

Looking back, there is no doubt that the Russian played the superior game nor that he had superior luck (a 6.45 average dice roll compared to 6.93 for the German). Together it proved an unbeatable combination. In my opinion the German owed his loss to his initial setup and the clumsy turns which resulted from it as the German was forced to adjust to the unfavorable events caused by the demise of his forward positions.

I still believe that a strong concentrated perimeter defense in the N5-R5-R8-P8 area to be the best course for the German to follow in meeting his admittedly tough victory conditions. The opposite extreme as illustrated by Mishcon's suggested setup is not without merit and may well be the best course to pursue. Suchar's problem was that he tried to embrace both strategies, i.e., a forward defense coupled with beating feet to the rear. The result was a piecemeal defense which fed itself to the Russian juggernaut in handy bite-sized pieces.

Considering the myriad of complex interlocking variables in COI, I find it hard to criticize either player. The result was a highly interesting and educational contest, albeit a short one. Mishcon's play might well earn a commendation were it not for his hot dice which tended to hide his fine play. It is a pity the replay did not continue further so we could see the outcome of his planned Close Assault on the MG-less STGs. As he points out, the STGs are vulnerable to Close Assault but the infantry would present an easy bonus target and if hit at 3 hex range would be unable to close for Close Assault that turn. Doubtless Jon was prepared to sacrifice one while rushing both loaded tanks into play.



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SERIES 100 is a pad of ten new scenarios for *CROSS OF IRON* printed on the same index stock and in the same style used for both *SQUAD LEADER* and *CROSS OF IRON*. These scenarios were designed by COI playtester Courtney Allen and playtested by members of his Interest Group San Francisco playtest group. Afterwards, they were retested by other regional groups of the COI playtest team—most notably Jon Mishcon, Joe Suchar, and John Kenower who contributed greatly to their final evolution. For those disdaining the "design your own" approach, here is your chance to experience more COI scenarios which have been tested for balance and constitute top quality playing aids. Now is the chance to employ more of those special armor units provided with COI which don't see action in any of the official scenarios.

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# AMERICAN STRATEGY

In the second part of this series I stated that the American commander (henceforth AC) should have nerve. I still cling to that contention because a conservative AC who does not take risks will surely lose, while the BC with his numerically and qualitatively (at least temporarily) superior forces can afford the luxury of playing it safe to a certain degree. Perhaps the word "nerve" does not accurately describe the successful AC as well as the word "chutzpah" does. Following the suggestions to be given in this article will require a certain amount of that. Now for the opening analysis.

## THE OPENING SITUATION

Actually, anyone who has read part II will soon see that this analysis is simply a mirror image of the opening situation analysis in the previous article. The difference is, of course, that we are now seeing it through American eyes.

**CANADA:** Not too many options for the American here. Although the taking of Quebec would cause a serious delay to British planning by forcing their reinforcements to come in at Halifax, the fact that your transport units are useless during the winter makes an effective assault on Quebec impossible. (However, having the Americans occupying Quebec at the start might not be a bad idea for a variant.) For an effective winter assault on Quebec, you not only need more supplies than the British, (which you can get) but you need an artillery unit (which you can't get, at least in time). Therefore, a wiser move would be to attempt the control of Montreal in order to deny control of the Middle States and/or New England area to the British. Simply bring up the artillery from Ticonderoga and your supply and CA strength point from Quebec and construct your fort. The trouble here is that you had better bring up a CA or two from Boston if you don't want to automatically be fighting at a disadvantage against British regulars. A more conservative move would be to pull back into Ticonderoga and reinforce that position. You would save an artillery unit, thus strengthening your defensive position. However, you are not really forcing the BC to commit himself; he can ignore your position, stay on the defense in Canada, and send his extra troops to where they can do you more harm. By fortifying and reinforcing Montreal, you force the BC to decide how much material and men Canada is worth to him. And if you do decide to stand in Montreal, reinforce it to the point where the British reinforcements in May can get no better than 1-1. You cannot afford to use more than 3 RM here because any more than that is automatically removed at the next interphase. Therefore, any CA will have to come from Boston, which is where we go next.

**NEW ENGLAND:** You face virtually the same problem as the BC in this area. Here you have your greatest concentration of combat power anywhere, and yet at the same time you are confronted by a superior force in Boston, entrenched, supplied, supported by artillery, and even furnished with naval transport capable of moving the better part of them out to sea! While it would be foolhardy to assault Boston, neither can you afford to send your entire army of regulars off to the South and leave Canada to the whim and fancy of the BC. (Not to mention New England.)

Here is where the conservative is separated from the entrepreneur. You can expect the British to send up to 6 BR elsewhere by sea. A good way to throw a monkey wrench in that is to start your force

confronting the British in the same hex as his. What this does is to penalize naval movement out of that hex by 5 MP. If he is escorting his transport unit with his battle fleet, he cannot threaten the Deep South until March. If he sends his battle fleet on a "Tokyo Express" run, his force will arrive in segments, and you can attack his unescorted transport fleet with the Continental Navy and pray for a 6. In any event, it pays to sit on Boston at the start. Move the Continental Navy off the east edge of the board in February and look for an opening to attack an unescorted transport fleet before having to come back to base. If not, your navy will have to sit in port quite a bit. Which one, we will discuss later.

Assuming that the BC has pulled 6 BR out of Boston, this means that you can reduce your forces confronting him as well. You will send from 4-6 CA to Montreal, so that leaves you 12-14 CA. About 2-3 of your remainder can pull back to defend interior New England, while the rest head south to bolster your militia. It is definitely recommended that you get some CA to every area as soon as possible, as your replacement rate will suffer without them.

**MIDDLE STATES:** There is a possibility that the British may land in this area, although it has negative features which shall be restated here. A positive feature is that New York can be reached on the first move by the British battle fleet, thus immediately capturing a strategic port. As stated in the previous article, this area suffers from the fact that you can harass the British from three sides, and your regular army is able to intervene in a relatively short time. For these reasons, I feel that more attention should be paid to the possibility of naval invasion in other areas.

**SOUTH CENTRAL:** this is an area which has a fairly high probability of being invaded. Your main problem is that you have few troops initially to defend this area with. Another is that your Continental regulars cannot intervene effectively until May or June. One advantage is that the BC, as in all the previous situations, must have to contend with defending against attack from three sides. However, the relatively cramped area of the South Central states makes defense easier for both sides. If the British should be allowed a firm control of this area, it would effectively split the colonies in two.

**DEEP SOUTH:** this is the area I recommended for the main British effort using the "incoming tide" strategy. This area is extremely difficult for the CA to get to before August. It can also only be assaulted from one direction unless you can slip some troops behind his lines from the mountains. Since this is the area I recommended, we will assume a British main effort here. The suggestions given here can be applied to the defense of other areas as well.

## OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

The main assumption of the "incoming tide" strategy is that the American must either retreat before greatly superior British forces or be destroyed piecemeal. To an extent this is true. In the Deep South the American should initially avoid combat and hinder British conquest and consolidation of the area for as long as possible. One very good way is through the proper use of the Continental Navy. (Gets more useful all the time, doesn't it?) Although it cannot engage battle fleet units, it still constitutes a naval UNIT. A naval unit sitting in an uncontrolled (not British occupied) port cannot be



# IN THE 1776 CAMPAIGN

attacked by enemy naval units, nor can ANY enemy naval units move into the same hex. If a naval unit cannot move into a hex, then it certainly cannot land any troops there, either. So by the simple expedient of starting your navy in a strategic port, (say, Charleston, for instance) you block the landings of any British forces in that port, forcing him to land elsewhere and assault the port by land. This at least buys you a little time. For that matter, why should your forces stay in Charleston and get creamed when you can pull back and put up a stronger resistance at Hillsboro? If you decide to pull back, I suggest that you destroy the fort. It will be of no further use to you, and why give the BC a free fort? Your fleet can cover your retreat from the fort, leaving one factor temporarily behind in order to destroy the fort. So until the CA forces arrive, (you will probably be able to get a factor or two from the South Central area) you have 8 RM, 1 supply, and 1 artillery unit. The earliest that you can get a CA to reinforce your position is in April after the interphase. Now the big question is: How do you go about defending against a British wave advance which utilizes greatly superior numbers? The key to the American solution lies in supply. No matter what the BC does, he can never get any more than two supply units at the beginning of each spring, summer, and fall quarter. On the other hand, you get one supply unit at the beginning of the spring quarter for each area not controlled by the British. That should be four supply units in April immediately. In addition, you get a supply for each area in which no strategic towns are controlled by the BC. You should count on being able to get at least one supply from this source, two if the BC has really concentrated his forces in his wave. The point I am trying to make is, you have an initial supply advantage over the BC which you can put to good use. Opposing a British advance does not mean to necessarily fight to the last man. The real object here is to make the BC expend HIS supply in attempting to clear you from a town. Once he passes the point of no return, (two attacks) you then look for an opportunity to break off combat as soon as possible. The BC must either force you out or leave a garrison force too strong for you to counterattack safely. The more supply the BC expends in combat, the less that he has available for building forts and supplying his important positions on the coast. Summed up, it is profitable for you to force the BC to use up his supply, but it is NOT profitable for you to prolong combat for any longer than necessary to expend his supply unit. Your supply situation deteriorates the farther the BC advances, so it is to your advantage to force combat early and often. (At reasonably survivable odds, of course. It does not pay to stand and fight if the odds are going to be greater than 2-1. The BC can then conceivably attack you without supply at 3-2 and save a supply unit, thus defeating your purpose.)

This all goes back to basic battle tactics. The withdrawal can be a game saver for either side, but it carries potential disaster should you misjudge the intentions of your opponent. As mentioned in Part I, the defender who has supply is very much in control of the situation. On the second attack, if the BC commits his supply, thus insuring its removal, the AC can withhold supply and attempt to break off combat. This will leave the unsupplied British forces facing a supplied American force, since the AC only used his supply once and therefore was not compelled to remove it. Needless to say, this is a very risky tactic to employ if you are not familiar with your opponent's habits. Of course, since the British supply rate is always constant, it is to his advantage

to advance as rapidly as possible to cut your supply rate as quickly as possible. Remember though, the BC will very rarely force march as it always means he must leave behind his supply, thus forfeiting his numerical advantage.

## THE MIDDLE GAME

This portion of the game corresponds roughly to the period after the British buildup in 1776 and extends to the period after French intervention. The BC will usually have succeeded in occupying the Deep South by the winter of 1777 at the latest. The main American concern during this stage of the game must be to hold the British advance to the relatively constricted area of the South Central states, as this area is very easy to defend. Actually you have two different courses of action during this phase. You can continue to be a die hard, forcing the BC to either consume men and supplies to force you out completely or leave a large garrison which detracts from his wave. Your second option is to pull back before the advance to save men and supplies, entrenching and fortifying the Middle States and New England area, concentrating especially on fortifying those towns which the BC MUST occupy to win. (These towns are: Boston, Newport, New York, Philadelphia, Charleston, and Savannah.) The BC will obviously have gotten control of some of these towns. However, you can protect one of these cities with the Continental Navy, (if it's still around) OR you must fortify one of these cities at the beginning of the game. The reason that fortifications are of any use to the American is that the BC cannot control a town in which there is a fort unless he has at least 1 BR or TM factor INSIDE the fort. Conceivably then, the Americans can win by occupying a fort in one of the required cities for a British victory, and allow the BC to occupy every other town on the board! Admittedly, that is a tad unrealistic, but it can happen with the game's present victory conditions.

Personally, I favor the die hard approach for two reasons. For one thing, you do not do the British any damage by pulling back. If anything, you are doing them a big favor by surrendering towns without a fight. The second big reason is that the more areas that you can keep from falling completely under British control, the more you increase the chances of French intervention. And French intervention is what will turn the game around for the American, if the game can be turned around at all.

When you do get French intervention, I would not send the French fleet dashing off to the West Indies along with your reinforcements. Fleet for fleet, the French Navy is superior to the British. Discounting variable forces, the French Navy can count on a superiority of at least plus 2 in a combat situation. An astute BC can then use his navy in the same manner in which the Americans used the Continental navy by stationing a battle fleet or transport unit in Charleston, Savannah, Georgetown, and Wilmington. This blocks any attempt by the Franco-Americans to land troops in the Deep South. Any landing must then be made on a coastal square at great cost in mobility. Of course, use of this tactic does necessarily concede free use of the sea lanes to the French. Any attempt on the part of the BC to regain naval superiority must wait until the British navy is able to bring its variable forces into play. Of course, the same tactics used by the British in the face of superior naval forces can be applied by the French as well in a similar situation

## Part III of The 1776 Thesis

by John Lockwood

A word on your worst enemy, winter reduction. Using the variable reduction chart, it would be advisable to pull out temporarily from high reduction areas immediately before the onset of the winter with its accompanying losses, and returning after the reductions have occurred in order to cut your losses as much as possible.

## THE END GAME

This phase covers the period from French intervention to the end of the game. The American should keep the French fleet massed with his transport to minimize British interference. If the American makes the mistake of dispersing the fleet, the BC will simply mass his fleet and bushwack anything within easy reach. The American would do well to take a hint from British strategy and keep a force of Franco-Americans at sea, always looking for an unguarded port behind British lines. If the BC is too thorough for that sort of thing, and he happens to have his fleet guarding the important ports, the American can still create havoc by landing on the coast at a point FAR removed from British lines. (Such as Savannah.) The farther from the main British forces that the landing is made, the greater the eventual effect will be. Any force that is sent to deal with the invaders must be at least equal to it to have a chance of stopping it. Once a strategic town in the area is taken, the invading force can be strengthened at the next interphase due to the improved reinforcement status of the area. Another positive effect is that the British must detract from their wave, thus weakening the impetus of their main advance. The AC should not be satisfied with just invading once. He should probe with his fleet as much as possible, invading at widely separated points behind the British lines. If he ignores your invasions and tries to continue his advance, he will soon find himself losing control of formerly secure areas. Unless he has variable forces available, he does not dare risk attempting a counterinvasion, fearing the possibility of having his whole fleet temporarily put out of commission by a French attack. (Using the fleet in a piecemeal fashion only guarantees its piecemeal destruction.) If the American executes this tactic properly, the BC will soon find himself in a position similar to that of a little boy attempting to plug up all of the holes in an increasingly leaky dike. The main "wave advance" will become stagnant as the BC pulls more troops from the main body to deal with the amphibious landings.

To sum up the overall American strategy, the American should combine standing fast with substantial forces in strategic towns with tactical avoidance of combat aimed at maximum expenditure of British supply. The American should destroy anything of possible use to the British, which includes forts, artillery units, and anything else which seems likely to fall into the hands of the BC. He should make maximum use of the French forces when they arrive by striking as deep as possible behind British lines and continue to strike as often as practicable, with the aim of creating the very situation the Wave advance attempts to avoid: a war with no discernible front line.

That about wraps it up, folks. And just keep in mind those inspiring words of Mrs. Cornwallis to her son, the general: "If you can't be good, son, be good AT it!"

