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My face-to-face gaming continues to evolve from solo, Play-by-E-Mail (PBEM), and Zoom gaming to small "pods" of wargaming friends to my first pandemic-era "convention." OK, that's a bit of hyperbole because it was only a dozen gamers, half old friends and half newly-met friends, from four states. We all wore masks, but this portends a brighter future for upcoming holiday gaming in houses and at conventions.

Wargaming is a social hobby combining an appreciation for history with the challenge of assembling and applying assets to accomplish a goal. Judging by the submissions to *ATO*, it's a great time for wargaming. If you haven't, I'd like to urge you to take a look at our "In the Pipeline" page on the *ATO* website and vote for a game that you want to see published in our pages: atomagazine.com/pipeline.cfm

As always, if you have any interest in becoming a playtester, or have rules questions, drop me an e-mail at gamesupport@atomagazine.com and I'll see it gets addressed. That goes for all of *ATO*'s games.

ATO 56: Hitler's Stalingrad: Breslau 1945



This wargame about the Soviet siege of Breslau in 1945 combines the drama of a desperate defense with some clever mechanics that reflect the realities of the period. With the map and counters finalized in terms of content, this Perry Moore design is currently in graphics development and final rules review.

The basic game provides numerous nuances for both sides as players learn to use the strengths of their respective forces. The Soviets increase in capability as more and more troops appear, while defensive works and timely reinforcements offer options for the Germans to weigh space, time, and counter-attacks.

Yet even the most carefully planned attack is vulnerable to ambushes and carefully constructed defenses sometimes get surprised. Momentum changes throughout the game, and different Soviet strategies and German ripostes offer considerable replay opportunity.

Once you understand the basic game, you can include optional rules such as Luftwaffe supply, Tabun nerve gas, Soviet command interference, special city terrain effects, and more.



Again, I'll quote one of the playtesters who continues to playtest the nuances of the siege: "For a mid-sized 'magazine' game, there are a lot of layers here to enjoy and master. And the rules keep things exciting all the way into the end-game...This is a well-thought-out game."

PDF downloads of the last couple playtests are on consimworld.com; click on: Forum, then the sequence of folders: Boardgaming> INDIVIDUAL GAMES AND GAME Series Discussion> Era: World War II> (INDIVIDUAL GAME)> Eastern Front> Hitler's Stalingrad: Breslau 1945.

ATO 57: A Crowning Glory



Napoléon's masterpiece, the Battle of Austerlitz, that cemented his hold on the throne of France, receives a new approach by designer Ty Bomba. This entry-level, grand-tactical wargame offers considerable leeway for both sides to act and react depending on the tactical situation. Each brigade-sized unit uses multiple counters to represent declines in strength. Stacking is one counter per hex and movement is highly interactive with players alternating counter-by-counter moves. Zones of control are semi-locking and artillery support is a simple addition of combat factors. This sets up situations where players debate pushing ahead with their own plans or trying to counter enemy plans.

Demoralization rules play a strong role in determining victory – that is, unless a player achieves a sudden-death victory.

To help players learn the game mechanics, a short, four-turn, limited-counter scenario covers the initial Austro-Russians Southern attack in the vicinity of the villages of Telnitz and Sokolnitz plus the so-called Sokolnitz Castle and the French defense and counterattack. Scenario-specific victory conditions are used.

—Russ