

[Crescendo of Doom] Designers Notes By Don Greenwood

Dr. Selover's comments [COD Game Analysis by Jay Selover; Fire & Movement #22, p20] are such that they require little in the way of designer's response. Good. Brevity is one of the strong points of my "Designer's Notes," and since what is worthwhile saying about the genesis and philosophy of the **Squad Leader** system has already been said on previous occasions, I'll confine myself to replies to Dr. Selover's review.

Dr. Selover is quite correct in pointing out the importance of consistency in a rules system as detailed as that of the complete **Squad Leader** series. Furthermore, his treatment of the river rules is exactly what I would recommend to the average player: ignore them until you come up against a scenario in which rivers exist. Keep in mind that they are included only for the sake of completeness; the vast majority of the scenarios will not concern themselves with rivers, and neither should players until they are confronted by one. Yet, the "exception" to the line of sight rules presented by the orchards was not introduced lightly. The orchard symbol is an abstract one; each green dot does not represent an individual tree or even a cluster of trees. The presence of the orchard "dots" merely signifies the existence, throughout the entire hex, of row upon row of cultivation. Such a terrain feature could hardly be represented by a true, line-of-sight interdicting tree symbol, any more than the orchard would conform to hexagonal dimensions. Treating the entire hex as a terrain obstacle resulted in the right "feel" for what was being depicted, and in this case I did not consider the "exception" to be a difficult one to remember. Giving Dr. Selover his due, I admit the matter could probably have been handled more eloquently by coming up with a more sophisticated orchard symbol, which completely filled the hex.

Dr. Selover's humorous interpretation of the pond and river elevation rules is more embarrassing, and I admit that a literal interpretation of the rules could lead one to come to this paradoxical conclusion. In truth, however, the pond is considered the equal of the river in terms of elevation, and separated from the latter by a slight elevation increase in the marsh hexes. Obviously, marsh hexes are considered marginally higher than actual water hexes, just not enough so to be declared the equivalent of Level 0 terrain. The major difference is that there is no Reverse Slope effect when firing across the pond.

That ends the reply to Dr. Selover's direct criticism of the gamette. All that remains to be said is in defense of the marketing Philosophy which requires that the gamettes be purchased in order; i.e., that a person not

interested in the early war years must still purchase Crescendo in order to play **GI: Anvil of Victory (GIA)**.

There is not much I can say about that. If you are predisposed to believe that Avalon Hill is ripping you 4f by making you buy something you don't want in order to get something you do want, nothing I can say is likely to change your mind. There is no doubt that this attitude exists in some corners. I can truthfully say that the only criticism of **Crescendo** I have received pertains to the subject matter, not the rules or components. I have actually received semi-hate mail from people who think **Crescendo** stinks because it has no *Panthers* or *Tigers* doing battle with *Shermans*. They feel the scenarios are boring because they deal just with *MkIIIs* and *Matildas*. I am afraid I can't conjure up too much in the way of pity for these folks. **Squad Leader**, for all its embellishments, remains primarily an infantry game. The great amount of armor detail is still meant only as additional chrome for the armor branch in its relationship with infantry. Those who gloss over the fighting in 1939-42 to get to the more charismatic armored vehicles, which appeared later, are missing a very important and far more interesting side of World War II. As to those critics who want **GIA**, but not **Crescendo**, I am open to suggestions as to how I could possibly cover the material in both gamettes needed for the former within the physical constraints of one box.

I should like to close by allaying Dr. Selover's fears that the gamette series might not continue. The popularity of the **Squad Leader** system remains high, and sales have already justified the **GIA** gamette, which should appear in 1981 and for which the basic research has been completed. Plans beyond that depend indeed on future sales. As Dr. Selover points out, the gamettes are destined by their very nature to have a pyramid sales structure; should any one of them suffer a disappointing sales performance, the ones that follow would be similarly affected. Yet, there are always new enthusiasts joining the fold with their initial purchase of the basic **Squad Leader** game - and enthusiasts of the system are extremely dedicated. If they had their way, not only would the number of gamettes be expanded, but also the system would be used to cover everything from ancient warfare to science fiction. Doubtlessly, they will be disappointed in the time it takes to produce whatever else is forthcoming. **Crescendo** received a great deal of playtesting and design input. In my opinion, it was worth it. The errata compiled thus far are practically non-existent, and that is remarkable for game as involved and detailed as this one. As I am the fellow who has to answer all those questions when they do come in, you can rest assured that I shall take my time in making future gamettes as Light and error-free as **Crescendo** - all of which translates into time. Don't expect **GIA** before next July!