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GO TELL THE SPARTANS

This month's game was designed by Robert Markham, a very prolific and experienced war game designer. Mr. Markham has a long list of game titles, by several publishers, to his credit. Many veteran gamers will have more than a few on their shelves. Besides the previously issued game by ATO, *Napoleon at the Berezina*, other titles include those by Avalon Hill (*Raid on St. Nazaire*, *Campaigns of Frederick the Great*), *Command Magazine* (*Wahoo and Hoorah*), *S&T* (*Atlanta Campaign I and II*, *Indian Mutiny*), *Gamefix* (*Winceby*), *3W* (*Royalists and Roundheads*, *Crossbow and Cannons*), and *Avalanche Press* (*Granada and Soldier Emperor*). These are just a few of the many credited to this month's designer.

Mr. Markham has also written many articles and reviews over the years in several of the hobby's leading publications, as well in military history journals. He has served as the editor for the journal *Volunteers*, and is currently serving as contributing editor for the Civil War magazine *North and South*. Mr. Markham has a BS in secondary education as well as a MA in History/International Relations from the Western Connecticut University. He has been happily teaching U.S. and World History in Danbury, Connecticut for 32 years.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

As of this writing *A Dark and Bloody Ground* is being finished up, with the final proofs of the counters being reviewed. The rules and charts have long been finished up, and only the map and 3 battle boards await a final proofread. By the time you are reading this article everything should be off to the printers.

This game saw extensive playtesting even before it was turned into *ATO*, and there was much additional playtest work by others once I turned it in to the publisher. Some of the "fine tuning" related to the numbers of settlers that could be placed in an area, as well as how they would be deployed by the US player. Much discussion also focused on the role of raids and pillaging. Moving from DTP to large-scale printing of this game was also reason for pause by me. Many, many hours of proofreading and many, many emails were spent to iron all of the details. Particularly stressful was proofing the double-

sided counters. Making sure my eyes didn't cross, and not getting distracted by Craig's really beautiful artwork, was an enjoyable but new challenge!

Many of the playtesters called for a "quick and easy" battle resolution system, to be used in lieu of the battle boards. This was a call made by me only after a lot of consideration and thought, probably the toughest during the entire design and development process. The war in Ohio from 1790 to 1795 was essentially a bitterly contested guerilla war, one that grew out of a generation's worth of escalating tensions and hostilities/misunderstandings. There were only three "big" battles, with much of the war being decided by innumerable skirmishes, raids, the seemingly inexorable push of settlers coming out of the east, as well as Britain's ultimate failure to support their Native American "allies." To make battles too easy to initiate/resort to would skew the play balance too much, and

present a warped interpretation of the history portrayed in the game. This simple decision shows how the focus of a designer's presentation is crucial to the development of the game that ends up on your table. By the way, lest anyone think I am a cold-hearted uncompromising SOB developer, there will be an optional quicker (not necessarily really quick, though) battle resolution system posted by me on Web Grognaards. *A Dark and Bloody Ground*, as with all of the games appearing in *Against the Odds*, will be the result of much time and effort by many people. I look forward to hearing from you with your game sessions.



SIMULATION INSIDE

Eight Page Rulebook
22" x 34" Game Map
252 Piece Countersheet

COMING UP

Fortress Berlin, designed by John Prados, has seen a lot of enthusiastic playtest action, and the game is very solid. At this point only a few rules clarifications and some re-wording for the CRT as well as victory conditions are needed for the basic game. Andy Nunez has done up an excellent article to accompany a variant history for the fall of Berlin, one that posits a possible American, British and Polish airborne offensive to seize the Facist Beast's lair before the Soviets arrival.

Richard H. Berg's *Suleiman the Magnificent* is also very complete. Already playtested before the designer turned it in, I'm playing through this one to make sure no trees were missed due to the forest. The game is an exciting, freewheeling contest between the Ottoman Turks and the Hungarian-led confederation. The savage battle exhausted both sides, and led to the collapse of Hungary's role as a major power in Europe.

As the new developer I am pleased to see how these games continue *ATO's* established practice of publishing fun and creative games, well founded in the history, and addressing topics that have seen little attention in the hobby. We have a lot to look forward to, and I will strive to insure that my efforts bring our readers quality and interesting products. Let the dice fly high!

ORDER OF APPEARANCE

By Paul Rohrbaugh, ATO Staff Developer

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