

GRIFFIN

Number 2

Editor: Keith Thomasson

GRIFFIN is a sub-zine brought to you courtesy of Alan Powis and Forden's Epitaph. Number one was duly produced and distributed by Alan, all for nowt, and this, number two, is the first you've had to cough up for. First item this time is the letter column. Not so much the letters column; more the letter column, as I only got one...

LETTER

1. Keith Loveys Good luck to your sub-zine 'Griffin'. Not a bad start with one reservation.....I don't think your Battleships is viable in its present form (especially as you've printed a bomber as costing 1 point - should be 3 of course!)

I've played this game many years ago having found it in 'More Indoor Games for 2 Players' by (I think) Hubert Phillips. It's a great game but I don't think it'll work as a one-way game. Why not? Simply because the tactic of using 20 salvos and 59 R.P.'s guarantees killing all your ships.

This is a reasonable tactic in the 2 player game proper but in your version it is 100% since the R.P.'s are guaranteed to be able to take off - in the proper game they are liable to be shot down while still on the ground either by Atom Bombs or an enemy R.P. discovering two at once.

Well, I won't say who put the bomber down as 1 point - with the retyping that had to be done for number one something had to slip up. But that's hardly important. What does matter is the rest of Keith's letter, and the fact that he's right. It had crossed my mind that R.P.'s would not be destroyed by enemy action, but I failed to realise that it would make such an important difference to the game. One of my mistakes was to admit the amount of shipping and the number of guns that would be present on my master chart. That can easily be changed and made secret, thus making it impossible to know how many salvos are required to wipe out the fleet, and also how many reconnaissance planes are needed to map out the chart completely. Later on in this issue I've put down my rules alterations, which manage to keep it a one-way system, but incorporating chance discovery and destruction of your air forces before they can be used.

Number 2

As you may have gathered from the above note stating that I only received one letter, I don't have any game starts this issue. Keith Loveys has taken up Mastermind and Black Box, but I didn't feel there was much point in printing his first round results by themselves, especially as I've written to him and he knows himself how he got on. But it won't be any fun for Keith if nobody else joins in. At the moment he stands to win the 15p he paid in order to play each game. So let's have some of you sticking your necks out and signing up for one or the other. Or both. Why not? The most you can lose is 30p.

Two games I just gave passing mention to last time were Kingmaker and Russian Civil War.

Kingmaker is the game of the Wars of the Roses, and I know of 1 completed game and 11 games in progress at the moment. Robin Hood has done a great deal to make people aware of the potential of this game as played by post, in his zine Herald, the main section of which is dedicated to postal Kingmaker. It threatens to become one of the more popular postal games, having many elements of Diplomacy in it. If you don't own a copy of the game, I urge you to obtain one by whatever means at your disposal and give it a try, even if you have no intention of signing up for my postal game. There are two versions on the market; the Philmar version is the original (British for once), whereas the Avalon Hill version, which costs almost twice as much, has been updated and expanded to include greater variety of play. There is little to choose between them - I myself am playing in two Philmar games and one Avalon Hill (Advanced) game by post at the moment. If you would like to play by post, or are even mildly interested, drop me a line. Try and let me know which version you have, or which version you would prefer to play. In the event of a game start (and that looks rather remote from my present standpoint!) I will print the postal rules in Griffin. If you would like to peruse them before committing yourself, send me a S.A.E. and I'll get a set to you forthwith! Six players are required to give the game variety, and the game fee is £1.00. The big advantage of the game is that, whatever happens, no player is completely out of the game for any length of time. So once you're in, you stay in. It might get a little boring from time to time, but a single event card can swing fortunes your way incredibly quickly.

Russian Civil War is an altogether newer game, with only 3 running that I know of. The unusual thing about this S.P.I. game is that the rule book contains a section specifically for postal play, making redesign and alteration of the game format unnecessary. All this work has been done beforehand by the manufacturers. This game also requires six players, with a game fee of £1.00. One of S.P.I.'s Power Politics Series, the game is concerned with political intrigue during the Russian Revolution. I'm sure a fair percentage of readers (that's you!) must own a copy or know about the game. So do any of you want to play? If you don't, why not write and tell me that, too? It really is just as interesting to know how many people don't want to play a game as it is to know how many people do want to play!

RAILBARON

Do you remember back in school you used to get those maps with lots of towns connected by lines, marked with distances and costs? And you had to work out the shortest and cheapest route between two towns?

That is the premise behind Rail Baron, Avalon Hill's new rail game which arrived from the states about two months ago. The game is a little more complicated than just running between towns, of course. Every journey undertaken has a fixed revenue sum, which is paid at the end of the journey. But in the meantime, travelling on various railways costs you money, and this is paid either to the bank, or to a player if he/she has bought up the railway in question. And it costs more if the railway is owned by a player! Five times the banks fee, in fact. The idea of the game is to amass a grand total of \$200,000 and get back to your home base with it. Quite simple, or so it sounds. But great fun!

Rob Thomasson has just finalised postal rules for this game, aided by Don Turnbull, and I hope to be able to print them in issue three on the off chance that it might persuade some of you to try it out. Games are already set to start in Courier, Herald and Chimaera, and there seems to be a lot of under-current interest in the game. Enough for four games to start? Well, we'll see about that, won't we? Once again six players would seem to be the optimum. As for the game fee, I don't know as yet. But if this idea interests you, please let me know.

BATTLESHP

Well, I've got around to the corrections section, where all that was wrong with the Battleships bit last time shall be (hopefully) corrected once and for all, producing a game that is fully playable.

First correction is to Table One, which lists the cost of the items which go to make up a player's offensive force:

Table One

SALVO.....	1 point	(Players still have 100 points with which to make up their offensive force)
R.P.....	1 point	
BOMBER.....	3 points	
ATOM BOMBER.....	10 points (Maximum of 6 allowed)	

In issue one I stated "the G.M.'s chart will contain 60 points of shipping, various pieces of land, and 10 A.A.Guns". This is the second correction, and the G.M.'s chart now contains:

- From 60-100 points of shipping - actual quantity unknown to the players.
- Various pieces of land.
- From 0-30 A.A.Guns - actual quantity unknown to the players.

This ensures that no player knows exactly how many salvos are required in order to sink all the G.M.'s fleet.

And now for the major alteration. No consideration had been given previously for the destruction of aeroplanes (of whatever type) on the ground, which is almost certain to occur during a normal 2 player game, and which adds another factor to take into account when concocting your offensive force. I considered using percentile dice, and setting a figure which, if not exceeded would result in the particular plane being used crashing on take-off. But that was not consistent - in the ftf game you lose planes still on the ground, but are never stopped from using them in your turn. If you can send a plane, it gets to its destination. Of course, it might get shot down.... Well anyway, this is what I've arrived at.

Firstly, let's take a hypothetical offensive force:

SALVOS.....	30.....30 points	(This is not intended to be a particularly well balanced force; it is just a convenient way of explaining the system)
R.P.'s.....	45.....45 points	
BOMBERS.....	5.....15 points	
ATOM BOMBERS.....	1.....10 points	
	Planes: 51	100 points

Salvos are not placed on the chart themselves, and therefore are not at any time destroyed before firing.

For each turn, the number of planes still waiting on the ground are compared with the total area of the chart. This gives the base percentage figure.

To adjust for the fact that the total unknown area of the chart grows smaller during the game, half the turn number is added to the percentage figure so far calculated. The result is adjusted to the nearest whole number.

Anyone out there know what the hell is going on?

EXAMPLES

One Turn 1. 50 planes still waiting (1 plane having taken off already).

Total area (441) divided by 50 = 8.82. Plus half the turn number = 9.32. Therefore percentage figure = 9%.

Two Turn 12. 39 planes still waiting.

Total area (441) divided by 39 = 11.31. Plus half the turn number = 17.31. Therefore percentage figure = 17%.

