# Memories & Reflections of **Redmond A. Simonsen**

*Redmond A. Simonsen was co-Founder of Simulations Publications Inc; Editor of MOVES magazine; co-Editor of Strategy & Tactics magazine and Art Director of SPI. He was also a game designer and developer. He was inducted into the CSR Awards Hall of Fame in 1977. Redmond passed away on 8 March 2005. It was my honor to know him and to work with him, but it was his friendship which I will always treasure. He helped me with my first magazine Fire & Movement— we go way back together. Here are some memories and reflections from those glory days in New York.*
*— Rodger B. MacGowan*

**A Meeting that will not happen...**

I am deeply moved by the passing of my old friend and teacher Redmond Simonsen. I would like to pass along my sincere condolences to his family for their loss. Redmond is one of the great originals of our hobby whose shoulders we all stand on when we play our beloved games. However, to me he was a friend who I always thought I would run into someday to catch up, but alas this is never to be.

When I was a young designer growing up in the SPI machine, Redmond was the revered and respected leader of the art department whose job it was to make silk purses out of R&D's submissions. As my working hours closely matched Redmonds', I often sought out his wisdom on how to solve knotty design issues. I remember one time when I was designing **MechWar 2,** I was frustrated with how we had traditionally handled defilade hexsides. After a late night session we figured out how to do away with them. However, the part that most sticks in my mind was the intellectual fun he and I shared when I brought him my latest conundrum. He always dropped anything he was doing to help me, which is always the true sign of a friend. What I most appreciate was how his spending time with me made me better than I was. I hope he felt that his time was well spent.

There is insufficient room in this issue to properly recount Redmond's professional accomplishments, but suffice to say that most of the images and icons of our hobby come from his brilliant mind. However, right now all I remember is the friend that I have lost. Redmond was generous to a fault. He was generous with his time, his wisdom, and his resources. I will remember what he did for me for the rest of my life and I was blessed to have known him. I hope that wherever he is now he will save me a seat, so we can someday talk and catch up.

1976

**When I worked at SPI, Redmond was my boss for two years.** We had a lot of dinners together, and we never talked about work. We drank a lot of wine. He really thought deeply about life, he had high principles. You had to break-through, but then he was very kind and reliable. Typical gruff exterior.

I was just reading Redmond's article on map graphic design in the SPI book, *Wargame Design* (1977). He doesn't talk about how he does it in the article, kind of talks all around it. But the work itself shows you everything. Redmond was a careful designer. He got something that worked and then tweaked; changed one element in the map while leaving **all** the rest. A gradual evolution came with additional colors: starting with just blue on sandstone stock, then blue and brown, then Red joins Yellow as a novelty.

He showed me a lot of trust. I was there to implement his vision of *Physical Systems Design* (he didn't say Graphic Design). Even at work we didn't talk about what we were doing, we just did it. I don't remember him ever correcting me, or holding up a chart or something and waving it at me, even when I shifted the Odds Headings to the side on the **Punic Wars** CRT!

There were times at work it would get tense, around deadline for *S&T*. we had reserved presstime on a Web Press and we couldn't be late. In that environment, we'd close the doors to the R&D Hallway so no one would hear the insanity as we tried to get the last-minute corrections done. Actually it was pretty crazy to work there.
*– Kevin Zucker*

1981

**Memories of Redmond abound...**

he could be difficult, he could be fiercely cutting, but he was always helpful and ubiquitously creative. And he was fun to work with, simply because he had so much input to offer, so much knowledge he willingly shared, and so much assistance to any project he freely gave.

Two instances from my early career at SPI stand out. The first real game I ever designed was **Terrible Swift Sword.** I had little idea what I was doing (some would add "The more things change the more they remain the same"), but it was Redmond who, when I showed him one of the first versions of the rules, stopped what he was doing, looked through them, and instantly came up with two basic premises that are still in the GBACW system today (weapons differentiation and the importance of Morale to combat).

Then there was **Conquistador,** which was my next game after **TSS.** We're sitting there playing the initial version, moving ships from Europe to the New World hex-by-hex (Frank Davis was rolling so badly that his ship looked like a commuter train back and forth 'round the Cape). Redmond watched for several minutes and then did what he did so well: thought "outside the box". Why don't you just get rid of the hexes and have the ships travel to Europe by *Bounds* (players of **Conquistador** will know what this means). Sounds silly, and, today, it sounds obvious, but then it wasn't, and that was *the* kick in the design butt the game needed; from then on, it was all (relatively) easy.

That's what Redmond did: he made the tough stuff easy. And then he made it look good. And he did it with style, elegance, and wit. A great graphic artist, and just as great a friend.
*— Richard H. Berg*