

# Beach by Beach

## Strategy in *BREAKOUT: NORMANDY*

### Part 1: Utah and Omaha

by Alan Applebaum

**N**ever wanting to rest on his laurels, the typical gamer strives to improve his tactics and strategy with each playing. Andy Maly may have won the year's Editor's Choice Award with his article "A Matter of Priorities" in Volume 29, No. 3, but accomplished *BREAKOUT: NORMANDY* player Alan Applebaum offers an alternative perspective.—SKT

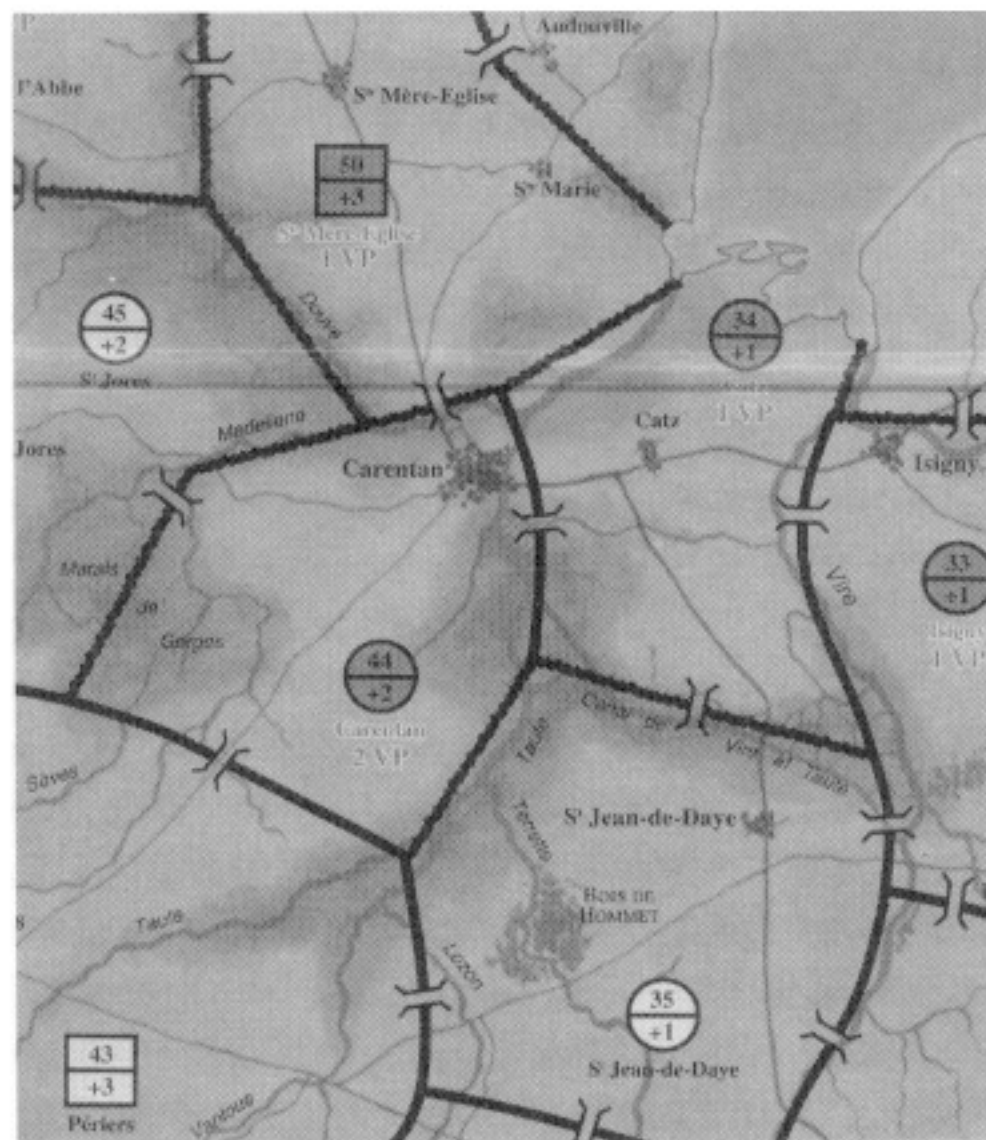
Don Greenwood and Andrew Maly provided a good overview of the early moves in *BREAKOUT: NORMANDY* in Volume 29, No. 3 of *The GENERAL*. Since that issue was published, substantial experience with the game indicates that the range of strategic and tactical choices described by Greenwood and Maly can be narrowed considerably. This two-part article comments upon the earlier articles and attempts to cover a number of topics in more detail. I will provide an overall strategic summary, and then discuss how the play around each beach interacts with the strategy, not only on June 6th but thereafter. Like the earlier pieces, this article deals only with the one-week game (Allies must obtain ten victory points by the end of the June 12 turn).

#### OVERALL SITUATION

Since the initial setup is fixed and the game has no scope for concealment, it should be possible to decide on the optimum Allied plan before the game begins. While Andrew Maly's advice emphasizes Allied aggression and flexibility, I take the opposite view and favor consistency and conservatism. This is not to say that the Allied plan will never change or that every game will follow a similar pattern. Unusually good or bad luck or German mistakes may dictate a change. Still, the Allies should go into the game with a clear idea of what they will do in "normal" circumstances.

The most important conclusion that the Allies should draw from an examination of the map is that they can win the game without taking any Bocage areas except Ste. Mère-Eglise, as follows: Ste. Mère-Eglise (1 VP), Merville (1), Bayeux (2), Isigny (1), Catz (1), Carentan (2), plus the Advantage (1), while contesting Caen, Pont l'Abbe and two of the following three

Bocage areas (Foret de Clerisy, Tilly and Villars-Bocage—contesting 7 VPs for the tenth Allied VP). This corresponds to Maly's "achievable" areas, plus Carentan, the Advantage and contesting areas. If one of the latter three Bocage areas is taken, obviously, you have a margin for error elsewhere. Carentan is by far the most difficult of these areas to capture. The climactic play of the game will quite often be a huge 20-25-attack-value attack on ten units in Carentan on June 11 or 12. Because Carentan is worth 2 VPs it is not very tempting to substitute two other (1 VP) areas for Carentan in the plan, especially if they contain Bocage. St. Lô is also worth 2 VP, but is much more difficult to take than Carentan due to being a Bocage area.



The all-important Carentan area.

Given this plan, the allocation of responsibilities among the Allied forces is quite straightforward:

**Utah:** Ste. Mère-Eglise; assist with Carentan; contest Pont l'Abbe.

**Omaha:** Isigny and Catz; assist with Carentan; contest Foret.

**Gold and Juno:** Bayeux; contest Tilly and Villars Bocage.

**Sword:** Merville; contest Caen.

It may occasionally be possible for the Allies to vary from this overall approach, but any such variation should be viewed

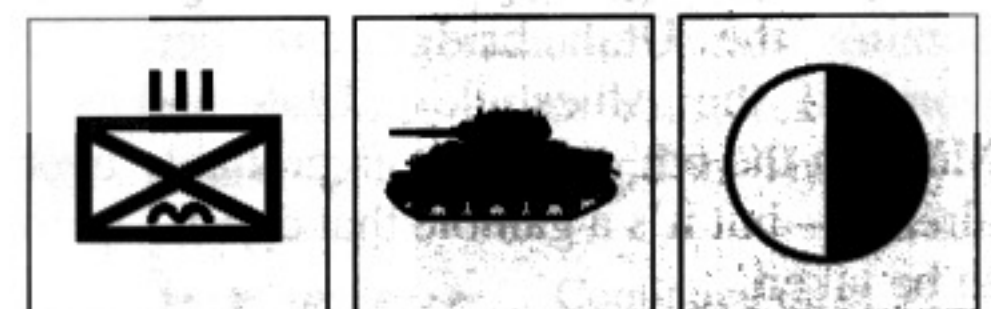
with extreme skepticism. The discussions below of each beach will explain why the foregoing plan is usually optimal, and how to implement it and defend against it.

If all beaches are in Allied hands by the evening of June 7, it will be very difficult for the Germans to defeat this plan without help from the weather. Accordingly, I believe that the Allies are favored (slightly). The Allies can afford to play conservatively, and should do so because of the way the game mechanics work. The Germans, on the other hand, must play aggressively, unless they have great luck in the early going. No opportunity for a counterattack should be missed, even in clear weather. Even if no attack is made, the German can seize the initiative by threatening Allied-held areas and causing the Allies to waste valuable impulses playing defense.

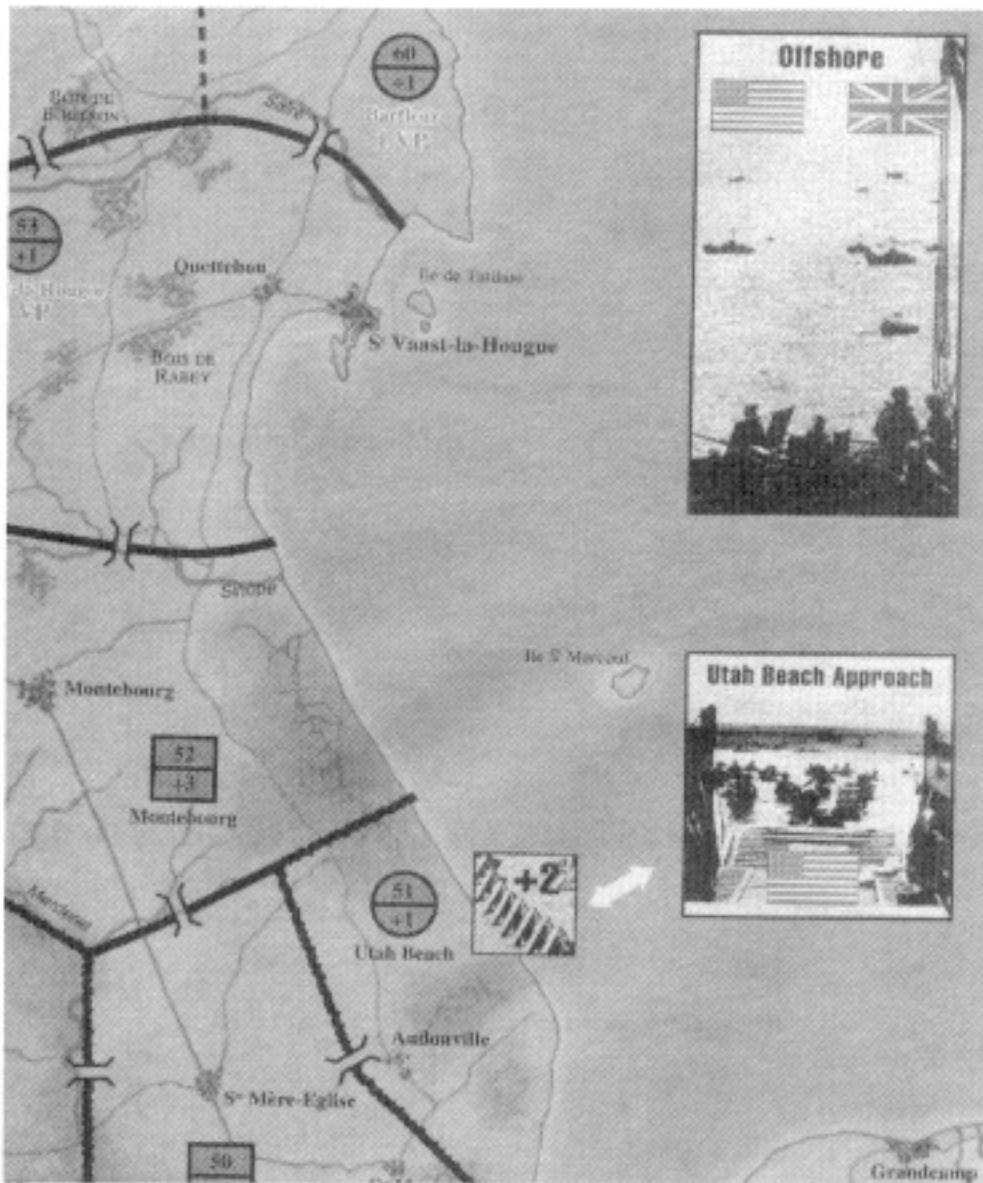
Although this article should be understandable on its own, the reader should review the Greenwood and Maly articles in Volume 29, No. 3 and the Series Replay in the same issue, and also consult the probability table supplied by Ron Fedin of Volume 30, No. 3 of *The GENERAL* (page 15).

#### UTAH BEACH—STRATEGY

As Maly indicated, attacks out of Ste. Mère-Eglise into Pont l'Abbe or Montebourg are usually futile. These Bocage areas can be defended easily. If the German makes a mistake and gives you a good chance to clear one of these areas with a single attack, or strips the entire sector of reinforcements, that is another matter (but that shouldn't happen). Given the limited supply available on Utah and the abundance of German units available to defend what is essentially a three-area front, Carentan is all the Allies can hope to get. If Carentan falls before June 11, the Allies should romp to victory, barring a completely hopeless British situation. Thus, the Allies need to get into Carentan as soon as







possible and the Germans need to defend it as strongly as possible. How this happens is described below.

### UTAH BEACH—US TACTICS

- June 6: Clear the beach
- June 7: Take the bridge to Ste. Mère-Eglise
- June 8: Clear Ste. Mère-Eglise
- June 9: Contest Carentan
- June 10: Refit while awaiting link-up with the Omaha forces
- June 11-12: Final assault on Carentan

This nice, conservative schedule assumes average luck and no targets of opportunity (*i.e.* a weakly defended Pont l'Abbe or Montebourg). This may seem like a slower advance than some players like, but unless the Utah group is able to clear Carentan by itself, there is no great advantage to contesting it early rather than late. If you have to wait for the Omaha force to catch up anyway, you might as well save the extra impulses for another part of the board. Note that the foregoing schedule is only going to use one impulse on each of the first three days. Bombardments should be saved for Omaha where they will be more effective due to the lower terrain effect modifiers (TEM) of the areas near Omaha.

I agree with Maly that on the night of June 5-6 the paratroopers should not seize the Utah-Ste. Mère bridge. If the Germans are permitted to seize the Montebourg-Ste. Mère bridge with both 5's and 6's, they have a 7-to-5 chance of doing so in two attempts, which they will usually get. This will generally shut down Utah for the entire game. By restricting the German to 6's (and being willing to use the Advantage if the Germans do roll it) the chance of the German reinforcing Ste. Mère is negligible. Seizing the Utah bridge can certainly work—if the Allies clear Utah and Ste. Mère on the 6th, the game is probably over already—but it's a gamble that doesn't need to be taken.

Like Maly, I favor an initial assault on Utah with two units, since if one is spent by interdiction the other will probably win the battle and save the first from disruption. A single regiment has only a 44 per cent chance to clear the beach, even if 709/1/919 is spent (67 per cent to land, times 66 per cent to roll "-1" or better on the 7-3 assault). Failure affords the Germans a 50 per cent chance to blow the bridge to Ste. Mère. Even if the Germans must use Impulse 0 to defend Bretteville, the Allies may have better uses for their half of that impulse than a second assault on Utah, giving the German another chance. Finally, a needed impulse may be lost if the initial assault fails.

The US plan for dawn of June 7 is to have at least three units from the 4th Division available for a 10-8 assault across the (enemy-controlled) bridge into Ste. Mère. As Maly indicates, the 7-8 attack into Ste. Mère with the third infantry regiment on June 6 (once the beach is cleared) is okay as long as it doesn't jeopardize the 4th Division's integrity bonus on June 7. If the US rolls "+1" or better, they take the bridge, and if they roll "+2" they will have a fresh 6 AV (attack value) unit already in Ste. Mère to attack Carentan, if Ste. Mère is cleared on June 8. Be sure to make the coastal interdiction rolls for both the third infantry regiment and 4/xx *before* deciding whether to make the 7-8 assault. If 4/xx is disrupted, play it safe and just make your 17 per cent bridge seizure attempt with the infantry unit.

With equal dice rolls on the 10-8 Assault on June 7, the St. Martin Coastal just becomes spent and still presents 5 DV (defense value) to the 90th Division. If one regiment of the 90th fails its interdiction roll, the other two along with 101/327 attack at only 7-5 with only a 16 per cent chance to clear Ste. Mère. Thus with average luck, Ste. Mère will probably not fall on June 7 to the recommended plan. Fortunately, the arrival of 82/325 on that day puts an end to German attempts to seize the Montebourg bridge, as three fresh units remain in Ste. Mère even if none can be refit because the Utah bridge is still German. The German could conceivably move some artillery next to Ste. Mère, flip a couple of fresh units with a bombardment, seize the bridge, and reinforce the area. Yet, this is a low-odds move which requires a lot of time and supply. Accordingly, the Allies shouldn't worry too much about it.

By June 8, however, US forces can attack Ste. Mère with both the 4th and 90th Divisions, so it should fall easily if not reinforced by the Germans. The key question is whether the Americans take it cheaply enough so that they have enough left to assault Carentan on the same day. Carentan

will be defended with at least 11 DF initially (91/6 FS, 100 Pz Rp, "+2" TEM and "+2" bridge over flooded boundary). It is unlikely that the Americans can mount even a twelve-point attack on June 7. One of the 4th Division regiments would have to be contesting Ste. Mère already, so that it could lead the 101st Airborne into Carentan, once Ste. Mère is cleared. The corps artillery will not be available to bombard Carentan until June 9, and the air unit probably will have been used around Omaha. Therefore, your chance of getting decent odds on Carentan on June 8 will depend on the availability of WTF.

Without WTF, US forces face a 12-11 assault with five units and a 34 per cent chance of failure. Loss disrupts all five units, ending all offensive operations out of Ste. Mère for that day and possibly June 9 as well. Therefore, play it cool—the Americans will have a 14 AV attack on June 9. Carentan may be strongly defended by then, but both WTF and the Corps Artillery prepare the US way. Remember, at this point you are trying to occupy Carentan, not take it. Therefore, the number of spent defenders is not important (they do not add to the DV of the area). On the other hand, if WTF is available on June 8, the assault into Carentan becomes much more attractive then, if you can spare the two impulses. Note also that if you have attacked into Carentan and stripped Ste. Mère of all fresh units, a weather change may permit a successful German counterattack into Ste. Mère, paralyzing the entire Utah sector. However, WTF may be better used on the Omaha front on June 8 (see below).

If the worst happens and the German does succeed in seizing the Montebourg-Ste. Mère bridge and reinforcing Ste. Mère, the best US response is to face reality. You *cannot* take Ste. Mère unless the German gets careless, so don't try. You will just waste impulses and supply, while the German defends with units which are not needed elsewhere. Regroup the June 7 reinforcements to the Offshore Box on the evening of the 7th and bring them over to Omaha in the morning. In this situation, the Allies need to take Foret de Clerisy, Tilly or Villars to make up for the lost VP and then take Carentan from Omaha alone (a tall order). The Allies have a decent shot with the extra units and the extra impulses created by not spending any on Utah and saving the Utah supplies each turn.

On the positive side, Ste. Mère may fall unexpectedly on June 7. If so, the US schedule moves ahead one turn. It is tempting to try for an early win by overrunning Carentan on June 8. Two preliminary bombardments by WTF and the Corps Artillery should reduce Carentan to 6 DV (91/6 FS







# Sports Special

By Robert M. Halford

## PUTTING THE H BACK INTO YOUR OFFENSE

I have spiced up my game of *STATIS-PRO FOOTBALL* by adding a new position and a few plays and options. I hope you will enjoy these changes as much as I have.

### H-BACK

The H-back position uses the empty squares of the offensive player grid, on the left between RB1 and FL2 and on the right between RB3 and FL1. The H-back is considered to be part of the backfield. If a run play is called, the blocking value of the player comes into play. This position will be covered by defensive boxes G and I, with the G defender covering the left H-back position and the I defender covering the right H-back position. With this addition to the formation, a player may run five receivers at a time.

### WIDE RECEIVER SCREEN

This new play calls for the receiver to be in the H-back position. The receiving player also must have a rushing column with some kind of yards on his card. Thus, not all receivers can run this play. This screen is determined in the same manner as a screen play to a running back.

### QUARTERBACK DRAW

This play uses the rushing statistics of the quarterback. Once called, the offense must wait four plays before calling it again.

### AUDIBLES

After the offensive and defensive calls have been made, the offensive team may change the play (but not the players on the field). The defensive team may then also change its play (but not players). This is

only allowed on third or fourth down and only once per quarter.

### KICK RETURNS

In over 100 games, not once have I seen a return for a touchdown. To change this, on punt and kickoff returns, if the runback number is a 1, then flip another fast action card (FAC) and if that is a 1 or a 2, the return is for a TD.

### WIND

We have added wind to field goal kicks. The wind is either in your face or at your back (wind direction should be determined before the coin toss at the start of the game). When attempting a field goal, make a wind check. Flip the next FAC and use the run number as the strength of the wind (which is the number of yards added or subtracted from the kick length). We also found that field goals are unrealistically easy in the normal rules. Therefore, we add only twelve yards to the FG attempt, instead of 17.

### TIME

In order to cut the playing time of the game by about a third, we changed the way the clock runs. Now, ten-second plays last 20 seconds, except in the last two minutes of the first half and the last five minutes in the second half. ★

→→→→→ (from p.17)

benefit may be to cause the American to spend an impulse and supply rescuing the 82nd. Still, the threat is cheap to produce and most of the units on the peninsula are too far from the action to do anything else in the early turns anyway.

The units from Barneville, St. Saveur and Les Pieux should not threaten Pont l'Abbe but instead should regroup toward Carentan each evening. If an emergency develops, they can move one area during the day and still reach Carentan on time. Whether or not the Germans ultimately clear Pont l'Abbe, they must keep a small reserve in Valognes to defend against threats to Pont l'Abbe or Montebourg. Many a German player has lost the game by forgetting that 91/1057 is not invulnerable, even when accompanied by 101 NW. The Americans may not tip you off by bombarding before hitting you at 15-8 and romping across the peninsula to victory.

I was quite intrigued by Greenwood's suggestion that 91/6 FS regroup to Catz. It is true that it will not be hit by a bombardment of Carentan, but so what? Its absence may obviate the need for a preliminary bombardment of Carentan in the first place. I don't really see how the Carentan garrison can achieve a decent DV without it. The unit's counterattack ability into Isigny is

interesting, but will require the assistance of a weather change to be really effective. A 6-5 attack against spent Americans contesting Isigny could work, but at what cost?

The two units in Coutances provide the German with some interesting options on the 6th and 7th, as they can be used to shore up Carentan, Isigny-Foret or the Villars-Tilly region depending on need. More on these units later.

### OMAHA BEACH—STRATEGY

The Americans on Omaha are charged with reaching Carentan to assist with its capture, and therefore must take Isigny and Catz on the way. Foret de Cerisy is an attractive target because it can be entered without crossing a bridge, but like other Bocage areas, it can easily become a quagmire if the German can afford three or more units to defend it. Generally the Americans should be satisfied with merely contesting Foret and shortening their line. Bayeux should be left to the British, because the Omaha force suffers the most time pressure of any Allied group. Maly's suggestion that, as a general rule, the Americans should contest St. Lô seems incorrect. If US forces get into St. Lô, they are already doing well enough. If they can reach St. Lô from Foret de Cerisy, they already have their "extra" VP (beyond the basic plan) and a very safe rear. If they are in Isigny,

their job is to head for Catz, not fool around in St. Lô (unless, of course, it is so weak that it can be captured outright). It is true that, by contesting St. Lô, the Americans may be able to take Foret more easily, but this ties up units that are needed for the drive to Carentan. On the other hand, with either Tilly or Villars in the bag, the Allies no longer need Carentan and can focus on surrounding and capturing Foret for the tenth VP (contesting St. Lô and Balleroi).

### OMAHA BEACH—US TACTICS

Regarding air bombardment on June 6, Maly and I agree completely. Only fresh CA should be attacked, in the following order of priority: Omaha, Juno/Gold/Sword, Port-en-Bessin, Grandcamp. No other choices are even close. Omaha gets first priority, because it is the most critical beach, and a big roll nets four spent units. Juno and Gold bear on two beaches each, but Sword is more critical, making these a tossup. Port-en-Bessin not only bears on two beaches but is easier to flip than Grandcamp, which contains a FLAK unit, which outweighs the chance of flipping three units.

The initial assault on Omaha will depend on the preparatory bombardments. As Maly notes, against a completely spent defense and no available coastal interdiction, it probably makes sense to land just the 1st Division and the Rangers, assaulting



at 12-7. You have only a 5.4 per cent chance of losing (which you can and should re-roll if necessary). Attacking at 14-7 (by adding in the two regiments of the 29th Division) gives you less than a ten per cent chance to clear the beach anyway. On the other hand, an attack by the 1st Division and the Rangers allows for one regiment of the 29th Division to clear the beach and the other to advance into Trévières, Port-en-Bessin or even Grandcamp. Note that (a) killing either the Grandcamp or Port-en-Bessin CA may give up the three-unit "hat trick" on June 7, and (b) if you contest Grandcamp without clearing it, you make it easy for the German to blow the all-important Isigny bridge. If you can induce the German to reinforce Omaha from Grandcamp you have already won the battle, because the two mobile Grandcamp units are sorely needed elsewhere. Even if the 352/xx remains fresh after the initial bombardments, you should consider withholding at least one brigade of the 29th Division from the initial assault, so that the German will be reluctant to fire the artillery (for fear of losing the beach on June 6). Moreover, if the German needs to use Impulse 0 elsewhere, your follow-up assault may flip 352/xx before it attacks.

In any event, the American should take reasonable steps to ensure that the initial amphibious assault is at no worse than "+3," if possible. Accordingly, if two or three fresh CA are available to interdict the amphibious assault, be conservative and come ashore with all units. Nothing is worse than losing on Omaha, spending the Advantage, and losing again. Speaking of the Advantage, it has only three uses on June 6: the initial assaults on Omaha and Sword, and a successful German seizure of the Montebourg bridge. Because Omaha is the highest priority, you should roll the assault on Omaha *before* the assault on Sword.

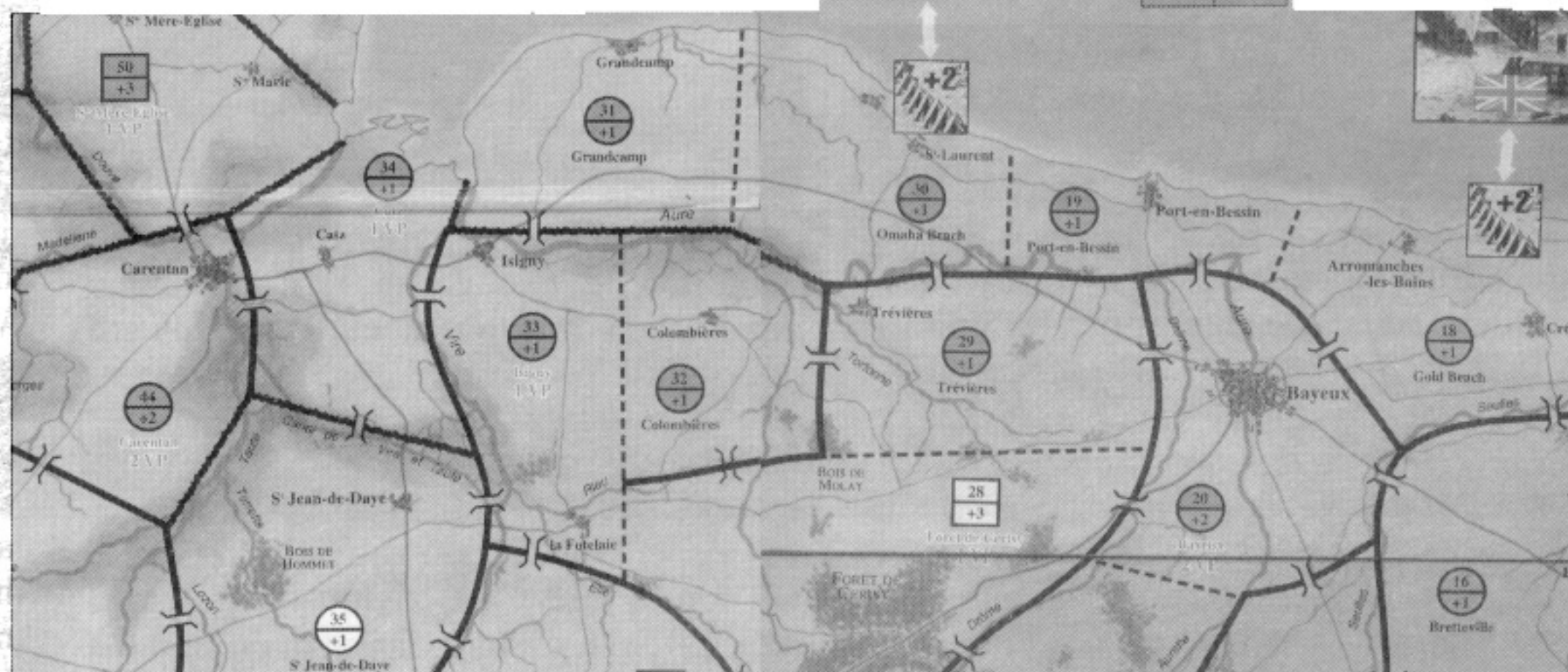
I believe Maly's concern about the vulnerability of the two US artillery regiments to bombardment by 352/xx is somewhat overstated. With the 1st Division, the Rangers and one regiment of the 29th Division already ashore, the US artillery does not present an extra target unless the 352/xx rolls "+4" or better (only a 16 per cent chance). Accordingly, I would generally bring both artillery units ashore with the first follow-up assault along with one regiment of the 29th. If both regiments of the 29th are already ashore from the initial assault, the chance of the 352/xx hitting the US artillery is reduced to less than ten per cent. Therefore, bring the artillery units ashore as soon as possible. If they come ashore with assaulting infantry conducting a non-mandatory assault, they are not dis-

rupted even if the assault fails. While the Allies have less to do on D-Day than the Germans, they still need five or six impulses to get everyone ashore efficiently. Don't waste an impulse.

If you lose on Omaha, re-roll. Or, if 352/xx disrupts all or most of your units, don't despair. Rather than make weak attacks with your few fresh units on June 7, wait for your force to repair itself and use your impulses elsewhere. As you will get the benefit of at least one overrun on June 8 anyway, you don't gain much by clearing Omaha on June 7. The Rangers come in handy on June 8, if Omaha is still contested. Of course, if the situation gets really desperate, the British can help by clearing Port-en-Bessin so that some of the spent/disrupted Americans can regroup there and make room for an assault on June 8 by the US 2nd Division.

With average luck, though, you will be facing only a token defense of Omaha on June 7. Assuming you won the amphibious assault on June 6, and 352/xx didn't score

Omaha and Grandcamp and still retain a movement factor to scramble back to Omaha, avoiding the German LXXXIV Corps Artillery firing from Isigny (or attempt to seize the Isigny bridge if only one fresh unit is in Isigny). Also, the Rangers can now participate in the overrun attack on Grandcamp. Of course, the Rangers are stuck in Grandcamp at the end of the impulse, but any punishment they take from the LXXXIV Corps is meaningless, because they are withdrawn at the end of the day anyway. The WTF could also bombard Trévières, if the 352/xx is waiting there to take its revenge on US units assaulting Port-en-Bessin or the spent artillery remaining on Omaha. On the other hand, hitting Isigny with WTF is probably better, because, if the attack spends all German units, it prevents LXXXIV/xx from firing (if present), allows 29/175 to reach Isigny all the way from the



big, a smart German will save units and supply by moving all units other than the CA out of Omaha on the night of June 6. The German also usually will move his two mobile units out of Grandcamp. This leaves the American with the opportunity for a "hat trick," eliminating the three CA units in Grandcamp, Omaha and Port-en-Bessin in a single impulse. Make this move early in the day on June 7 to get the maximum benefit from the "+1" dice roll modifier (or the Advantage). However, the assault on Caen is a higher priority because the Advantage may well be lost there. Saving the "hat trick" until after the risky Caen assault allows the Allies to regain the Advantage.

A bit of "prep fire" may also be necessary prior to the overrun attempt. If the Grandcamp CA is fresh, the Americans should consider an air bombardment early in the day. If this works, the MF cost of entering Grandcamp is reduced to three. Thus, the 5 MF US infantry can overrun

Omaha approach box once Omaha and Grandcamp are cleared, and gives the Americans a decent shot to seize the Isigny bridge with a 5 MF unit overrunning Omaha and Grandcamp. If the Omaha-Trévières bridge is still standing, priorities change and the hat trick could include Trévières, instead of one of the other areas (depending again on German bombardment opportunities).

Having considered all this, one still must decide whether to try for the hat trick at all. If the Germans have the Advantage, it may be critical to recapture it. But if the Allies already have it, the hat trick may be paying too high a price for a mere Sunset dice roll modifier (DRM). The maximum overrun attack out of Omaha into both Grandcamp and Port-en-Bessin against a lone spent CA in Grandcamp and a lone fresh CA in Port-en-Bessin is very likely to succeed. Whether the move succeeds or fails, your Omaha force is all done for the turn (except for 29/175) and may be vulnerable to counterat-



tack or at least bombardment. Even if 29/175 does make it into Isigny, it is vulnerable to counterattack as well, particularly on a weather change. On the other hand, if you hold back units from the Omaha overrun (or if the air bombardment on Grandcamp fails) your odds on the hat trick are worse (significantly worse if Grandcamp CA is fresh). If you fail to clear Grandcamp, you will have done yourself serious harm as the German gets a 67 per cent chance to blow the Isigny bridge on each attempt.

In summary, with the Advantage in hand, it may be wiser to press the attack on Isigny by holding back some units from the assault clearing Omaha than to try for the Sunset DRM by killing the three CA units. The Americans look silly if they decline the hat trick and the German succeeds in blowing the Isigny bridge. Yet, since the Americans will certainly clear Grandcamp, the chance is only one-third, in which case the Americans may be able to console themselves by assaulting Trévières instead. In summary, if holding the Advantage, the Americans should consider sending just one infantry unit into Port-en-Bessin after the overrun and treat the Sunset DRM as a pleasant surprise if it occurs.

Assuming all is going according to schedule, play on June 8 revolves mostly around the Grandcamp-Isigny bridge. If it is still standing, the number one US priority is to get across it. Bombardment may be an unaffordable luxury, because it permits an extra bridge demolition attempt. Once contested, Isigny is easy pickings, given its "+1" TEM and lack of defenders. If the bridge is blown, however, because the Americans cannot afford to spend impulses on low-odds repair attempts, they will have to go through Trévières and Columbières, a time-consuming and dangerous process. The "+1" TEM of these two areas make German bombardments of spent US units quite attractive. It is a bad idea to attack Trévières without a good chance to clear it, because if you merely contest it the Germans get an 83 per cent chance to blow the Columbières bridge, delaying your advance for another day.

Once Trévières is cleared, the Americans should make one assault on Foret to contest it and shorten US lines, but they should not try to take it unless a 50 per cent chance or better presents itself. A failed assault with a full division or more is devastating, but a successful assault with three or more units isn't much better, if it doesn't lead to capture of the area. Therefore, unless the German center is near collapse, stay with the plan and advance next into Columbières. In fact, even the first assault on Foret should not come at the expense of taking Colom-

bieres that day. If you can get into Isigny before the German Zone E reinforcements can rush to the rescue on June 9, Isigny and Catz will both fall easily. Even if Isigny can be heavily defended, the German will have to think twice about taking a stand because the area can be hit by Naval and Air Bombardment, VII Corps Artillery and several divisional artillery units in Grandcamp. If the German is stubborn, the Americans can make Isigny a massive killing ground if not distracted by "opportunities" in Foret or Bayeux.

Once Isigny falls, life gets easy for the Omaha forces. Unless Ste. Mère has been shut down, the German won't be able to spare too much from Carentan. The June 9 Zone E reinforcements must cover both Catz and St. Lô. Once the Isigny-Grandcamp bridge is captured/repared, the 2 CCA comes into the game. The big challenge is to get sufficient forces into Catz, and then into Carentan, so you can make the massive assault described above. This is no easy task, especially as assaults across the German-held Catz-Carentan bridge are mandatory assaults. Even if Isigny falls on June 8, the American may not have enough time to organize all his forces. As the Americans get spread out, the 20 supply points provided by Omaha may not be enough to refit all units. Again, the key is to remember that you are heading for Carentan. As long as you don't waste impulses in a futile pounding of Foret, and as long as you didn't lose the initial assault on Omaha or get the entire force spent by 352/xx, you will do fine. If US forces take Catz on June 9, they can attack from Catz into Carentan on June 10 to join forces with the Utah group (which should be contesting the area already). This puts together the giant assault force for the final showdown. If you don't get the ideal setup until June 12 but Carentan is all you need, then you can still win if the day doesn't end very early.

#### OMAHA BEACH—GERMAN TACTICS

Omaha is the place where the Germans can really put the hurt on the Americans, but they must pick their spots. When absorbing CPs from the initial assault, the Germans should try to keep 352/xx fresh as long as possible, but be realistic. If your defense is going to consist of Vierville at D2 and a fresh 352/xx alone, with both infantry units at D2 and retreated out, and all US infantry hasn't been landed, it may be worth considering taking two CP by flipping and retreating the 352/xx. The 352/xx can disrupt the entire US force with one swing of the bat, but if your Impulse 0 is to garrison Bretteville, you can be sure that the US Impulse 0 will come from the

Omaha approach box and you may not get your bombardment anyway. Even if you do get it off, that may well be the last bombardment this unit ever makes. Even worse, you have weakened Omaha by one DV and one step, significantly increasing the chance of losing Omaha on June 6. The Trévières-Bayeux region is extremely vulnerable early in the game, and any Omaha veterans which can be fresh in Trévières on June 7 are a big plus. If the Americans won the initial amphibious assault and 352/xx did not get a big bombardment, you should assume that Omaha will fall early on June 7. No units should remain on the beach overnight other than the Vierville CA.

This is not to say that the Grandcamp units shouldn't be thrown into Omaha on June 6, if they will prevent Omaha from falling that day. These units may even make a successful assault on Omaha following a weather change on June 6. In one memorable (but short) game they actually destroyed the entire US invasion force! In most games, however, you are asking for a painful overrun if you have three or four units defending against two fresh US divisions. Even if you are planning to abandon Omaha during the evening of June 6, reinforcement from Grandcamp is still risky, because these units will not be able to escape to safety during the night. The Americans are likely to obtain a three- or four-unit kill on June 7, if you retreat to Grandcamp. If you go anywhere else, Isigny is very likely to fall too soon.

Some players have experimented with taking the Vierville CA as a unit loss so that they can totally abandon Omaha during the night. This denies the American hat trick on June 7. While clever, this is not really worth it. The areas around Omaha are too vulnerable to allow the Americans total freedom of movement on June 7. Besides, the Americans might still get the hat trick by assaulting Trévières, Grandcamp and Port-en-Bessin simultaneously—even more devastating than the traditional kill of the three CA units.

Earlier articles have indicated that the Omaha-Trévières bridge must often be blown on the first impulse of June 7. As the German may need to move Panzer Lehr (or reinforce Ste. Mère) on Impulse 0, this is hardly ideal. The bridge can be blown on June 6, as long as 352/xx has made its escape to Trévières. If this unit is already spent, you should retreat it in preference to an infantry unit. Then, the bridge can be blown safely on June 6, because the infantry units don't need it to retreat to Trévières. If possible no more than two



→→→→→ (from p.56)

units should remain in Trévières following the Regroup Phase on June 6, the others moving to reinforce Bayeux or to garrison Foret-de-Cerisy or Colombieres.

Once the American has "exploded" off Omaha and taken Grandcamp, the situation gets dicey. Isigny will be at risk by Impulse 0 of the following day. If the US overrun was not into Trévières because of the blown bridge, you have a little breathing space. The line you are trying to hold is Tilly-Balleroi-Foret-Isigny. Bayeux is worth two units and some bridge-blowing attempts, but that is all. Bocage is your friend; stay in it. With Isigny being the weak link in the line, you must hustle as many units there as possible. I recommend regrouping the mobile Grandcamp units and LXXXIV into Isigny. If Carentan, Villars and Tilly all look safe for June 7, you may be able to spare the Coutances units for Isigny as well. Blowing the Grandcamp bridge is probably worth two or three impulses. However, Isigny cannot be defended to the death, because you cannot afford heavy unit losses in this sector in the early turns. When the Americans get a big assault (which tells you that the area is about to fall), you should take as many retreats as possible and leave only one unit to defend the area. Then, you must immediately blow all bridges out of the area (only missing on a 1). This saves Catz and St. Lô for the turn (unless the US player gambles on a bridge-repair impulse and gets lucky).

Frustratingly, the hordes of units which the Germans receive in Zone E on June 10 and 11 will rarely be able to save a desperate situation. They are simply too slow and too far away to defend Catz or Carentan. If they have time to make it into Carentan, Carentan is probably not in danger anyway. You hope to be able to avoid moving June 10 units at all on the 10th unless there is a weather change, because you can't afford to resupply them if they are spread out over three or four areas. In summary, the defense of this region is probably the German's toughest and most critical task. He must (with the barely adequate forces available) balance unit losses against the need to delay the US advance. An early weather change (allowing Panzer Lehr to advance) is your best medicine. Failing that, a defense in depth gives the Germans the best shot at survival.

This article will continue in the next issue with Applebaum's analysis of Gold, Juno and Sword beaches and some general tactical considerations. ★

## COMING ATTRACTIONS

### ON TO RICHMOND

The Peninsula Campaign:  
April to July 1862

In the spring of 1862, General George McClellan sailed the Union Army of the Potomac down the Chesapeake Bay to Fort Monroe. From there, McClellan's troops marched up the Virginia Peninsula on their way to Richmond. At the time, it was simply called "The Grand Campaign." Over a quarter of a million men, more than any other campaign of the war, were involved in this operation. McClellan's plan necessitated amphibious movement, siege operations, three different supply bases, and close coordination of ground and naval forces—making it one of the most complex strategic maneuvers of the war. Other games have covered portions of this famous campaign, but *ON TO RICHMOND*, the sixth member of Avalon Hill's award winning *Great Campaigns of the American Civil War* series, is the first to depict the entire four-month campaign with all of the strategic options available to both players.

In line with the size and complexity of McClellan's operation, *ON TO RICHMOND* represents the most ambitious project to date in the *Great Campaigns* series. Two brand new maps, stretching from Richmond and Petersburg in the west to Urbana and Yorktown in the east, depict the Virginia tidal wetlands over which the campaign was fought. These maps cover entirely new ground for the series, starting some 15 miles to the south of the Fredericksburg area covered in the series most recent installment, *STONEWALL'S LAST BATTLE*. The character of this region of Virginia is reflected in the new terrain types added for the game: two types of swamps, ferries, dams, redoubts and naval batteries. The rule book and counter set have been

expanded as well. With three full counter sheets, the game includes all of the units stationed within the Eastern theater which could have participated in the campaign.

The creation of *ON TO RICHMOND* also breaks new ground by being the first combined effort of series originator Joe Balkoski and *STONEWALL'S LAST BATTLE* designer Ed Beach. The focus has been equally divided between historical accuracy and playability. The basic mechanics of the series remain unmodified. However, key changes have been made to the rules for artillery, assaults, flank attacks and retreats to streamline play, eliminate misinterpretations, and enhance the historical flavor. The changes have been made in such a way that they are fully compatible with the previous games in the series and can be applied to them as desired. *ON TO RICHMOND* includes a rich set of basic game scenarios, seven in all, ranging in length from 30 minutes to six hours. Scenarios appropriate to newcomers to the series and veterans alike include Stuart's First Raid, Seven Pines, The Gates of Richmond, Flight to the James and The Seven Days.

Once these scenarios are mastered, players will be ready to tackle the full campaign. The initial strategic burden is on the Union player, who starts the game by selecting between the historical invasion site and three alternative routes to the Confederate capital. The southern side has plenty of tough strategic decisions as well. Forces can be recalled from the Carolinas and Shenandoah. The ironclad *Virginia* can sortie against the *Monitor* in Hampton Roads. Norfolk can be reinforced against a Union attack or abandoned. The game contains rules for siege artillery, amphibious movement, gunboats and naval batteries to complete the historical picture. Finally, the system that allows the Union player to gain and lose the strategic initiative, a technique that works well to model the indecision that marked McClellan's spotty performance in his grand campaign.

—Ed Beach



## WHISPERS . . .

. . . Decision Games released *Fire & Movement* editor, David Nicholas, in September and is attempting to sell the magazine. . . New company Rio Grande Games will be publishing in 1998 English-language versions of *MEDICI* and *EL GRANDE*, two popular German games. . . After volume 2 of *THE GREAT WAR AT SEA* (ready in late 1997 or early 1998), Avalanche Press will publish *EAGLES OF THE EMPIRE: EYLAU* and another wargame. . . Moments in History entered discussions with Azure Wish about a joint venture on the distribution of *RISORIMENTO 1859*, which promises to be a package of battles and a campaign and is expected in early 1998. *IRON BOTTOM SOUND II* (with ten scenarios) by Jack Greene is expected in November 1997. MiH has also signed with Greene to publish *FLEET ADMIRAL*. They hope to release *DAK II* in the Spring of 1998 and an updated *DECISION AT KASSERINE* in 1998 as well. They plan to enter the Napoleonic field with a four-map version of *AUSTERLITZ*. . . Meanwhile, Spearhead, having lost Greene's naval game, plans to move up release of the first installment of *EAST FRONT BATTLES*. . . Clash of Arms had ready for August's GenCon four new products: *LEUTHEN*, *CLOSE ACTION*, *AFRICA 1880* (a diplomatic game) and *THE 1997 HARPOON NAVAL*

*REVIEW*. They follow that with the release of *OPERATION SPARK* about the relief of Leningrad in 1943. Their first module of the *Struggle for Europe* series, *WAR WITHOUT MERCY*, is a strategic simulation covering WWII in the East with corps units plus some divisional breakdowns and is touted as being more detailed than *THIRD REICH* (but without production), but less so than *EUROPA*. John Prados has submitted his *FUNERAL IN BERLIN* design to Clash of Arms. . . Mayfair is producing the English rules for *DAS KARTENSPIEL* (the two-player card game version of *SETTLERS*) this autumn. . . ICE's *NIGHT BROOD ARMAGEDDON* supplement to *SILENT DEATH* has been delayed to 1998. . . GMT is planning two Pacific expansions for *DOWN IN FLAMES*. Their *THREE DAYS OF GETTYSBURG* maps went to print in September. They are nearing completion of the *SPQR GAMERS GUIDE* and modules *JUGURTHA* and *PHALANX*. (the latter having two battles for *DELUXE GREAT BATTLES OF ALEXANDER*) along with the game *SARATOGA*. *CATAPHRACT* has been pushed back, probably to 1999. *BATTLE FOR NORTH AFRICA* remains in development. *Great Battles of Designer* Richard Berg is moving into higher gear on *CAESAR* modules *THE GALLIC WARS* and *ALESIA*. . . Fat Messiah Games is putting out Phil Eklund's multi-player, mutant bug combat game *RAINFOREST*, an expansion of *INSECTA*. . . West End is releasing a Rebel SpecForce handbook and a