

A World at War Tournament, World Boardgaming Championship, 2010

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A World at War Tournament

World Boardgaming Championships

2010

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Introduction

This document provides a complete report on the A World at War tournament at the 2010 World Boardgaming Championships, held August 2-8, 2010 in Lancaster, PA. It begins with an overview of the tournament and the plaque winners. It provides a table summarizing the results of each match. And it provides a complete description of each match, written by the participants.

Overview

A World at War attracted its largest number of players ever: 25. This allowed for six full campaign games, also the most ever. A couple of new players joined the grueling six-day, 60-plus-hour event. The game always attracts a lot of observers, and this year new table markers were added indicating the time frame and turn for each game. This allowed spectators to easily tell at a glance how each game compared to historical results. Two of the games were very decisive Axis victories, two were Allied victories, and two were very close Axis victories. Most games generally followed the historical pattern of attacking France, followed by a Barbarossa attack. However, there were some unusual twists, including a Russian attack on Japan in Manchuria, an aggressive Mediterranean campaign along with Barbarossa, and several games that had great success with

German advanced submarines. Nuclear strategies were more varied than usual, with one game not producing atomic bombs at all, and several games producing large numbers of bombs, most of which were used tactically. The new rules regarding submarine warfare generally worked, but they need further tweaking. The new rule for ground attacks on fortified cities and islands, which guaranteed some losses for the attacker, worked very well.

As usual, play revealed several areas where rule changes were needed. The first was in Russia, where standard play had been for the Russians to run away in the Summer turn, instead of defending as they historically did. Penalties were added if the Russians allow key objectives to be captured without a fight. The second area was regarding Italian forces, which defended in mid-war much more effectively than they did historically. Consequently, the Italians almost never surrendered in fall 1943, as they actually did. New rules now weaken the Italians after they have been pushed out of Africa, and also prevent the fortifying of Italy before its surrender. In submarine warfare, the research rules have been modified to prevent the large imbalances that had been experienced in the Battle of the Atlantic.

Plaque Winners

1st - Bruce Harper (Best Overall)	4th - Elihu Feustal (Best Axis, Pacific)
2nd - Jon Hogen (Best Axis, Europe)	5th - Randy Scheers (Best Allies, Europe)
3rd - Paul Milne (Best Allies, Pacific)	6th - Vic Hogen

Game Summary

	Axis	Allies	Axis Strategy	Allied Atomics	Europe End	Pacific End	Game Result
1.	Bruce Harper Elihu Feustal	Randy Scheers Chris Goldfarb	Su'41 East Wi'41 Pac	Above average	Fa'45 (+1) [actual]	Fa'45 (0) [actual]	Axis (+1) [actual]
2.	Jon Hogen Ken Cruz	Don Stanley Rob Carl Ed Schoenfeld	Sp'41 Spain Su'41 East Sp'42 Pac	Above average	Sp'45 (-2) [actual]	Sp'46 (+3) [actual]	Axis (+1) [actual]
3.	Jim Sparks Nick Szulczewski	AJ Johnson Chris Collins	Su'41 East Su'41 Pac	Unknown	Wi'46 (+6) [est.]	Wi'46 (+5) [est.]	Axis (+11) [est.]
4.	Vic Hogen Joe Brophy	Kevin Milne Paul Milne	Su'41 East Su'41 Pac	None	Su'45 (0) [est.]	Wi'44 (-3) [actual]	Allied (-3) [est.]
5.	Jason Moore Brian Conway	Stephen Erikson Greg Wilson	Su'41 East Su'41 Pac	Abandoned	Sp'45 (-1) [est.]	Sp'45 (-2) [est.]	Allied (-3) [est.]
6.	Jeff Mathis Fred Ehler	Jerry Smolens Jeremy Vipperman	Su'41 East Fa'41 Pac	Unknown	Sp'46 (+6) [est.]	Fa'45 (0) [est.]	Axis (+6) [est.]

Detailed Game Descriptions

Additional comments provided for each game by Mike Crowe.

Game 1

European Axis: Bruce Harper
Japan: Elihu Feustel
Allies Europe: Randy Scheers
Allies Pacific: Chris Goldfarb
European Result: Fall 1945 (+1)
Pacific Result: Fall 1945 (0)
Overall Result: Axis (+1)

Game narrative provided by Randy Scheers and Elihu Feustel. Additional comments by Bruce Harper.

Japanese Strategy: My focus during mobilizations will be economic growth. I plan to mobilize in Fall and Winter 1940. To keep tensions low, I won't increase SBP until Winter 1941 (with production). Japan will mobilize more army air, and fewer ground units, than normal (no armor or SBP). This should allow me to build up my carrier force and build forts each turn from 1942 onward. I will add two extra transports and as much ASW as possible.

1939 Fall Axis: Poland falls with medium losses. Germany declines to raid with its pocket battleships so it can have 50 BRPs for builds in Winter

Bruce: Actually because Germany wanted to build up its fleet and didn't want to start the game off by losing several PBs ...

1939 Fall Allies: In response, Britain mines the Norwegian waters. Britain also announces full cooperation with France.

1939 Winter Axis: The reaction roll for Norway yields nothing. This infuriates the Fuhrer, who attacks the Lowlands and convinces Italy to attack too. As a side effect of the Italian declaration of war, they vacate eastern Libya as indefensible.

Randy: I'm not sure why Bruce chose to attack in Winter.

Bruce: Because one of the main reasons that Germany waits is so that it doesn't trigger Anglo-French cooperation too early. The other factor is that the mining of the Norwegian waters costs Germany five BRPs of builds in Winter 1939; but if Germany attacks, it doesn't have enough BRPs to build up to its construction limit in Winter 1939 anyway, so the reduction from Norway doesn't matter.

So the Winter 1939 attack was quite logical, and shouldn't have surprised the Allies, since they provoked it; there were fewer negatives to the Winter 1939 attack and the positives still remained. But from now on, I will always build the German air force in Fall 1939, because it can always be used in Winter 1939, whereas the armor may not be useful, and you always want to be as ready as possible for weird situations like this one.

1939 Winter Allies: The Allies advance in North Africa, but Russia declines a Winter War with Finland.

Mike: This has become standard practice for most Russian players. In this game it also avoided a German diplomatic roll for Norway in Spring 1940 with a +3 modifier.

Bruce: The Finnish rules were finally cleaned up after the 2010 convention, thank goodness.

1940 Spring Axis: Germany attacks into France and is poised to take Paris in the Summer. The invasion of Norway is postponed.

1940 Spring Allies: The Allies deliberately tempt the Germans to invade Britain.

Bruce: LOL! Well, I thought it was just a blunder, which goes to show you how differently people look at the game! I can resist anything but temptation ...

1940 Summer Axis: With France in trouble, Germany invades Britain in order to try to punish the British for defending the beach hex east of Portsmouth with only a single factor. This delays the attack on Paris.

1940 Fall Axis: The Germans take Portsmouth, and things look promising. France surrenders, with a pro-Allied surrender level of -3. Despite this, all of the French colonies go Vichy.

1940 Fall Allies: A lucky six on an 11+ attrition roll at -1 forces the Germans to eliminate the Italian armor in Portsmouth in order to keep Britain from retaking the port. But it also allows Britain to fortify London. Britain gets to the outskirts of Tripoli.

Bruce: Without this attrition roll, the Allies would have been in a lot of trouble; Germany would have been ashore in Britain in force in Winter 1940. A five out of six chance to win early is pretty good odds, but now the Axis have to try to win all over again. The German submarine campaign was absolutely horrible in this game (this led to some rule refinements), as noted below, so Britain could already breathe easily.

Mike: A World at War has introduced cumulative negative feedback modifiers into all projects that can achieve multiple results. This affects air range and radar research now, as well as torpedoes and ASW technology. The overall effect is to further dampen the probability of a second result too soon after an initial result, which could result in an unbalancing advantage for one side or the other.

1941 Spring Axis: Germany abandons the invasion and prepares for Barbarossa. This is the end of Sea Lion in this game. Norway and Denmark remain neutral.

1941 Spring Allies: The British retreat as German units start arriving in North Africa. The Battle of the Atlantic heavily favors the

Allies, with only six transports sunk through the end of the year.

1941 Summer Axis: Germany calls Norway with four DPs, and rolls a '1'!

Mike: I really hate it when this happens to me!

Bruce: Me too! It wasn't easy to keep playing at this point, although the Axis had had some good research rolls, and that gave them some hope.

The usual mauling of the Russian army ensues.

1941 Fall Axis: Dnepropetrovsk falls.

Bruce: In this and several other games, the Russians ran away in Summer 1941, so the Axis just attritioned in Fall 1941. It was recognized by all that this had become the standard defense for Russia, and that it was so ahistorical that it revealed a serious flaw in the rules. That flaw has since been corrected, and future Russian campaigns promise to be more interesting and exciting, even in 1941.

1941 Winter Axis: The Germans manage to take Leningrad, as the Russians elect to push German units away from Kharkov, in order to strengthen their position in the south.

Bruce: I thought this was a mistake that let the Axis back in the game. Had the Russians kept the Axis one hex from Leningrad, they would have had a good position.

Japan did a standard Winter 1941 attack. Japan's focus during mobilizations was economic growth, mobilizing in Fall and Winter '40. To keep tensions low, Japan didn't increase SBP until Winter 1941 (with production). Japan mobilized more army air, and less ground than normal (no armor or SBP). Japan has a moderate Pearl Harbor attack achieved moderate results, eliminating one BB3 and sinking three others in port.

Mike: No second strike?

Bruce: Not with every American carrier unaccounted for!

Mike: Apparently the low tension Japanese mobilization strategy didn't pay the hoped-for dividends at Pearl Harbor!

Britain defends Manila and Singapore heavily, as Japan has only nine air factors for attacks and overruns. Japan attacks conservatively with 3:1s and has almost no losses. Japan lays down several carriers in Winter 1941.

1942 Spring Axis: Germany declares war on the United States, following another diplomatic failure (this time in Vichy). Germany takes Malta, Denmark, and Norway.

Japan builds two extra transports and ASW, and begins building one fort per turn. Offensively, Japan focuses on taking Pacific islands.

1942 Summer-Winter Axis: In Russia, Germany tries to roll up the Russian line from the north, but the Russians are just too strong. Moscow is nearly encircled but holds. Kharkov falls and the year ends with the Axis gaining some maneuvering room, but Russia holding strong.

Bruce: This game, and several others at the convention, made it clear that Russia rebounds too quickly for 1942 to be interesting. Despite having lost Leningrad in 1941, Russia was in absolutely no danger in this game and the best the Axis could do in Russia was to gain a little space to improve their defensive prospects for 1943. This flaw in the game, which has long been suspected to exist, has finally been remedied and subsequent Russian campaigns are proving to be much more interesting for both sides.

Germany announces a Naval Nationality DRM increase to NDRM 4! With the Italian naval DRM now equal to the British, the Western Allies make only limited advances

in the Mediterranean. Allied aid via Murmansk is also shut down.

Japan takes Midway, and has enough island groups to collect a resistance point per turn for the next seven turns.

1943 Spring-Winter Axis: In Russia the Germans have to decide between a static defense and a "Citadel" counter-attack. Figuring that if it worked for Adolf it must work now, the Germans attack and chaos ensues for much of the year. The Germans manage to achieve their goal of a dynamic equilibrium, although by the end of the year the Russian steamroller is gearing up. The Western Allies make progress in the Mediterranean, as North Africa falls and Malta is retaken.

Bruce: The German Summer 1943 attack didn't do much better than the historical Kursk offensive, but the Russians overextended in their counterattack and Germany managed to eliminate four Russian armor units with a Fall 1943 attrition, so the end result for the Axis was as good as, if not better than, what they would have achieved with a purely defensive approach.

One consequence of the Japanese mobilization plan (combining growth with low tensions for the surprise attack) is that Japan only had six shipbuilding points and could only build three lights. This isn't a real problem though, as Japan will be able to keep its oil reserve at 10 until around Fall 1944. Japanese submarines sink two carriers as the US advances, but Japan avoids a major naval battle. The convoy is shut down eventually by the US surface fleet, not the submarines.

Bruce: I think a Japanese shipbuilding rate of seven in 1943 is exceptional, so I wouldn't use the word "only"! Japan can certainly try to fight the war with only five shipbuilding points.

1944 Spring Axis: The Western Allies invade France, but the strong German defense forces them to start in Brittany, which is as far from Berlin as the Germans could hope.

A major carrier battle occurs with the US and Japan squaring off with three full carrier task forces apiece. Japan loses one of its carrier task forces, but the other two are intact.

1944 Summer-Winter Axis: Hope alone can't stop the Allies though, and heavy fighting in France inevitably expands the Allied foothold on the continent. Italy is invaded in Summer and collapses, despite its fine navy. Russia pushes Germany back into Poland and overruns Rumania. Germany transfers its hopes to its advanced subs, which wreak havoc on Western Allied shipping.

Bruce: The Germans didn't really need to hope any longer, because the Western Allies were behind the historical curve in France and it was clear that in Europe the Axis were no longer going to lose. While Germany failed in Britain and didn't get anywhere special in Russia in 1941-42, the German defense in Russia, coupled with slowing the Western Allies down in the Mediterranean (the Naval Nationality DRM increase) made an Axis victory possible.

Japan begins to lose resistance points (from controlling island groups) in Summer. In Fall, Japan's perimeter begins to collapse, and the transports are shut down by surface ships before the submarines can finish the job.

1945 Spring Axis: Paris, Warsaw, and Breslau fall, and the Western Allies drop an atomic bomb on Cologne.

Bruce: An atomic bomb in Spring 1945 is pretty unlikely, but there's not much the Axis can do about it.

1945 Spring Allies: The US begins carrier sweeps of Japanese AAF to clear the way for the American bombers and possibly for an invasion. Japan's carriers were only useful as extra air bases. Kamikazes were ineffective, and would have been better used as carrier sweep fodder.

1945 Summer Axis: Two things are clear: neither the Russians nor the Western Allies can take Berlin this turn, and it is equally impossible for the Western Allies to force a German surrender by dropping an atomic bomb on Berlin. The Germans have 32 army air factors, 11 Interceptors and four jets covering Berlin.

1945 Fall Axis: Allied air power will blanket Germany, and the interceptors alone have no chance of stopping an atomic attack on Berlin, even if the ground defenses somehow hold. The game therefore ended with a Fall 1945 German surrender. This was fortunate from the Allied point of view, because in Fall 1945 the German subs (including six advanced subs) would have cleared out the Atlantic SW box!

The most likely result was for Japan to surrender in Fall 1945, after getting hit by two strategic nukes, with one tactical nuke supporting a heavily defended beach invasion. There was a small chance that Japan could have held out until Winter. We turbo-played the last couple of turns. It came down to a SW defense roll. If I got a '5' or higher on two dice, no SAC would have gotten through. But I rolled a '3'!

Post-Mortem

Randy: Europe was a one turn win for the Axis; Japan was a tie. The net result was a one-turn Axis win. There were the usual good and bad rolls on both sides: in research the Axis got maximum results in both advanced subs and jets, as well as an important Naval Nationality DRM.

Mike: What was the importance of the Axis naval DRM? How did it materially affect your game?

Randy: The Axis DRM meant that Britain was fighting Germany at -2 NDRM; that pretty much stopped any Murmansk convoys and limited what the WAs could risk in the Atlantic. It also meant that the Italians fought even up with the British in the Med. As a result, the WAs were much more restricted in what they could do navally through 1943.

Randy: The Western Allies virtually won the submarine war with an air range result in 1939 and two ASW results in 1940, and had a very strong atomic program. Diplomacy was poor for both sides; most of the minors wanted nothing to do with the war. A key one-in-six attrition result turned back the improvised Axis invasion of Britain, but in the east the 1941 and 1942 Winters were mild. All things considered, the final result (a virtual tie) was a fair one and the game was great fun in both theaters, with constant fighting everywhere.

Bruce: As is usual in A World at War, you remember the bad luck and forget the good luck. I actually think the Axis were unlucky in this game; their bad luck came early – the failed conquest of Britain and several important diplomatic die rolls. The 1941 weather roll in Russia was good for the Axis, but I still think it wouldn't have had much effect had the Russians not allowed the attack on Leningrad. By the time the 1942 weather roll came along, the German invasion of Russia had already failed.

But later on the Axis research (jets, advanced submarines) came through, and there was no skill involved! This gave the Axis an unexpected new lease on life, and Germany managed to squeak out a one-turn victory.

By the end of the game, everyone's nerves were shot, as you can imagine. It was a great

game: exciting, interesting and played with great civility by everyone.

Finally, because the level of play in the game was high (there were no "blunders", only the inevitable (possible) errors by all sides), this game was invaluable to me from the design point of view, as it confirmed what many players had suspected. For example, apart from the issues mentioned earlier, in this game the Germans had two 3x3 infantry units on every French beach in 1943, as well as beach defenses (and I think even in 1942 in some hexes). This also occurred in at least two other games at the convention, and everyone agreed that the Germans shouldn't have to devote so much to defending France that early. This led to some rule modifications which have weakened the effect of "premature" Western Allied invasions.

So from every point of view, this was a great game, and I certainly learned from it.

Game 2

European Axis:	Jon Hogen
Japan:	Ken Cruz
Western Allies Europe:	Don Stanley
Russia:	Rob Carl
Western Allies Pacific:	Ed Schoenfeld
European Result: (+3)	Spring 1946
Pacific Result:	Spring 1945 (-2)
Overall Result:	Axis (+1)

Game narrative provided by Ed Schoenfeld. Additional comments by Rob Carl, Jon Hogen, and Ken Cruz.

Axis Strategy, Europe:

Mike: Jon pursues his patented Fortress Europe approach, beginning with a Winter attack, followed by a conquest of Spain, attack into Russia, and conquest of Gibraltar. After doing lots of damage with submarines and ground attacks, and amassing a huge wad of BRPs, he sits back and defends aggressively until he wins (at least, in Europe!)

Japanese Strategy:

Ed: Ken elects a Japanese tension plan with the goal of declaring war on the US jointly with Germany in Spring 1942. He varies this by producing/mobilizing all three Japanese 3o3s, and takes two full offensives in China. The goal is to secure a more or less permanent resistance modifier by taking Chunking.

1939 Fall-Winter Axis: The Axis open with a Winter 1939 attack.

1940 Spring-Winter Axis: France falls in Fall 1940 (FSL = 0). Vichy is not established. Syria goes Free French and North Africa independent. Germany sends raiders on some turns, but the damage they do is not too great; Germany's naval strategy is more to build up the

Kriegsmarine to oppose the Allied fleets later in the game, so a BB5 and several other battleships are laid down in Kiel.

Jon: The losses on the first turn in Poland influenced my decision to delay the conquest of France until Fall 1940, so I could do it in a more low-risk, high-odds manner. The small overall losses allowed me to build a large BRP base and a large German navy for use later in the game.

1940 Spring-Fall Allies: The US skips some shipbuilding in 1940 in order to reach 300 BRPs in the 1941 YSS.

1941 Spring Axis: Germany conquers Spain in Spring 1941, and places a railhead in southern France.

1941 Spring Allies:

Rob: I planned to have a 4o5 armor in the line for the Summer 1941 turn. The second die roll of the game cancelled that – no military breakthrough. I still came up with a good defense, very strong in the north.

1941 Summer-Winter Axis: The Axis have enough redeployment capacity to bring off a respectable Barbarossa. Germany halts its offensive at approximately the historical front line of 1943, the normal stopping point for Jon's 'Defensive Barbarossa'. Germany pulls back its air to besiege Gibraltar.

1941 Summer-Winter Allies: Russia holds in Europe.

Rob: I form a Fall defense with just 5 BRPs of aid. That was all I would get until late 1942. I was actually in East Prussia and held the Baltic States at the 1942 YSS, the first Allied power on German soil! We have snow in Winter 1941, and we both simply consolidate.

The German sub war is strong, especially with the Spanish ports (and later, Gibraltar), aggravated somewhat by the Allies' decision to build CVEs as quickly as allowed. Transport levels became quite low, and Britain is under oil effects through most of

1941. The Allies spend heavily on grants to China.

Mike: Just how heavy can that be?

1941 Spring-Winter Axis: The US opposes the Japanese plan to take Chungking by sending 28 BRPs of grants to China over the course of the year. This gives the Chinese enough construction capacity to keep up with their losses. It also allows for a few counter-offensives to slow down the Japanese advance on Chungking.

1942 Research: Japan has bad luck in strategic warfare research. The Allies get a Torpedo result in 1942.

Rob: My military research was averaging 1.75. I didn't even have a modifier for rolling for CTL.

1942 Spring Axis: Japan breaks off its premature Ichigo to attack Britain and the US in Spring 1942. Only one carrier strikes Pearl, just enough to cut down the US redeployment capacity on the surprise turn, but not enough to actually accomplish anything. US strategic and wild MAGIC cards shift the surprise level enough to let the US air defense roll eliminate all three Japanese eNAS before they could attack the fleet. On the DoW turn, Japan does not advance far in the Pacific, taking only Wake, Rabaul (on a 1:1 after an Australian CA2 sunk the DD carrying a unit to the empty beach adjacent to the objective), one Gilbert, and one Aleutian island. The Australian fleet managed to turn back a single DD invading Bougainville. Lae is never attacked. Meanwhile, the rest of the Japanese carriers help conquer the Dutch East Indies in a single turn, although strong forces at Singapore (including 10 fleet factors) slow the Japanese advance in mainland South East Asia.

1942 Spring Allies: The Allies have to abandon the SW box in Spring 1942, which fortunately is also the turn Germany declares war on the US.

At the end of Spring 1942 there are significantly fewer than 30 factors in Manchuria, and Germany is clearly not pushing forward on the European map – so Russia declares war on Japan. This has an interesting effect on the overall position. Russia spends 1942 bringing a bunchaton of Russians, including 20 AAF, to Siberia.

Rob: Ken was pounding China. He declared war on the Western Allies in Spring 1942, and with so many troops in China, he couldn't get his garrison back up to 30 BRPs. Since I have Jon stopped at a good line in the west, I declare war on Ken to relieve some pressure on China. I was hoping to pull some Japanese out of China and settle down to an attrition war. I even left a minimum garrison in Vladivostok to tempt him away from Chungking.

Mike: Since Jon has all his air over Gibraltar, even if he stopped the siege to attack Rob, he could not do so before Fall. So he would only have one or two turns to attack in 1942, depending on the winter weather die roll, with Rob fully built and getting stronger. Also, does it go without saying that Allied aid to Russia is unimpeded?

Ed: Russia is supported by the maximum BRP grants from 1942 onward.

1942 Summer Axis: Gibraltar falls.

Mike: Well, that didn't take long. Since the air did not head West until Winter, Jon attacked after two turns of siege, meaning Gibraltar was tripled. If defended by two 3x4s, it would have a defense of 18. To get a straight up 2:1, Jon would need to attack with two 4o6s, a paratroop, and 27 air factors. However, Jon often uses an invasion from both sides of the strait of Gibraltar to increase his chances with shore bombardment. Once Gibraltar is taken, Jon can send most of the air East again in time to attack or defend starting

in Fall 1942.

Jon: Actually, by Summer 1942 Gibraltar had been out of supply for three turns. Fall 1941 supply was cut with about seven or eight air and the German fleet - just enough to make it look difficult. By Winter 1941 I had increased the air to over 10 factors total. Spring 1942 saw close to 20 air factors in the area. By my Summer turn, Gibraltar was only doubled. The key here was getting that first out of supply turn in Fall 1941 with the minimum commitment.

1942 Summer Axis: Japan has its armor in port, intending to use it against Manila. Instead it is diverted to Manchuria in order to stop Russia. The Japanese take Vladivostok and drive deep into Siberia.

Rob: I was the first Allied power on Japanese soil. But I overlooked a port that was in range for his armor to get to the front line. When you swat at a bee, you might get stung. I always have to blunder something. Ken had produced two 3o3s. He was going to use them against the Philippines. Ken used the armor to surround most of the Russian Far Eastern army. My DoW on Japan was a strategic move, and would have worked very well if done right.

Japan still takes Manila, but needs most of its carrier fleet to do so; it loses six eNAS in the exchange, while the US sub damages a CV. As a result, the Japanese advance in the Pacific during Summer 1942 is very weak. Only one TF supports Japan's second try at invading Bougainville, against the entire US carrier fleet, and is turned back.

1942 Summer Allies: The US kicks Japan out of the Aleutians and Gilberts to pick up a pro-Allied cumulative resistance modifier for controlling eight island groups. This will neutralize the modifier Japan will eventually get for Chungking, as the US never gives up its early advantage in the islands.

Ed: So the first effect of the Russian declaration of war is to equalize the Japanese conquest of Chungking (which hasn't even happened yet!). The second is to further preserve China as an intact force by absorbing most of Japan's offensive power.

Mike: The permanent loss of the Gilberts on the DoW+2 turn is not good for Japan. A US port may show up there, but perhaps not if the WA required more than two years to achieve one of their naval breakthroughs. With presumably all of his air tied up in Southeast Asia and Asia, it is understandable that Ken does not contest this. The Russian DoW should help Jon a great deal, but it will be difficult for Ken to stabilize the Pacific game.

1942 Fall Axis:

Rob: Jon made a good move and got the Baltic States. I still had enough air in the west to limit what he did, and after that the front slipped into attrition warfare, until I had some shock troops and enough air.

Japan takes both Irkutsk and (finally!) Chungking.

Mike: I hope everyone remembered that Siberia has "winter" weather in Fall turns.

Rob: After losing so many troops, as well as Vladivostok, I put a minimum garrison in Irkutsk, while trying to build a line. Ken could only get a 1:1 on it, without the exchange covered. With enough snow in Fall he could not have attacked at all. But it did not snow, he intercepted my DAS, and with my air combat dice, he got the 1:1 and took Irkutsk with a thin supply line.

Ed: While the net cumulative resistance modifiers favored Japan for four turns, Ken's position was entirely defensive for the rest of the game, and the Japanese collapse became only a matter of time.

Mike: Yes, but how MUCH time? And what price would Russia pay in getting its European steamroller moving for its focus on Japan?

Slowed by monsoon weather in Summer, Japan does not clean up the Malayan peninsula and Burma until Fall 1942. The Japanese transport level declines steadily beginning in Fall 1942.

Mike: Payback for the Germans clearing the Atlantic SW box.

1942 Fall Allies: The Allies quickly recover from abandoning the SW box, helped in part by mobilizing transports, and in Fall 1942 the WAs invade Portugal (though that position was eventually lost).

Mike: The invasion of Portugal implies that Jon had shifted his air back to the East. But with so much Russian air going towards Japan, it was easy enough for Jon to transfer air and units back to Spain to crush this.

The US takes advantage of early carrier parity, taking Rabaul under Allied air cover.

Mike: Given that Japan did not DoW until Spring 1942, how did the US achieve carrier parity so quickly?

Ed: The US laid down CVLs in Spring and Summer 1941, so these had launched in Spring and Summer 1942, respectively. Along with a CV laid down in Winter 1939 (and launched in Winter 1941), this gave the US 22 carrier factors available in Fall 1942.

Mike: The US appeared to be several turns ahead of schedule at this point, although the Russian DoW had something to do with it. So did keeping Lae and Port Moresby in Allied hands.

1942 Winter Axis: Outside of the first few turns in the South Pacific, the only naval action is a Japanese raid in Winter 1942, when a CA2 and a British CVL from the South Africa box sink one Japanese BC3 and damage another as they raid from

Singapore.

Mike: No doubt to Ken's amazed disappointment!

More naval battles are fought in the Atlantic than the Pacific, though the Americans and British can never quite get the German BB5 Grossdeutschland.

1942 Fall-Winter Allies:

Rob: I was able to surround Irkutsk in my turn, and would have gotten it back in Winter if it snowed. It didn't snow, and Ken reopened a supply route.

1943 Research: The Allies get a second (!) torpedo result.

1943 Spring Allies: The Allies try to invade Norway, but are stopped by the Kriegsmarine and its BB5, which inflict sufficient naval losses to reduce the odds below 1:1.

1943 Spring Allies: The US takes Majuro in the Marshalls.

1943 Summer Allies: The Allies invade Morocco.

Rob. I took a 1.5:1 on Irkutsk and, of course, blew out! I had to try, to at least prove that I am not afraid of the dice. But it's just THE WAY IT IS! I rebuilt the losses on the Western front, in preparation for attacking there.

The US takes Hollandia and Kavieng, and builds a port in Majuro.

Mike: This let Ed turn up the heat on Guam and Truk. With a port in Majuro and possession of Hollandia and Rabaul, he could project 150 fleet factors onto Guam or Truk. If he had them.

1943 Fall Allies: The Allies retake Gibraltar.

Jon: Fall 1943 for me was a critical turn. Don really wanted to land SOMEWHERE and I really wanted him to make that landing as far away from Berlin as possible – Gibraltar for instance. I pulled air out of the east and stacked defensively

everywhere. The one relatively weak spot was Gibraltar, which is where the invasion came.

The US takes Manus, Ambon, and Sorong. When Japan intercepts the invasion attempt in the East Carolines, the US does not engage, as Japan has added a few CVLs, the US has not yet launched many carriers, and the US has a horrible MAGIC card draw (the worst of the game). Russia attacks aggressively along the entire front – in classic Rob Carl form, heavy exchange losses are considered merely an easy way to redeploy units back to Europe. Russia takes Irkutsk.

1943 Winter Allies: The Allies conquer North Africa, but Sicily is still too strong to invade. Instead, they invade Spain. A second invasion of Norway fails.

Ed: The effects of turn after turn of combat losses and bombing had begun to tell, and Germany also started to trade space for time. That didn't mean a lack of fighting, however, as Jon shrewdly contested the Allied liberation of France, Italy, and Eastern Europe.

Mike: The Allies were about a year behind the Western Allies' historical progress in the Mediterranean, but that's par for the course when they have to take Gibraltar first and are suffering under a brutal sub campaign. Ed did not mention an invasion of France in 1944, so I assume that an invasion of Spain was substituted.

Rob: I suggested to Don that he invade France at 1:1, but he preferred to come up through Spain.

1943 Winter Allies: Russia uses deep breakthroughs to liberate Peking in Winter. The cumulative resistance modifier now favors the Allies, and will for the rest of the game. The US takes Woleai in the East Carolines.

Mike: This is the first turn that US CVs laid down in Spring 1942 could be

available. I assume that Ed had enough of those, coupled with fully intact pre-war carriers, to confidently sail under Japanese LBA.

1944 Spring Axis: Japan begins to withdraw steadily on all fronts.

1944 Spring Allies: The Japanese transports are completely cleared from the SW box this turn and hereafter. The US takes Guam. Russia retakes Vladivostok.

Mike: The US moved decisively forward. Japan could now be invaded, provided Ed could clear out Ken's AAF, not to mention cope with the kamikaze threat.

1944 Summer Allies:

Rob: I used a good two-pronged attack through East Prussia and Poland to drive on Berlin. But I could only get a 2.5:1 on one of the two breakthroughs. I would have had two bridgeheads, stacked with armor, across the Vistula, with all of East Prussia secured. I had my 506 in the rightmost attack, so that was where the odds were 2.5:1. The left attack went with a 2:1. Of course I blew out! With my whole left flank exposed, Jon counterattacked and wiped me out. It set me back two or three turns, at least.

1944 Summer Allies: The US takes a weakly held Iwo Jima. Bombers now take over for the subs in pressuring the Japanese economy.

1944 Fall Axis: Japan's slow withdrawal continues, and the home islands are built up to contest the expected invasion. To keep the Japanese AAF at peak availability, Japan does not declare kamikazes.

1944 Fall Allies: The US takes Okinawa. Throughout 1944, Russia keeps up the pressure in Asia, taking Nanking, Harbin, Vladivostok, Mukden, advancing adjacent to Seoul, and clearing Japanese troops out of Shanghai. Meanwhile, the Nationalist Chinese (financed by massive and continuing US BRP grants), recover

Chunking, liberate Canton and Foochow, and clear the Japanese out of Hong Kong. They cannot move in (they are prohibited by the 99-year lease – and by rule), but the Australians invade Hong Kong with a single DD on the next turn. Similarly the Nationalists occupy a Shanghai that has been cleared of Japanese units by the Russians. This provides the US with fully supplied airbases on the Asian mainland.

1944 Winter Axis: Japan is on its last gasp, but drama ensues! A careful analysis of the strategic warfare table shows that Japan has to stop the bombers – a firestorm would trigger a Japanese surrender – but so might air combat losses!

1944 Winter Allies: The US concentrates on Pacific and SEA objectives while setting up to invade, as they await the launch of a few more carrier TFs.

Mike: This was a direct result of the late Japanese DoW, and part of the pay-off of Ken's strategy.

The WA plan to clear out the last Japanese troops outside Japan and Korea (except for one stack of 3x2s in the Thai jungle-mountain hex). A '12' would have killed enough Japanese AAF to trigger another surrender modifier, but the roll is an '11'. In ground combat, Russia needs any result that causes Japanese casualties in a 1.5:1 on Seoul. In classic Rob Carl fashion, the result is a '1', '1'. Sigh.

Rob: I got a 1.5:1 on Seoul, and any Jap losses would have forced Japan to surrender one turn sooner. But NO!!! I get a '1'. Then I couldn't even get an Ex at 1:2 with a +1 on the die roll.

1945 Research: The Allies achieve the maximum research result for Uranium Separation.

Mike: Well, that is impressive, requiring a result of '12'. The Allies could only have had three RPs in this project at this point. With three atomic breakthroughs, they

would need to roll a '6'! This gave the Allies one bomb immediately, and then an A-bomb every two turns (Spring 1945, Fall 1945, Spring 1946, Fall 1946).

1945 Spring Allies: Russia charges into Poland and eventually reaches the Oder, while the Allies are also ready to push hard. Liberal use of Very Expensive Redeployments (voluntary elimination of a unit that is then rebuilt at double cost) brings most of the US Pacific forces into Europe in time for the Summer turn, and allows the great joy of spending the entire US construction limit of 339 BRPs (though some of that was taken up by grants.)

Japan will inevitably surrender. Of course this is the turn in which the USN sees the most action! And, no, it is not during an American invasion of Japan – it is during a Russian invasion of the Kurile Islands! Russia invades with a 1x2 and the entire Russian Pacific fleet (all nine factors). (*Rob: This is the only invasion of Japanese territory!*) Japan intercepts with the Yamato and a BC3, but intends to fight only with the Yamato. The US counter-intercepts with four TFs from Guam and an artificial port in Saipan, sailing just outside Japanese LBA range.

Mike: This counter-interception (in the interception hex) is illegal. The Russians are on their own! However, that did not detract from the glorious naval battle, which both sides were happy to fight.

Japan counter-counter-intercepts with five TFs. The US plays a tactical card to get a search advantage, and the fight is on. The CG1s find each other and enter fleet combat. Ohio takes on Fuso while the Wisconsin sails against two BB4 and two BB3, sinking Yamashiro while sustaining three hits. Japan launches two surprise airstrikes against US CG2. Two radar results reduce the surprise effects sufficiently that American CAP with NDRM 4 plus the CAP bonus wipe out most of the attackers. The first wave has no

aircraft reach the ships, and the second (by Japan's remaining eNAS) inflicts only one hit. The CG3s find each other and the US gets to launch an air strike and conduct fleet combat. Japanese CG3, a decoy made up of lights, is entirely wiped out. The US also make a non-surprise airstrike on Japanese CG4, sinking a CVL. The Japanese withdraw. The Americans take their additional die rolls to help the Russians, as the small forces in the Kuriles struggle to find each other. The Yamato gets one shot that sinks a Russian CA2 and DD1, but does not turn back the invasion. Since the Americans are too close, the Yamato withdraws and Russia gets the Kuriles.

The Japanese surrender is a -2 Allied result on the Pacific board. Japan is never invaded.

Mike: Nor did the Allies use the A-bomb. Nor could they have, until the next turn!

1945 Summer Allies: The WA roll successfully for the A-bomb. One bomb is expended tactically in Europe.

1945 Fall Allies: Plutonium production provides the maximum result in Fall, giving the Allies eight bombs for 1945 and (if needed) three per turn for 1946 – another good century for California wine.

Mike: Another impressive roll, requiring an '11' result. With three RPs and three Atomic breakthroughs, a '5' or '6' was needed. This gives the Allies one A-bomb immediately and one every other turn, so they got one in Fall 1945, Spring 1946, and Fall 1946. Since Ed said they had eight A-bombs for 1945 and three per turn for 1946, this means the Allies had three Uranium Plants and two Plutonium Reactors (!). They've been busy.

A second A-bomb is expended tactically. Two more are dropped successfully on the Rhur, followed by conquest on the ground.

1945 Winter Axis: Germany cuts supply to the forward Allied air bases, making it

impossible to drop a bomb on Berlin in Winter.

Mike: Jon was nonchalant in the face of this rain of atomic bombs, and survived for two more turns! As Jon likes to say, "It's what I'd hoped you'd do!" The Allies couldn't drop an A-bomb because they were out of targets, unable to successfully each Berlin, Leipzig, or Breslau. Ed doesn't mention that Jon denied Norway to the Allies by pumping the defense of Bergen up to 60 (!), preventing them from taking Swedish hexes in range of Berlin.

1946 Spring Allies: Since a German surrender is inevitable in Spring 1946, we call the game at about 9 PM Saturday, with a +1 net Axis victory.

Europe Post-Mortem

Jon: The first third of the game was successful from a German point of view. By that I mean that I was able to achieve territorial gains economically with a minimum of losses (although I had about the worst losses in Poland on the first turn that I can remember).

Throughout the middle third of the game and into the beginning of the final third, the German navy continued to be a force that had to be calculated into the equation. If I remember correctly (it's a little different each game depending on sub losses), I laid down a BB5 that I double-accelerated at least once, plus perhaps two additional BB4s and then a smattering of CAs and DDs. The additional battleships were the framework though. The Italians were also turning out their paper ships every turn as fast as possible to attrition the Brits a little. I forget the exact timing, but I had a good-sized navy that matched up pretty well from turn to turn. Each turn it got a bit more robust as the Allied navy did as well. Sometimes it prevented a landing (Norway) and sometimes it made a landing less effective (Portugal). Sometimes it prevented an

invasion just by its presence. I tried to encourage a Gibraltar-to-Berlin path, as it would give me a nice long run of territory to give up, allowing me to sometimes switch east to pound Rob.

This all worked out very well. I gave a little ground on both fronts turn after turn. If Rob got a little too far, I'd give a little more in the west and go blast Russia with a counteroffensive. Denying Norway to Allied hands was critical, since the end game became a Bomb-tossing contest. I was able to keep forward air bases from the Allies until Spring 1946. I could have used a slightly different tactic to delay the Berlin bombing until Summer or Fall 1946, but this would have involved increasingly more risk. And by that time, with Japan out of the war, everyone knew that Spring 1946 survival resulted in an overall Axis win. So, as usual, I went with the more conservative approach, securing the Spring 1946 victory for Germany and the one-turn overall win.

Mike: Jon is being coy about his "slightly different tactic to delay the Berlin bombing". He has alluded to this before (he mentioned it in my con game with him two years ago), but he has not used it yet. He is keeping it under wraps. I am waiting for someone to press him hard enough to force him to use it, whatever it is.

Jon: Part of the anti-bombing strategy is no secret. I was contemplating pulling some forces from the east and taking a large counteroffensive along the Rhine, which could have set Don back a turn or maybe two. The risk there would have been twofold: could I build back all my losses if too many exchanges were rolled, and would Rob have gotten closer in the east? As it was, I was maintaining a nice pear-shaped air defense with airbases out of Allied reach in central Germany. So ultimately I thought I could pull off the Spring 1946 survival without the additional risk.

Mike: Sometimes the things Jon doesn't do are more interesting than the more conservative, less risky strategy he likes to employ.

Ed: It's worth commenting on the effect of the bombers. Don and I had originally thought to try an early bombing strategy in Europe, and in fact we managed to send bombers on almost every turn from mid-1941 on. We felt the bombing campaign was very worthwhile; even though it often did little direct economic damage, it did force Germany to spend construction BRPs on AAF and interceptors. One negative was that British AAF often had to bomb, because the need for a rapid advance in the Pacific put a premium on deploying US AAF to that theater. The resulting losses materially slowed Don's rebuilding of the British forces. In retrospect, we might have done better to take a few more chances on a Japanese naval interception in the Pacific, in order to get the US involved in the European bombing campaign sooner.

Rob: I finally convinced Joe Brophy that the dice just are not on my side. Joe bought me some dice with a skull and crossbones for the '1'!

Pacific Post-Mortem

Ed: It could just as easily have been a net draw or one-point Allied win save for a few poor rolls and errors on the last turns in each theater. Many thanks to Jon and Ken for an enjoyable and competitive game, and to Don and Rob for excellent partnership and outstanding resilience, as the board often looked like I was doing so well and they so poorly (but we should all know the board position lies – you can't make an accurate assessment unless you know the strategies involved.)

Mike: I don't think the board position lied in this game.

Ed: Special thanks to Ken for joining in my blather on Saturday to construct an elaborate

Japanese surrender ceremony and subsequent alternate history.

Ken: I really don't have much to add. Ed is an excellent writer and his summaries are spot on. Japan would have held out longer, but Ed got a torpedo result in 1942 and another in 1943. Japan could only muster one ASW result in 1943 (with maximum RPs allotted there and one naval breakthrough). That meant the premature end to the Japanese transport line. It was a very fun game. The surrender ceremony Ed and I conjured up was a lot a fun too. Is it next year yet?!

Rob: I always say every year that I had more fun than any previous year. But this year was BY FAR the best I ever had!! I was looking forward to playing Jon and especially Ken. When I found out Ken was playing the Pacific, I was a little let down. So when Ken left the garrison short in Manchuria, there was nothing in the world that was going to stop me from DoWing him. Not even the fact that I only got 5 BRPs of grants in 1941, and knew from the board situation that I wasn't getting any for a while.

Then, after my royal screw-up, and fighting the dice, and fighting on two fronts, to come back and have one or two die rolls turn the game to a draw or one-point victory, I felt like I had won my own first place trophy! This is certainly not to say I did it on my own. On the contrary, we would not have pulled it off if those guys had not fought back as hard as I did.

But fighting my own dice is tough. I am certainly used to really bad combat losses, but to blow out on so many key things, including research! Roll three dice and take the middle number, and roll for three years, and see if you can average 1.75 in the military category! And for Russia, military is the only thing that really matters.

But the most fun by far was playing with Ken! I kept teasing Ken about finding volunteers for the Eastern front! Of course most of them were 1x3s. At first he would just hand them back the next turn saying, "Here's your volunteers." Most of his attacks were without losses. Later, even he saw how bad the dice were treating me on everything, including attrition rolls. That's when he started saying, "I'm sorry, Rob" when he handed me my dead troops.

As well as getting to play against Ken, I have always dreamed of getting my Russians going against the Japanese and Germans at the same time. And then to get the chance, only to blunder the first turn. Leave it to me! But I think it at least worked out for the best in the long run.

Game 3

European Axis: Jim Sparks
Japan: Nick Szulczewski
Western Allies: AJ (Ashley) Johnson
Russia: Chris Collins
European Result: Winter 1946 (+6)
[est.]
Pacific Result: Winter 1946 (+5)
[est.]
Overall Result: Axis (+11) [est.]

Game narrative provided by Nick Szulczewski, Jim Sparks, and AJ Johnson.

Axis Strategy, Europe: The plan for the European theatre is to be flexible and see where research and opportunity lead. The initial goal is to take Suda Bay by diplomacy or force, to protect supply and transport into Tobruk under the cover of air. At the same time, the plan is to hold Italy out of the war until Fall 1940, to obtain the favorable diplomatic modifier for Yugoslavia. Germany will lay down DDs that will launch no later than Summer 1940, to leave open the possibility of a Fall 1940 Sea Lion. If that opportunity doesn't pan out, the plan is to apply pressure in the Med until a standard Barbarossa can be launched in Summer 1941. For research, Germany wants to focus on air defense and air NDRM research, along with a normal BotA research plan.

Mike: Why the emphasis on air NDRM? What is a "normal" BotA plan?

Nick: I could be mistaken about the German air NDRM. I know air defense was rolled every year, and Jim got like four or five results before we ended in 1943. That wouldn't be possible under the post-con research changes.

A "normal" BotA plan would be to go for the 1940 torpedo result, with the possibility of going for another one in

1942. I'm not sure if Jim continued the torpedo research or not. I would consider Axis air range to be more than a "normal" commitment, and Jim did not go for air range. For production, generate enough subs to keep the maximum allowed in the Atlantic SW box, with the possibility of a sub operating on the board in certain turns, and add a shipbuilding point to Kiel in 1940 or 1941.

If it turns out Germany will go against Russia, the plan is to get three Russian Occupation Policies results by 1942, to boost the amount of infantry available on the eastern front.

Mike: I like this plan.

Japanese Strategy: The Japanese plan is to leave open the option to DoW in Summer, Fall, or Winter 1941 depending on the form the German strategy ends up taking and the overall board position. Jim mentions to me that he may go for a Sea Lion strategy if the opportunity presents itself, so I will prepare for a Summer DoW if it becomes necessary due to the tensions increase of a British surrender.

Nick: I noticed that the WA player did not produce any air in 1940, nor was any NAS or AAF from mobilization going to be on board until Fall 1941 at the earliest. This, along with a somewhat weak defense by the WAs led me to make the DoW in Summer, before the oil embargo set in.

I plan to mobilize Japan's entire infantry force pool, and have the only military production be the two marines. This way I won't have to go for a military general breakthrough at all. Japan will be a little light on AAF for the DoW turn. Another disadvantage Japan will face is that with my mobilization schedule (Fall and Winter 1940), I'll defer taking Saigon until Spring 1941, to keep tensions low enough so the oil embargo will not be enacted until Summer 1941 at the earliest.

The research plan is to go light in the military category (only the marines will be produced), heavy into air, and moderate into navy.

AJ: The Japanese achieved two or three air defense results by 1943 and got an air NDRM result in 1942, a turn before the WAs achieved theirs. A double ASW result was achieved in early 1943. Japan also increased shipbuilding once with the final mobilization, and produced shipbuilding in 1941, 1942, and 1943, bringing Tokyo up to seven SBPs, allowing up to four lights (transports) to be built per turn as of 1943.

Mike: Being ready to DoW in Summer as Japan, especially when playing as Jim's partner, is very wise! I like the flexibility of thinking, the planning, and the adjusting to events along the way. This is the essence of playing AWAW well.

1939 Fall Axis: The Axis put two DPs in Greece, but miss the hex control (or better) result, so Italy DoWs Greece. German raiding is ineffective. Italy invades the beach in Crete.

Mike: This is a nice plan. Controlling Suda Bay lets the Axis potentially attack Egypt immediately in Fall 1940, by allowing air cover for a sea transport of two 4o6 armor into Tobruk.

1939 Winter Axis: Germany conducts the Sitzkrieg and builds up, while Italy pushes in Greece and occupies Suda Bay.

1939 Winter Allies: The WAs mine the Norwegian waters (without permission).

Mike: It is often better to mine in the Fall turn, as then it reduces the German Winter UCL by 5 BRPs, resulting in fewer German troops to attack in Spring 1940. Of course, the Axis could just decide to attack in Winter and make this moot, as Bruce did in Game 1. But he was also facing Anglo-French cooperation and had nothing to lose.

Russia demands the Finnish border, and attacks but fails to take more than one hex.

AJ: I believe a 2:1 was attempted and blown out on a '1'.

Mike: I hate it when that happens!

1940 Spring Axis: The real showdown begins. Germany DoWs Belgium/Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Denmark/Norway.

Germany invades the Norwegian beach, conquers Belgium/Luxembourg, attacks the Maginot hex east of Metz, exploits into both of the other Maginot hexes and into the two hexes northwest of Sedan. Calais, Dieppe, and Sedan are isolated.

Italy controls all of Greece north of the Athens hex row. Russia continues to fight in Finland, and still does not finish the job.

Mike: The post-con rules changes give the Russians some relief from bad luck here by requiring that only two border hexes be taken to bring Finland to her senses (or let Russia attack all the way to Helsinki, and knowing Jim, I would not be surprised to see him go this route just to see what would happen). Under the pre-con 2010 rules, many, if not most, Russian players were leaving Finland alone and trying to keep it out of the war diplomatically. The post-con rules make attacking Finland more attractive.

1940 Summer Axis: Germany finishes off France and Norway. Italy continues to push in Greece.

AJ: I successfully hurt German UCL with Norwegian mining operations, and actually got a '-1' FSL result after the fall of France, so I was feeling pretty good.

Mike: What was the disposition of the French colonies?

Nick: All the colonies went Vichy, and Germany got control of all of them when Vichy allied with the Axis.

1940 Summer Allies: Russia demands Bessarabia, and is still fighting in Finland. Rumania resists and Russia is unable to occupy all of Bessarabia. The US mobilizes in the Atlantic.

Mike: Ordinarily, Russia masses enough force on the Bessarabian border to convince Rumania not to resist. If they resist, they risk losing their entire army, which hurts both their chances to ally with Germany and to be fully built for Barbarossa. It is ominous that Jim could afford to resist, and succeed. The Russians were undoubtedly hampered by having substantial force tied up in Finland.

Because the Rumanians fought and lived to tell the tale, Jim was in an enviable diplomatic position. All the Balkans got a +1 for Russia and Rumania having fought, as well as a +3 for an on-going war, so Jim got a +4 for all the Balkans. The likely result was full alliance by Hungary, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia.

To avoid going to war with Russia immediately, Jim could postpone the roll for Rumania, pull his troops out of Bessarabia (thus conceding the hexes), and make rolls in Winter 1940 and again in Spring 1941. And the Rumanian roll, in addition to the default of +4, would also have +1 for Russia and Rumania having fought, +2 for Russia making demands, +1 for Russia entering Bessarabia, and +1 for RGT level over 10 (for a total of +9), plus whatever DPs Jim had in Rumania. Assuming he lost six Rumanian infantry units, he could rebuild one in Fall, giving him a net +4 modifier in Winter, before considering DPs. In Spring 1941 it would be at +5.

Of course, the Russians could attempt subversion in Winter 1940 if they had a result, and again in Spring 1941. This might be enough to keep Rumania out of the war and turn the tables. They have nothing to lose if all the other Balkans are

conquered or allied with Germany anyway.

1940 Fall Axis: Germany calls the Balkans while Russia is still involved in a border war. Germany bombs Britain. Italy DoWs Britain. Italy finishes the conquest of Greece. German raiders sink two transports. Russia continues fighting in Finland, though the Rumanians concede Bessarabia. Japan mobilizes. The US mobilizes in the Atlantic.

1940 Fall Allies: Russia makes big mistakes in the Winter War with Finland, as well as in Bessarabia. A dubious strategy and TERRIBLE dice rolling leave the Finnish border hexes still Finnish after four turns of offensive options by the USSR!! Very similar results in Bessarabia cause the Russian BRP and UCL to be way too low when Barbarossa is launched.

Mike: What were the Balkan diplomatic results?

Nick: Germany got 10 BRPs each for Hungary, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia, and 5 BRPs for Rumania.

Mike: Only 5 BRPs for Rumania?

1940 Winter Axis: Germany and Italy both conduct full offensives in the Med. There is an opportunity for the Axis to blow the British defenses in Egypt wide open on a 2:1, which would be followed up by exploitation. It fails on a '1', '1' combo.

Mike: Wow.

German raiding is ineffective.

1940 Winter Allies: Russia continues fighting (ineffectively) in Finland. Russia spent 56 BRPs on offensives in 1940 (some on the attack on Rumania in Summer), and spent 41 BRPs to build (but mostly rebuild) units in 1940. Russia ends 1940 with 35 BRPs.

Mike: It's hard to believe the war in Finland isn't over yet. Russia can only grow by around 23% in the 1941 YSS, but that's still 10 BRPs less for the Russian base because of the 56 BRPs spent on

offensives. I could see spending 30, but 56? What is HAPPENING in Finland??

Nick: Very poor rolls by the Russians. Several 2:1s were blown out with a '1'. And when hexes were taken, it was usually by full exchange. The FBH never completely fell to the Russians, and the Winter War continued indefinitely.

Mike: I would give up after the second blowout on a 2:1, if not the first. Russia can't afford this much reduction in its base, even if discounted by 80%. Attacking Rumania when still engaged in Finland is also simply taking on too much as the Russians. You want to scare the Rumanians into giving you the border hexes, not fight them!

1940 Winter Axis: Japan mobilizes.

1940 Winter Allies: The US mobilizes in the Pacific.

1941 Spring Axis: Germany calls Sweden and gets 5 BRPs. German raiders sink two transports. Japan occupies Saigon and sets up to attack in Summer.

1941 Spring Allies: Russia still does not finish off the Finnish border, but withdraws to set up a defense against Germany. The US mobilizes in the Atlantic.

Mike: What is the status of Rumania?

Nick: I believe Germany had at least hex control going into Barbarossa.

Mike: I assume Jim rolled again in Spring and got hex control.

1941 Summer Axis: Germany gets Vichy as a full ally. Germany DoWs Russia, takes Kiev, and encircles the Russian army. German raiders sink four transports.

Mike: Jim's luck with raiders made up for the 2:1 blowout in Egypt. FOUR transports?? Also, I'm curious about why Jim rolled for Sweden before Vichy.

Nick: I think Jim was waiting to gain another modifier for Vichy, either on the board or from research. It's possible that

Jim took Malta in Spring, as Italy did a full offensive on the Med front that turn.

Japan DoWs the USA, catches one carrier at Pearl, and sinks it. A second strike on Pearl is conducted. Japan lands in Lae, Rabaul, the Gilberts, the Solomons (not in Guadalcanal, since it was defended by one factor), Wake, and the Aleutians – all without a fight. Japan takes both oil centers, as well as Batavia (for the BRPs). Hong Kong falls on a 3:1. The Malaya beach was left empty, so Japan hits the beach and moves into Kuala Lumpur. Japanese troops land in Lingayen and take T15 in Burma. Japan fortifies Canton, and ends Summer with 41 BRPs.

Mike: I'd like to know what the total carnage was at Pearl.

Nick: All the air units were wiped out in the first strike. I think there were a couple BBs damaged or sunk across the two rounds, but the damage was not particularly severe. The US had at least a few BBs surviving undamaged. I don't recall the exact carnage.

Mike: Managing to grab Batavia, along with all the other usual targets, is pretty stellar for a Summer 1941 attack. However, since Saigon was not occupied until Spring, Nick couldn't yet take Rangoon and risked not being able to occupy the jungle/mountain hexes in Burma. Taking an Aleutian was nice, possible since this wasn't a Winter attack.

1941 Summer Allies: Russia withdraws to set up a defensive line outside of German air/infantry range.

Mike: How badly was Russia mauled on the opening turn? They should have been pretty strong if Rumania was not in the war yet.

Nick: As I said, I think Germany had at least hex control of Rumania. Jim did a very good job of surrounding most, if not all, of the Russian army. He is very adept at finding any little weakness in a defense.

1941 Fall Axis: Germany advances, occupying eastern Poland, the Baltic States, Bessarabia, Kharkov, and Dnepropetrovsk – all without conducting a full offensive. In spite of limiting his attacks, Jim encircles the Russians a second time.

Mike: Since Bessarabia was not occupied in Summer, I deduce that Rumania wasn't in the war yet. Is that correct?

Nick: No, Rumania was in the war, or at least had granted hex control to the Axis. I think Jim just opted not to take both Bessarabian cities in the first turn of the attack. Perhaps he exploited around them.

Mike: It sounds like Jim attacked in Fall but did not exploit, gaining him a +1 winter prep bonus for the Winter 1941 turn. Under the post-convention rule changes, that bonus modifier no longer exists. Also, Russia can no longer concede objectives and ICs without a diplomatic penalty, providing more incentive to fight in Fall.

Japan finishes off Singapore, Balikpapan, and Manila. Thailand associates, allowing Japan to attack and occupy Mandalay, T14, and Rangoon. Japan lands units in the Ellice Islands, the New Hebrides, and a second Aleutian island. Japan ends Fall 1941 with 15 BRPs.

1941 Fall Allies: The US attempts to counter-invade one of the South Pacific islands, but Japan succeeds in a moderately long interception. A US carrier is sunk and another is damaged; the invasion is aborted. At the end of the US turn, there are only two operational US carriers in the Pacific. Japan controls seven island groups and four are contested, so Japan gains +2 cumulative resistance points.

Mike: Things were going swimmingly for Japan in the Pacific. It sounds like the Summer 1941 offensive took the Allies by surprise. Also, Jim's pressure on Egypt may have encouraged the British to keep

more Australians and Indians there than they might have otherwise.

The Allies were already in trouble on all fronts: Britain had major transport problems, Russia was praying for a cold winter, and Japan was overrunning the South Pacific and piling up resistance modifiers. It looked like the Allies might lose Noumea, which is always painful. I fear for how many Allied shipbuilding points were being sucked up by transport builds.

On the plus side, the US was in the war early in the Pacific, so it could build up a large carrier force a couple of turns early. And the Allies did have opportunities in Burma.

For a game in which a Summer 1941 Japanese attack was successfully rebuffed, see Game 5.

1941 Winter Axis: The Russian Winter is mild (the roll was a '1'), and with the extra winter prep from Fall, Germany is able to occupy Rostov and exploit across the Don. Germany bombs Britain. The Russian army is encircled for a third time.

Mike: If Jim could take Rostov, cross the Don, AND bomb Britain (in addition to the transport damage already done), the Allies were in a world of hurt. The Russians were in a very difficult board position already. The game may be decided by the Summer 1942 German attack in Russia. Even if Russia could be fully built by then, their line will be long, and Jim is likely to find a hole somewhere. The British will be finishing the year at a deficit of some kind, and will not be in a good position to divert the Axis attention on Russia. No mention has been made of the US entering the war in Europe, but it would be hard to believe that they didn't come in by Winter.

1941 Winter Allies: Japan occupies Rangoon and the jungle/mountain hexes in Burma.

Japan invades Midway, the remaining New Hebrides island, and Guadalcanal (finishing the conquest of the Solomons).

1941 Winter Allies: Japan controls nine island groups and three are contested, for +3 cumulative resistance points (now +5 total).

Mike: The good news was that the Allies still held Port Moresby and Noumea, but for how long?

1942 Spring Axis:

Jim: I got Vichy as an Ally in Summer 1941, and somehow broke through in Egypt and took out the Middle East.

Japan invades Dutch Harbor. Japan fortifies Lae and constructs a port on Tamana in the Gilberts.

1942 Spring Allies: The US liberates Niutao (Ellice islands). The Nationalist Chinese get frisky, attack Foochow at 1:1 odds, and succeed. Japan controls nine island groups and two are contested, for +3 cumulative resistance points (now +8 total).

Mike: Well, some good news for the Allies from China!

1942 Summer Axis:

Jim: I saw a flaw in the Russian defense, and was able to overrun and then exploit off the second line. Meanwhile, I was able to push from the south from Persia, and pocketed Russians in the Caucasus. I offered Chris the opportunity to amend the turn, but he declined. I was able to surround most of the Russian army.

The Japanese run a patrol to strike a US TF which had been left in range. The US intercepts instead of taking the air strikes; two US carriers are damaged. Japan re-invades Niutao and also lands in the Fiji islands.

Mike: Is there a reason the US fleet was not concentrated in Noumea with five air factors on it? The US only needs to hang on to the ports in the South Pacific; this

they should be able to do with infantry and air.

1942 Summer Allies:

Jim: Chris had a good idea for using attrition to re-supply the Russian army, but I was able to kill units in the attrition after his limited offensive. That allowed me to retreat without overstacking and maintain isolation. I cut sea supply to Baku with air, and blocked land supply with an armored unit advancing from Persia. I offered to allow him to redo his turn, but he again declined. He was forced to retreat to the Urals.

The Japanese are able to cut supply to Noumea, so the ground units on the New Caledonian beach are eliminated out of supply. Nationalists again get frisky, attack Nanking at 1:1 odds, and succeed. At the end of the turn, there are only two operational US carriers in the Pacific. Japan controls 10 island groups and three are contested, for +4 cumulative resistance points (+12 total).

Mike: Things were bleak in the Pacific outside China.

1942 Fall Axis: The Axis occupy an undefended Baku.

Jim: With all his oil and most of his ICs gone, Chris eventually gave up the game, and I played other games.

The Japanese press their carrier advantage, invading the rest of the Ellice islands and the vacant New Caledonian beach.

1942 Fall Allies: The US gets a full carrier TF on the board in the Pacific for the first time – finally! Japan controls 11 island groups and two are contested, for +5 cumulative resistance points (+17 total).

Mike: And an assault on Noumea seemed imminent.

1942 Winter Axis: The Japanese decide to start defending in the Pacific, despite their

carrier edge. (Though they will deal with the Chinese in Asia.)

1942 Winter Allies: The WAs push into a jungle/mountain hex in Burma. The US invades an Ellice island. Japan controls 10 island groups and three are contested, for +4 cumulative resistance points (+21 total).

Mike: That resistance total is impressive! Nick executed the Summer attack, and reaped its potential benefits, extremely well.

1943 Spring Axis: Japan conducts a full offensive in China, attacks Nanking and exploits into Changsha. Foochow is invaded and the bridgehead is re-established.

1943 Spring Allies: The WAs make some progress in Burma and a little progress in the Pacific. Japan controls 10 island groups and three are contested, for +4 for cumulative resistance points (+25 total).

Russia offers to surrender, likely permanently. The resulting US election would push the US out of the war in Europe. Germany could gain significantly in the west (by concessions and by restarting the war at a time of its choosing). A Sea Lion is possible – even likely.

Adjudication

The Allies throw in the towel and the game is called at this point. A decisive Axis victory is projected on both boards.

The Japanese will continue to gain cumulative resistance modifiers for several turns. The US doesn't even have carrier parity yet (though will soon), and simply does not have enough time to get enough cumulative resistance modifiers of its own by the 1945 YSS to prevent a US withdrawal in the Pacific (much less what would happen in Europe at that time). Even if the US manages to retake one full island group per turn (a daunting task – probably impossible in this situation), Japan will receive another +6 cumulative resistance modifiers (+3 in Summer, +2 in Fall, +1 in

Winter). The modifiers won't start going negative until Summer 1944, and there will only be -1 per turn, so a total -3 prior to the YSS. Japan would have +28 to its resistance level going into the 1945 YSS. Even if all the other relevant resistance modifiers net to 0 (which seems unlikely, even if the entire might of the US is pressed on Japan until then), the US election would be -23, which would force the US out of the war in the Pacific and keep them out for several turns at least.

Post-Mortem

Nick: Jim and I both wanted to play the Allies, but AJ and Chris wanted to play them, so we took the Axis. Jim and I both thought that had AJ and Chris played the Axis, the game would have lasted much longer, since it is very difficult to force a very early surrender of either Axis power, much less both of them. We feel that it is probably better for the newer players to play the Axis for that reason (to avoid the blowout wins).

Also, AJ and Chris divided up their forces in an unusual manner (at least for the Con). AJ took the Global WAs while Chris took Russia (and the Chinese). I think this setup works fine for Warplanner games or with very experienced players, but Jim and I both felt like AJ got overwhelmed once he had to play on both boards.

AJ: The bottom line is that Chris and I got “smoked”. The game was pretty much over in 1943.

Game 4

European Axis: Vic Hogen
Japan: Joe Brophy
Allies Europe: Kevin Milne
Allies Pacific: Paul Milne
European Result: Sum 1945 (0) [est.]
Pacific Result: Winter 1944 (-3)
Overall Result: Allied (-3) [est.]

*Game narrative provided by Paul Milne.
Additional comments provided by Mike
Crowe, Joe Brophy, and Vic Hogen.*

1939 Fall Axis: The Germans take Poland while losing a 3x3 and an AAF. Three transports are lost to subs and raiders.

1939 Winter Axis: In diplomacy Ireland becomes tranquil for the rest of the war, and the Axis gain hex control of Yugoslavia. Germany rolls for all the Balkans and takes '7' results for Rumania and Hungary. Subs cause a 4/1 loss.

Mike: Well, THAT was interesting! Vic spotted the Russians an early mobilization schedule in return for a few extra BRPs in 1939. It is an interesting play if one hopes to go for the Russian oil. Or maybe Vic was just greedy for BRPs.

1939 Winter Allies: Russia demands the Finnish border hexes; the Finns lose two counters through attrition.

1940 Spring Axis: The Germans do a traditional attack and conquer the Netherlands, Belgium/Luxembourg, and Denmark. Norway is invaded. The border hexes of France are taken in exploitation. Sub losses are 3/1.

1940 Spring Allies: The WA attrition accomplishes nothing. The Russians attrition Finland again and eliminate two more counters.

1940 Summer Axis: Paris falls on exploitation with the Germans taking very light losses. Norway is also conquered.

Finland capitulates and Russia gains control of the border hexes. Sub losses are 2/1.

1940 Summer Allies: Significantly, Russia mobilizes because of the early German activity in the Balkans. Germany establishes Vichy.

1940 Fall Axis: Italy DoWs the WAs. Germany rolls for the Balkans again and allies with Rumania and Hungary, but makes no further headway with Bulgaria. The Germans do not bomb Britain. Sub losses are 6/1, but raiding fails.

Japan takes its first mobilization and it's all infantry, so the US begins to smell an early war.

1940 Winter Axis: Sub losses are 5/2 and raiding again fails. Germany DOWs and invades Greece, but can't conquer it in one turn.

Japan occupies Saigon, so it's all but certain there will be a Summer 1941 attack.

1940 Winter Allies: Supply is cut to Malta. Russia again mobilizes.

1941 Spring Axis: The Axis invade Malta and take it with light losses. The British navy does not intervene due to the amount of German air. Sub losses are 6/1. Greece is conquered.

1941 Summer Axis: Germany DoWs Russia. The attack kills or isolates virtually the entire Russian army. Sub losses are 5/1. The Axis attrition in Africa, with the line at the Qattara Depression.

Japan DoWs the US and takes Malaya, Hong Kong, Palembang, Brunei, Kavieng, and Bougainville. The Philippines are invaded. Significantly, the lack of destroyers and other resources prevents invading either Lae or Rabaul. Two carriers are sunk at Pearl Harbor, but will be raised to fight another day. There is no second strike.

Mike: Why no second strike? With two carriers caught at Pearl, that seems odd.

Joe: The failure to take a second strike against Pearl Harbor was just a blunder.

1941 Summer Allies: The WAs are able to supply the Gilberts and land a unit at Tamana.

1941 Fall Axis: Yugoslavia becomes a full Axis ally. In Russia, Kiev and Dnepropetrovsk are captured; Kharkov is isolated. Germany does not exploit or fly any offensive air missions. Sub losses are 5/3.

Japan continues its attack and takes the Philippines with the help of carrier air. Japan also takes Rabaul and Singapore. Adak and Kiska are occupied. Japan calls off the Rangoon attack when it drops to a 1:1 (there is a 2x2 in Rangoon, covered by Allied air).

1941 Fall Allies: Russia establishes a line in preparation for the Winter turn.

The Allies supply Lae, and build a fort there. Rangoon is fully supplied and reinforced.

Mike: This Summer attack does not appear to have gone well. It is being used more frequently by Japanese players, but with somewhat mixed results.

1941 Winter Axis: Germany doesn't do anything significant in Russia. Sub losses are 4/3.

Japan takes Rangoon with a land based and amphibious attack supported by the Japanese carriers.

Mike: This put the Japanese carriers out of position so that they could not defend the perimeter.

1941 Winter Allies: The Russian attrition causes moderate casualties. The US DOWs Germany. Africa continues to be a stalemate.

Mike: The Winter 1941 US entry was probably due to the Axis taking Malta in 1940. I'm not sure why Vic chose to do this, as Malta is easy enough to take in Spring 1942, and a later invasion keeps the US out one more turn, delays double

shipbuilding mobilizations, and stretches out the U-boat war.

The Allies force supply into Lae and occupy some of the Burmese jungle/mountain hexes.

Mike: That's far too early for the Allies to have entered the Burmese jungle/mountain hexes. But unless the Japanese enter them in their Winter 1941 turn, it can't be stopped. If the Axis attack more historically in Winter 1941, they can actually wait until Fall 1942 to occupy those hexes – the Allies are prohibited in the first two turns, and the Summer monsoons keep both sides out for a third turn.

1942 Spring Axis: The Germans attrition the Russians with very little effect. Germany deactivates Vichy; the Italians occupy Tunisia. Sub losses are 7/3. For the first time raiders get through, but on a roll of '2' fail to kill any transports.

Mike: Vic was brave to send the raiders out with the US in the war!

Japan patrols in the Gilberts and finally takes Tamana, completing the Gilberts' conquest.

1942 Spring Allies: The Allies are able to gain a strategic hex through attrition in North Africa, and the Italian position begins crumbling. The Allies land in Morocco and Algeria. The Russians attrition the Germans with very little effect.

1942 Summer Axis: Germany conducts a full offensive in Russia and takes Kharkov and Rostov; Leningrad is isolated. Italy retreats in Libya. Note that Germany never put many resources in Africa. Sub losses are 5/3.

Japan patrols in the northern Solomons to run supply to Rabaul, and also invades an empty Santa Isabel. A CV3 is lost to an American submarine, but there is no naval battle. Japan also attempts to invade Midway, but is intercepted by two TFs

(thanks to US MAGIC cards). The invasion is thwarted; the Japanese lose another CV3 while the US has a BB4 damaged.

Mike: Well, the US got revenge for its two carriers at Pearl. Ouch. On the bright side, the Japanese didn't lose FOUR carriers like in the real war!

1942 Summer Allies: The US retakes Adak.

Paul: A strategic note: Due to the fortifying of Lae and the generally good Allied position in the Pacific, we decided to send more than the usual share of Allied resources (especially air) to the Pacific.

1942 Fall Axis: Germany attritions in Russia. Italy is retreating towards a fortified Tripoli. Sub losses are 5/6.

Mike: Germany ATTRITIONED in Russia? This is a little mystifying to me, given that so much Allied air was in the Pacific.

Joe: I think the reason Vic took a Fall 1941 attrition in Russia was just the LA style of play. They generally have the Germans take some land, build a wall of steel, and let the Russians knock themselves out until 1944, when they can finally make some headway.

Vic: I didn't push one last turn with the Germans when I could have, electing to go on the defensive in Fall 1942. That was intentional – but I believe a mistake.

Japan attempts to supply Kiska, resulting in a naval battle with old BBs and CAs. Japan wins and the supply gets through.

1942 Fall Allies: The US invades and retakes Kiska. The US also takes Manus in the Bismarcks and Santa Isabel in the Solomon Islands.

1942 Winter Axis: The Germans attrition in Russia.

Japan brings down a large amount of air to try to cover supply to Rabaul. A large air battle ensues, but goes badly for the Japanese; supply is cut.

1942 Winter Allies: The WAs bypass the Italians in Tripoli and Tunisia and invade an unfortified Malta. Russia attritions. Sub losses are 5/6.

The Allies invade Bougainville and Kavieng. A port is built at Manus. The US sub war hurts the Japanese for the first time with a 5/1 result.

Mike: A 5/1 result in 1942 is pretty devastating for the cash starved Japanese. Given the rapid nature of the Allied advance thus far, it looks like a big Allied win was brewing.

1943 Spring Axis: Sub losses are 6/6. The sub war continues to go well for Germany because of the Axis' commitment of RPs to it and the Allies' use of their CVEs for Mediterranean invasions.

Mike: I'll say! Those look like Happy Time losses!

1943 Spring Axis: The Russians mount a large offensive and kill most of the German infantry on the front by exploiting sideways. The German armor remains largely intact.

Mike: I can only guess, but it seems that perhaps too much German air was in the Med. It is difficult for the Germans to replace so much infantry, given the relatively few objective hexes in Russia under Axis control.

1943 Spring Allies: Sicily is invaded, while cleanup of the Italians in Libya and Tunisia continues.

Hollandia is taken. Sub losses for the Japanese are 7/2.

Mike: Ai yi yi!

1943 Summer Axis: The Germans retreat to the Dnepr and send some armor to Italy to save the situation there. Sub losses are 4/6.

1943 Summer Allies: The Russians pull up to the Dnepr and attrition. The siege of Leningrad is broken. The Allies cross to mainland Italy from Messina.

Truk is captured with a massive invasion. The British (with American help) begin to attack in Burma to link up with China. Sub losses fall to 3/1 as Japan finally gets an ASW result, but Japan is already starting to suffer from a shortage of oil.

Mike: Yes, the loss of 15 transports in three turns will do that.

1943 Fall Axis: Sub losses are 5/7.

1943 Fall Allies: Russia takes a huge offensive, attacking along most of the front. There are large German losses and large territorial gains for Russia. However during the combat and the subsequent breakout attempts of the Germans in the next turn, the Russians suffer huge armor losses.

Mike: I was beginning to worry that the Allies would have it too easy!

The Allies take another Italian hex and Italy surrenders.

In the Pacific, the Allies invade Saipan, bypassing the very heavily defended Guam. The offensive continues in northern Burma. Transport losses are 4/2, but the damage has been done.

Mike: I am beginning to doubt that Japan could survive until 1945.

1943 Winter Axis: The Germans try to form a line along the Rumanian border and then north from Cernauti to Riga. The Germans form a new line in Italy at Naples. The sub war continues with a 4/5 result.

Mike: The sub war was very strong in 1943. I notice that Germany did an excellent job of keeping the Allies out of France.

1943 Winter Allies: The Russians attrition while they bring forward infantry and rebuild their armor.

The Allies almost get caught napping. Unprotected supply is sent to Saipan, and the Japanese intercept at long range with a good roll. Fortunately, there is a spare TF in Manus which gets an equally good roll and

counter-intercepts, and supply gets through. Mindanao is invaded. A port is then built on Saipan.

Mike: Not getting the port on Saipan would have allowed Japan to survive an extra turn, so this was a very significant event.

1944 Spring Axis: The Germans dig in for the next onslaught. Sub losses drop to 2/5.

1944 Spring Allies: The WAs invade France at Caen and exploit one hex. They also attack in the Naples area and exploit adjacent to Rome. The Russians hit Rumania hard and get close to Bucharest and Ploesti. They also hit hard in the center and drive into eastern Poland.

Foochow is invaded from Mindanao. Also the two undefended oil centers and Saigon are invaded. The Japanese are almost eliminated from northern Burma.

Mike: Obviously Joe held on in Burma despite losing some of the jungle/mountain hexes. It's actually difficult for the Allies to advance in this theater against NO opposition! The terrain alone limits most advances to one hex a turn. I hope Joe had a decent oil reserve!

1944 Summer Axis: The Germans fall back to the Warsaw line; the Italian line is established at Florence, abandoning Rome. They form a better line in France.

1944 Summer Allies: The Russians attack around Warsaw and are able to take Ploesti and Bucharest. The oil situation has Germany concerned.

An unfortified Okinawa is invaded as Japan is concentrating on building the defense of the home islands. Carrier strikes are made against the remaining Japanese navy in port, eliminating most of it.

Mike: That was a rather inglorious early end to the IJN. Paul must have had a LOT of carriers by this point, given he could begin laying them down in Summer 1941.

The forces in Burma link up with the Chinese but are not as useful as the Allies had thought they would be. SRs are almost impossible, as they always seem to have to pass next to a Japanese unit.

1944 Fall Axis: The conventional subs peter out (CVEs are finally protecting the convoys), but an advanced sub is encountered.

1944 Fall Allies: There is bitter fighting around Warsaw but it holds out, now isolated. In the south the Russians drive for Hungary and Yugoslavia. The WAs attack the Florence line and break through, isolating the surviving Germans. In France, Paris is taken, but there is still a double line protecting the German border.

Peking and Shanghai are attacked using Chinese infantry supported by all of the carrier air plus some LBA that was sea transported to China or staged from Burma.

1944 Winter Axis: In Italy the Germans retreat to the Alps. Another advanced submarine appears and the Allies are very worried.

Mike: Paul didn't mention how successful the conventional subs are at this point, or if they are still operating. If the Germans could actually field all of their conventional submarines (16 at this point) and two advanced submarines, they could still get a 5/11 result. With three (and another conventional sub) they could score 7/13, leaving only 10 transports (or fewer) in the Atlantic SW box in Spring 1945. If more advanced subs keep appearing, the Allies will need to win just to stay on the continent!

1944 Winter Allies: The Russians finally take Warsaw and drive to the Oder. In the south, Yugoslavia goes down and Budapest is threatened. The Allied force in the west links up with the Italian front. The remaining forces in France are eliminated, and Belgium and Luxemburg are taken. The

Allies are hampered by a lack of armor and air (a 5o6 was sent to the Pacific, and there still is a lot of air there).

In the Pacific, Kagoshima is invaded. It is defended by two 3x2s and three special units with a fort and beach defense, giving it a defense of 36. After D-Day most of the Allied navy was sent to the Pacific, and 12 TFs invade, carrying six marines, a British 2o3 and 3x2, with a 5o3 for exploitation. Assuming most ships survive, it has an attack value of 83, a straight up 2:1 attack. Kamikazes are a very real threat, so every task force has at least one fleet carrier for CAP and enough capital ships to spread out the hits. All TFs carrying troops also get LBA cover from Okinawa. Kamikazes find a TF carrying two marines but the CAP, LBA, and AD reduce them so that only a CA is lost and a BB damaged.

For the ground attack ... a '1' is rolled! The invading force loses 18 factors and the attack is reduced to 1:1. A '5' is then rolled (*Mike: Big sigh of relief from Paul*), eliminating the defenders. With air support from China, Nagasaki, defended by a 1x2, is overrun. Living on the edge, the 5o3 attacks the 1x2 on the main island at 2:1 and wins the battle. That, with the capture of Canton, is enough to force surrender. It should be noted that the WAs had not developed nuclear weapons, so it had to invade Japan. They did have CTL 3, however, virtually ensuring a successful invasion.

Mike: Paul attacked with abandon, forcing Japan's surrender in Winter 1944. But it was close. Paul achieved a three-point Allied victory against Japan, which is about as well as I have seen the Allies do since the atomic bomb rules were revised.

Mike: Unless there were some additional exploiters not mentioned, the exploitation in Japan wasn't legal. A single exploiter cannot move from Kagoshima to Nagasaki and back to Kagoshima (in order to attack into Honshu); that's two hexes, even if the

armor is “backtracking”, and an exploiting armor would have had to remain in Nagasaki (the first hex) to maintain the required chain of [Pacific] exploiters. Another exploiter would have had to remain in Kagoshima (the second hex) in order to allow the 5o3 to advance after combat into Honshu (the third hex). (Neither Honshu hex adjacent to Kagoshima is adjacent by land to Nagasaki, so it is not a lateral advance.)

Paul: In my mind at that time, if the chain was not broken it was legal move. We all missed that. I kind of think many people miss that judging from what I have seen in the Malaysian campaigns. However after the attack Kevin pointed out to me (which happens way too often) that I should have done a combined attack on Nagasaki and hex M29. These 2 1x2's would have defended at 3 and I could attack with the 5o3 and and 10 AAF from Shanghai which would have been at 5 to1. This was possible because of the rule (15.44) that allows air support that can touch any of the hexes to count for the combined attack. He was obviously quite right. So the outcome would have been the same and frankly much easier.

1945 Spring Axis: Another advanced sub appears and the Atlantic SW situation is getting serious for the Allies.

1945 Spring Allies: The Russians attack and get next to Berlin. The WAs take Cologne and exploit two hexes. The Allied forces in Italy attack into the Alps. Hungary falls, and the Russians move into southern Germany. The Germans are out of oil.

However, the convention is out of time.

Adjudication

The game is called. We decided that Germany might fall the next turn (Summer 1945) or certainly the turn after that (Fall 1945). A Summer conquest would be a tie in

Europe; a Fall conquest would be a one-point Axis victory. The final result is a two- or three-point overall Allied victory.

Europe Post-Mortem

Joe: I did my best thinking in research. The successful German strategic warfare program was my idea.

Vic: I was playing for a draw. I intended to conduct as strong a sub campaign as I could without taking Spain, hold in the Med, and try to take down Russia while activating as many of the minors as I could without driving RGT over 40. I did not try to build a large German navy, although I did try for and get the maximum advanced sub result. It had the effect of reducing the US buildup quite a bit, giving me time to focus on slowing Russia. I then used Winter 1943 to fall back out of air and infantry range. My thinking was that preserving my army was preferable to standing and fighting. I believe the Summer 1945 surrender was correct. I think the new Russian rules would have allowed me to push even deeper into Russia before giving up the initiative.

Mike: Vic’s plan is similar to the one Jon Hogen often uses, but instead of taking Spain, building a large navy, and mauling but not trying to defeat Russia, Vic hoped to possibly obtain a surrender.

Pacific Post-Mortem

Joe: The Japanese plan was to build a port in the Gilbert Islands and sweep up as many island groups as possible, but that did not work, obviously. The Summer 1941 Japanese attack can work but this was the first time I tried it. Obviously it needed some fine tuning.

Game 5

European Axis: Jason Moore
Japan: Jason Moore,
Brian Conway
Allies Europe: Stephen Erickson
Allies Pacific: Greg Wilson
European Result: Spring 1945 (-1) [est.]
Pacific Result: Spring 1945 (-2) [est.]
Overall Result: Allied (-3) [est.]

Game narrative provided by Stephen Erickson and Greg Wilson.

Allied Strategy: I persuade Greg to adopt a “Japan first” strategy that I developed earlier this year in a game within our West Coast play test group (Jon Hogen, Vic Hogen, Ken Cruz, and I), which resulted at that time in a two-turn victory for the Allies in the Pacific. All mobilized and produced AAF goes to the Pacific through mid-1942 and two Australian factors are added to the Australian force pool upon DoW. Greg fine-tunes our strategy, requesting a CVL and other British warships amounting to a small TF, to head into the Pacific at war’s onset.

We settle on this strategy without regard for the strengths or inclinations of our opponents. It is just something Greg and I were curious to explore.

Greg agrees to be vigilant with me during the early turns in Europe, looking for the unconventional approaches characteristic of our wily and immensely capable foe.

Mike: Jason is the only person to win first place in the AWAW tournament three times.

Greg: I have played Japan twice recently and attacked in Summer 1941 to preserve Japanese oil and get good surprise at Pearl. This then allows the Japanese to strike deep into the island groups, and to start to rack up resistance points in 1942.

Getting eight points by the end of 1942 is doable. Then the Japanese just have to hold some islands, and they will build up a great number of resistance points. Given that as Japan I have done this twice, I am worried about getting the same treatment as the Pacific Allies.

Mike: I'm glad to see that Greg is working on the antidote to his own poison!

To guard against this we plan to have as much Allied force as allowed in the Pacific. This includes a British force of three CA2 in Singapore, and Australians positioned in the Solomons, Gilberts, and New Hebrides. We’ll also attempt to hold the Golden Triangle (hex S15 in Burma) by beefing up northern Burma at the expense of a weaker Singapore.

1939 Research: Axis research rolls are stellar; Allied rolls are poor.

1939 Fall Axis: Axis research rolls are stellar, Allied ones are poor. Germany conquers Poland, losing one AAF. Germany lays down its seventh DD.

1939 Fall Allies: Russia enters eastern Poland and the Baltic States.

1939 Winter Axis: The German army sets up to attack west.

1939 Winter Allies: Russia demands Bessarabia. The Rumanians do not resist, and Russia gains Bessarabia.

1940 Research: The Axis continue with stellar research rolls, and Allied rolls are poor once again. Japanese AND German spy rings appear in Allied atomics!

1940 Spring Axis: Germany DoWs the Low Countries and Norway/Denmark. Germany advances through Belgium and one hex into France. All attacks are at high odds, and there are minimal German losses. The Germans invade the Norwegian beach southeast of Oslo and airdrop into Bergen. Germany’s seventh DD launches.

1940 Spring Allies: The Allies announce a '5' result in Anglo-French cooperation. A French attrition fails to take a hex. Britain places beach defenses in L22 and L23.

Stephen: Jason was poised for a Summer conquest of France, but I was pleased with what I saw. The lack of an eighth DD and second air transport implied Sea Lion would be less than full strength, if it was attempted at all. France was tightly defended and the lack of an Italian DoW kept the southern front quiet.

1940 Summer Axis: Italy declares war. Germany exploits into Paris. This was a very clean campaign with minimal losses. The Axis complete the conquest of Norway.

1940 Summer Allies: The Allied defense of Great Britain is solid. The defense of the eastern Med is solid with two TFs, and units controlling all three Egyptian border hexes. Germany ends the turn with no units in France south of Paris. The French surrender level is '-2', favoring the Allies. Germany establishes Vichy. The west African colonies go Allied.

Stephen: Still I was pleased – as pleased as any Allied player can be at that stage of the game, especially going against Jason. I would benefit from the favorable French surrender, and the good luck gaining the west African colonies was welcome.

1940 Fall Axis: Rumania and Hungary ally with Germany, but Germany fails to gain control of Yugoslavia diplomatically. There is no Sea Lion; there is no bombing of London. Germany whiffs on the sub war, sinking zero transports. Much of the German army masses at the Yugoslavian border, with three German armor and an Italian armor in the ports of Venice and Trieste. The Italians gain one hex in Egypt: LL25. The remaining German land units begin heading east for Barbarossa. Italy lays down two DDs.

1940 Fall Allies: British units use naval redeployment (NR) into Oran, and use tactical redeployment (TR) to move forward. Britain speeds reinforcements into South Africa, as the Axis are poised for a potential major strike into Egypt. The Allies retreat in Egypt into row 26 to consolidate their forward position.

Stephen: I was pleased with several things: the sub war was going fairly well, enabling me to lay down the occasional DD or CVE. Germany did not elect to mass for a Winter DoW on Spain – something I see nearly every game in Los Angeles; that was novel. Germany's inability to diplomatically annex Yugoslavia meant he would invade it next turn. I surmise that is why Jason didn't bomb London: he was concerned about tensions. Four Axis armored corps in port in the Med, disguised as part of the Yugoslavian campaign, were a huge concern, but I could only do my best. If he didn't respect my presence in west Africa, I would roll into Tunis in Winter.

1940 Winter Axis: The sub war improves for Germany, sinking four transports rolling at a +2 modifier. Germany DoWs, invades, and conquers Yugoslavia. Germany invades Tunisia, and advances through Tunis into the westernmost hexes of Algeria (DD15 and EE14). The supply line into Africa is well protected. Germany continues to set up for Barbarossa. Germany and Italy both lay down two DDs.

Greg: Japan did not build DDs in Winter 1940 in order to get an extra growth RP. That left the attacks in 1941 a bit short on destroyers.

1940 Winter Allies: British forces meet and attrition the Germans in western Algeria, while others arrive to reinforce Egypt. Britain remains weak in Egypt, as all unbuilt Pacific units are built, preparing for the possibility of a Japanese Summer 1941 DoW. All Australian and Indian units to

leave the European board to be in position in the Pacific.

Stephen: Germany could still land a significant punch in the Med, but only at the cost of weakening Barbarossa. Jason, diabolically, seemed to be executing what for him must certainly have been his most unconventional strategy ever – a historical Barbarossa!

Britain ends the year in solid economic shape. Necessary units were built, BBs advanced, etc.

1941 Research: Germany continues its stellar research rolls. Including all 1941 rolls, the Axis roll two '6's, three '5's, seven '4's, eight '3's, and only one '2' and one '1'. The Allied rolls improve but the damage has been done; they consolidate RPs into "must have" projects, which means passing on others for now. For example, the Allies do not allocate RPs to air production, transports, or military production in 1941. The spy rings in Atomic research are taking their toll on the program. With RPs/DPs limited for intelligence, the Allies eliminated one spy ring, only to have it return the following turn.

1941 Spring Axis: Germany rolls for Vichy and gets a 2x3 to send east, and rolls for Finland (which was protected by Russian DPs) but gets only 5 BRPs.

Mike: One wonders why Jason didn't wait until Summer to roll for Finland.

Germany masses for a Summer Barbarossa with about 35 AAF in position. The sub war remains just moderately effective. Germany takes Malta.

1941 Spring Allies: An Allied offensive in the Med succeeds in gaining a hex row in western Africa and a hex row in Egypt. The Russians painstakingly establish an overrun-proof defensive line on the Eastern front. It's not an armor-forward defense, but one which is just able to deny overruns and

prevent more than a three-hex penetration along the front.

Stephen: At this point I was pleased. The French surrender was positive. Britain was not invaded; Gibraltar was secure; the Allies were solid in the eastern Med and had the advantage of air superiority at the Tunisian border. The German U-boat campaign had been kept in check. The British economy was as solid as could be expected, which meant I had BRPs to go on the offensive a bit in north Africa. The most the Germans could advance in Jason's Summer Barbarossa would be three hexes. Life seemed good, given that it was Spring 1941.

1941 Summer Axis: Barbarossa is a bold, tactically beautiful German attack. Germany takes Riga and sets up three exploitation attacks, each at a straight 2:1, which, if successful, will encircle 90% of the Russian line. Each attack succeeds! The sub attack at a -1 modifier eliminates three transports. Italy retreats from Egypt toward the row 20 bottleneck. In unit construction, Italy advances and double accelerates two BB4s.

Validating the Allied fears, Japan attacks and catches two carriers in Pearl.

Greg: Finding carriers in Pearl is a mixed blessing: you hope to catch them there; however, the extra NAS usually means you do not get a chance to surprise the BBs if you concentrate on the carriers and air.

Mike: As you should, to pave the way for a second strike. However, one disadvantage of the Summer 1941 attack is that Japan only has five carriers.

As the rolls turn out, Japan destroys the US air, destroys the Lexington, and sinks the Enterprise in port. The Enterprise in fact takes five hits, but the critical hit roll failed.

Greg: With the new critical hit rule (post-convention), the Enterprise would have been destroyed.

Mike: That was it? No second strike? No damaged or sunk BB3s?

Greg: Nagumo decided enough had been done and declined a second strike.

Mike: That seems like a mistake.

1941 Summer Allies: A Russian attrition leaves the bulk of the Russian army destroyed and a hole blown wide open in the center. Russia tries to piece together a defense but finds it impossible, and the planned “line” shifts further and further back. Russia settles on a defense anchored in E42, arching along the northern forest-line down to Smolensk. The south, anchored at U41, centers on defending Rostov. The middle is the vast Russian steppe, wide open for the taking.

The Allies take a Med attrition, conserving BRPs, because, while advancing to the Libyan bottleneck, they could not mount an attack from the east this turn. The Allies capture Tobruk and Bengasi.

Stephen: I was shocked. I don't see this in L.A. The guys don't risk 2:1 attacks on the opening turn of Barbarossa. In that situation, from the defense I had set up, I can always recover a line, usually close to the front. Not here. Jason ripped the front open wide. :-)

Mike: Jon Hogen (L.A.) doesn't usually try to conquer the Russians – just hurt them a lot. Rather than destroying everything in the Summer turn, he is happy to have something to attack in the Fall. He usually attacks in Spring anyway!

1941 Fall Axis: The German attack in Russia advances to within two hexes of Moscow. German armor end the turn adjacent to Rostov. Smolensk, Kiev, Dnepropetrovsk, and Kharkov are taken. The Axis protect supply and transport lines into Libya with five to eight AAF and reinforce both sides of the desert front. The subs roll snake eyes, blowing out and sinking only one transport.

In Summer and Fall, Japan cleans out the Southeast Asian colonies. Due to the Allied focus on islands and forcing the Japanese to protect their TFs against the Dutch, Australian, and British navies, things get a bit tight. As a result, Japan has to spend most of the opening two turns clearing out the Dutch East Indies and Philippines. No push is made in the Solomons until later.

1941 Fall Allies: Russia manages to string together a line, but really needs bad winter weather. The line stretches from Tula down row 46, then curls around the southern Don into Rostov. In Africa, the British take a full offensive: armor exploits adjacent to Tunis and armor breaks into NN19, penetrating through the “bottleneck”.

Stephen: I remained on pins and needles in Russia. However everywhere else was good. My armor adjacent to Tunis meant the Axis couldn't fortify it. I was ahead of schedule in the Med. The loss of two Russian ICs raised the Fall tensions to 46, which meant a virtually certain US DoW in Winter. Germany was not doing well with the sub war. Modest transport losses meant I had launched six CVEs and would get the first CVE modifier in Spring 1942, partially mitigating the “happy time”.

The Allied supply line to Rabaul (still held) is critical, as the Allies have a fort in reserve. If the Japanese miss cutting supply from Truk, the Allies would have Rabaul held tight. Japan, however, cuts supply. The Allies reinforce the Gilberts, New Hebrides, and Solomons.

1941 Winter Axis: Germany DoWs the US. The Russian weather roll is a ‘5’ for a ‘6’ effect, allowing up to three Axis attacks. The Germans take Rostov and push into N47 and O47, pressing on Stalingrad. At a +3 modifier, the Germans sink seven transports. Axis forces begin to strengthen the coastal defense of France. Five to eight AAF remain in Sicily, ensuring continuous

supply to North Africa, as well as the NR of new units into the fight.

Mike: I'm not sure what happened with the Winter weather. The Axis had two winter prep results (at most), so on a roll of '5' should have suffered the level '8' effects (5+5-2=8). Maybe the roll was a '3'?

1941 Winter Allies: A targeted Russian attrition mirrors history, and the Russians advance into I45, J45, and J46, pushing the German line three hexes from Moscow. The Russians are able to build all their ground units, but the frontline is lengthy. The Russians are stretched past their ability to create a two-hex deep line, whereas the German panzers and Luftwaffe have the power and the concentration to continue to advance at will. The US Atlantic fleet is put to immediate use protecting a Murmansk convoy, and US troops land in Britain. The British bomb for the first time, causing three BRPs of damage and eliminating one interceptor. Tunis falls and the Allies eliminate armored “speed bumps” on each side of the Libyan front, consolidating gains.

Stephen: I was very happy with the US entry into the war. Because of our “Japan first” strategy, I would not receive any AAF and only a few 3x4s in 1942, but the US TF is very welcome. (As were the BRPs!) The Allies were in clear control of the Battle of the Atlantic. I was spoiling for a naval battle in the Med, but the opportunity hadn't arisen.

The Germans had little armored threat in Russia to the north, so the northern front as well as the defense around Moscow was tight. The center line between Moscow and Stalingrad, while backed by armored ZoCs, was weak overall – weak enough that the German Summer offensive would be certain to gain ground wherever Jason chose to concentrate. Russia was by no means out of the woods.

Japan uses their whole navy to take out Rabaul.

1941 Winter Allies: The end of Winter 1941 sees the Japanese holding Rabaul, Wake, Burma, and Singapore. However, no resistance points have been earned. The Allies consider this a success, as the Allied fleet is being laid down at an accelerated rate.

1942 Spring Axis: The Axis call Greece, but it is protected by Allied DPs: no effect.

In Russia, Germany maximizes an attrition and edges closer to Stalingrad.

Stephen: Jason knew his best chance for victory rode with the Summer offensive.

The sub war is effective, sinking four transports and inverting five. Tripoli is fortified.

1942 Spring Allies: Given the Russian situation, the Allies immediately open both the Alaskan highway and the Persian route. The Germans have a TF in Bergen available to oppose Murmansk convoys, but do not challenge the Allied TF sent to escort the BRPs.

The Allies and Japanese spar over the same ground for much of 1942. The Allies send all the air they can to help hold the Japanese while they have the fleet advantage, and a British CVL is used to help increase the US BB3 TF's interception range. Instead of fighting over the Solomons, the big fights are over the Gilberts. The Allies hold Tarawa and build a port there in Spring 1942. Most of the fights are smaller actions. Both sides patrol to wipe out the enemy LBA, with the defender deciding not to risk attacking the patrols, which are usually under protective air cover.

1942 Summer Axis: In Russia, the Germans – radically continuing to strictly adhere to historical precedent – launch a southern offensive. To the north of the salient they capture Stalingrad. To the south, Maikop is cut off and isolated, and panzers exploit

south of Stalingrad into P48, Q48, S47, and T46.

1942 Summer Allies: On the Allied side, concern for Russia remains paramount. 35 BRPs of aid flows in (20 BRPs via Murmansk, 5 BRPs via Persia as a partisan must be cleared, and 10 BRPs via Alaska). Regardless, Germany's attack leaves an isolated Maikop which is now defenseless, and Grozny is indefensible save for units in the city itself. Everywhere else is fine. A second CVE modifier means the battle of the Atlantic has nearly been won. Two US 3x4s enter Ethiopia, and the Axis in North Africa have retreated to a fortified Tripoli and one adjacent hex. Twelve AAF shift into range of Malta and Sicily, dwarfing the Axis AAF and three NAS there. The commando lands in Sardinia. Summer bombing of both Essen and Cologne eliminates only three BRPs, plus 12 BRPs of Axis air losses. The Axis have two air defense results and an overall +2 modifier (a product of superior research rolls).

1942 Fall Axis: In Russia the Axis advance into all hexes west of the Volga below Stalingrad. Germans penetrate into M50. Maikop falls, meaning Russia must start counting oil. Grozny is isolated, and armor advances into the southern mountains and V46.

Stephen: Bold moves would be necessary to force the Axis to put the brakes on. If Baku were to fall, Russia would be hard pressed to continue the fight.

1942 Fall Allies: The Russians organize a strong defense of Baku, involving two 5o6s, two 3o5s, several 3x3s, and 15 AAF. In the west, the Allies study the Axis defense of France: there are two 3x3s on the five easternmost beach hexes, but no beach defenses and no armor or AAF in the area. Lorient is defended with a 3x3 and a 1x3. The Allies only have 12 AAF in Britain and no American 5o6s – the result of their

“Japan first” strategy. The Allies do have the navy to carry a 2o5, a 3x4, and a 4o5.

The Allies decide to invade France! A TF pins the German TF in port. The 2o5 and 3x4 attack the Lorient beach (N19) at 2.5:1. The exploiting 4o5 moves through Brest (N18) capturing the port and attacks both 3x3s in Rennes (N20) at 2:1. The WAs and Communists agree to build partisans in St. Nazaire (O19) and O20.

In the Med, the Allies consolidate their position, isolating and encircling Tripoli and moving armor to ports. Bombing nets no BRP damage. The Allies have no DDs left to NR units into the BH port at Lorient. The WAs send one oil to Russia via Persia, enabling Russia to build around 75 factors and end the turn with three oil in reserve – which is now the most Russia can generate on her own.

Stephen: I was very satisfied with the shoestring invasion. I felt Germany must respect it, or it could expand and become dangerous. Winter would be a critical turn.

Mike: It seems from the Winter Axis turn that the 4o5 advanced into Rennes after eliminating the two 3x3s there. With only a lone exploiting unit, moving/advancing three hexes from Lorient (the breakthrough hex) to Brest to Lorient to Rennes wasn't legal. The first exploiting armor can move only two hexes (it doesn't get a pass on the rule even if it moves back to the breakthrough hex) unless the third hex is a lateral advance after combat, which Lorient-to-Rennes was not.

1942 Winter Axis: The turn starts out well for the Axis: the winter weather roll is an unmodified '2', inflicting the level '3' effects on the Axis. Germany takes a limited offensive, occupying F43 with armor and cutting supply to the forward Russian units, then takes a punishing attrition. Germany elects not to attack the Russian line

defending Baku, although armor advances to Y45 threatening to flank the defenses.

In France, Germany eliminates both partisans, advancing into their hexes. The attrition (at +5 for the difference in winter prep) gains a hex, but the Allies take the loss from Rennes (N20) preventing Axis advance into it.

Mike: Again I'm unsure about the Winter weather. In Russia it looks like the Axis had four winter prep results (two produced and two from the 1941 Winter?) since $2 + 5 - 4 = 3$. That should have made the modifier in France +4 (or less if the WAs had any winter prep). And I hope everyone remembered that the units that attacked and advanced into the two partisan-occupied hexes were ineligible to attrition – though with a +4 even a one-factor attrition gains a hex on a roll of '5' or better.

The WAs are caught off balance: previously eliminated US replacement counters have not reappeared in Britain – they headed to the Pacific instead – so the German attrition forces the loss of four 3x4 infantry corps. Germany builds a fort in N21, shifts four armored corps and 25 AAF into France, and sets up a 2o5 and 2o6 forward defensive front near Baku.

Stephen: Jason's intent was now clear. With a 13 AAF air superiority in France, he was poised to cut supply and quickly kill my invasion. The armor came west from his juggernaut in southern Russia; however, should my invasion fail, the armor and AAFs would certainly return to the east.

Mike: It is hard to second guess Jason without seeing the board position. If Baku could have been taken and significant damage done to the Russian army, that may have been worth letting the Allies keep their bridgehead in France.

1942 Winter Allies: In Russia, taking full advantage of the Axis' elongated front and defensive posture south of Stalingrad, the Russians attack. In an eerily historical parallel, the Russians cross the Don (with a BH at N47) and the Volga (BH at O49), isolating a 3x3 and 4o6 in N48, a 5o6, 3x3, and airborne in Stalingrad, and two corps in M50. Exploiters from O49 move into P48. From the Baku pocket, armor bounces off the Axis armored rear guard units reaching V47 and W44. In the center, the Russians retake K45 and L45 killing German infantry. In France, the decision is made to protect the invasion. Twelve AAF sea transport from the Med to Britain, and the resulting air parity enables the WAs to run supply into France. The Allied attack captures O19 and O20.

Mike: Something is wrong. You can't sea transport air to protect supply, because the supply phase occurs before sea transport.

Stephen: My write up would benefit from more clarity and detail. Jason ended his turn with 25 uninverted German AAF in France, giving him air superiority of 25 to about 13. He could have, and if I were him I would have, attempted to cut my supply during initial supply determination. But he based the 25 AAF that he brought west in rear positions such as Lyon and Vichy; I don't recall any air as far forward as Paris. He may have wanted to cut supply, but didn't have enough forward bases to enable him to concentrate a massive amount of air on more than one sea supply hex. He could have (but didn't) TR to La Rochelle (where 10 AAF could base), but I was adjacent to Caen and Cherbourg. So perhaps the most air he could have gotten within range of Brest was 15: five in La Rochelle and ten from two airbases he could construct. Had he been in position to attack the supply line, I would have elected to defend the supply convoy in

order to force him to commit most or all of his air. Even if he had the ability to concentrate all his air on Brest, enough to hit my escorting TF(s) once and cause some damage, I may have elected to take the hit in that one hex to get supply in.

I ended the turn with 30 AAF, because five inverted AAF also NRd in from the US. If Jason wanted to cut supply in Spring, he would have to add 15 AAF to the 25 AAF he already had in France – his entire air force. I decided to transport the 12 AAF in from the Med was to reestablish air parity going forward, and to ensure that a reinforced invasion could then continue its progress deeper into France.

In the Med, with Malta and Sicily in sight, the withdrawal of all but three Allied AAF stops everything. Ethiopia is conquered. The German partisan threat in Persia is vanquished. Russia, sent another oil through Persia, is reduced to two oil – but its massive army is now built. With the Battle of the Atlantic effectively over and the Kriegsmarine pinned, aid can flow to Russia uncontested. The Axis have surviving BRPs to grow modestly at the end of 1942.

Mike: Where was the German Navy and how was it pinned?

Stephen: The German navy was based in Bergen. I believe we played with the new rules regarding Bergen and Murmansk. Regardless, I had a TF escorting Murmansk convoys that would have been more than a match for the German navy, had Jason tried to intercept Murmansk convoys.

Stephen: I was elated. The decisions made this turn had won the game for the Allies. The invasion of France survived the winter and expanded. The large force the Axis brought to reinforce France and destroy the invasion had to remain in France to contain the invasion. The threat to Baku was over and the Russians would be able

to retake Grozny in Spring and (unless significant reinforcements arrived) Maikop in Summer. Going into Spring mud, the German line was overextended and soft. Seven Axis corps were isolated in the Stalingrad pocket.

The Allies take one of the Marshall islands (Majuro), which earns them their first cumulative resistance point. Instead of the Japanese piling up resistance points, the Allies will start to rack them up!

1943 Research: Research rolls are even. The Axis have crippled Allied attempts to build the bomb – and they know it. Axis air defense and other research results are minimizing the bombing damage.

1943 Spring Axis: The Axis roll a ‘1’ and get hex control of Finland. The Axis have a 3 DP edge in Greece, but fail to get a pro-Axis result.

Mike: I've been there many times.

In a game fast becoming surreal in its eastern front historical parallels, Germany feeds two fresh 4o6s into the Stalingrad pocket, replacing the seven corps which will die out of supply. Germany anchors the southern front, securing Rostov and defending along the western side of the Don. Armor in Maikop and Q47 constitute a rear guard speed bump. A 2o6 sea transports into Helsinki and advances adjacent to an unfortified Leningrad. If Germany can take Leningrad, the Russian oil reserve will be further compromised, but it is a last-ditch effort – Germany lacks the punch in the north to get a 1:1 on Leningrad. In France, Germany conducts a punishing attrition but gains no hexes. The sub campaign continues, but no longer causes significant transport losses. Paris is fortified, but Germany is unable to rebuild all its units.

Japan takes Majuro back and reclaims the Marshalls.

1943 Spring Allies: The Russians swing two armored corps defending below

Stalingrad into L48 to become exploiters. Attacks into N46 and N45 lead to exploitation into O45. A misplayed exploiter that should have entered P45 doesn't, but combined with armor advancing into R45 a bigger pocket of Axis infantry is encircled. In the far south, Maikop is retaken. Soon Russia will no longer have to track oil. L44, M44, and J44 all fall to attacks aided by shock armies. In the Med the commando takes Ajaccio. Tripoli is attacked at 1.5:1 and taken. In France, the Allies take P19 with an airdrop, establishing a BH, and P18. Five newly-built AAF are arriving each turn. Because the German AAF strength in the west remains 25, surplus Allied AAF reinforces the Med once again.

The US again takes Majuro to earn a cumulative resistance point (counted at the end of the Allied turn).

Stephen: This island was fought over and traded back and forth for three turns before the Allies finally held it and the Japanese pulled back.

Mike: The game description in the Pacific ends here. There is more discussion in the Pacific post-mortem.

1943 Summer Axis: The units in Stalingrad and the hexes to its west die in isolation. Germany strengthens its front along hex row 43 in the center, and uses the Donets in the south.

1943 Summer Allies: Russia lowers the boom. Armor swings to the north. H43 and J44 become breakthrough hexes. 5o6s exploit behind the German line into H42 and I42, and armor takes Smolensk. Armor also moves into F42. Army Group North is fully encircled. The center of the German front line is decimated by units attacking into L43 and M43. In the south, the Donets is crossed.

In the Med the Allies have the capability to invade Malta or Sicily. Noticing no armor in southern Italy, the Allies invade AA23.

Realizing the threat, the Italian navy counter-intercepts. Allied TFs win each of two separate engagements. The Italian navy breaks off, preserving enough of a TF to protect Taranto. The Allies land. A 2o5 exploits into Y24 and another into Rome. In France, the Allies are still not strong enough to attack fortified Caen or drive on Paris, but expand to the south into hex row Q. Italy surrenders at the end of the turn.

Stephen: At the end of this turn I had to hide my joy. It was just the Summer of 1943 but Germany was in dire straits: over 130 BRPs of German units were off the board. (Germany was building about 70-73 BRPs per turn.) The Russian front was scary: the north was encircled, the middle shredded, and the south reeling. The sudden loss of Italy took away absolutely essential land and air units and BRPs at the worst possible time. Jason had NO units in northern Italy at all. At the end of the turn Jason conceded; we were both talking a two-turn Allied victory. It was 5 PM on Saturday, convention time, but Jason decided to soldier on. The crafty German had yet to put on his thinking cap and conjure up a remedy ...

1943 Fall Axis: The Axis defensive reaction was beautifully simple: stay strong in France, plug the Italian front with armor in the mountains above Rome, and in Russia ... flee west at top speed. Not even offering a "paper bag" defense, Germany flees and reconstitutes a line in hex row 39. The line is strong with AAF and land units in Riga and the north, where the Russians could reach it, but the line in the center and south is completely out of Russian reach. Half the unbuilt German units are constructed and filtered into the ranks. Germany, hoping for minimal combat losses in the Allied Fall turn, would then attempt to fully rebuild its army before the Allied Winter offensives.

Stephen: And that was where the game ended on the European board.

Europe Post-Mortem

Stephen: Both Jason and I agreed that this game would result in an Allied victory. Factors suggesting it might turn out to be a one-turn victory include Jason's tactically skillful and resourceful defensive abilities and the fact that the Allied atomic bomb project was stillborn. But I am certain it would have been at least a two-turn victory for several reasons:

1) Jason had 130+ BRPs of units off the board. His massive retreat in Fall 1943 would allow 70 BRPs or so to be rebuilt in Fall, and would enable him to attempt to build most of the remainder in Winter and have them in place for my Winter attack. However, I would easily be able to kill at least 45 BRPs of German units in my Fall attacks.

Mike: So Jason didn't retreat far enough?

Stephen: Jason retreated to a very good position. On the center and southern fronts my units could only race forward but not make contact; that would save him BRPs by avoiding unit losses in those areas in my Fall turn. In the north he had to form the line along hex row 39; it's the perfect place for a line. He was faced with a difficult choice: either retreat out of my reach but cede territory that he absolutely can't give up this soon (Winter 1943 is too soon for a fully-juiced Russian army to be just eight hexes from Berlin!) or retreat to the line he chose but incur losses from my Fall attack.

Germany couldn't mount a strong defense for Winter 1943 with 105+ BRPs of units off the board at the end of my Fall turn. But that's what was certainly going to happen given my Fall attacks in France, Italy, and the northern part of the Russian front.

Spring 1944 was unavoidably going to be a crushing turn for him: his weakened army

(down 110-130 BRPs) would be facing not only the full weight of the massive Red Army in the east, but would also be defending a line in the west stretching across France and Italy. In addition, I was going to open a third front; that's a huge kill zone.

In a "normal" game, a fully-built Germany can absorb the punishment in the east, since the Allies haven't established much of a western front by this point in the game.

2) My position in France at the beginning of my Fall 1943 turn was where I would normally hope to be by the end of Summer 1944.

Mike: Wouldn't you normally be in Paris by Summer?

Stephen: My experience (in games for the past year or so) is that with a Spring 1944 invasion against a good German defender, Germany can protect Paris until Fall 1944. Against a good defense, the Allies can only manage to land in the south of France, and they don't get further than one hex past the beachhead in the invasion turn. Germany builds a fort in Paris and masses enough troops so that the Allies can advance adjacent to Paris in Summer, but can't take it. I was four turns ahead, measured against that standard.

I had the strength to push forward on land in France as my second and third 5o6s were in play, and my air superiority continued to grow. Fall and Winter would see consequential Allied advances in France, along with significant German losses each turn.

3) The loss of Italy was significant. The Axis needed both the Italian units and BRPs (*Mike: And UCL!*). Jason effectively sealed northern Italy on his Fall turn, but my Med forces would quickly have become active elsewhere. There were several places these forces could go that would have had an immediate and severe impact on Germany,

and that Germany simply could not adequately defend.

Mike: Yugoslavia and Greece are the obvious candidates, if they were actually staying in the Med. Or perhaps they could have attacked through European Turkey. They could also have invaded Norway. Have I left anything out? But wherever they were to go, they couldn't continue putting much pressure on Italy at the same time, could they?

By the end of the Allied Winter offensives I would expect with near certainty the following:

1) In France I would be in Paris and Vichy and driving through southern France. I had three 5o6s, two 4o5s, and a total of seven armored corps attacking in France. Given my air and land superiority there this would be hard to deny.

Mike: That would put you two turns ahead of schedule in France, but you could lose ground in Winter to a good winter attrition.

Stephen: It would leave me three turns ahead of schedule, as this position normally seems to happen after Fall 1944, usually against a more completely "built" Germany – it's normally tougher sledding than it will be for me here in Winter 1943.

2) On the Russian front, a Winter push with three shock army results, two air transports, and three airborne would net me front line Riga and Kiev at the very least. I would also severely deplete his line in the center and south.

Mike: Winter weather might ground the airborne.

The German territorial BRP shrink from all of this would be significant, impacting their ability to build in 1944. Germany would end the year with well over 100 BRPs of units unbuilt, and would quickly be in a downward spiral.

Mike: With only about 60 BRPs of units unbuilt at the end of the Fall turn, if you killed 45 BRPs of units in Fall, he would be down 105 BRPs of units. If he rebuilt 70 BRPs worth, he'd start Winter with 35 BRPs unbuilt, and you would need to kill another 65 BRPs to reach 100.

Stephen: He wouldn't be able to build 70 BRPs, due to bombing and partisans. But let's go with your math that far. He would be starting Winter with at least 35 BRPs of unbuilt units. That's a fair number of armor corps and AAF. So his Winter lines would be weaker, and he'd face the full brunt of a massive attack along both western and eastern fronts.

Mike: How effective would your Winter offensive be on the Western front? The Germans would attrition you first (adding +6 to the die roll), so they could gum up the works by advancing armor at key points. And you would be attacking under a '6' weather result, which prohibits exploitation. With no airdrops, bridgeheads are difficult to create, and sneaky Atlantic invasions aren't possible. And since he'd still have plenty of room to retreat, and more units on the board to make things more difficult, it isn't obvious that he would be down by 100 BRPs of units.

Stephen: It is not difficult to kill 65 BRPs of units in a situation like this. If he were to keep his air back I would mince him in attacks and exploitation attacks. If were to fly DAS, he'd protect some secondary positions and have fewer units encircled, but would lose a bunch of air. And most significantly, he does not have plenty of room to retreat ... he has no room to retreat! He played that card with his Summer and Fall collapse in Russia and in allowing my early invasion in France. I was poised to attack along hex row 39 in Winter 1943! That's several turns too

soon. He has to stand tall – with a line that is nowhere near full strength.

Mike: One rule of defense is not to stand tall when you can't afford the losses and still have room to run. And there is room to run. If he took your attack on hex row 39, he'd have to run anyway, so why wait? It would make more sense to me for him to have retreated to hex row 35 in Fall, where only your armor could get at him. That would eliminate the possibility of any casualties in the east and allow him to defend more heavily in the west, minimizing his casualties there.

Mike: A Winter 1944 conquest of Germany is not out of the question, but given Jason's reputation, I don't think it's a lock. The biggest factor in the Allies favor, besides unbuilt units, seems to me to be the fact that Italy is already out of the war.

Stephen: A Spring 1945 conquest would be a huge disappointment. Winter 1944 I believe it would be – and that's factoring in Jason's defensive skills. Italy helped as it went quickly and cheaply. I feel the unbuilt German units are far more important.

Mike: Unfortunately, the Allies don't have the atomic bomb! It's too bad you couldn't play this one out.

Stephen: This was a tremendous game, one where Jason and I had the time to move efficiently and the time to execute tactically – each move was our best move. Jason's focus was especially impressive as he was handling both boards until Brian's arrival. I had such a great time, so much fun with Jason, my partner Greg, who often provided such insightful timely advice, and Brian. What a harrowing game.

Pacific Post-Mortem

Greg: Mid-1943 found the Allies with five full carrier TFs versus Japan's two full carrier TFs.

Stephen: The WA Atlantic navy is heading to the Pacific very early. The Italian

surrender in Summer 1943, combined with the fact that I was already well into France, meant that no less than 100 naval factors would exit the European board in Summer and Fall 1943. Also the sub war was over well before the fall of Italy. In Summer 1943, 18 CVEs were headed to the Pacific. That's huge, and to me adds another turn to our victory in the Pacific.

Mike: I agree – that's huge!

Greg: The trick is where to go next: Guam or Truk? Both would be attacked under large Japanese air forces; however it could be a good attrition play to force the Japanese to trade carrier for carrier with the US. With another full TF coming out of the shipyards, the Allies could afford huge carrier losses, while Japan could not.

Japan did very well in research. The US sub war was shut down by three ASW results and two air range results. Meanwhile, the US had horrible research. The A-bomb project actually failed, helped on by Jason's double spy rings in the WA atomic program. So Japan was going to have to be dug out with marines. Still, I predict that Japan would have fallen by Summer 1945, given the head start the Allies had on island groups. By Summer 1945, Japan would have -10 cumulative resistance points because of the early US island group advantage – certainly worth an A-bomb!

Stephen: I concur with Greg's evaluation. Seen from the Japanese side, their carrier strength was fundamentally intact, BRP base strong, oil maxed, transport line in good shape, and Brian knew that the Allies would never get the bomb. However, our "Japan first" strategy successfully prevented the Japanese from getting any cumulative resistance points for island chains. Not one! The US had been getting one per turn since Winter 1942 and would continue to do so for the rest of the game. The US had massive carrier air superiority with five complete

carrier TFs on the prowl and two more forming. Japan reaped none of the advantages of their early DoW (Summer 1941), and would face the downside against a huge American navy that mobilized early. The lack of a bomb could save Japan for one additional turn; however, -10 cumulative resistance points effect by Summer 1945 is a huge hit. I feel that even if Japan won a significant naval engagement and turned back a key invasion for a turn, those -10 points might still be enough only to gain a draw in the Pacific.

Greg: I don't think it would be possible for Japan to win such an engagement.

Mike: Given that Guam or Truk falls in 1943, or the Japanese fleet is sunk preventing it, I agree that a Summer or Spring 1945 surrender, or possibly even a Winter 1944 surrender, is the likely outcome. Especially so with all the Allied naval forces from Europe arriving by late 1943 or early 1944.

Game 6

European Axis: Jeff Mathis
Japan: Fred Ehler
Western Allies: Jerry Smolens
Russia: Jeremy Vipperman
European Result: Winter 1946 (+6) [est.]
Pacific Result: Fall 1945 (0) [est.]
Overall Result: Axis (+6) [est.]

Game narrative provided by Fred Ehler and Jeff Mathis.

Introduction: Jeremy is an experienced A3R player, trying his hand at his first AWAW game at this year's con. His ally Jerry plays AWAW once a year at the con, and agreed to assist Jeremy by taking on the Western Allies in both theatres. I [Fred] was about to embark on my first face to face match. To prepare, I played a learning game with Tim Schroeder via Warplanner during the previous year. My ally Jeff has attended the con two or three times in the past and plays by email. His experience with the game more than made up for my lack thereof.

Axis Strategy, Europe: The only dedicated German strategy is to focus on bomber production and submarine warfare. I plan for a standard Summer 1941 Barbarossa. Other than that, Germany is prepared to react to opportunities.

Jeff: And as it turned out, a few presented themselves!

Japanese Strategy: I am just hoping for a better DoW versus the US and Britain than I had in the Warplanner game. I want to build up my AAFs and create a large air umbrella over the Bismarcks. I will add two airbases to assist basing in the Bismarcks and two strategic cards to prevent MAGIC interception.

Fred: The air umbrella worked great, but I didn't get the opportunity to use the strategic cards.

1939 Fall-Winter Axis: Poland is conquered without incident in Fall, and the usual *Sitzkrieg* follows in Winter.

1939 Fall-Winter Allies: France defends very heavily in the north, going so far as to have the explicit objective of having enough in the south to prevent the fall of Paris in Spring, but no more.

1940 Spring-Summer Axis: Sun Tzu would not approve of a direct assault on the massive Anglo-French army in the north, but more importantly, the Axis see an opportunity to set up a Fall campaign against Spain. They send everything south and open a wide enough corridor to redeploy a lot of armor and infantry into southern France. I meet my objectives without too much trouble, since the WAs decide to play the two turns conservatively, opting to evacuate the British rather than make a stand in France, and then prioritizing the defense of Gibraltar over the defense of Spain proper. Meanwhile in the Med, six armor factors are sent to Libya.

1940 Fall Axis: A risky forward defense by the Allies allows a successful 1.5:1 attack ... followed by exploitation into Suez.

Mike: Although not exactly spelled out, the Axis conquered Spain in Fall 1940. Ouch!

Mike: And took Suez! Double ouch!! The US should be in the war in Europe in Fall, though that is not mentioned here. With Spain conquered, Gibraltar under siege, Suez lost, and Barbarossa about to kick off on schedule, things looked very dark for the Allies.

1940 Winter Axis: Winter is predictably uneventful. The Axis consolidate their gains and prepare to siege Gibraltar and assault Russia. The eastern front is almost devoid of Germans at the end of the turn, with most armor units still in France and Spain.

Rumania, Hungary, and Bulgaria are activated; Yugoslavia and Greece are not.

Jeff: Even though I activated all the Balkans (other than Yugoslavia), which I consider a dead giveaway of German intentions, I think the Allies were unsure or even doubtful that a Barbarossa campaign was in the works!

Japan wants to build up its air force, and mobilizes a lot of AAFs. Besides air, only infantry are mobilized. Japan produces marines, infantry, NAS, and adds a strategic MAGIC codebreaking card to (hopefully) neutralize US MAGIC interception.

Japan had no intention of advancing in China, and takes only enough hexes to link up with Foochow. Attrition losses are light and Japan grows 25+ BRPs in the 1940 YSS.

1941 Spring Axis: Germany announces a spy ring in Turkey and is shocked to discover one lone Russian DP opposing the German fat stack, the spy ring, and the covert op in Ribbentrop's pocket.

Jeff: This was the most curious diplomatic decision of the game by the Allies. With Spain already in Axis hands, and Vichy dissolved to make room for the panzers that came crashing in, where were the Western Allied DPs???

Germany decides to go ahead and roll for Turkey in Spring; Turkey offers full alliance!

Jeff: Still, I had a decision to make, since accepting the alliance would cost me surprise. I was a little gun-shy at first, never having attacked Russia without surprise before, and I wasn't really sure of the implications. I credit Fred and some players from other games for convincing me it was a good trade-off (Rob Carl in particular was quite sure passing on the "electric can-opener" was not an option.) The coolest plot-twist here (well it was cool if you like schnitzel and wheat beer)

was that the Med force fresh off its victory in Egypt was perfectly positioned for a little gambit.

The Axis DoW Lebanon-Syria and attack Damascus, using the poor French as a springboard catapulting exploiting armor into the newest member of the Axis – Turkey!

Jeff: Including tactical redeployment, some of these units must have traveled 14+ hexes to the Caucasus border, where I now had a German 4o6, German 2o6, Italian 2o5, and Turkish 2o5, supported by a generous supply of Turkish infantry!

The Panzer corps in France and Spain show the logistical prowess for which they are famous, and they all redeploy to the eastern front. (Well almost all of them.)

Japan occupies Saigon.

1941 Spring Allies:

Jeff: Spring also saw the most questionable strategic decision of the game by the Allies. Having conquered Spain in Fall, I was able to start the siege of Gibraltar the following turn. With a good amount of Axis air power having nothing better to do, supply was easily cut in the Allied Winter turn. Spring would be a different story I had suspected, since the Luftwaffe flew east along with all Italian AAF. Nevertheless, I figured it wouldn't hurt anything to leave a small contingent of three Italian NAS that wouldn't be too useful for Barbarossa anyway. To my surprise, the Allies decided not to attempt the supply mission, allowing Gibraltar to reach Iso-2! I suspect the Allied rationale was that the Axis air force would be tied up in Russia for at least another turn, and he could just punch supply through in Summer.

1942 Summer Axis: Barbarossa's primary thrust is stronger than expected, even though the Axis botch the northern pocket due to an annoying oversight. The Germans attempt

the gambit whereby they invade Saare, airdrop into Parnu, and then NR an armor into Parnu at the end of the turn. Unfortunately, the bulk of the Kriegsmarine is squirreled away in the Murmansk Box where it can raid with impunity and shout insults at passing Allied convoys, and no German air remains to protect the mission. So the sea escort was successfully repulsed by the Russian navy!

Mike: The Russian interception was only legal if Helsinki and Tallinn were neutral or under Russian control. I assume Finland was neutral, as activation isn't mentioned. Maybe some Allied DPs were there. Under the current rules, the Kriegsmarine can raid with impunity and insult passing Allied convoys from Bergen, from where it can also sortie to sink the Russian navy if necessary.

On the other hand, Russia's southern front is practically undefended, and the Axis combine an advance from the Turkish border with an invasion through the Dardanelles and into the Black Sea to capture or surround all three oil centers.

Jeff: I believe Baku could still draw supply through Persia, but it was far enough behind German lines to be impractical to defend in the long-term.

Mike: Activation of Turkey as an Axis ally and the successful relocation of several Axis armored units to Russia's southern border make defense of Russia very difficult. But defense of the oil fields is essential, even at the expense of ultimately losing Leningrad, Moscow, and even Vologda. The US would soon be in the war, and the Western Allies would be able to put up a fight in the Middle East. Russian airborne, 1x3 infantry, and produced units could help man the defenses against the Turks and Germans, even if the Russians have to eliminate and re-build some of them in Spring to get

them there. But the game was completely out of control by this point.

1941 Summer-Winter Axis: Seeing a real opportunity in Gibraltar, Germany manages to spare some air from the Russian campaign and redeploy it to Spain to continue the siege.

Jeff: I don't remember for sure, but my guess is that I decided to counter-air the Russians only half-heartedly, opting to keep a force back for potential DAS counter-interception instead. When Russia unsurprisingly decided not to contest, I had some un-inverted air to play with. The Allies would never supply Gibraltar again, and eventually I just attacked the six factors there at face value and captured it without losses.

Despite the circumstances and Jeremy's inexperience in the subtle differences of defending against Barbarossa in AWAW vs. A3R, Russia didn't just roll over and die; in fact, they showed some serious bite. The original Russian force in the north (which included Vilna) was freed up twice, thanks to another German blunder in its Fall encirclement, so Russia carried the Baltics and eastern Poland into the 1942 YSS!

Another Russian gambit was actually picked up by German intelligence before the German turn was done (due to an ill-advised finger-point), but I still failed to stop it! The Russians combined a snake-like partisan formation along the entire Turkish border with a daring attack near the Sea of Azov to create a nightmarish pocket comprising the entire Caucasus region, and containing probably no less than 40 ground factors of various types! Fortunately, I was able to free the pocket and preclude any similar future efforts, so the only real impact was a temporary defensive reprieve.

Despite all of this, the writing was on the wall.

Fred: Jeremy did not see the trouble in Russia until it was too late. With Germany's gains in the west, and bombers in the east, Russia got pounded into a -14 surrender. The US pulled out of the war in Europe, leaving Britain to face the Germans alone.

Jeff: The Allies had been fighting a hopeless cause for several turns when we finally decided to call it and focus on the Pacific theater.

1941 Fall Japan: Because of high tensions in the ETO, Japan declares war in Fall 1941. They do not draw a strategic MAGIC card to help with surprise, but still catch a carrier at Pearl. Two strikes of 18 NAS take out all the air, sink and destroy the CV and two BB3s, sink one BB3 in port, and damage two BB3s. One carrier task force is in the US; the other is five hexes away, but misses interception.

Mike: I usually keep at least one NAS on CAP during the second strike to guard against a US carrier interception, which can be nasty. However, that may have been overly conservative if the Pearl Harbor column was low.

Hong Kong is taken at 3:1 with no losses. Rangoon, Malaya, and Singapore are taken with the help of mobilized air; four DDs transport a 1o3, 2o3 and 1m2 into Singora. The DEI navy and air are neutralized with a small patrol (two CVLs, two BB3s, CA2). A 1n2 (DD2) invades Brunei at 3:1, while 1x2 + 1n2 (DD4) invade Palembang at 3:1. 1x2 + 1x2 (DD4) and AAF from Formosa take Lingayen at 3:1. 1x2 + 1n2 (DD4) invade Rabaul at 3:1. One 1x2 (DD1) invade and take each of Kuching, Kavieng, San Cristobal, Wake, Guam, Tarawa, Beru, and Attu. One CA2 and a 1x2 are lost in ground combat. Unused AAF redeploys into Rabaul

and San Cristobal, and a NAS redeploys to each island.

1941 Fall Allies: Lae, New Britain, the Solomons and Gilberts are isolated. US forces deploy into the South Pacific (Noumea, Suva, and Port Moresby). A 1x2 and three NAS are sent to Kiska. The New Hebrides and the northernmost Ellice island remain empty.

1941 Winter Japan: Again, no strategic MAGIC card. Japan advances into the Burmese jungle/mountains. Dacca is weak, and falls to Japan; there is still Japanese air in the area.

Fred: In hindsight, to take Dacca I had to give up the northernmost jungle/mountain hex to the Indians, and would likely not trade that hex for Dacca again.

Fall's Sumatran invasion force is reconstituted to take Java, and Java falls to a marine invasion from Sumatra at 3:1. Fall's Sarawak invasion force is reconstituted to invade and take Balikpapan. The Rabaul invasion force is reconstituted to take an isolated Lae. Two 1x2s in Lingayen and six AAF attack and take Manila at 8:3. There are no bad losses. Japan invades Midway (a TF and 1x2) and Adak in the Aleutians (a TF and 1x2), as well as Niutao (Ellice Islands), Espiritu Santos, and Efate (both New Hebrides islands) with a 1x2 each.

Mike: The invasion of the Aleutians in Winter is illegal (rule 34.23 A).

The US has no codebreaking cards for MAGIC interceptions, but is able to intercept the TF going to Midway. Japan's force of CA10 and DD1 escapes with CA2 and DD1 sunk and CA2 damaged.

Fred: Its purpose was to draw the MAGIC interception if Jerry had one.

The US also intercepts in the New Hebrides, but is turned away when the IJN sails out to counter-intercept. A couple US lights are sunk and some heavies are hit (but not

damaged or sunk). The Japanese suffer some eNAS losses to LBA, but no ships are sunk.

The three NAS from Kiska are shot down or inverted by air defense.

Fred: That worked well. The entire US navy was inverted, as well as the LBA over the New Hebrides. I had saved exactly nine DDs to sea escort three 3x2s to my new islands in the New Hebrides and to Niutao (Ellice Islands). The 1x2s that invaded, however, had to be eliminated for overstacking. The 3x2s looked like a good speed bump for the US to deal with while I set up my air umbrella in the Bismarcks and Solomons. At the end of my turn I had 9½ island groups.

Mike: This was a lot to accomplish on the first two turns.

Fred: The US was upset I had gotten a second Aleutian island with his NAS there.

Mike: He did have a reason to be upset, but he didn't happen on the right one!

1941 Winter Allies: The US removes all naval and air units from the ETO and sends them to the PTO.

Mike: This seems like it was an over-reaction. After a Fall 1941 attack, the US should focus on building carriers one turn earlier (starting in Fall rather than Winter 1941), and getting into position to attack earlier than normal in 1943.

1942 Spring Japan: Japan adds a second strategic MAGIC card to assist in neutralizing US MAGIC (but neither is drawn this turn). The US isolates Niutao (Ellice Islands). Japan's eyes are on Dutch Harbor, and it takes this turn to set up for the push north. Three marines are deployed back to Japan. No attacks are made. All ships are in Japan or Truk. The air umbrella begins building in the Solomons and Bismarcks; Japan still holds 9½ island groups. An ambitious shipbuilding program is begun: three CVLs are laid down in Spring, two CVLs will be laid down in

Summer, four CVLs in Fall, and four CVLs in Winter.

Fred: I was using all of Japan's and Germany's printed CVL counters!

Mike: (!)

1942 Spring Allies: The US begins to attrition the Japanese air cover in the South Pacific. The US also manages to pull together sufficient strength to invade and take Niutao back. Dutch Harbor is defended with a 3x2 and a 1x2.

1942 Summer Allies:

Mike: What turn did Russia surrender?

Fred: Summer 1942, but only because Jerry was the only Allied player left, and we wanted to shut the ETO down. Jeff would have gone all the way to the Urals box otherwise, because the entire US forcepool was in the PTO.

Jeff and Jeremy lost interest in going through the motions in Europe, with one day left. A close game is of much more interest to both players.

Mike: With Russia out of the war, did Germany attempt to invade England?

Fred: Jerry tried to play both boards on Friday, but it took all day to get through two turns (Winter 1941 and Spring 1942). Jeff and I spent most of the day talking and socializing with the other players, while Jerry tried to play both maps. Germany controls everything in the ETO but Britain and about one-fourth of Russia. The only thing for Jeff to do is to bomb and build up an invasion force.

Jeff does not want to play this out with Jeremy gone, and only Jerry left to play us both. Jerry, who only plays once a year, is reluctant to lay down his sword and wants to continue playing the PTO. To get some faster play in, I suggest we not play the ETO at all. Then I talk Jeff into assisting Jerry so the turns will go faster. We use the British units that are already

committed to the PTO, and simply abandon the ETO. To further speed things up the US does not track BRPs.

I am now on the defensive and never having played this far into the game, I want to see how things progress.

1942 Summer Japan: Still no strategic card is drawn, but the time has come to make one final push with or without a strategic card. Two TFs with just over 20 factors in base in Truk, and four TFs with about 90 factors base in Japan. The US isolates the New Hebrides. The two TFs in Truk invade Guadalcanal. One TF from Japan invades Kiska and the other three TFs invade Dutch Harbor. All landings are successful, and Japan finishes its turn with 10 full island groups.

1942 Summer Allies: The US again attritions the Japanese air umbrella and invades and takes back Efate (New Hebrides).

1942 Fall Japan: Japan sits tight and enjoys its new empire. Air stages forward for the US to counterair, and the outward islands are filled with infantry. Japan holds 9½ island groups.

1942 Fall Allies: The US attacks the Japanese air umbrella again, and invades and takes back Espirito Santos, regaining complete control of the New Hebrides.

1942 Winter Japan: Japan sits, stages air forward, and holds its lines. Japan controls nine island groups.

1942 Winter Allies: The US steps it up and invades Santa Cruz (Solomon Islands) and Tamana (Gilbert Islands). The Indians also recover Dacca.

Mike: Did Japan attempt to oppose these moves? If not, why not?

Fred: Although I had only lost CA4 and had my entire fleet to oppose these attacks, I wanted to save the fleet for an all out Midway style battle.

Mike: If you can resist an invasion with substantially more force than the enemy is bringing, under your LBA, that's a good time to fight (and something your enemy will typically avoid). If you wait for a large naval battle, it is unlikely to come in a way that favors you. The US can simply build up overwhelming force. 1942 is a good year to fight.

1943 Spring Japan: Japan grows by more than 50 BRPs during the 1943 YSS. Its UCL is over 50 and its oil reserve is full

Fred: I add a third strategic card to my stack just to see if I can draw one.

Japan stages air forward and waits to see where the Allies will go next. Japan holds eight island groups.

Fred: I was about to continue my shipbuilding using Italian CVLs, but it didn't look like we'd make it to Spring 1944. I was hoping to slow the US down with AAF in the Bismarcks and carriers and land-based NAS in the Marshalls. We never got far enough in the game to see how long I could hold that line.

Mike: Based on what ended up happening in the Summer 1943 turn, I would guess Spring 1944.

1943 Spring Allies: The US invades and takes Wake (which was only weakly garrisoned), San Cristobal (in the Solomons), Nauru (in the Gilberts), and Wotje (in the Marshalls). The Indians get Mandalay back.

1943 Summer Japan: The invasions are getting close enough to Truk to intercept without air assistance. Japan bases the entire IJN in Truk and Palau, stages air forward, and awaits the USN. Japan has launched five new CVLs, and has nearly three full carrier TFs (32 carrier factors, with more on the way).

Fred: It was Sunday morning and we were just about to give it up and go home, so I

encouraged a full naval battle. I told Jerry and Jeff that the American navy, even with all the ships from ETO, is afraid of the IJN, and that if they come within range I will attack them with or without LBA cover.

1943 Summer Allies: A US invasion of the Marshalls is the spark. Japan attempts interception with everything it has. The US counter-intercepts with everything they have. A huge naval battle takes place, without any LBA on either side. The Japanese navy pounds the entire US navy into submission. The US withdraws after Japan damages or sinks four CVs and all the US BB4s. The US does take Marcus.

Mike: What were the Japanese losses?

Fred: Japan lost two CVLs, had two CVs damaged, but had no capital ship damage. I had some really lucky die rolls in one round, damaging all four CVs in a CG. I found that CG again later and sank all four.

Jeff: The dice gods favored you way too much. You rolled four '11's with one eNAS each to damage those four CVs!

Mike: How many carriers did each side have at this point in the game?

Fred: I can't remember how many CVs the US had (I only sank the one in Pearl Harbor). I know Jerry had a lot of carriers laid down. I'm not even sure how many I had laid down. I know I had quite a few that I kept deferring; I had his carriers outnumbered and wanted to build as little as possible to grow my base. During our naval battle, the US had at least two full carrier TFs.

The trouble for the US was there were more carriers than NAS to put on them. I had my ports and five airbases full of AAF, which attritioned his carrier air. The US had a massive unbuilt NAS forcepool, while Japan's NAS forcepool was two turns from being fully built again.

Mike: What were the Japanese and US NAT rates?

Fred: I forgot to add a NAT increase in 1941, but added one in 1942 and 1943, so had NAT 5. It is a very good guess that the US did not add enough NAT results.

Mike: This is a classic problem for the US in AWA. I always increase the US NAT rate by two per year starting in 1942, once the second WA naval breakthrough is in place. This rate can never be too high. It is also important to build as many pre-war NAS as possible, although there are a lot of other demands (like armor, AAF, and transports).

Fred: After the big naval battle, we finally packed up and went home.

Pacific Post-Mortem

Fred: I have offensive experience but my defensive abilities need work. With Jeff and Jerry both working against me, it wouldn't surprise me to have gotten a draw in the Pacific (had we had the time). My lack of ground forces (because of mobilizing mostly AAF) was causing defensive issues in both Asia and Southeast Asia.

Mike: A draw is probably fair, assuming the Allies A-bomb program was on track. The biggest error the US made was not increasing NAT sufficiently.

Fred: I had it easy in the PTO because Jerry's attentions were divided. I spent a lot of time following Game 2, listening to Jon and Ken plot against Ed, Rob, and Don (and vice versa). The convention turned out to be quite the social event for me, and I'm very happy to have met everyone. Next year, if I make it, I'll buy the cooler and first case of beer, Elihu.