

of possibilities within prescribed limits for each scenario would be more appropriate to a hypothetical conflict and enhance possibilities for replay.

Both **Dark Passage** and **Southern Flank** satisfy my preference for a game that can be set up, learned, and played in a reasonable time—in this case three or four hours apiece. Both games suffer from poor editing. Usually, this is nothing more than an irritant to the compulsive among us; but sometimes it leads to ambiguities: for instance, I can think of three ways to interpret the rule determining the supply status of the Soviets in **Southern Flank**. All in all, for your money you acquire folio-sized games worth their price.

**The Great Monty-Patton Race
SICILY**

**Simulations Publications, Inc., 257 Park
Avenue South, New York, NY 10010**

Design: Dick Rustin

Development: Greg Costikyan

Review: Friedrich Helfferich

\$6.00 (with S&T nr. 89)

There was a time, not long ago, when S&T magazine games had fallen into disrepute. Too many had been "turkeys," put together by immature designers and rushed into print. Fortunately, this seems

to have changed. The latest crop, from **Cedar Mountain** in nr. 86 to **Sicily** in nr. 89, have all been very respectable games. True, they have not sparkled with ingenious innovations, but then, don't you prefer a good and proven system over one that tries, and fails, to reinvent the wheel?

Sicily models the conquest of that Mediterranean island by the Allies in summer 1943. Operation HUSKY is perhaps not a conducive topic for a game since its outcome was never seriously in doubt. The only real contest lay in whether the Germans would manage to extricate their meager forces largely

intact (they did) and who, Montgomery or Patton, would win the race to Messina ('twas 01' George, by a few hours). Nevertheless, Sicily does a very creditable job of drawing a picture of the campaign and even provides tension and excitement—at least until the Allies have consolidated their beachhead.

In size and style, **Sicily** is a typical S&T game, with one map and 300 counters representing regiments, brigades, or battalions or serving as markers. The scale is five kilometers per hex and two days per turn. Maps and counters, in Simonsen's pastel colors, are pleasing. The basic rules are those of the *Victory in the West*

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ON BEAT TO QUARTERS! "Tired of Sailing Ship Games that don't deliver? If so you'll do well to purchase *Beat to Quarters*." *Gamer's Guide #4*. "... Far and away the best set of rules for Napoleonic Naval Games I've yet encountered: The orders of battle for the various fleets is worth the price of the rules all by themselves." *Grenadier #14*. "The quality of production is excellent. The rules are well-written, clear, precise, and lavishly illustrated... artwork throughout impeccable and appealing." *F&M #25*. "... A very polished game system... well worth the price..." *Richard Berg's Review of Games #15*. "... A very professional job... very highly recommended indeed". *Phoenix #34*.

ON ROAD TO WASHINGTON: "... A truly important game to the state of the art..." *Campaign #98*. "... Does for the Civil War Period what Squad Leader did for World War II; it provides a viable, exciting, aesthetic, coherent, tactical game system, the possibilities of which have only begun to be explored..." *F&M #22*.



Command Perspectives

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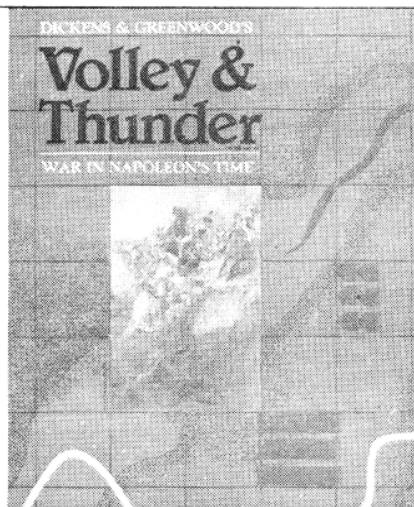
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system (Patton's 3rd Army, Operation Grenade). However, Sicily goes farther than its predecessors in elaborating on those rules. Thus, additions cover airborne and amphibious landings (both full-scale and small "end runs"), naval support, evacuation, and Italian desertion. Also, many of the basic rules have been modified to fit the different conditions of this campaign.

The "Patton system" is a distant offspring of Panzergruppe Guderian. Player turns alternate and have a simple movement-combat sequence (no "exploitation movement"). Zones of control are "rigid" (entering units must stop); a unit may disengage, at a movement point penalty, but then is prevented from entering another zone of control that turn. Combat is voluntary. The combat results table, based on strength ratios, offers limited choices between retreats and losses. Most units have three steps, the last being a "cadre." Combat strength is determined at the time of first combat by the draw of a chit, and is predictable from the unit's "class" and morale rating within only rather wide limits. The chit remains hidden from the opponent, and few players will remember the strengths of particular enemy units once a hundred or so are on the board. In this way, the annoying "factor counting" of other games is largely obviated. Sicily's special rules suggest that, in view of the long time span covered, a new chit be drawn for *each* combat, but this leads to rather improbable fluctuations of a unit's worth. We compromised, rolling a die and drawing a new chit on a result of four to six but not of one to three.

The system has matured through application to innumerable past games and is now essentially free of snags, ambiguities, and loopholes, and only in the Sicily additions may minor questions of interpretation still come up. Moreover, quality control has been meticulous so that only very few errors have slipped through. Most of these are self-evident and have been corrected in *Moves* nr. 60, where also additional rules are offered, which can be highly recommended.

Historical research has been competent and thorough. The map is accurate—and is the first on which I yet have to find a misspelled name. The orders of battle will satisfy all but the most fastidious expert. Play flows smoothly and succeeds in bringing out the characteristics of the campaign: the poor choice of the British beaches, the disaster of the initial paratroop drop, the increasing weight of the Allied air support as more and more airfields are seized, and Patton's spectacular sweep which stands revealed as a rapid occupation of a part of the island that the Axis forces could not have defended anyway.

The first two or three turns of play are exciting. If luck of the die and chit presents the Axis player with staunch Italian defenders at Gela and Avola (where terrain doubles defenders against initial attack), success of the landings may hang in the balance. Later, play tends to be sluggish as Allied progress will be slow. There is still tension, however, for the Axis player must take care not to miss the moment when to break and run for evacuation.

Two scenarios in addition to the historical one are provided. A free setup lets players explore alternative landings and strategies, and a short scenario of just the American landings brings out the best in the game. A pity there is not another that includes the British beaches!

All in all, Sicily is a thoroughly professional product that will satisfy both the player and the history buff and provides as much suspense as a faithful simulation of the campaign allows. It is the definitive game on its topic. For \$6.00, it is a "steal."

Guessing Game

EAST & WEST

International Team (U.S. Distributor:

**Polk's International Hobbies, 346
Bergen Ave., Jersey City, NJ 07304)**

**Review: James Murphy
\$49.95 (boxed)**

East & West is an operational-level game dealing with a hypothetical war between the Soviet block and its potential enemies. Three possible areas of conflict—central Europe, the Middle East, and eastern Siberia—are represented on three two-piece mounted mapboards. The graphics and physical quality of components are up to the Team's very high standards, although the counters are a bit thin. Unfortunately, the rules and particularly the English translation call for a lot of guesswork.

In conception, this game has many praiseworthy features. Each of the three theaters of war may be played as a game by itself, with predetermined reinforcements; but if the war is worldwide and all three maps come into play, one may allocate reinforcements and transfer troops between the areas. Also, in such a situation, players may use seapower to attempt interception of the transports. In addition to ground forces, the players may employ air power, missile strikes, and chemical attacks. However, the most innovative facet of the game is its representation of strategic electronic intelligence and security. Each player picks two three-digit numbers to represent his attack and defense codes, and each turn the other player gets a shot at breaking the

codes—a routine straight out of Mastermind! The broken code gives the enemy an advantage, but may be changed a few game turns later.

Unfortunately, the execution of *East & West* does not live up to the promises in its conception. A lack of organization—and a table of contents—makes it difficult to find the rule one looks for. It seems to me some rules that did not need it received illustrations while others that needed it did not. Moreover, certain illustrations are not labeled in enough detail to show what point they are to clarify. The English translation of the rules contains many ambiguities, sometimes says the opposite of what is intended, and other times just does not make sense. I do not mean to say that the game cannot be played. However, to play it will require guesswork, a lot of it unless you know French, German, or Italian (preferably all three).

Although there is no such thing as an accurate order of battle for a hypothetical conflict, at least the numbers and types of divisions which NATO and the Warsaw Pact can field today are known. The initial forces in the game bear no resemblance to such data. The game thus cannot be taken seriously as a simulation of a possible event.

Apart from these problems, I can recommend the game—to those who don't mind the price tag, guesswork, and purely fictional character.

Fighting Oar

RAMSPEED

**Metagaming, Box 15346, Austin, TX
78761**

**Design: Colin Keizer
Review: Bob Proctor
\$3.95 (mini-box)**

Ramspeed is the second of Metagaming's new *MicroHistory* games. Based on the format of their science-fiction *MicroGames*, the *MicroHistory* series is an attempt to break into the wargame market. Like the science-fiction games, Ramspeed is interesting, short (30-90 minutes), and fun. It is intended to be easy to learn and easy to set up and by-and-large it succeeds.

Ramspeed portrays the conflict between oar-powered ships of the ancient world. For your \$4.00, you get an 18-page rulebook, an 11 x 13 1/2-inch map, a counter sheet, and the cutest little die I have ever seen. The map is heavy blue paper with a half-inch hex grid. In an effort to fancy things up, someone put a picture of an ancient coin with a galley on it smack in the middle of the ocean. Ignore it, if you can. The counters are black and white and come in three sizes. The smallest