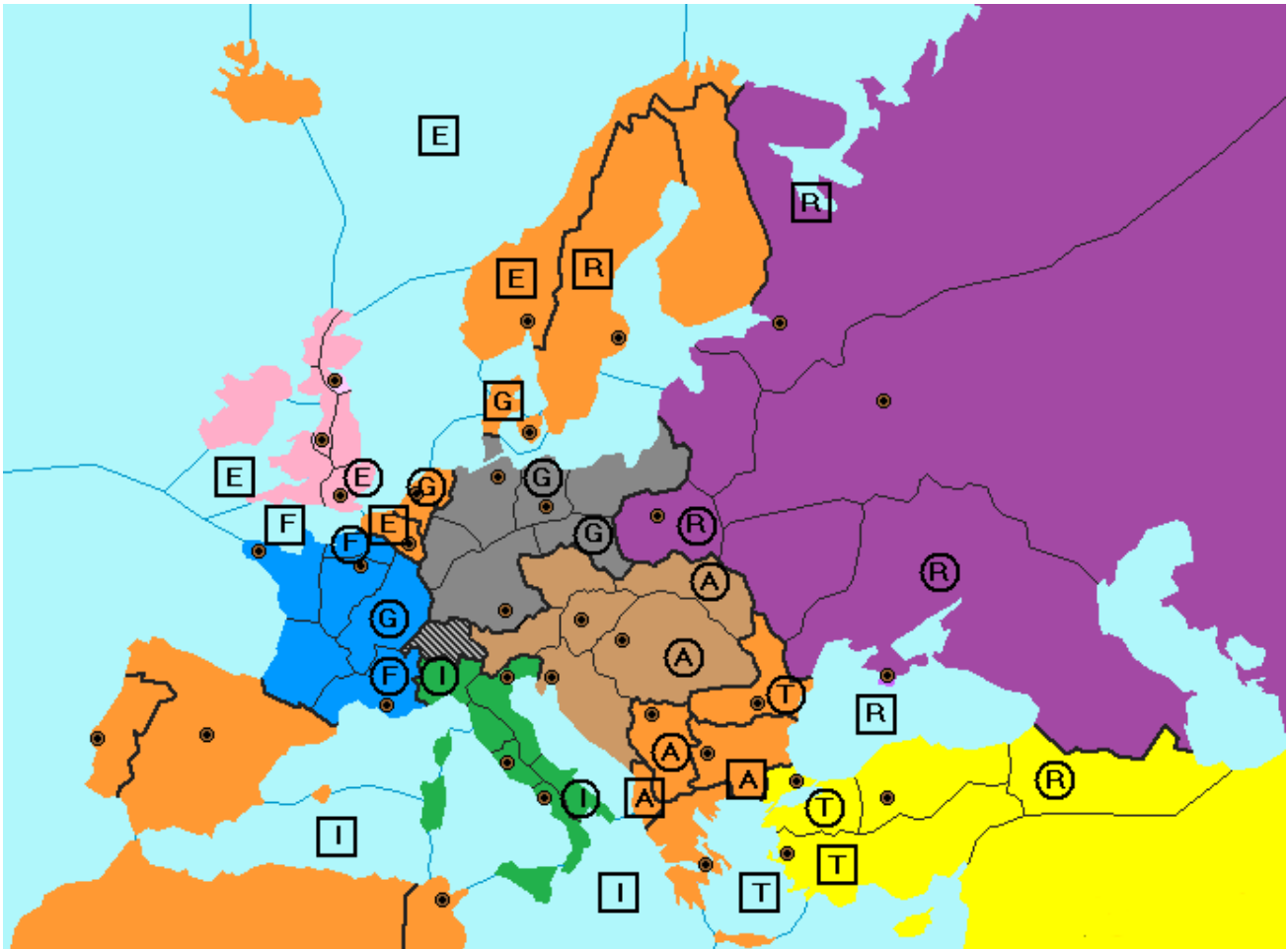
# AUTUMN 454 AD. EXCALIBUR

A Diplomacy variant by Kenneth Clark

This map by John Morris



Frissians  
Jutes  
Angles  
Saxons



## Moonage Daydream 2025BE (Spring 1902)

TURKEY (Gerry Bayer)

F(Smy) s F(AEG) - Con; A(Con) - Ank (FAILED);  
A(Bul) - Rum; F(AEG) - Con (FAILED)

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Lindsay Jackson)

A(Bud) s A(Vie) - Gal; F(Tri) - Alb; A(Ser) s  
TURKISH A(Bul) - Rum; F(Gre) - Bul sc; A(Vie) - Gal

ENGLAND (Edwin Hutton)

A(Lon) Stands; F(Lpl) - IRI; F(Bel) - ENG (FAILED);  
F(Edi) - NWG; F(Nwy) - Swe (FAILED)

FRANCE (Gracen Shepherd - NMR!)

A(Pic) Stands ; A(Mar) Stands ; F(ENG) Stands

GERMANY (Patrick Lafontaine)

A(Hol) Stands; F(Den) s ENGLISH F(Nwy) - Swe;  
A(Kie) - Ber; A(Mun) - Sil; A(Ruh) - Bur

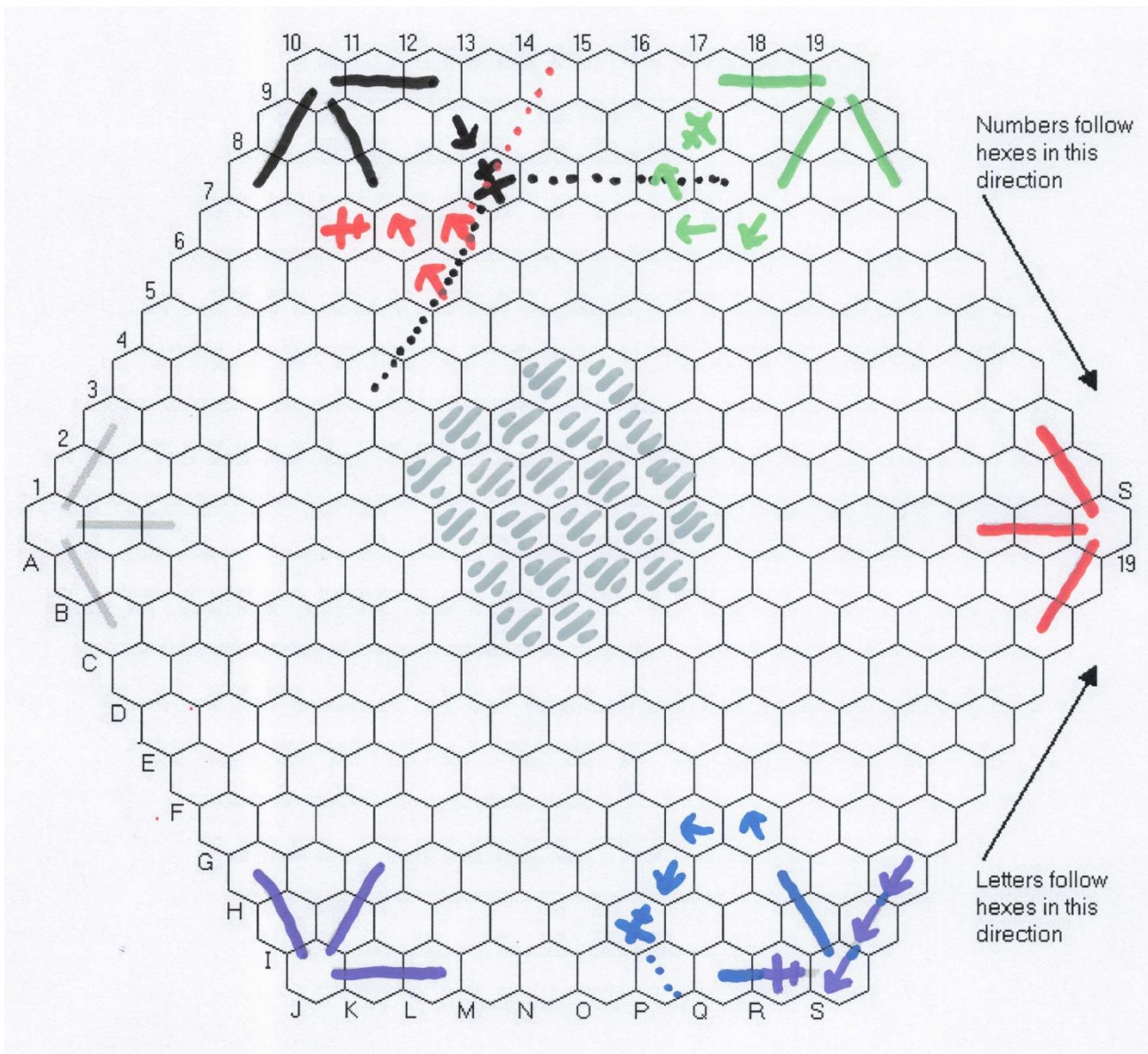
ITALY (Mike Elliott)

F(Nap) - ION; A(Pie) - Mar (FAILED); F(Tun) - WMS;  
A(Ven) - Apu

RUSSIA (Paul Simpkins)

F(StP) nc s F(Swe) - Nwy; F(Swe) - Nwy (FAILED);  
F(BLA) - Ank (FAILED); A(Sev) - Arm; A(Rum) s  
A(Gal)\* (CUT, DISLODGED TO Sev); A(Gal) s  
A(Rum)\* (CUT, DISLODGED TO War)





## Sopwith (Turn 16)

### Cliu Petre (Mog Firth)

Starts: D12 (facing E12)  
Ammo = 16; Damage = 12; Victory Points = 6  
Turn 1: A (fires Right) Hits The Red Byron - 4 damage. Hit by The Red Byron (4 damage)  
Turn 2: Holds (fires Left) Hits Biggles 2 damage.  
Turn 3: Holds  
Ends: E12 (facing F12)  
Ammo = 14; Damage = 8; Victory Points = 10

### Biggles (Martin Davis)

Starts: J16 (facing J15)  
Ammo = 16; Damage = 3; Victory Points = 5  
Turn 1: RT  
Turn 2: RT Hit by Cliu Petre 2 damage.  
Turn 3: RT  
Ends: H16 (facing H17)  
Ammo = 16; Damage = 1 ; Victory Points = 5

### The Red Byron (Alex Richardson)

Starts: E10 (facing D10)  
Ammo = 11; Damage = 7; Victory Points = 8  
Turn 1: RS (fires right) Hits Cliu Petre - 4 damage. Hit by Cliu Petre 4 damage.  
Turn 2: LS  
Turn 3: LT  
Ends: D11 (facing D12)  
Ammo = 10; Damage = 3; Victory Points = 12

### Baron Von Stinkhoven (John Langley)

Starts: P10 (facing O10)  
Ammo = 15; Damage = 5; Victory Points = 9  
Turn 1: LT  
Turn 2: LT  
Turn 3: A (fires Left)  
Ends: O7 (Facing J6)  
Ammo = 14; Damage = 5; Victory Points = 9

**Carrion (John Tait)**

Starts: S12 facing S11

Ammo = 2; Damage = 11; Victory Points = 10

Turn 1: A

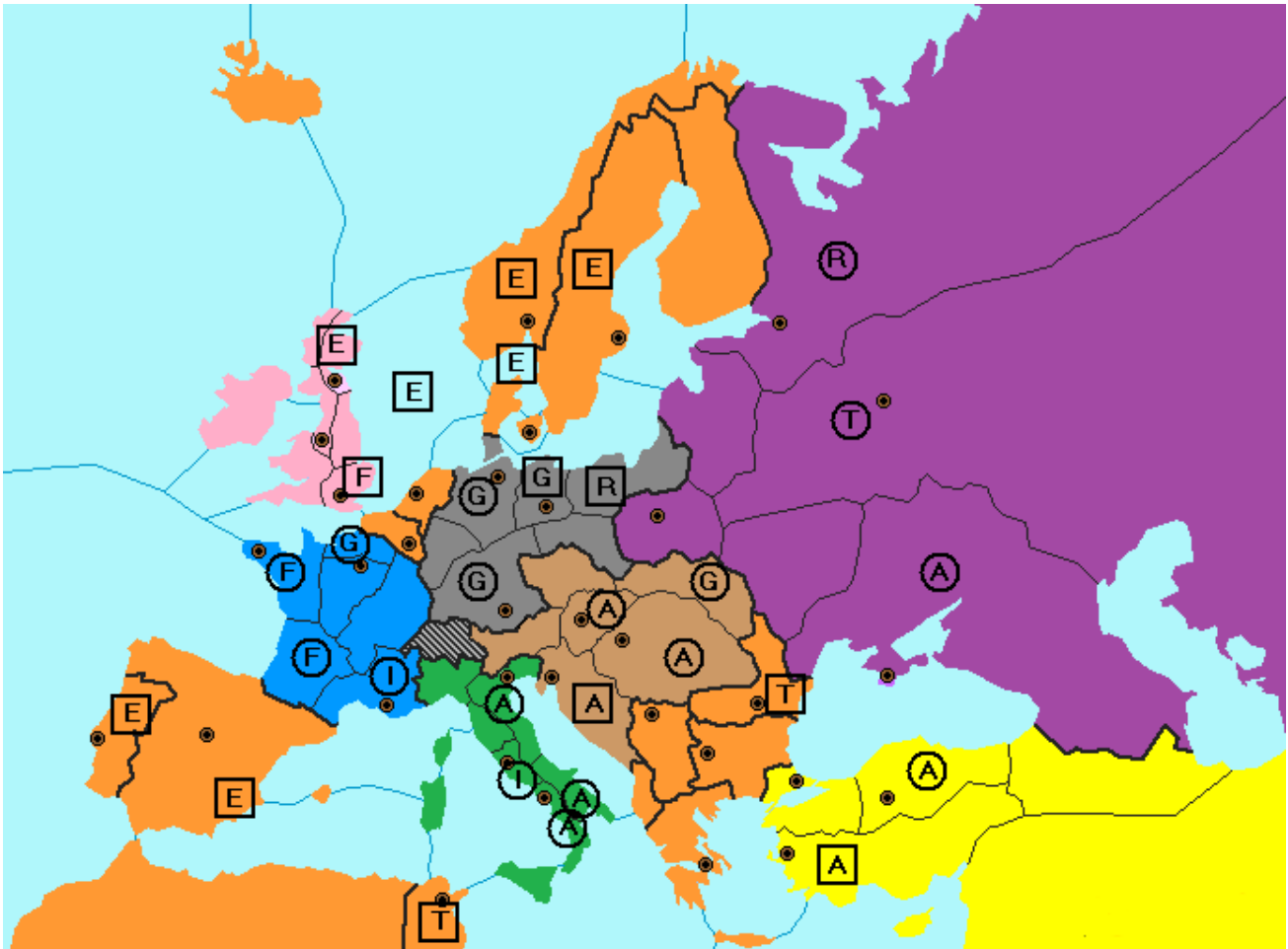
Turn 2: A

Turn 3: RT

Ends: R9 (facing Q8)

Ammo = 2; Damage = 11; Victory Points = 10

**Ground Control:** The weather is changing. A giant storm cloud has formed in the centre of the sky... The wind is pushing the giant cloud East. Remember, for every full move (3 turns) spent at an airbase you repair 2 damage points. Visiting an airbase allows you to replace all used Ammo. Staying on an Airbase can make you a sitting duck... but if you don't stay long enough, you don't get repaired.



## Diplomacy Bingo (Autumn 1904)

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Kaiser Franz-Joseph)  
A(Bud) Stands; A(Ukr) - Sev; A(Vie) Stands;  
F(ADS) - Tri; F(AEG) - Smy; A(Con) - Ank; A(Nap)  
s A(Rom) - Apu; A(Rom) - Apu; A(Ven) Stands

ENGLAND (King Edward VOO)  
F(Cly) - Edi; F(Den) - SKA; F(MAO) - Por; F(Spa)  
sc Stands; F(StP) nc Stands (DISLODGED TO  
Nwy); F(Swe) s F(Den) (MISORDER); F(Lon)  
Stands (DISLODGED TO NTH)

FRANCE (President Emile Loub)

A(Bre) - Par (FAILED); A(Bur) - Gas; F(ENG) - Lon;  
F(Wal) s F(ENG) - Lon; A(Tus) - Pie

GERMANY (Kaiser Wilhelm II)  
A(Kie) s F(BAL) - Ber; A(Tyr) - Mun; F(BAL) - Ber;  
A(War) - Gal; A(Pic) - Par (FAILED)

ITALY (King Vittorio-Emanue)  
A(Apu) Stands (DISLODGED - DISBANDED NRP);  
A(Pie) - Mar

RUSSIA (Tsar Nicholas II)  
A(Lvn) - StP; F(Ber) - Kie (FAILED, DISLODGED  
TO Pru)

TURKEY (Sultan Abdul Hamid I)  
A(Mos) s RUSSIAN A(Lvn) - StP; F(BLA) - Rum;  
F(ION) - Tun

**Autumn 1904 Adjustments:**

A: Bud, +Sev, Vie, Tri, +Smy, +Ank, Nap, Ven,  
Con, Gre, Bul, Ser, -Rum = 12; Gains 2. 3 Build  
centres short.

E: Edi, +Por, +Spa, Nwy, Swe, Den, Lpl, -StP, -  
Lon = 7; No change.

F: Bre, +Lon, Par, -Por, -Spa, -Mar = 3; Loses 2.  
Removes A(Pie), F(Wal).

G: Kie, Mun, Ber, Bel, Hol = 5; No change.

I: +Mar, Rom, -Tun = 2; No change. Builds  
A(Rom).

R: +StP, War, -Mos = 2; No change.

T: +Mos, +Rum, +Tun -Sev, -Ank, -Smy = 3; No  
change.

**Press:**

**Nick K to all:** in case you're looking for  
something (and something interesting) to do in  
this game besides submitting to the inevitable,  
please contact me on my usual email address  
which I here express as nick dot kinzett at gmail  
dot com.

**BINGO - The Scores on the Doors**

	Old Score/	This Turn	Total
Toby	130	20	150
Dane	126	20	146
Brian	121	20	141
Niall	124	16	140
Ian B	121	18	139
Mark	118	20	138
Jed	116	18	134
James	118	12	130
Richard	114	12	126
Kevin	105	20	125
Vick	102	20	122
Edwin	97	20	117
Ian W	94	15	109
Colin	98	9	107
Sandra	91	13	104
Simon	96	6	102
Brad	81	20	101
Alex R	84	10	94
Eddy	86	5	91
Nick	78	12	90
Andy	79	10	89
Patrick	66	12	78
Neil	20	20	40
Conrad	20	18	38
Alex L	0	20	20

**Versailles:** No less than ten players managed  
20 points this round! The most popular votes  
were F(ION)-Tun (18 votes) and A(Bud Holds,  
F(Cly)-Edi and A(Bur)-Gas, all on 17 votes. No  
one submitted orders for A(Ven), F(Lon)A(Tus)  
and A(War). There were tied votes for A(Nap),  
A(Rom), A(Con), A(Pic), F(Ber). A(Bud) was the  
most popular unit to order with 21 votes,  
followed by F(Edi) and F(ION) (20 votes), and  
A(Bur) (19 votes). A(Ukr), A(Bre) and A(Mun) only  
had 1 vote each. 21 players were active this  
turn. As you know, I ignore orders which are on  
their face illegal (e.g. A(Par)-Lon). 2 players  
misordered

Anyone can join (or rejoin) this game at any  
time. However, if you miss two votes in a row  
your name will drop off the results table until  
you submit orders again. The winner is the first  
player to 200 points. The tie-breaker is the  
actual total of points after the season when the  
game ends.

The anonymised spreadsheet used to  
adjudicate this game is attached at the end of  
the zine for amusement.

**Regular Diplomacy  
Gamestart?**

I have seven names on the Diplomacy waiting  
list for what could be game "N". I will probably  
call the game No Plan which was the title track  
on an EP released a year after Bowie's death in  
2017 on what would have been his 70<sup>th</sup>  
birthday. The EP featured four tracks written  
for his musical, *Lazarus*. It was recorded  
during the sessions for *Blackstar* just before  
his death.

Martin Davis, Ron Fisher, Leif Kjetil Tviberg,  
Charles Welsh, John Langley, Mike Pollard, Geoff  
Wilde

I will write to you all asking to confirm that you  
still want to play and giving you the opportunity  
to submit a country preference list. Please let  
me know one way or another ASAP. If it is all  
stations go, I will send out a gamestart notice.

This game start was advertised as "no  
standbys". I am open to playing this game with  
standbys if that is what people prefer - please  
let me know if you have a preference, and if the  
decision goes against your preference, is it a  
deal breaker?

If anyone wants to volunteer to take up any  
vacancies (if any arise) please get in touch ASAP.

# The 2025 UK Games Zine Poll

It is that time of year again. Alex Richardson is soliciting votes for the 2025 Zine Poll (first run by Richard Walkerdine in November 1973). Please make the effort to votes - you only have to vote for up to 5 zines in any/all of the categories. Just send Alex an email.

(a) **WHO MAY VOTE?** Anyone who sees at least one eligible zine, whether as an editor or a subscriber. Editors may vote for their own zines.

(b) **WHICH ZINES ARE ELIGIBLE?** In the first four categories, any zine published in the British Isles which has produced an issue in 2025 (up to and including the Poll deadline); is distributed by post, as an e-mail, as an attachment to an e-mail or as a download from a website; and runs games that we would recognise as "postal" ones (e.g. Diplomacy, Railway Rivals, 18xx, En Garde! or United, among many others).

The fifth category is a free-for-all open to similar "postal games" zines from around the world.

(c) **HOW TO VOTE.** The **five categories** are: (1) Diplomacy (and variants); (2) Railway Games; (3) Sports Leagues; (4) Other Games; (5) Overseas Zines.

**This year, I'd like you to list up to five eligible zines, in any combination of tied or single spots, in as many of the categories for which they qualify as you wish.**

Zines may be entered in more than one category and in different positions, if desired. For example, *Obsidian* might be listed in the Diplomacy, Railway and Other Games categories, in the fourth, third and equal-fifth places, if that's your assessment of it.

You could send in full lists of candidates for all five categories, nominate your favourite in just one, or something in between these two extremes. The amount of time you want to spend on this and the level of detail you want to go into are up to you.

Votes should be sent by e-mail from the voter's own account to [alex.bokmal@googlemail.com](mailto:alex.bokmal@googlemail.com). The Poll deadline will be midnight on **FRIDAY 31ST OCTOBER 2025**. Results will be e-mailed to each voter and published (with luck) in at least a few zines.

## Outro

This issue has been difficult as my PC keeps refusing to boot. If you are not reading this, then my PC has failed and I have been wasting my time all weekend. This is a slightly longer deadline than I would have wished for, but the last weekend in October is MidCon, so I can't really have a deadline that weekend.

All the spacefillers this issue are miscellaneous photos from the NDC in Warrington. Enjoy!

## MidCon

**MidCon #46** is taking place this year from **Friday 31st October to 2nd November** back at the Derby Mickleover Hotel (the same venue as the last few years) and tickets are on sale now, though the hotel appears to be fully booked. I have a room and will be there with my son, John.

[www.midcon.org.uk](http://www.midcon.org.uk)

## Waiting Lists

**Regular Diplomacy:** This game will NOT use standbys. No one - 7 needed!

**Fokker:** Diplomacy with Planes. Rules in issue 29. 5 needed. Mike Pollard, Ian Bull

**Star Wars: Order 66:** Rules inside. 6 needed.

**Mercator XIV (The Steve Jones Memorial Game):** (9/17 - 8 more wanted): Brian Frew, John Strain, Brendan Whyte, Colin Smith, Ken Flowers, Edwin Hutton, Martin Davis, David Anderson, Vick Hall. More than halfway!

**DEADLINE**  
**Friday 7th**  
**November 2025**

[godsavethezine@gmail.com](mailto:godsavethezine@gmail.com)

# Intimate Diplomacy Tournament - Update 29

## Game 3 Replay (Spring 1903)

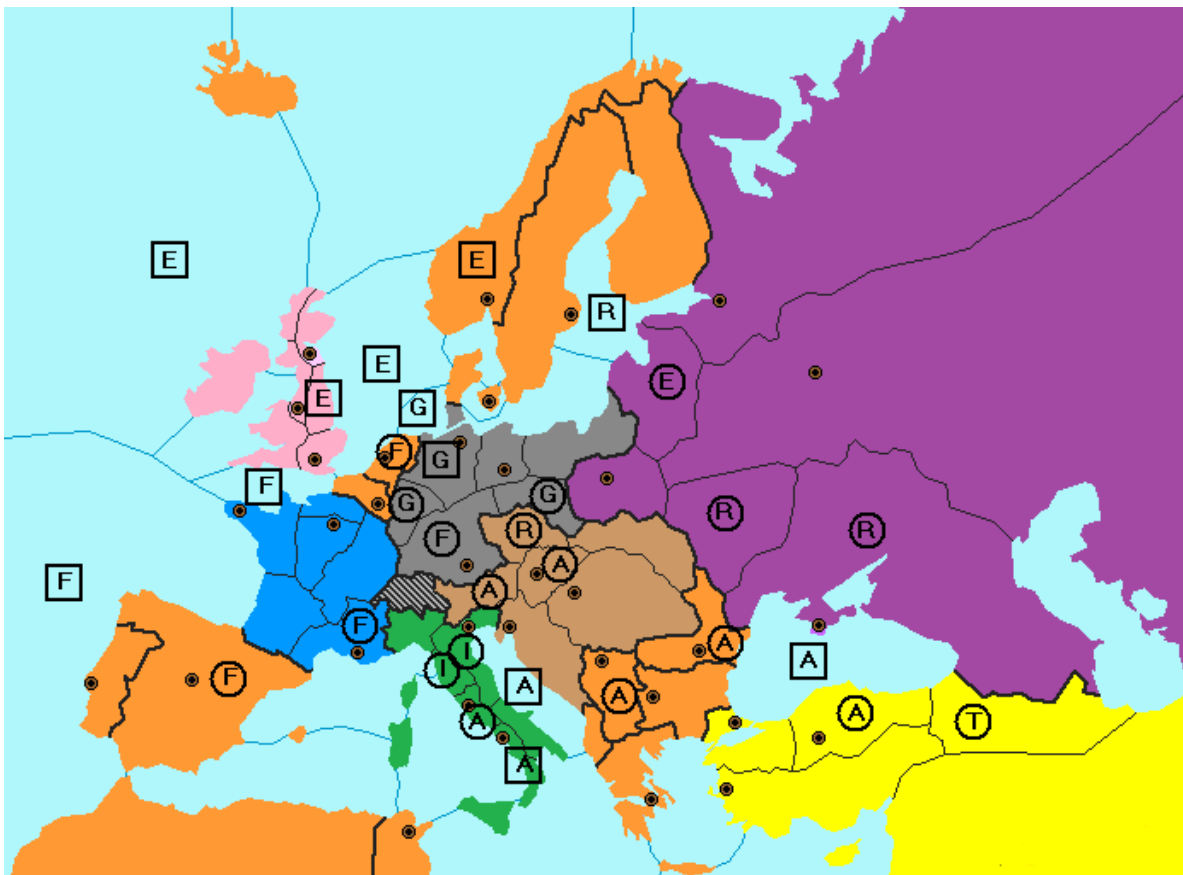
Richard Williams (Austria) vs. Brian Frew (France)

### Bids for 1903

	Richard (15 Credits)	Brian (20 Credits)
England	5	8
Germany	2	7
Italy	3	1
Russia	3	4
Turkey	2	0
Remaining Credits	10	1

So, Brian goes into 1903 with England, Germany and Russia, while Richard has Italy and Turkey.

The winner of this game will play James Hardy in the Final.



AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Richard Williams)

F(Con) - BLA; F(Apu) - Nap; F(Tri) - ADS; A(Ven) - Rom; A(Ank) s TURKISH A(Syr) - Arm;  
A(Rum) - Bud (FAILED); A(Mun) - Tyr; A(Bud) - Ser; A(Vie) - Bud (FAILED)

ENGLAND (Mercenary)

F(MAO) - NAO; F(ENG) - NTH; F(Lon) - Yor; F(NTH) - Nwy; A(StP) - Lvn

FRANCE (Brian Frew)

A(Por) - Spa; F(Gas) - MAO; A(Mar) - Pie (FAILED); A(Bel) - Hol; A(Bur) - Mun; F(Bre) -  
ENG

GERMANY (Mercenary)

A(Ruh) s FRENCH A(Bur) - Mun; A(Sil) - Ber (FAILED); F(Hol) - HEL; F(Kie) - Ber (FAILED)

ITALY (Mercenary)

A(Pie) - Ven; A(Tus) - Pie (FAILED)

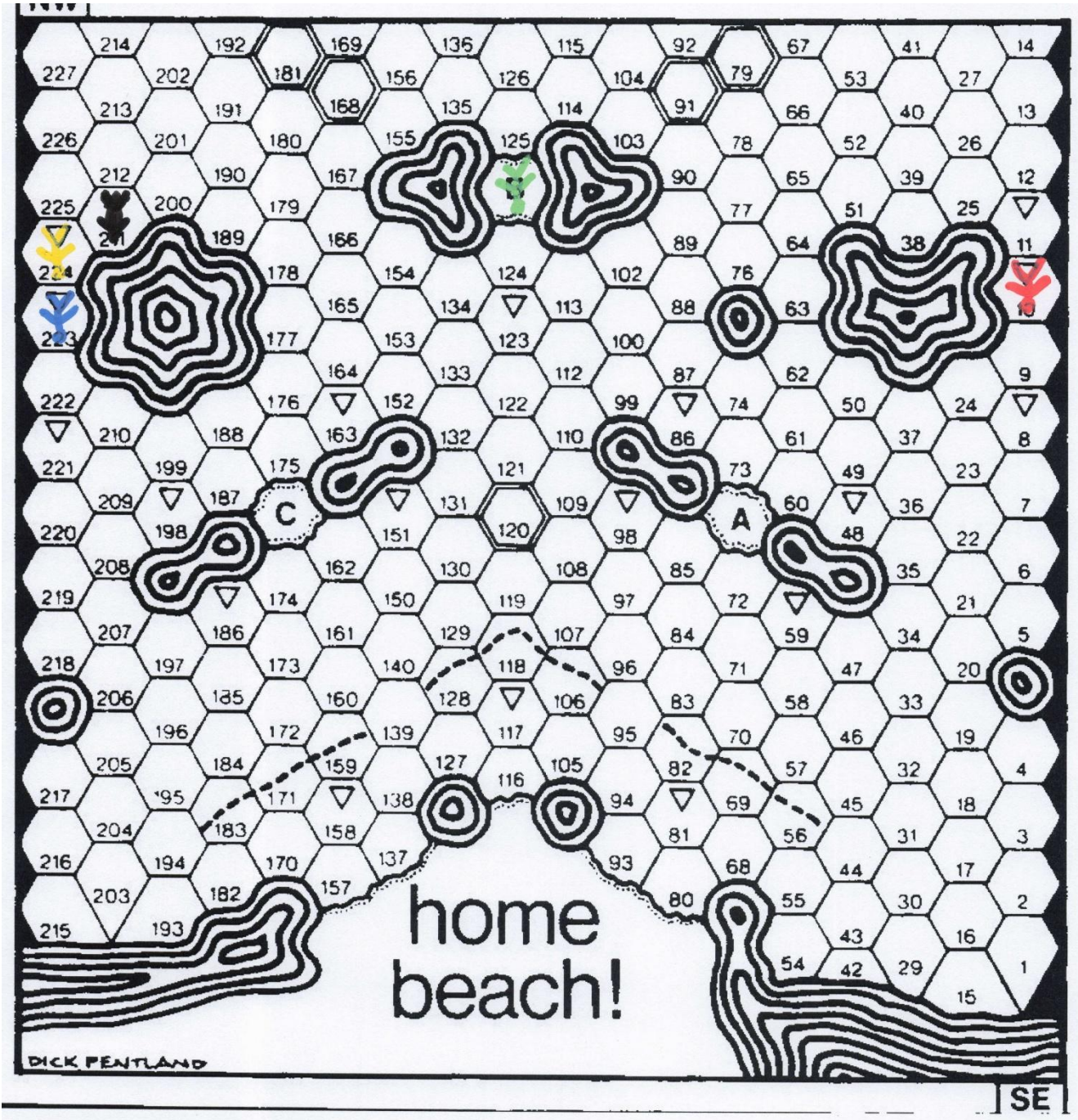
RUSSIA (Mercenary)

A(Gal) - Boh; A(Mos) - Ukr; A(Sev) s A(Mos) - Ukr; F(Swe) - GoB

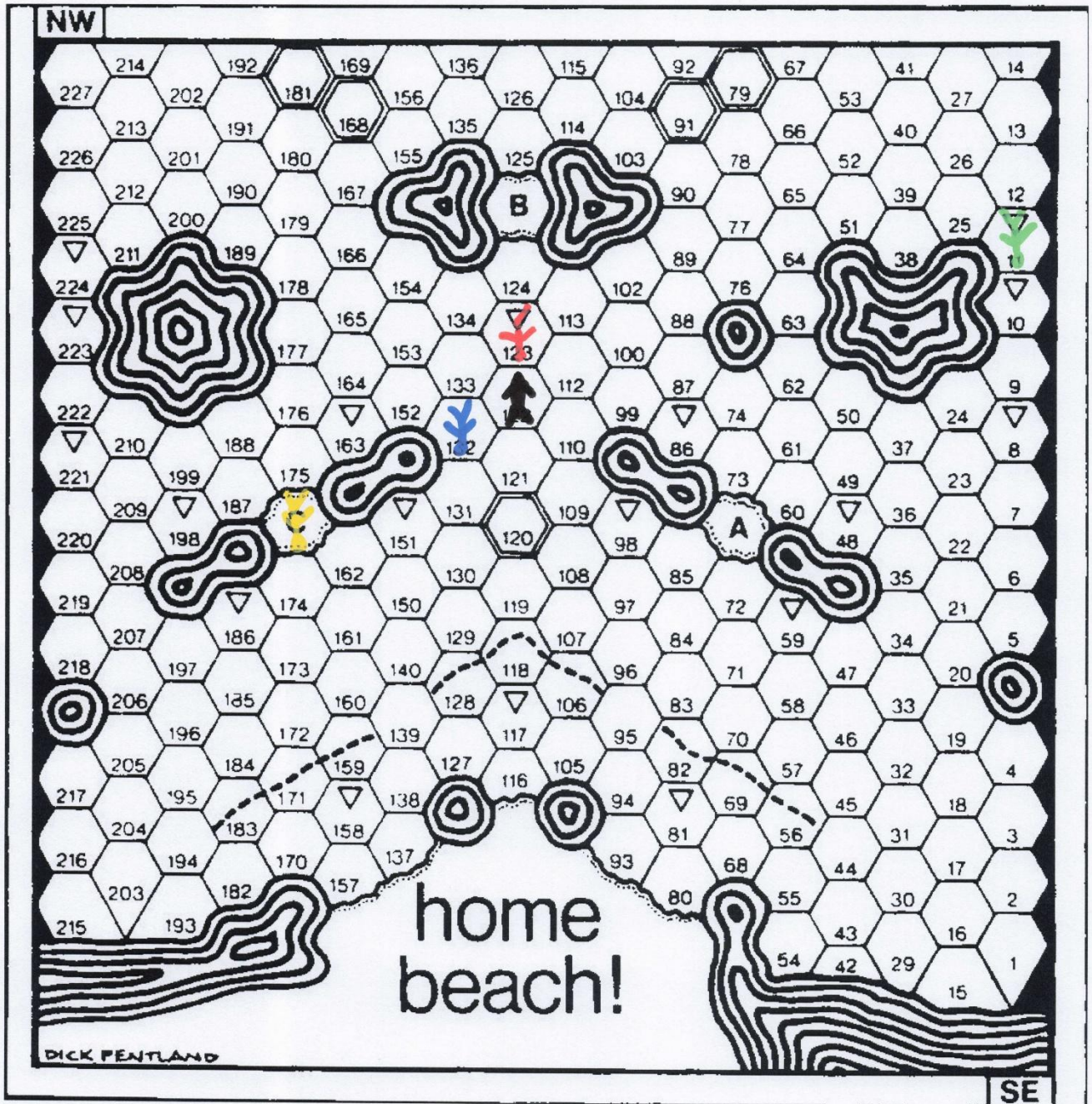
TURKEY (Mercenary)

A(Syr) - Arm

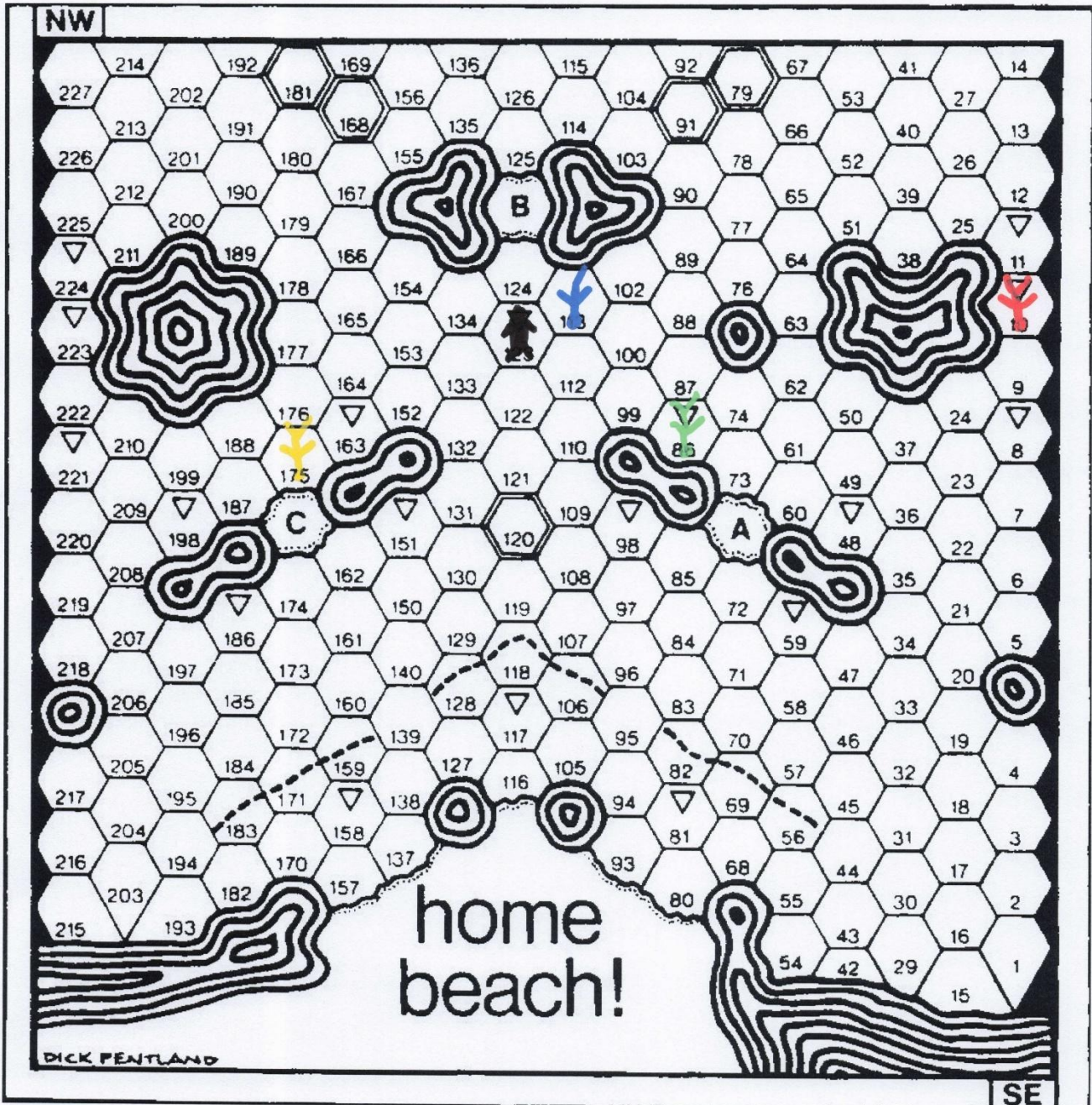
# Man-Eater Game 1



# Man Eater-Game 2



# Man Eater-Game 3



# Bingo A04

	A04	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Total	Wins	Order	
Army	Nap			Apu						Rom												S A(Rcm)					3	0	S A(Rom)-	
Fleet	ADS	Tri		Tri				Tri					S A(Ven)		ION	Tri								Tri			10	6	Tri	
Army	Bud	Hold	Hold	Vie	Hold	Hold	Tri	Hold	Hold	S A(Vie)- Gal	Hold	Hold		Hold	Hold	Hold	Hold	Hold	Gal				Hold	Hold			21	17	Hold	
Army	Ven																					S A(Nap)					0	0	Hold	
Army	Rom																										3	0	Apu	
Army	Vie	Hold	Gal	Boh	Hold	Hold	Tri	Hold	Hold	Gal	Hold			Hold		Hold	Hold	Hold	Hold	Boh				Hold			17	12	Hold	
Fleet	AEG												Smy		Smy						Smy		S				5	4	Smy	
Army	Con													Hold							Ank						2	0	Ank	
Army	Ukr																				Sev						1	1	Sev	
Fleet	Spasc														Hold												2	2	Hold	
Fleet	Den	SKA												Hold													7	6	SKA	
Fleet	MAO		Por	ENG	Por						Por	WMS	Por	Hold	SKA	SKA	SKA	SKA	SKA	Por							13	11	Por	
Fleet	Lon													Hold													0	0	Hold	
Fleet	Cly	Edi	Edi	Yor	Edi	Edi	Edi	Edi	Edi	Edi	Edi	Edi	Lpl	Edi	Edi	Edi	Edi	Edi	Edi	Edi							20	17	Edi	
Fleet	SPinc												Hold	Hold	Hold	Hold	Hold	Hold	Hold	Hold							6	6	Hold	
Fleet	Swe																										8	6	S F(Den)	
Fleet	F(Den)																										1	1	Par	
Army	Bre																										0	0	Pie	
Army	Tus																										6	6	Lon	
Fleet	ENG																										19	17	Gas	
Army	Bur	Gas	Gas	Gas	Gas	Gas	Gas	Gas	Gas	Gas	Gas	Gas	Gas	Gas	Gas	Gas	Gas	Gas	Gas	Gas								5	3	FIENG)-
Fleet	Wal	Lon																									5	3	FIENG)-	
Fleet	BAL	Ber	S A(Kie)- Ber	Ber	Ber	Ber	Ber	Ber	Ber	Ber	Ber	Ber	Ber	Ber	Ber	Ber	Ber	Ber	Ber	Ber							18	17	Ber	
Army	Pic																										2	0	Par	
Army	Kie	S F(BAL)- Ber																									14	13	S F(BAL)- Ber	
Army	Tyr																										1	1	Mun	
Army	War																										0	0	Gal	
Army	Pie																										7	6	Mar	
Army	Apu	Hold																									6	5	Hold	
Army	Lvn																										2	2	SP	
Fleet	Ber																										5	0	Kie	
Fleet	BLA																										9	7	Rum	
Army	Mos																										3	2	RUSSIA N A(Lvn)- SP	
Fleet	ION																										20	18	Tun	

# BINGO

## Units on the board for Spring 1905

### Austria

A(Bud)  
A(Sev)  
A(Vie)  
F(Tri)  
F(Smy)  
A(Ank)  
A(Nap)  
A(Apu)  
A(Ven)

### England

F(Edi)  
F(SKA)  
F(Por)  
F(Spa s)  
F(Nwy)  
F(Swe)  
F(NTH)

### France

A(Bre)  
A(Gas)  
F(Lon)

### Germany

A(Kie)  
A(Mun)  
F(Ber)  
A(Gal)  
A(Pic)

### Italy

A(Mar)  
A(Rom)

### Russia

A(StP)  
F(Pru)

### Turkey

A(Mos)  
F(Rum)  
F(Tun)