

Line of Communications



Number 2
September 2007

Brazil Goes To War

The Italian Fleet

*RAF Airfield
Construction Wings*

Contents

Joe Carioca And The War 3
 The Italian Fleet..... 4
 Brazil Goes To War..... 7
 What Will Grand Europa Look Like? 10
 Missing Units of the Royal Air Force —The Airfield Construction Wings..... 12
 Operation Compass 16
 Origins 2003 Playtest 17
 Letters 25



Got anything to say?

Then write to LOC at loc@luiz.claudio.nom.br.

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Cover: *Roosevelt and Vargas at Natal* (Raymond P. R. Nelson, 1943)
 Agência Brasil

Joe Carioca And The War

Luiz Cláudio Duarte

In August 1942 Brazil declared war on Germany and Italy. Brazil would go on to become the only Latin American nation to send troops to fight in the ETO (Mexico sent a fighter squadron to the Philippines).

Yet, in many ways Brazil has been a “forgotten ally”, as an [article by Frank D. McCann](#) aptly puts it. In *Europa*, the Brazilian Expeditionary Force makes an appearance in *Second Front* in the MTO, but as a lowly second-line infantry division it easily gets lost in the shuffle.

The main Brazilian contribution to the Allied war effort, however, wasn't in the ground fighting. Since 1942, the airbases in Northeastern Brazil were serving as important stepping-stones in the air road to Africa and Asia; and Brazilian naval bases were being used as early as 1941 to service what would become the American 4th Fleet. Brazilian ships and planes played their part in the Battle of the Atlantic, and Brazil suffered more casualties in this battle than in the Italian field of battle. In this issue, we take a look at the road that took Brazil to war.

Further, you'll find an article on the Italian navy in *Second Front* by Joey Sabin, and one on the missing RAF Airfield Construction Wings by Alan Philson. Also, we take a look at what a *Grand Europa* map will look like, thanks to Magnus Berglund and Ralph Sunley. Speaking of photos, we have James Broshot's photos of the Origins 2003 playtest game combining *March to Victory*, *Bloody Eagles* and *Balkan Web*.

There were no contestants for our Anzio Beachhead contest. A pity, but we have a new contest in this issue. Please send in your entries and your suggestions for new contests.

Rounding up the issue, we have our first Letters section. My e-mail account was acting up during some weeks, so some people weren't receiving my messages. If you send me a message and you don't hear from me in a couple of days, please resend it.

LOC is now a quarterly publication. Issue no. 1 was downloaded more than 1,000 times. Thanks to all who contributed and to all who read it. Remember, we need your help to continue — *LOC* is meant to be the voice of the Europa community, not one man's only. ★

Sea Lines of Communication

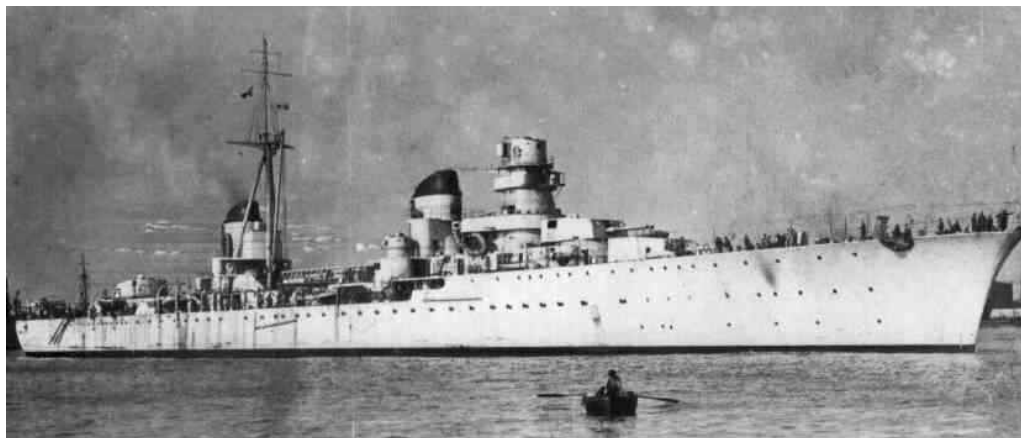
The Italian Fleet

Joey Sabin

Like seasoned marksmen, veteran players of *Second Front* are often looking to see what they can do to “tighten their shot group,” by adding realistic improvements without compromising the game and its aspects. Once a player has mastered the concepts and rules of this game, it’s time to step up from “Novice,” and move into an advanced status as perhaps Dictator or SHAEF Commander, as the individual case may be desired. An advance need not mean compromising the game in any way, in fact an advance can often make an abstract or free floating concept very realistic. One such concept involves the Italian Navy in *Second Front*.

One of the significant “what ifs” in the MTO is the use of the Italian fleet. At this point in the war, the Italian fleet was huddling in harbor, trying to stay hidden from Allied air strikes. The Italian Naval command had all but given up hope of any offensive actions. Using air power to attack naval vessels was a fairly new concept, which was proving to be both a cost-effective and a swift way to eliminate naval vessels throughout the globe. In spite of this, the Italian surface fleet did make two attempts to aid the Axis armies in Sicily in 1943. The light cruisers *Eugenio di Savoia* and *Montecuccoli* departed Napoli on August 4, hoping to surprise Allied shipping off the coast of Palermo. The Allies spotted the cruisers near the Lipari Islands, and, with surprise lost, the Italians ran home to La Spezia. On August 7, the Italians tried again, this time with the cruisers *Garibaldi* and *Aosta*. USN Task Force 88 sailed to intercept and was itself detected by the Luftwaffe in turn. Now aware they had been discovered, the Italian ships again returned to port.

In *Second Front*, the Axis player knows that, upon the Italian surrender, there is a poor chance of the Italian Fleet converting into Kriegsmarine Naval units. As a result, this can generate a “use it” or “lose it” attitude toward the Italian Navy. This attitude will often result in an Italian Naval sortie whose sole purpose is the death and destruction of any Allied naval units, whatever



Eugenio di Savoia
(www.regiamarina.net)

the cost in Axis naval units may be. Given the actual historical situation at that time, a “blaze of Glory” strategy might have been remotely possible, but it was highly unlikely. Navies of that era tended to be more civil than their air and ground counterparts.



Montecuccoli
(www.regiamarina.net)

I have always taken issue regarding this use of the Italian Navy in the MTO. I have been torn between the historical reality of the time and the desire to allow the Axis player free run with all available naval assets. I believe I have come up with a solution that keeps in harmony with historical accuracy and still makes the game very playable at the same time. It all started during a game of *Second Front*, around the Sep I 43 game turn, just prior to an inevitable Italian Surrender, as I was about to adopt a “use it or lose it” attitude as the Axis player. I took the usual action with the Italian Task Forces RM-1 and RM-2, paid my Resource Points and put to sea. The Italian naval units were grouped into a task force called TF-A throughout most of this action, only splitting up once all enemy naval units had been eliminated or had departed the map and were unreachable. TF-A departed Northern Italy and proceeded due south toward a USN TF on coastal duties in 26:3728. Upon reaching the Danger Zone around the 2000 hex row, a detection die roll was rolled failing to detect TF-A. A few hexes later an attempt was made to detect TF-A using Allied naval patrol air units from the North Africa holding box and it too failed to detect TF-A. Once TF-A moved within fifteen hexes of the Allied Naval Unit, a reaction die was cast and it too failed to detect TF-A. TF-A moved to hex 26:3727 and proceeded to remove Allied Naval Points from the game. At one point the Allied player even successfully broke off contact but, due to his unfortunate location, was still adjacent to TF-A, and was summarily annihilated.

As *Second Front* players interested in historical accuracy, we can have our cake and eat it too. These simple modifications to the rules (I know, I know! Nothing in this game system is simple...) can make the game more realistic and still give players the freedom of choice they so crave. First, the Italian Task Forces RM-1 and RM-2 can do anything they desire within the scope of the rules as written; however, if RM-1 or RM-2 are detected by any means (ie, Naval Patrol, Danger Zone, Enemy Naval Reaction, etc.) they must stop in the detected hex, suffer any results due to the detection and then immediately move (using normal and/or reaction movement) to the nearest friendly *naval base* (not just any port) and put into port there. In the case of more than one naval base equidistant from the Italian unit, the owning player may choose one as desired. If however, RM-1 and RM-2 go undetected prior to engaging a target

of their choosing, they may do as they please within the scope and wording of the rules as written (i. e., attack). Note: once engaged with their target of choice, RM-1 and RM-2 no longer need worry about detection and retreat as stated above, and revert strictly to rules as written until



Garibaldi
(www.regiamarina.net)

the intended target is either destroyed or the attack has been broken off (by either player). Once the Italian units RM-1 and RM-2 have destroyed the intended targets or the attack has been broken off (by either player), they revert back to their original status (locating a new target) and once detected, must return to the nearest naval base. Note that this may go on indefinitely as the Axis player sees fit, within the RAW governing naval movement and detection. Note that, under these rules, RM-1 and RM-2 cannot move into enemy-owned coastal hexes. Moving into or through an enemy coastal hex will reveal the Italian units, and, as a result, they must return to the nearest Axis-owned naval base. Note also that the Italian naval units RM-1 and RM-2 can always defend themselves within the scope of the rules as written.

Like many changes, there are benefits and drawbacks to each. Any changes or modifications to any game should list each benefit as well as each drawback if they want to be taken seriously, so that the readers can make complete educated decisions regarding its use or implementation. First, all related rules must be examined, no matter how insignificant they may seem, so as to ensure no conflict in the rules arise with its use. Second, there needs to be playtesting to evaluate its impact. Third, it must challenge the veteran players among us and create a lasting impression. Lastly, it must have significant historical relevance as its basis and aid the game and players to that end. It is known in our small community that some players feel any changes to the play of the game are “dummy rules.” I submit that there are so called dummy rules and indeed even idiot rules, but that the preceding is neither. As I see it, a dummy rule removes a player’s options in order to create a historical result. Here we only attempt to place a historical modification to the rules as a game upgrade in order to challenge veteran players and add historical relevance. In the end each player must decide, and an open mind is helpful. The first challenge here is to find all the relevant rules, see if there is a conflict and let all us readers know. The next challenge here is to playtest this new option and see if it works within play of the game and report your findings. Once all this is done, a more serious evaluation can be given and it may be even adopted as an optional rule someday. ♣

Brazil Goes To War

Luiz Cláudio Duarte

In 1930, the Brazilian government was toppled by a revolution and Getúlio Vargas stepped in as President of the Provisional Government. After being confirmed in office by a Constitutional Assembly in 1934, Vargas defeated a Communist coup in 1935 and, using forged Communist documents, staged a coup himself in 1937 and established a dictatorship — the *Estado Novo* (New State). The *Estado Novo* was partly based on the Italian Fascist model, but it was more akin to the Portuguese Salazarian corporative state, which even had the same byname. Unlike Fascist states, there was not a government party; Vargas outlawed all political parties soon after his coup.

Vargas was able to rally strong support — both domestic and foreign — to his government. The United States was at first worried about the new regime, fearing that Fascism had gained a toehold on the continent; but these worries were soon allayed, first when Vargas defeated a Fascist coup and, second, when Vargas designated Oswaldo Aranha as Foreign Minister.

Aranha had been Foreign Minister to Vargas during the Provisional Government and had recently been Ambassador to Washington. He was well-known and well-liked in the United States, and he was a firm believer in Pan-Americanism; furthermore, he had worked for years in strengthening the ties between Brazil and the United States.

Meanwhile, Germany had been steadily growing as a commercial partner to Brazil. Both countries being starved of hard currency, Brazil accepted the German compensation marks commercial scheme and steadily increased its commerce with the Nazi state.

Other ties followed. Brazilian Political Police established an interchange of information and techniques with the Gestapo. The Army, after years of French influence, was eager to embrace the new technology of the German Army. In 1938, Brazil bought weapons and ammunition from Krupp, including the new 88mm anti-air gun. Vargas and the pro-Germans in his government skillfully used German influence to counterbalance American influence.

At stake was an ambitious project for the industrialization of Brazil, and Vargas wanted above all to create a modern steel mill to jump-start the industry. American government and industry was reticent, which was seen in Brazil as a sign that the United States did not want a local industry in Brazil. Germany, on the other hand, promised to help install the steel mill.

Even so, relations with Germany sunk almost to the breaking point in late 1938. The German Embassy and the Ausland Organization of the Nazi Party had been steadily establishing a network of Nazi-controlled organizations among the large German community in Brazil. When the government cracked down on these organizations, bent on assimilating the German immigrants, the German Ambassador protested and was declared *persona non grata*. Both countries recalled their respective Ambassadors, and new ones were not exchanged until 1939.



On January 27, 1943, Presidents Vargas and Roosevelt inspected the military installations in Natal (Fundação Getúlio Vargas).

When war broke out in Europe, Brazil aligned itself to the United States in the collective neutrality of the American continent. The commercial ties with Germany were severely affected by the British blockade, and Britain and the United States became the main commercial partners of Brazil.

The great German victories in 1940 strengthened the pro-German faction in Vargas's government, and the President himself gave an oration to senior military officers that was interpreted as laudatory of the Axis, and contrasted to President Roosevelt's Charlottesville address, given the day before. But Aranha managed to keep Brazil aligned to the United States, and even the Army was slowly accepting the prospective alliance.

Already in 1939, the then Chief of Staff designate of the United States Army, General Marshall, had visited Brazil; months later, Brazilian Army Chief of Staff General Góis Monteiro visited the United States. General Góis Monteiro promised his counterpart that, in case of war, Brazil would allow the use of its air and naval bases by American forces.

This was good news for the planners in Washington, for both the Army and the Navy considered that the Panama Canal was the main focus of the defense of the continental United

States. An enemy force based in Natal (at the Northeast bulge of Brazil) could threaten the Canal, and there were already plans for defending Natal in the Army files.


However, Brazil was adamant in one point: Natal should be defended by Brazilian troops, not American troops, and certainly not Latin American troops. This meant that the Brazilian Army wanted modern equipment and modern training in order to conduct this defense.

Unfortunately, the United States Army was itself undergoing a major expansion, and there was no surplus equipment to be delivered to Brazil, even should Congress allow it. A Military Mission was sent to Brazil, but only paltry funds were offered to Brazil, who declined the offer, deemed insufficient for national needs.

Meanwhile, naval cooperation was progressing. In May 1941, Task Force 3, under Rear Admiral John Ingram, began using Brazilian naval bases, especially at Recife. Later, during the war, Admiral Ingram would be put in command of all Brazilian naval forces in the South Atlantic.

In December 1941, after Pearl Harbor, the use of Brazilian airbases by American forces was authorized by Vargas. In January 1942, Brazil hosted a Pan-American Conference in Rio de Janeiro and broke relations with the Axis countries.

American ASW forces were already based in Brazilian installations. Brazilian forces started ASW missions in May 1942. This prompted the German Navy to ask the OKW for permission to attack Brazilian shipping and ports; some Brazilian ships had already been sunk in international waters. According to Admiral Raeder's deposition at Nuremberg, Hitler ordered in June a "serious attack" against Brazilian shipping. Indeed, in August, several Brazilian cargo ships and liners were sunk by German and Italian submarines, with severe loss of lives. When Brazilian protests went unheeded, Vargas declared war on Germany and Italy.

Brazil went to war unprepared. Even so, its contribution to the final victory was not minor. Natal would soon become the greatest American airbase outside the United States, and was a vital step in the air route to Africa and the China-Burma-India theater. The Brazilian Expeditionary Division was sent to the Italian front, where it engaged in heavy fighting. Brazilian ships and aircraft conducted ASW operation in the South Atlantic. Brazilian rubber, cotton and other commodities were a vital cog in the Allied industry. All in all, a fair participation for a minor country. 

Grand Europa

What Will Grand Europa Look Like?

Magnus Berglund and Ralph Sunley



[Editor's note: Magnus Berglund and Ralph Sunley (next page) have put together the Europa maps (minus the ones from Wavell's War), in order to visualize what Grand Europa will look like. Magnus even asked his nine-year old daughter Hanna to lie down over the Balkans so as to serve as a living scale.

Of course, it would be physically impossible to move the counters on a map this size. Word from those who have engaged in GE experiments recommends setting up the maps in three tables — one for the Eastern Front, one for the Western Front, and one for the Mediterranean.

But it surely looks impressive when assembled like that.]



Missing Units of the Royal Air Force — The Airfield Construction Wings

Alan Philson

The origin of the Airfield Construction Service of the RAF goes back to 1939, when it was decided to set up flying training schools in France. After agreement with the French Government, an area of the Loire valley was allocated to the task, and the RAF approached the Army to provide the troops and equipment to construct the new airfields. To their horror the army refused, citing the fact they had already agreed to provide over 100 airfields and satellite-landing grounds for the RAF in the north and no more resources were available.

This resulted in the RAF setting up its own unit, No 1 Air Ministry Works Unit, controlling No 1 Works Area (France), to supervise the construction of these new airfields by whatever French and Belgian civil companies could be found to do the work. Three of the airfields in the Vendôme region were ready by June 1940, when the unit was evacuated. In July 1940 it changed its title to No 1 Works Area (Field) and took on the same tasks at home.

The next phase of the organisation's existence developed during the summer of 1940. With the threat of heavy bombing of its airfields, the RAF requested the army to provide engineers to repair bomb damage and keep the airfields operational. Again the army refused, citing the need for constructing beach defences. However, since they had hordes of unskilled labour unemployed in the Pioneer Corps, they agreed to provide these for filling in bomb craters,;repairs to damaged airfield services would have to be found from within the RAF's own or civil resources.

This proved acceptable until towards the end of the year, when the Pioneers were withdrawn; to fill the gap, the RAF formed its first real construction units, Nos. 1& 2 Works Squadrons, later renumbered as 5001 and 5002 Squadrons. Each Squadron consisted of a HQ and 10 Flights of 80 men, although very few of them were skilled in any trade, and only hand tools were available — and few of those.

Further squadrons soon followed during 1941 and, by the end of the year, 6 had been formed. In the same period the organisation gradually developed from a crater filling basis to an engineering role, and future plans were laid to expand the organisation to be fully capable of constructing any type of airfield and providing the services that go with it. In July 1942 it was officially titled the RAF Works Service and finally as the RAF Airfield Construction Service in May 1943. By this time the organisation had 19 Squadrons and various Flights equipped with mechanical plant and specialist quarrying and construction units, employed in expanding and improving airfields all over the country.

The expansion brought with it the need to reorganise, and the Wing was adopted; each Wing would have 4 squadrons, each consisting of three construction and one plant squadron.

Within the Plant Squadron there were 64 items of mechanical plant including dumpers, graders, scrapers, excavators, bull & angle dozers, rollers, roters, pumps, mixers, and compressors.

In addition, some units were organised to serve overseas, and some were actually formed overseas. 5021 Sqd was formed on Iceland in May 1942 from drafts sent out from the UK, and spent the rest of the war stationed there providing support facilities to the RAF units and laying concrete runways at Reykjavik and Kaladarnes. In September 1943, 5020 Sqd was formed to construct Lagens airfield on Terceira in the Azores as part of a mixed Army/RAF force for Coastal Command aircraft. 5051 Sqd was formed for service in the Middle East but details of its activities are sketchy.

Meanwhile, the units at home were building up to strength in men and equipment. Each Wing had 49 Officers and 2,341 men, excluding Mechanical & Electrical Flights and any specialist units attached. All were finally ready by February 1944. Each Squadron also designated one of its Flights as a Field Flight, composed of men in the top medical grade and trained as infantry.

For the invasion of France and subsequent operations, the ACS were put at the disposal of the army to augment their own Airfield Construction Groups and were heavily involved in constructing the advanced landing grounds in Britain to be used to cover the invasion phase.

The army was not keen on accepting the ACS for operations on the continent, but recognised that their own resources were insufficient to meet all the demands for airfield construction that operations on the continent would bring. They insisted that the units be militarily capable in addition to their construction role. To a certain extent they already were, since the RAF Regiment had furnished many of the personnel, but to keep the army happy the units were put through battle school and military engineering schools to learn the techniques used by the army in the field. In addition, the army required a unit that could serve in a field role and operate in the front line as normal engineers and have the mobility to move quickly with the army.

This new unit was 5357 Wing, organised as an HQ and 2 squadrons, 5022, 5023, each consisting of 6 Field Flights, a Plant Flight and an MT Flight formed from the Field Flights of the existing Wings. To administer these units, the RAF formed 85 (Base) Group HQ in December 1943, and in March 1944 it took control of 5352, 5353, 5354, 5355, 5357 Wings. The organisation of these at that time was:

Wing: Sqds

5352: 5001, 5013, 5014, 5202

5353: 5005, 5008, 5012, 5203

5354: 5006, 5006, 5016, 5204

5355: 5002, 5009, 5017, 5205

Each wing also had an Electrical & Mechanical Flight for repairing or installing power generation plant. Specialist units attached to the Group included quarrying and well boring flights.

The remaining Wings would remain at home and carry on with airfield construction tasks and provide a force to cope with the expected attacks by the Luftwaffe on airfields supporting the invasion; these units were:

Wing: Sqd

5351: 5003, 5004, 5011, 5015, 5201

5356: 5010, 5018, 5027, 5206

Elements of 5357 were ashore in France on D-Day but, due to congestion in the beachhead area, the main body did not arrive until D+30, and the other Wings were likewise delayed in their deployment. All were finally ashore by late August.

One other wing was formed in 1945 from elements of the existing units as they began to disperse after the end of the war in Europe. 5358 Wing with 5024, 5025, 5026, 5207 Sqds was formed to construct airfields for the RAF on Okinawa and was en route there when the war ended.

Draft OB for these units.

March 1 1941

Britain

1x 0-5 Con X 1 (RAF)

April 1 1941

Britain

1x 0-5 Con X 2 (RAF)

August 1 1941

Britain

1x 0-5 Con X 3 (RAF)

February 1 1942

Britain

1x 0-5 Con X 4 (RAF)

January 1 1944

Convert:

4x 0-5 Con X 1, 2, 3, 4 (RAF) *to:*

4x 0-2-6 Con X 5351, 5352, 5353,

5354 (RAF)

March 1 1944**Britain**

2x 0-2-8 Con X 5355, 5356 (RAF)

May 1 1944**Britain**

1x 1-10 mot Eng X 5357 (RAF)

June 1 1945**Britain**

1x 0-2-6 Con X 5358 (RAF)

July 1 1945**Britain***Transfer to Far East:*

1x 0-2-6 Con X 5358 (RAF)

Table 1		
Airfield Construction Service Organisation 1944		
5357 Wing	Officers	Other Ranks
Wing HQ	10	32
2x ACS Sqd, each	16	605
Sqd HQ	12	66
6x Field Flight, each		58
Field Plant Flight	3	112
MT Section	1	79
Total	42	1,242
5352-5355 Wings	Officers	Other Ranks
Wing HQ	13	56
3x ACS Sqd, each	9	560
Sqd HQ	9	50
7x AC Flights, each		58
2x Artisan Flights, each		52
Plant & MT Squadron	9	605
Total	49	2,341

Operation Compass

Luiz Cláudio Duarte



Situation It is the beginning of a Western Desert campaign, using the rules from *Wavell's War* and the components from *War in the Desert*. Operation COMPASS is about to begin. Send us your best set-up plans for the British COMPASS forces and your orders for the surprise attack turn and the regular Dec I 40 Allied player turn.

All optional and advanced rules are in effect. Besides the set-up instructions and the orders to your units, write also a description of why your strategy is the best one; this description will help the judges better evaluate your entry.

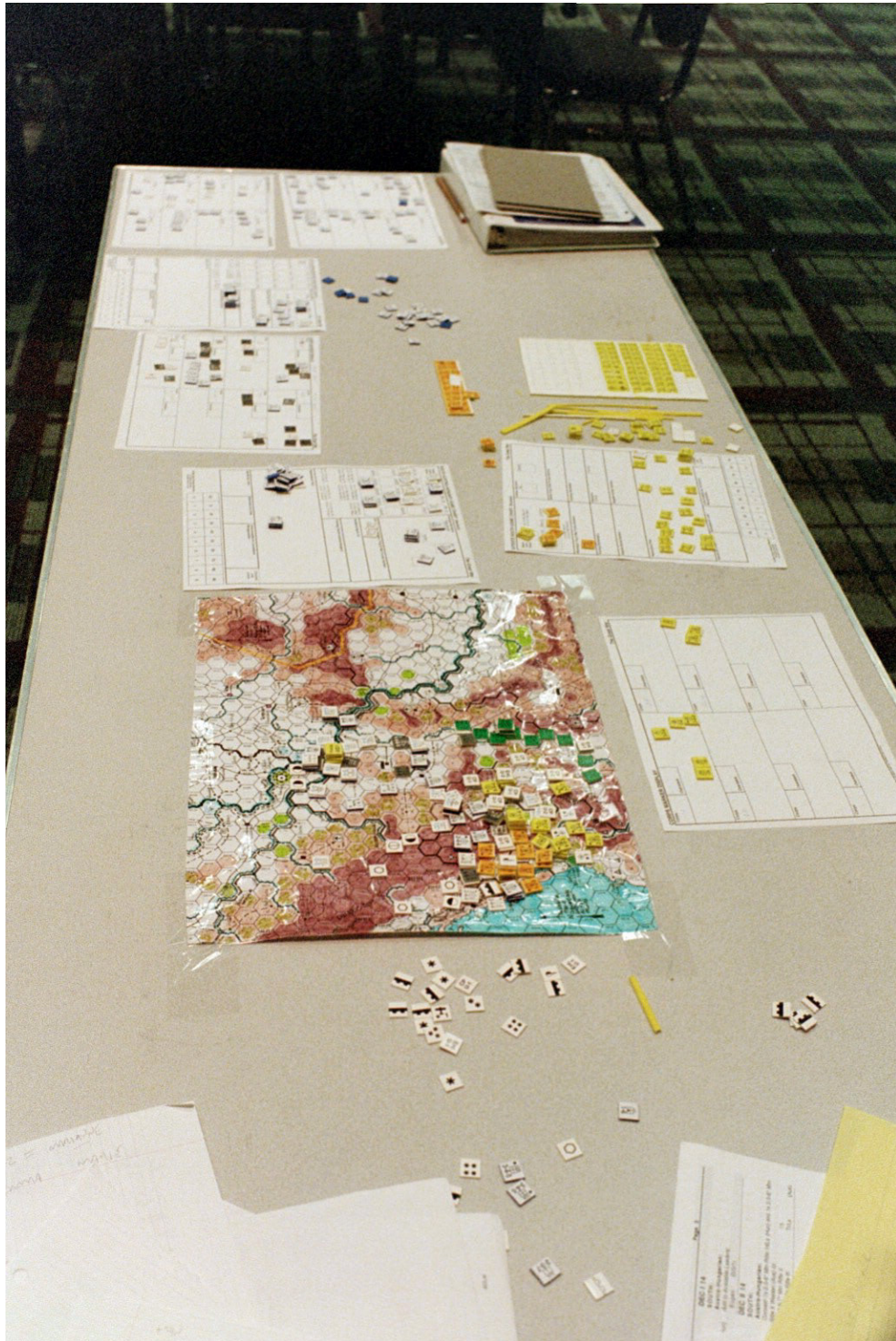
Please send your entry to loc@luiz.claudio.nom.br. All entries must be received by October 31, 2007. 

The Great War

Origins 2003 Playtest

James Broshot

[Editor's note: These photos were taken at Origins 2003, during the playtest game combining March to Victory, Balkan Web and Bloody Eagles.]



BW map excerpt, looking from south to north, with corps sheets in background.



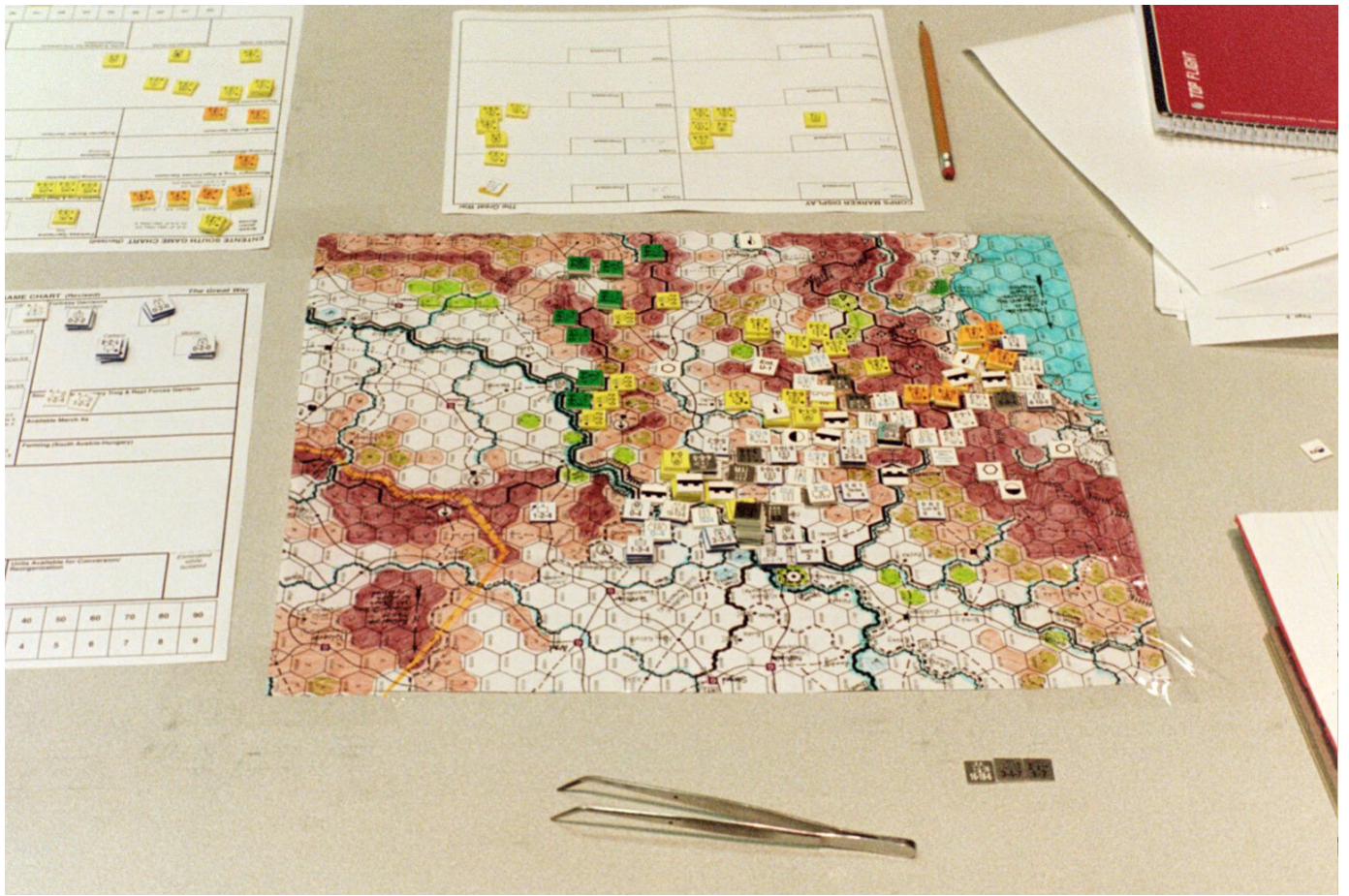
North sections of MTV + BE maps, looking from west to east.



North sections of MTV + BE maps looking from east to west. Russians are in green.



MTV + BE maps looking from west to east. Arthur Goodwin on left, David Stokes on right.



BW map excerpt, looking from north to south, late in the game. Some German reinforcements (from MTV) have appeared, as have the Bulgarians (in green). Serbs are yellow and orange.



A different view from the one on page 20, above. Arthur Goodwin on right, David Stokes on left.



David Stokes looking at the BW section and corps charts.



Combat in Galacia. Russians are in green.

Lines from Home

Letters

Terry Foskett

Excellent effort. Now that Europa Mag seems to be in suspension and with no issues for nearly two years LOC is very welcome. I look forward to future issues.

Terry's letter is a sample of several others sent with congratulations on the first issue. Thanks to you all, your words are very much appreciated.

Dean

First of all - thanks for doing something with Europa!

The cover - Great!!

The content was Very Good (I am very much an amateur though).

VP point analysis was GREAT!

I have seen some excellent content on the Europa Association list, including the John Astell tank/artillery data.

Also were there any post April 1945 cold war scenarios for the system?

Also the magazine could use a humor section. Maybe a pre 1939 German-Polish border guard situation. (like "Laugh In"). Or two guys in a foxhole sort of thing. Or maybe some example of Ally or Axis examples of humor or propaganda. (or links to whatever is already out there).

I always enjoyed the TEM examples of "Counter History" from a historical standpoint.

Anyway, thanks for putting this out and please keep on going.

Thanks for your kind words, Dean. I haven't seen any post-WWII scenarios for Europa, but I'd certainly publish them if someone wrote them. A humor section would indeed be a good idea, but alas — this is beyond my skills.

John M. Astell

Congratulations on issue #1 of Line of Communications. I am very pleased to see a new Europa newsletter being published, and I wish you continued success.

I've read Alan Tibbetts' "The Wayward Account" and have a couple of comments:

1) Alan quotes from the Second Front rulebook:

"Levels of victory are:

Marginal Victory: The player wins a marginal victory. His performance is about equal to or slightly better than his historical counterpart.

Substantial Victory: The player wins a substantial victory. His performance significantly surpasses that of his historical counterpart.

Decisive Victory: The player wins a decisive victory. His performance greatly surpasses that of his historical counterpart.

Note: Unlike most previous Europa games, these victory conditions judge players' performances against their historical counterparts. An Axis decisive victory, for example, means the Axis player did much better in the game than the Axis did in the war-it does not mean, however, that the Axis actually won the war. By 1943 the historical (and game) situation is such that, given competent play on both sides and no freak occurrences, the Allies will almost always win the war."

He goes on to point out that in game terms the historical victory levels actual indicate an Allied decisive victory. This is correct. Second Front had a convoluted and complicated development process that resulted in many problems, as is evident by the copious errata for the game. (By the way, I think LOC should mention your SF errata and ruling web page, <http://www.luiz.claudio.nom.br/sf/sf.html>, which is extremely useful.) The SF rules booklet went to the printers before many other components did. Thereafter, as I recall, I revised the victory chart to the present form. A better phrasing of the SF rule thus would be:

"Levels of victory are:

Marginal Victory: The player wins a marginal victory.

Substantial Victory: The player wins a substantial victory.

Decisive Victory: The player wins a decisive victory.

Note: Unlike most previous Europa games, these victory conditions provide a framework to guide players in the playing of the game. An Axis decisive victory, for example, means the Axis player did quite well in the game-it does not mean, however, that the Axis actually won the war at all, let alone decisively. By 1943 the historical (and game) situation is such that, given competent play on both sides and no freak occurrences, the Allies will almost always win the war."

2) That said, it seems clear that Alan overstates the number of victory points the Allies achieve in a "Second Front as history" exercise. He underestimates Allied Disastrous Losses, even when giving a 50% bump for the ETO from what he calculates. For just one example, "The Battle for Normandy" in the Europa Magazine #59/60 shows much higher Allied losses for D-Day, which all are disastrous losses since the forces that landed by air and sea were isolated in the Jun I 44 combat phase.

Alan also dismisses the possibility of excessive losses, but this seems incorrect for the late 1943/early 1944 period. The late 1943 period saw the Salerno landings in September (where the Allies landed exactly where Kesselring had expected and prepared for), the crossings of the Volturno and Trigno Rivers in October in the autumn muddy season, and the assaults ("at enormous cost", per Atlas of the Second World War, Peter Young) on the Gustav Line in November and December in muddy and increasingly

wintry weather. The Allies historically incurred heavy losses at this time. I no longer have my design notes on this topic nor time to work it our again, but I think excessive losses is very likely for the Dec II 43 victory assessment.

The Allies suffered again in early 1944, at the blocked-up Anzio beachhead and with unsuccessful assaults at Cassino. Some excessive losses were thus likely incurred for this period. A glance at the Allied OB for the Apr I 44 scenario shows that the Allies have about 46 points of ground unit losses in the MTO but only about 35 accumulated infantry replacements in both the ETO and MTO, indicating excessive losses must have been incurred on the Mar II 44 victory assessment.

Overall, I suspect if you did a true “Second Front as history” exercise, you would find the Allies achieved fewer victory points than Alan gives them. As I recall without my notes, the Allied victory would still be in the decisive victory range, but much closer to the cutoff for a substantial victory. Overall, I think this is a fair assessment of the historical situation: The Allies won a decisive victory but certainly could have done better (could have achieved a higher VP total). More Allied mistakes or better German resistance could have prolonged the war or increased the war’s human and economic costs to the Allies (or both), which would be represented by a lower victory level.

Thanks, John, this is high praise indeed.

