

Diplomacy World #140



Winter 2017 Issue

www.diplomacyworld.net

Notes from the Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of **Diplomacy World**, for Winter 2017. And winter it is, at least here in Texas while I type this, on the first day of the new year. An arctic blast has turned most of the United States into a huge popsicle. Of course, if I take a less personal view I can see that large areas of the globe are experiencing temperatures above normal. Oh, who am I kidding, it's all about ME ME ME!

2017 was a very difficult year for a lot of people that I know personally (myself included). And it was a difficult year for Diplomacy World as well. Obviously, the loss of my dear friend Jim Burgess took a major toll on this publication. And I don't just mean that his input and effort is missed...his enthusiasm is also something which made every issue more fun to put together. And his sense of humor. When I have trouble finding the motivation to work on Diplomacy World I try my best to think about what Jim-Bob might say to me. Sometimes that helps.

Unfortunately, even before his passing we were dealing with a number of vacant Diplomacy World Staff positions. And now that problem has compounded. Take a peek at Page 3 and consider whether you might be a candidate for one of the vacancies. And even if you're not, perhaps you have ideas about who might be?

You could also consider writing an article for an upcoming issue that falls into one of the categories listed there. Just remember: if there's a kind of article you wish you could see more of in Diplomacy World, there are probably others who feel the same way. Instead of wishing it would appear, sit down and give writing a try. It can't be that difficult if folks like myself (and Jack McHugh) can do it. If just a dozen readers submitted their first article to Diplomacy World in 2018, and if just a dozen more convinced a friend to submit their first article to Diplomacy World in 2018, that would mean enough material for the entire year! When you realize that each issue of Diplomacy World is downloaded thousands of times, can it be too much to ask that a dozen readers submit something this year, and a dozen others convince a friend?

Despite the backstabbing and lying, the Diplomacy community is in general a friendly and welcoming lot. You don't need to be an expert tactician to write an article about Strategy and Tactics. You don't need to be a brilliant historian to write an article about the ties

between the game and real history. You don't need to be a professional comedian to put together a humorous article (there isn't nearly as much humor in these pages as there once was). If you go to a club or a convention, write about your experience. It doesn't matter if you won or lost; some very valuable insights can be gained from examining why you did terribly. Or just write about why you had fun. This is a hobby of people, after all. The personalities, the friendships, the laughs, the time spent together is what transforms it from a game to THE GAME.

Now, moving on to this current issue. The long-awaited new Demo Game is underway (currently moving through 1903) and so we have the opening comments and the entire 1901 game year for your enjoyment. Rick Desper has brought Christopher Martin on board for commentary this time, and Jack McHugh has actually made some interesting comments without being subjected to the cattle prod. Yes, THAT Jack McHugh; I swear. I think he feels sorry for me or something.

For literary types, Larry Peery has a lengthy article covering recent books on World War I. (This reminds me, I need to get a decent article on all the hobby members who have published books in the last few years. There are a lot more than you might realize, from fiction to fact on a vast array of topics).

There's lots more inside as well. Randy Lawrence-Hurt covers the latest Boston Massacre. Jon Hills gives us the first of what he hopes will be a regular feature highlighting UK news with a Diplomacy-related twist. And that's just the beginning.

So, start reading, start enjoying, and then start contributing!

I also want to mention the cover and some of the other artwork are pieces submitted some time ago by our friend Nemanja Simic. His talent is greatly missed in these pages!

I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is April 1st, 2018.

Remember, besides articles (which are always prized and appreciated), we LOVE to get letters, feedback, input, ideas, and suggestions too. So email me at diplomacyworld@yahoo.com! See you in the spring, and happy stabbing!

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Contributions are welcomed and will earn you accolades and infinite thanks. Persons interested in the vacant staff positions may contact the managing editor for details or to submit their candidacy or both. The same goes for anyone interested in becoming a columnist or senior writer. Diplomacy is a game invented by Allan Calhamer. It is currently manufactured by Hasbro and the name is their trademark with all rights reserved.

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Knives and Daggers - The Diplomacy World Letter Column



David Wang - Doug Kent, thank you for putting together Diplomacy World #139 in memory of **Jim Burgess**. Thanks to everyone for sharing their thoughts and memories of Jim. It has been many years since I played Diplomacy, but reading the issue jogged my memory and I may be able to help fill in some of the gaps.

Rick Desper, I was also at the first Diplomatic Incident house con in 1993. Jim was one of the hobby names I got to meet in person. Don't remember if that's where you and I first met or if it was at one of **Brad Wilson's** house cons, Vertigo Games or the one on the Jersey shore in Avalon NJ (I forget if it was called Avalon Con or Shore Con). Many of the details have faded, but if I recall correctly Diplomatic Incident was at **David Kovar's** and **Jack Sinnott's** place, and maybe David K and **David Partridge** ran the house con. I think I still have the t-shirt from the first Diplomatic Incident.

In 2000 Diplomatic Incident was at Jack's new place, with maybe Jack and David P running the house con. I think I was Austria-Hungary to Jim's Italy. We didn't get very far, either. That was my last Diplomacy game. I also remember Jim telling me **John Caruso** had been trying to reach me for Caruso Baseball, but it was at an old email address.

Dick Martin, seeing your name reminded me of **John Caruso's** Strat-O-Matic Baseball League, affectionately known as Caruso Baseball. Many Diplomacy players had teams in the league including **Jim Burgess** (Boston Red Sox), **David Anderson** (Detroit Tigers), **Gary Behnen** (St. Louis Cardinals), **Kathy Caruso** (New York Mets), **David Grabar** (Oakland Athletics), **Chris Hurley** (New York Yankees), **Vince Lutterbie** (Kansas City Royals), **Dick Martin** (Baltimore Orioles), and **Eric Voogd** (San Francisco Giants). Those are the Diplomacy people I can remember and I apologize if I missed anyone. I was the Pittsburgh Pirates. Jim was one of my favorite trading partners. I think more of our discussions were about baseball, especially Caruso Baseball, than Diplomacy.

Heath Davis-Gardner, Jim's kindness and compassion beyond the hobby is not surprising. I am glad and am

sure many others are glad Jim gave you his support and encouragement. Although Jim and I had only occasional contact since Caruso Baseball ended, I too was surprised by the depth of loss I felt at Jim's passing.

Heath mentioned the szine/zine debate. Jim liked that I had the domain name szine.com where I put my szine Metamorphosis and Caruso Baseball league information.

I posted this on the Diplomacy World Facebook page, but hope Doug doesn't mind if I include this here, too.

Boston University School of Public Health (SPH) has established the James F. Burgess Memorial Graduate Scholarship Fund at the School of Public Health.

To give online, here is the link to the SPH Giving web site:

[Giving | SPH | Boston University](#)



Larry Peery - I'm conducting an experiment. The first part of it took place this past year on various FB and Dip-related websites. I asked a question and gathered the responses. Sometimes it worked well and sometimes it didn't.

Now I'd like to try the same thing using DW and TDP. Again, I'm going to ask a fairly simple question and ask for a response. I'm curious about the number and quality of responses I get and how they compare with my earlier effort.

Here's the question: who is the most charming person you've ever played Diplomacy (either FTF or PBEM) with? Explain why and what happened briefly.

You can respond here, by email (peery@ix.netcom.com) or post your response on my FB page at Laurence Peery.

The more responses I get and the better stories to back them up the better the article I'm working on on the role of "charm" in Diplomacy will be.

Selected Upcoming Conventions

Find Conventions All Over the World at <http://diplomacy.world/> and at <http://petermc.net/diplomacy/>

I am trying to locate additional sources for Upcoming Conventions. PLEASE, if you have an event coming up, notify me, and why not make up a one page flyer for inclusion in Diplomacy World?

Cascadia Open – Saturday January 27th 2018 – Sunday January 28th 2018 – Burnaby, BC, Canada – Email contact Cascadia.open@gmail.com

Totalcon – Friday February 23rd 2018 – Sunday February 25th 2018 – Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel, Marlborough, MA – www.totalcon.com

Whipping 2018 – Saturday March 31st 2018 – Sunday April 1st 2018 – San Jose, CA - <https://www.facebook.com/events/1514225645320205/> or whipping@bayareadiplomacy.com

CodCon – Friday April 13th 2018 – Sunday April 15th 2018 – Glen Ellyn, IL – www.codcom.com

DixieCon – Friday May 25th 2018 – Sunday May 27th 2018 – Chapel Hill, NC – www.dixiecon.com

GenCon – August 3rd 2018 – August 5th 2018 – Indianapolis, IN – www.gencon.com

Ask the GM

By The GM

Dear GM:

The New Year is upon us and I need to make some New Year's resolutions—any suggestions?

New Year, New Attitude

Dear Attitude:

Yes, how about writing some articles for Diplomacy World? I am tired of only reading articles of Perriblah with only the slightest connection to Diplomacy or the Diplomacy hobby. How about some articles on your experiences with Diplomacy or how you got into the hobby or what you plan to do this upcoming year?

Get writing—I look forward to reading your Diplomacy articles.

*Your pal,
The GM*

Dear GM:

I find myself more interested in playing cooperative multi-player games instead of more ruthless games like Diplomacy or Candyland—what do you suggest I do to get out of this funk?

Nice guys play cooperative games

Dear Nice:

You really are a sad case when you want to cooperate with other players—this is the anti-thesis of a good Diplomacy player. You should be forced to spend an eternity playing Austria with Kathy Byrne as Italy as punishment for you sins.

I suggest you try something less challenging like Risk to whet your appetite as you in danger of losing your Diplomacy card. You also might try playing with certain Diplomacy players who are impossible to cooperate with—they will soon put that awful taste for humanity back in your mouth.

*Your pal,
The GM*

Boston Massacre 2017

By Randy Lawrence-Hurt

I should have gotten this into the fall issue of DW, but apparently I'm lazy. I mean, sure, I had other things going on, like planning to get engaged (she said yes in case you were wondering; apparently all that Diplomacy over the years paid off), but I still felt a little guilty. I know how the world waits with bated breath to hear how the yearly Massacre in Boston turned out, and now they've had to wait several months extra. Mea culpa, mea culpa.

It turned out ok, the end.

What, you wanted more? Fiiiiine.

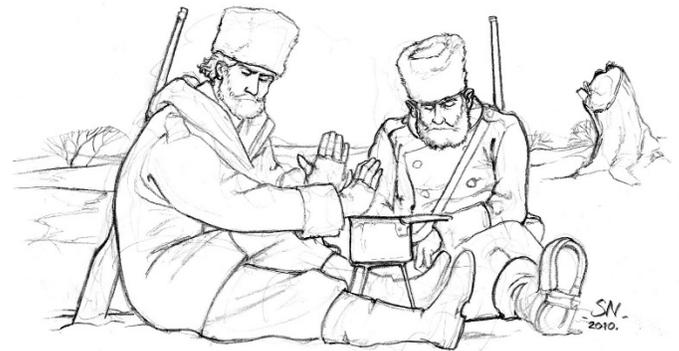
It really was a great tournament. This was our second official year as Boston Massacre, after spending two years in western Massachusetts as The Boroughs (and prior to that going on a several-year hiatus), and I think this was the year we really hit our stride. We had eleven boards over three rounds and twenty-five individual players. While these were mostly Boston/New England locals, we were also graced with the presence of about a board's worth of travelers. We also brought in a number of new players (meaning both new to Diplomacy, and new to face-to-face tournaments), which I think nicely features one of Massacre's greatest strengths: because I am pretty involved in the face-to-face scene, and our TD Alan Levin and one of our best players, Nicholas Delateur, are very involved online, we're able to reach a broad swathe of players we might not otherwise see at these events.

Not to mention, two of our new-to-tournaments players took home Best Country awards. To me, this highlights something we as a face-to-face community can always work to improve; our outreach to online and new players, and our efforts to keep them in the face-to-face community once we draw them in. There is really high-level skill out there, not to mention some great people, and we can all do more to help expand our community.

The weekend started off as it did last year, with a large gathering at the Cambridge Brewing Company just down the road from the venue. The majority of the players were there at one point or another, and as was expected there were many libations and war stories. Like last year, that was probably my favorite part of the tournament. Playing Diplomacy is great and all, but just having a few drinks with friends I've made thanks to Diplomacy is always better.

Round one kicked off almost on-time Saturday morning, which in my experience is typically something to brag about. We had four boards, with both Alan and I playing on two. Fortunately, the last straggler showed up right when Fall 1901 started, so Alan was able to play on just

one board. Looking back at the tournament results, I see that I topped one of my boards, and finished third on another, but in all honesty I have no idea what happened on either of them. I'll attribute that to playing on two boards in a drop-dead timing system, though it could also be the holiday cheer I've been imbibing for the last several days (I'm writing this on December 28th, because I work best, and sometimes only, under last-minute panic). Hopefully some of the other players have a better memory and will share their stories elsewhere in DW.



I do remember that one of my boards went almost to the start time of the second round, leaving little time to pop out for a quick bite. This was an unfortunate but necessary aspect of the tournament schedule; in order to have three rounds in two days, the first day is usually pretty hectic. The more I play at tournaments, the more I appreciate a relaxed schedule (say, three rounds over three days), but of course that's not often feasible, due to travel or work concerns and hotel expenses. Fortunately, most of the other boards ended much earlier, and I'm told a number of people were able to enjoy an excellent meal just down the road from the venue at the Smoke Shop, one of the best barbecue joints in the city. While venue shopping for next year is still ongoing, certainly one of the best-selling points for the Marriott we've been in the last two years is its location; there are about a dozen restaurants and bars within a block, all of them good.

Thus fortified, round two kicked off, again with four boards; this time, Alan played two boards and I got to focus on my one. I can't say it helped me a great deal, as I only took second place as Turkey, but since this was an improvement on my Turkey from the first round, I'm counting it as a moral victory. Again, I don't have an real recollection of what occurred on this board. Judging from the final scores on it, it looks as though I ended up taking Russian and Austrian dots, which is usually how I like to

play Turkey, but I haven't the foggiest how that happened. I see Steve Cooley was in Italy, perhaps he can enlighten us. I should really start taking notes, or at least saving my orders from game-to-game; I can't help but think my play would improve if I had some way of remembering what I did right (or more likely wrong) in previous games.

I don't recall this round going particularly late for anyone, except perhaps one board. Either way, mine was done fairly quickly, and a group of us went out for a late dinner and some well-deserved drinks. I took this opportunity to solicit feedback on the location and venue. The general feeling was that both were excellent, but the venue's room rate was high. This is a known issue with hosting tournaments in Boston; it's just about impossible to get a good rate between April and November, and nobody wants to come to Boston in the dead of winter (which basically lasts the rest of the year). There were some very helpful suggestions from Dave Maletsky regarding how he shops for venues, though, and while I'm not making any promises, I'm hopeful 2018 will see the Massacre lodged at a more affordable, but equally convenient location.



Round three got started ontime Sunday morning, with three boards and no one playing on more than one. No doubt this contributed to my solid result as Russia, the

one board I actually do recall. Matt Langer in England and Brad Blitstein in Turkey were having very good games, but had made the mistake of allowing me to keep pace with them. After the three of us working together to various degrees had eliminated three of the other powers, leaving just a puppet France, several draw votes were proposed, and then anonymously voted down. In between these failed votes, little changed, and this began to irritate me. I had made a private commitment prior to the tournament that, because I was the Assistant TD and therefore not eligible for awards, I would play my best on each board, but not vote down any draw, regardless of the result. The other players on my third board were aware of this, so I was confident they knew I was not vetoing the draw; but, as I mentioned, one or more of them kept proposing, and then anonymously vetoing, without clearly improving anyone's position. Meanwhile, I was sitting behind both Matt and Brad with eight centers. So I stabbed them both at the same time, taking three total, and setting myself up to take a couple more the next year (albeit, with a fight). It wasn't a fatal stab to either of them, but it made their positions, both tactical and diplomatic, tricky; whichever of them chose to fight me, the other would profit and top the board by a significant margin. So at that point, with Matt and I tied for board top (at 11 SCs each), and Brad right behind us at 10, the draw vote passed.

If there's a lesson from that game, it's make sure you have a plan when you veto a draw; if you do it just to keep the game going and hope for the best, someone might make you pay.

When it was all said and done, Nicholas Delateur won the tournament, after three strong showings. I wouldn't be me if I didn't note here that, score-wise, he and I were tied for first place, but I was ineligible. That's not to demean his victory, though; he's clearly shown himself to be one of the best players in New England over the last several years, and he fully deserved his victory that weekend. Second and third places respectively went to Brad Blitstein and Matt Langer, thus adding another twist to that knife I'd left in their backs after the third round. The top seven was rounded out with four travelers; Dave Maletsky, Jason Mastbaum, Jorge Zhang, and Craig Mayr. A number of people stuck around afterwards to play some Terraforming Mars, but I had a date with my couch and the NFL, so I called it a weekend.

Many thanks to all the players who helped make the tournament a success, and to Alan Levin who ran yet another smooth, drama-free, and fun event. Hope to see you there next year!

A Proper Map of Europe

by Christian Günther-Hanssen

In the last edition of Diplomacy World Bob Durf heads a call for a better map. He expects this call to be in vain, but I will at least try to contribute by calling back. For I too have long been annoyed with the state of maps on Diplomacy boards and frankly many WWI representations in general.

My personal pet peeve has often been historical accuracy. This is different from Bob's concern, and it doesn't have any effect on gameplay in Diplomacy as such, but is nevertheless an area with room for improvement. The latest copy of Diplomacy has for no good reason butchered the borders in the Balkans. My

own copy, from the early 90s, is equally crude and will for example tell you that Corsica belongs to Italy. It also has a purple Russia which I find hideous.

For quite some time I've been working on a better map of Europe. I've been picking out old maps showing exactly how the international borders were at that moment when Franz Ferdinand died in the backseat of his car in Sarajevo 1914. Not only that; I've also managed to find the internal borders between the counties of England, departments of France and vilayets of the Ottoman Empire etc., as they were at the outbreak of the great war.

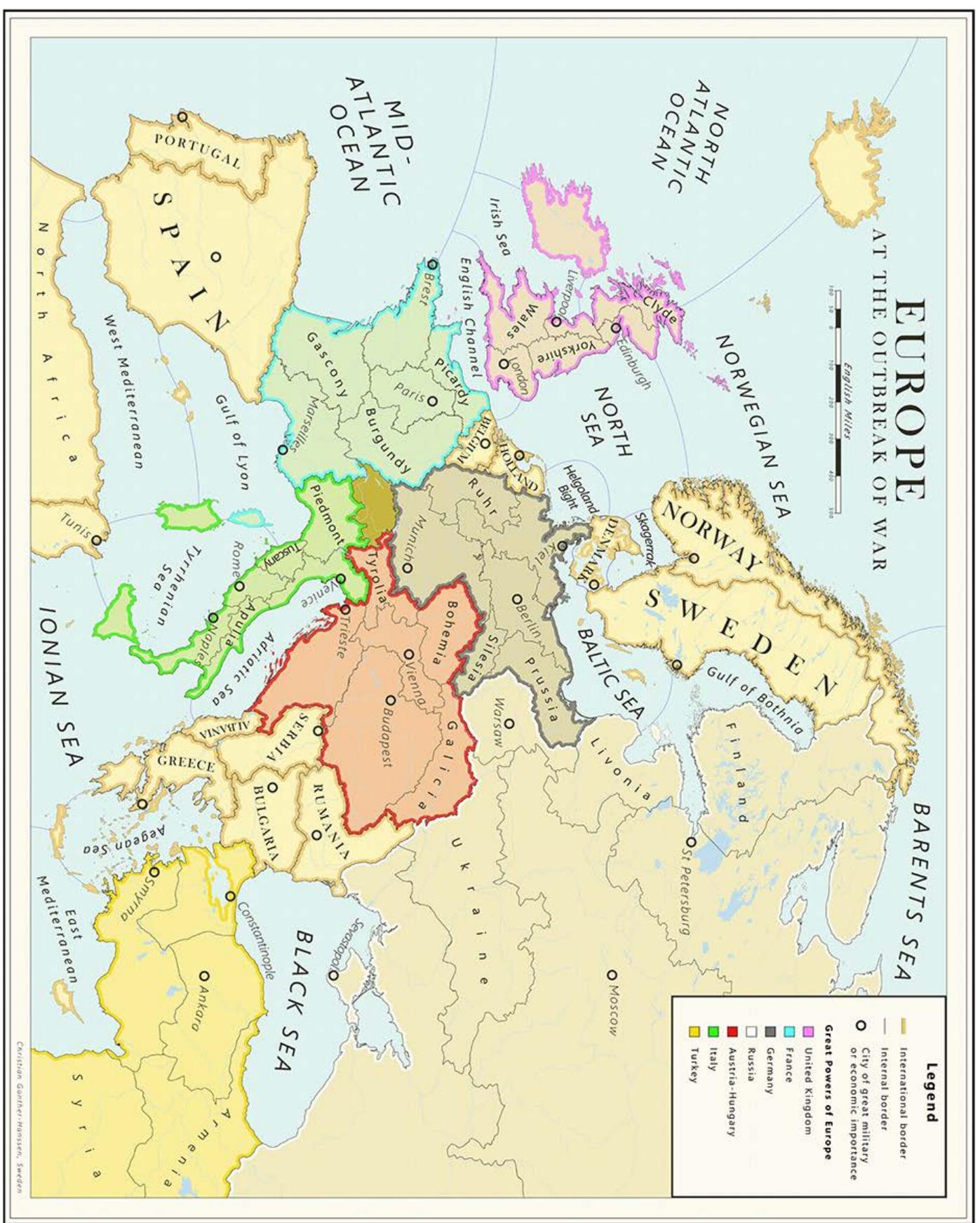


The result of this is a map that is probably the most accurate and detailed World War I map ever to be seen on a game board. To top it off I have made it with design elements from the early 1900s, so it looks like it could very well have been made in 1914. I'm currently in the process of tweaking minor details, so that it as far as possible also fulfils demands similar to those Bob listed in his article. This is nothing major, and the map is more or less ready for gaming.

It should not be too hard to be able to print this map of Europe as a game board, and then play whatever WWI-related war game one fancies on this board. While I originally made this map for my own pleasure, I am open to suggestions on how it could be used to benefit a greater audience.

Anyone who has any experience with printing game boards, and anyone with any other input regarding this map, is welcome to get in touch. Email me at c.guntherhanssen@gmail.com.

EUROPE AT THE OUTBREAK OF WAR



TotalCon 2018

February 23-25

Best Western Royal Plaza, Westborough MA



- Three-round Diplomacy tournament (Friday night, Saturday afternoon, Sunday morning)
- Prizes for Top 3 and Best Countries (and probably some other fun ones as well)
- No separate entry fee for Diplomacy (just get admission to TotalCon)
- Plenty of time to play other games and socialize!
- Pay-what-you-can crash room on site (contact the TD)

For more information, email the TD at: randy.lawrencehurt@gmail.com

Standing on the Tarmac of Airstrip One

By Jon Hills

Welcome to the first of what I will hope may become a regular column in Diplomacy World.

Although I've played Diplomacy with friends and family on and off for about 30 years, it was only as I started to play online and by e-mail that I realised that I was part of a global hobby. Before then I'd never known that 'zines existed, much less that there were such things as international conventions and tournaments. Having since discovered Diplomacy World (and devoured its back catalogue) I have recognised that there are hobbyists in the UK, Europe, Australia, and just about everywhere in between.

At heart, though, Diplomacy has always seemed to me to be a North American game that just happens to be played elsewhere. Even now, most active players – and therefore DW readers and contributors – are based in the US and that's where most of the game's history lies.

However, as a UK-based player, I'd like to see more in DW from around the globe.

Of course, rather than criticise anyone else, I have realised that the solution is to submit my own contributions. So that's what I'm going to try and do.

Older readers may remember the veteran Anglo-American journalist, Alistair Cooke. For nearly 60 years he presented a weekly radio monologue, 'Letter from America,' on the BBC World Service. This fifteen-minute commentary on American life was aimed primarily at UK listeners but had a global following.

I want to use a similar framework – taking topical events in the UK and (if possible) giving them a 'Dip'-related twist. It may not be hugely analytical but I hope it will be interesting, engaging and occasionally even entertaining.

I'm calling the whole project Airstrip One – reflecting the UK-US relationship in George Orwell's Nineteen Eight-Four – and what follows is my first attempt.

As with any new venture, feedback is always appreciated so if anyone has any (positive) suggestions or comments you can e-mail me at jon.airstrip1@gmail.com. And if anyone wants to do something similar from wherever they are in the world, I'd love to hear from you.

Primates, elephants and dolphins are, amongst others, all recognised as social animals; the advantages that they gain through cooperation enable them to survive and thrive.

And as the dominant primate species, we humans are no different. Although we put more words around it, we really need relationships to bring out the best in us.

The hopes that these relationships represent also prompt us to celebrate them, and that seems to be true wherever we are in the world and whatever culture we live in. Granted, a few prickly souls might prefer not to but they seem to be the exception.

With that in mind, I am delighted to announce that a distant cousin of mine has recently got engaged.

I don't have anything to do with that branch of the family so I'm not expecting an invite to his wedding but it is a cause of celebration nonetheless. It's not expected to be a long engagement as he's getting married next May, in a small chapel outside London.

And best of all, he's fallen for an American girl. I don't know too much about her but I gather she's an actress and also gets involved in quite a lot of charity work.

My cousin used to be in the Army but now works for the family business. This means that he deals with the media quite a lot and he's frequently flying off doing something exciting. Earlier in the year, he was heavily involved in the Invictus Games, which encourages and supports the rehabilitation of disabled ex-service men and women. Last month, he and his brother even got an invite to the UK Premiere of the new Star Wars film!

Now, if any of this sounds vaguely familiar, it's because the couple in question are quite famous. In fact, you might have heard of them. They are Prince Harry¹ and Meghan Markle².

¹ Harry (& William) are my thirteenth cousins, courtesy of a fortuitous marriage back in the 15th Century.

And, no – that does not make me royalty!

² According to that ultimate purveyor of all truth – Wikipedia – Meghan is a still more distant cousin of mine too. We (and countless others besides) are apparently both descendants of King Edward III.

No nation does pageantry quite like the British and although not as significant as William & Kate's wedding a few years ago, Meghan & Harry's wedding will still be one of the global events of 2018 – closely followed in both time and media coverage by the F A Cup Final! However, attitudes in Britain towards the Royal Family can vary wildly. Some folk are devoted Royalists and will camp out on the streets for days ahead of State events. On the other hand, some people would happily get rid of the whole damn lot of them – bemoaning the cost to the public purse of maintaining royal privileges. Others, perhaps more cynically, recognise that the Royal Family remain one of UK PLC's best exports.

But what, if anything, have Meghan & Harry got to do with *Diplomacy*?

Well, I think they can give us some pointers on how to play the game that little bit better.

After announcing their engagement, one of the earliest comments circulating in the media was that Meghan & Harry appeared to have come together rather quickly. This has a parallel in *Diplomacy* as the beginning of a game can seem a bit like speed dating. We fervently – perhaps even desperately – search for someone (or more!) to become our partner. Sometimes our in-game courtships will be quite quick – as Harry & Meghan's public courtship has seemed – and sometimes they will take several game-years of careful negotiation. However, what never changes is the need to put ourselves 'out there'. I'm not suggesting that we should invite our 'Dip' opponents on a date – that could be tricky, especially online – but unless we're playing Gunboat we should always start by reaching out to everyone in the game – and the longer we can keep doing so the better. Only then can we identify who our potential allies or targets should be. If we don't, then we face a very short and very lonely game.

Now, despite only meeting a relatively short while ago, Meghan & Harry have not entered into their relationship lightly. Before they even began publicly dating, they had to decide whether or not their relationship was serious enough to justify the attention that it would attract from the world's press; not terribly romantic but in their case, very necessary.

Thankfully most of us are spared that sort of intrusion to our day-to-day lives. However, there is another game parallel here. Before committing

to an alliance we would do well consider what the rest of the 'world' will make of our choice. Does it make sense both tactically and strategically? Innovation and imagination are fine but an irrational choice of ally makes us look foolish and identifies us as a potential target.

It is also important, I believe, that we choose our partners carefully and for the right reasons. In face-to-face play, allying with someone just because they are a friend is no way to play the game. The same is true on-line. In that situation I prefer 'Anonymous' games, where you do not know who is playing which power until after the event. Partnerships based on negotiation and the realities of the board rather than reputations. It can also throw up surprises as you can find yourself working happily - and forming subsequent friendships - with people you didn't expect to. It is a tremendous leveller.

Finally, Harry & Meghan's engagement is only a precursor to their actual marriage. However, in my experience (eighteen years and counting) marriages need Communication, Commitment and Compromise if they are to survive - just like a diplomatic alliance.

Real life relationships are possibly less volatile than those in a game of *Diplomacy* although both often start off full of hope and promise. However, both will struggle unless all parties are committed to seeing the thing through. Likewise, compromise is essential to avoid the partnership being blown apart by arguments (or Supply Centre disparity) and everyone must keep communicating, otherwise there will be confusion, discord and a generally unsatisfactory outcome!

As a fellow Dipper said to me recently – just before stabbing me in Serbia - the key to the game is about building trust, which is the foundation of all good relationships. Consistently applying these three 'C's' will allow that trust to develop – at least until we decide to make our stab.

Regardless of their feelings about the Monarchy in general, most people in the UK seem happy that Harry has found someone to share his life with. I hope that he and Meghan will enjoy a happy and successful marriage, despite the unique pressures that they will face.

However, I also hope that by remembering these simple parallels, we can all become better partners, both on and off the board.

The Strategy and Tactics of Getting Your Children into Diplomacy

By Joshua Danker-Dake

A year and a half ago, I wrote about how I introduced two oldest of my children—Sophia, now 7, and Paul, now 5—to Diplomacy and taught them the mechanics, which, at least, Sophia got pretty well. They had a great time, but we haven't done much with it since then, and I've been thinking about why.



To my delight, in the last year or so, they have really come to love board games—any and all board games. They are up to try anything, just as happy to play Diplomacy or chess as they are to play children's fare like Bugs in the Kitchen or Funny Bunny. Any games, all games—we have dozens in the house—they're excited to play all of them, but they've never latched on to any one of them for more than a week or two.

This is no doubt because a great deal of their enthusiasm is just spending time with the old man, and of course they flit from game to game like butterflies in a flower garden because they're small children with factory-issue attention spans.

To no one's surprise, they both like winning, and neither is entirely gracious in defeat. They just aren't fully prepared emotionally to get their asses kicked by dad every time in single game (the exception being Battling Tops, which my daughter is preternaturally lucky and/or good at). But I intend to keep giving them opportunities until they come around, improve, or both.

Sophia is starting to learn to analyze a board, to think about the consequences of a move. Paul just wants to move pieces and, somehow, win. Lately they prefer co-op board games, like Forbidden Desert. They have a much better chance of winning in such games, and they're naturally team players; neither has yet evolved into a ruthless competitor, although that's definitely coming.

At any rate, treasonous as this may sound, I've decided that I'm no rush for my kids to pick up Diplomacy. Diplomacy is co-op—until it's not. They're not ready to cope with the lying and the treachery, and I think I like it that way. Previously, neither of them had any guile to speak of; now, the oldest is learning some and trying to use it in real-life situations, and I don't like it. Thankfully, she's not particularly good at it—yet. I'm in no rush for her to become so. Childhood innocence and naiveté are evanescent, to be sure, but I choose not to blow that dandelion.

We will play many different games as they become able, not only because I'm not one of those dads who wants to sit through Candyland even once if I can possibly help it, but also because I want them to become people who can think and plan and strategize.

Eventually, life will teach my children more than enough about deceit and betrayal, how to give it and receive it. And after the world has kicked them around a bit, there will come a day when they are ready to become true Diplomacy players, and it will be glorious.

Xenogogic Winter 1918

Pass in Review; Books on WWI

By Larry Peery



United States World War I soldiers reading in the War Library Service section of the Red Cross building at Walter Reed Hospital. (The Granger Collection, New York)

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Empress of the East: How a European Slave Girl Became Queen of the Ottoman Empire.

INTRODUCTION

There have been a lot of books written about WWI over the years (The Book Depository web site lists "all" ((not likely)) WWI books with 21,136 results, but many of those are duplicates or variations in media such as hardback, paperback, audio, kindle, etc.) but still they keep coming. Generally the books fall into these categories: military history, alternate history, geographic area focus, biographies & memoirs, and novels. This time, as part of my effort to commemorate the 100th anniversary of WWI, I have nine books dealing with

various aspects of the Great War, a brief heads-up on five books written by five of the key German principals of that War and, finally, a mention of my favorite book of last season; which has absolutely nothing to do with WWI.

Four years ago my dream was to have 100 new books on WWI published in the belligerent powers of that war to commemorate the 100th centennial of The Great War: Instead I got perhaps 50, of which 20 were of lasting importance and worthy of a place in your library. Over the last four years I've noticed lots of books being published in the USA to mark the event, a few from the UK, and none to be seen from French, German, Italian, or Turkish sources. Ironically, we finally got a good history of the war from the German-Austrian perspective and an excellent new history of the fall of the Ottomans -- both written by Americans.

A generation raised on the horrors of how WWII ended -- with the bombings of Dresden, Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the loss of XXX, XXX lives --- can barely remember those horrors, let alone the infinitely greater horrors of how WWI ended with the Influenza Pandemic of 1919 and the loss of XX, XXX, XXX lives. Still, we need to remember ourselves and pass on to future generations the stories of what happened during and after "the end of The War to End All Wars." These books may help us do that.

National Geographic Kids Everything World War I: Dig in With Thrilling Photos and Fascinating Facts
By Karen L. Kenney, 2014

Is it ever too early to teach kids about the horrors of war? In today's world, I think not, but is making war thrilling and fascinating the right way to do it?

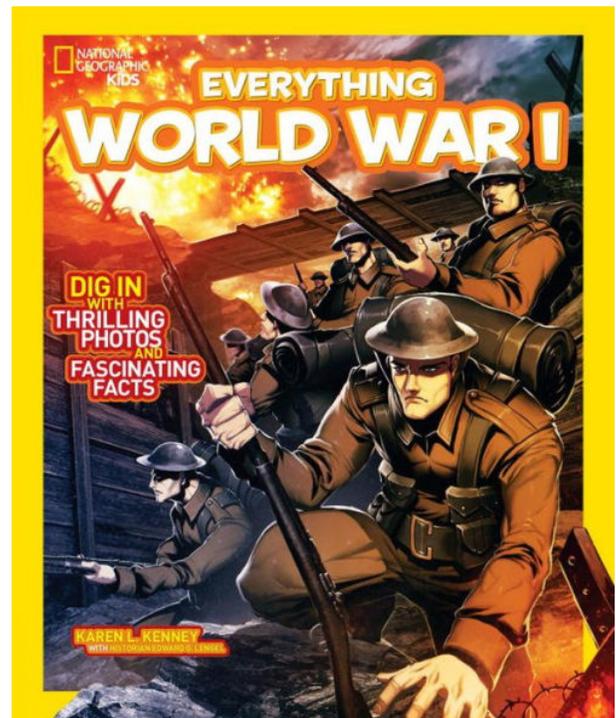
"Explore the fascinating history of America's First World War, meet the greatest military leaders and tacticians, and learn about key battles in this compelling new book in the popular Everything series.

Each book in the National Geographic Kids Everything series has more than 100 pictures, an explorer's corner with from-the-field anecdotes and tips, fun facts throughout, maps and infographics, an illustrated diagram, a photo gallery, cool comparisons, a behind-the-scenes photograph, an interactive glossary, and more.

This book marks the 100th anniversary of WWI and takes a thoughtful, kid-friendly approach to a serious subject." (Publisher's information.)

I remember in the late 1950s when one of my newspaper route customers gave me, over a period several years, his back issues of *National Geographic* magazine. Each month when I stopped by to collect my

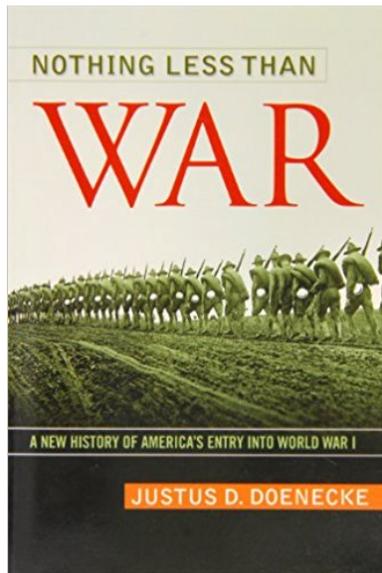
thirty-five cents newspaper subscription fee, he'd take me into his shop and load up my newspapers bag with a couple of years of old issues, with maps, from pre-WWI to post-WWII. I remember pouring over those issues from the war years and they had a profound impact on me. By the time I was ready to study those wars in junior and senior high I was ready to go "over the top". Years passed and I eventually gave those issues away to another young lad who expressed an interest in seeing what he called "the real thing." More years passed and National Geographic eventually released its first 100 years of issues on CDs for a price of \$250. That was in 1988, I think. I bought the set and in 1998 I bought the next decade disk, and in 2008 I bought yet another decade disk. I'll be curious to see if another one comes out next year or if Mr. Murdoch has decided that doesn't fit his vision of what *National Geographic* should be. Still, from time to time I pull out those disks and review those old issues of the 'zine. And if I'm really feeling nostalgic I pull out some of my hard copy back issues that featured the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II or the funeral of Sir Winston Churchill. They just don't make them like they used to.



Kids Everything WWI, National Geographic, 2014, 64 pp., \$13, for 8-12 year olds, 10+ ads and reviews on Google search

Good, interactive approach, has a whole section on the role of animals in WWI

Nothing Less Than War: A New History of America's Entry into World War I



By Justus D. Doenecke, 2014

It's much harder to find a good short book about WWI than a bad long book. This one falls in the first category.

"When war broke out in Europe in 1914, political leaders in the United States were swayed by popular opinion to remain neutral; yet less than three years later, the nation declared war on Germany. In *Nothing Less Than War: A New History of America's Entry into World War I*, Justus D. Doenecke examines the clash of opinions over the war during this transformative period and offers a fresh perspective on America's decision to enter World War I.

Doenecke reappraises the public and private diplomacy of President Woodrow Wilson and his closest advisors and explores in great depth the response of Congress to the war. He also investigates the debates that raged in the popular media and among citizen groups that sprang up across the country as the U.S. economy was threatened by European blockades and as Americans died on ships sunk by German U-boats.

The decision to engage in battle ultimately belonged to Wilson, but as Doenecke demonstrates, Wilson's choice was not made in isolation. *Nothing Less Than War* provides a comprehensive examination of America's internal political climate and its changing international role during the seminal period of 1914—1917." (Reviewer's opinion.)

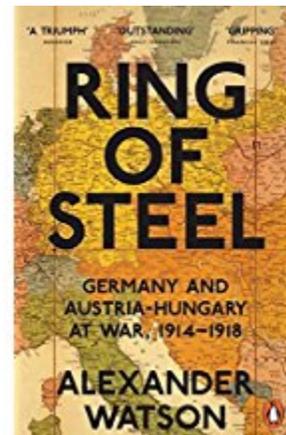
Lloyd Ambrosius, author of *Wilsonianism: Woodrow Wilson and His Legacy in American Foreign Relations* (Publisher's information.)

A New History of WWI: A New History of America's Entry into WWI.

Publisher, U. of Kentucky Press, press release https://www.kentuckypress.com/live/title_detail.php?titleid=2622#.WiQ2PzeJiUk (Publisher's information.) "The New History of WWI and What It Means for International Relations (Theory)", by Keir Licher, 2007, academic paper <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/222166>

The above is a scholarly essay that uses this book as a case study of how the American entry into WWI can be viewed as another step in the development of the theory of international relations.

***Ring of Steel: Germany and Austria-Hungary in World War I* Paperback – March 28, 2017**



By Alexander Watson, 2014

"Remarkable.... The first comprehensive history of the war written from the perspective of the Central Powers." --Los Angeles Review of Books

"For the Central Powers, the First World War started with high hopes for an easy victory. But those hopes soon deteriorated as Germany's attack on France failed, Austria-Hungary's armies suffered catastrophic losses, and Britain's ruthless blockade brought both nations to the brink of starvation. The Central powers were trapped in the Allies' ever-tightening Ring of Steel.

In this compelling history, Alexander Watson retells the war from the perspective of its losers: not just the leaders in Berlin and Vienna, but the people of Central Europe. The war shattered their societies, destroyed their states, and imparted a poisonous legacy of bitterness and violence. A major reevaluation of the First World War, *Ring of Steel* is essential for anyone seeking to understand the last century of European history" (Publisher's information.).

Perhaps not the definitive work on the subject, but a good start.

Last year marked the 100th anniversary of the October Revolution, which fundamentally shaped and continues to wield influence over Russia and the rest of the world. Not surprisingly, publishers have put forth a number of related books, with major biographies of Lenin and Stalin, and many new works of Soviet history, including a new book by Anne Applebaum, "Red Famine."

Other books examine the present-day ripple effects of those tumultuous events. Masha Gessen's "The Future is History: How Totalitarianism Reclaimed Russia," looks at the nation under Putin, and Maria Alyokhina's "Riot Days" recounts the Pussy Riot musician's time in prison, where she fought for prisoners' rights.

But many readers turn to older books for insight into the Russia of 1917 and the following decades. Hobby Old Farts probably have a Russian history book or two in their bookcase. If not the *NY Times* last October asked three writers and thinkers --- the novelist Martin Amis, former secretary of state Condoleezza Rice and former deputy secretary of state Strobe Talbott to write essays on some of their favorite books dealing with the Russian Revolution. You can see the results in the *NY Times* of 20 October 2017. One eagerly awaited book, at least by me, was

Ring of Steel: Germany and Austria-Hungary in WWI,

This is an excellent example of how you can learn a lot about a book from reading the reviews written by others. You'll see what I mean if you read some of the following:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/aug/10/ring-of-steel-review-alexander-watson-germany-austria-hungary-first-world-war>

Ring of Steel: Germany and Austria-Hungary at War, 1914-1918 review – a well argued, important book

Alexander Watson's account of the Central Powers in the First World War is wonderfully lucid and enlightening

Two pages of praise and one short paragraph of criticism.

"The book has faults. It is too long; though much of the detail is wonderful, some of it is unnecessary. As a writer Watson is still learning his trade: his approach is too straight-on, he could have varied the pace and vantage point more and given us more sense of place. But to finish a book of this scope, without running out of steam, and make it consistently interesting and readable, is a triumph."

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/book-review-ring-of-steel-by-alexander-watson-1416607763>

Ready for War: The Central Powers' effort in World War I was sustained by love—for family, for comrades, for the fatherland.

By Adam Tooze .Nov. 21, 2014 5:09 p.m. ET

"We began the war, not the Germans and still less the Entente," Baron Leopold von Andrian-Werburg, a young Austrian diplomat, admitted in December 1918. Von Andrian-Werburg's crucial role at a Vienna war council on July 9, 1914, had been to advise his colleagues about the likely response of Russia to a severe Austrian ultimatum toward Serbia. There were not many European leaders who in the wake of 1914 were willing to make an admission of this kind. Most tried desperately to avoid accepting their own culpability. But this sense of shouldering an awesome responsibility was common to the small clique of young..." (Reviewer's opinion.)

The above is an earlier work that covers much the same ground as Watson but still leaves room for further discussion of the subject. Publishers do keep track of what each other is doing and it isn't uncommon to see several books on the same topic appear at about the same time. The Centennial of the Russian Revolution and the 100th anniversary of WWI are both good examples of this.

<http://www.military-history.us/2015/01/book-review-ring-of-steel-by-alexander-watson/>

Book Review: Ring of Steel by Alexander Watson January 15, 2015 by Patrick Shrier

[FULL DISCLOSURE: I received my copy of this book free from the author and/or publisher. I was not paid for this review and the opinion expressed is purely my own]

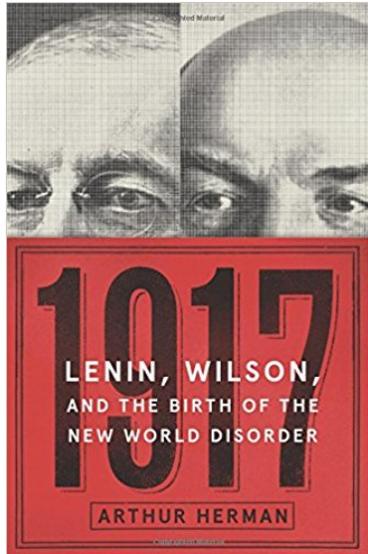
[Ring of Steel: Germany and Austria-Hungary in World War I](#) does for the Germany and Austria-Hungary what Niall Ferguson's *The Pity of War* did for the Allies in WWI. It explains the war through the lens of the people that participated both at home and at the front and explores the ways in which the experience of war shaped the perception of the war and led to the dissolution of both empires.

The book itself is a hefty tome at first glance; it actually looks like it could serve as a doorstop in an emergency. All told it is 788 pages and a good 2 ½ inches thick. Much of that thickness comes from the notes and bibliography. There are 120 pages of notes and the bibliography alone is 68 pages long. That testifies to the depth of scholarship that went into the book. Everything is meticulously sourced, often using primary as opposed to secondary sources. The meat of the book is 567 pages of text consisting of an introduction, 13 chronological chapters, and an epilogue detailing the experience of war on Germany and Austria-Hungary from 1914-1918.

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0968344516637161b?journalCode=wiha>

Interesting review by an Austrian scholar. He called it “a brick of a book”.

1917: Lenin, Wilson, and the Birth of the New World Disorder



By Arthur Herman, 2017

This is the story of two men, and the two decisions, that transformed world history in a single tumultuous year, 1917: Wilson’s entry into World War One and Lenin’s Bolshevik Revolution.

“In April 1917 Woodrow Wilson, champion of American democracy but also segregation; advocate for free trade and a new world order based on freedom and justice; thrust the United States into World War One in order to make the “world safe for democracy”—only to see his dreams for a liberal international system dissolve into chaos, bloodshed, and betrayal.

That October Vladimir Lenin, communist revolutionary and advocate for class war and “dictatorship of the proletariat,” would overthrow Russia’s earlier democratic revolution that had toppled the all-power Czar, all in the name of liberating humanity—and instead would set up the most repressive totalitarian regime in history, the Soviet Union.

In this incisive, fast-paced history, New York Times bestselling author Arthur Herman brilliantly reveals how Lenin and Wilson rewrote the rules of modern geopolitics. Through the end of World War I, countries only marched into war to increase or protect their national interests. After World War I, countries began going to war over ideas. Together Lenin and Wilson unleashed the disruptive ideologies that would sweep

the world, from nationalism and globalism to Communism and terrorism, and that continue to shape our world today.

Our New World Disorder is the legacy left by Wilson and Lenin, and their visions of the perfectibility of man. One hundred years later, we still sit on the powder keg they first set the detonator to, through war and revolution.” (Publisher’s information.)

1917 is an Amazon.com’s #1 WWI Biographies book

1917: Lenin, Wilson and the Birth of the New World Disorder;

<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/454091/arthur-herman-excerpt-1917-lenin-wilson-and-birth-new-world-disorder>

National Review has an excerpt written by the author.

A Century Later, Lenin and Wilson Still Cast Huge Shadows on the World

The lessons of their respective legacies are more relevant than ever.

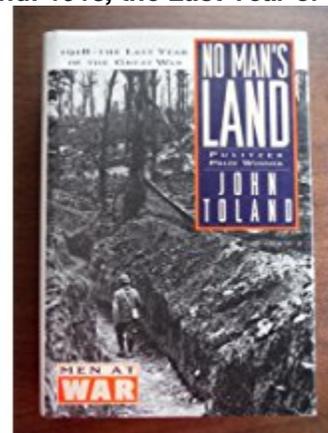
<https://www.nyjournalofbooks.com/book-review/Lenin>

“Historians and academics always face the challenge of balancing biography with what T. S. Eliot called “those vast impersonal forces” that hold us in their grip and shape history. Arthur Herman in his new book, *1917: Lenin, Wilson, and the Birth of the New World Disorder*, tips the scales toward biography, but does not ignore the “vast impersonal forces” of history” (Reviewer’s opinion.)

The following review was written not by a journalist or academic but by a lawyer!

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/16/books/review/martin-amis-lenin-russian-revolution.html?_r=0&mtref=www.google.com&gwh=7EBE63130AB5BEAC3DEACC1B800E258B&gwt=pay

No Man’s Land: 1918, the Last Year of the Great War



By John Toland (Author), Grover Gardner (Narrator), audiobook published in 2017, original hardback book published in 1996.

There are so many important events in the last year of the Great War that it's hard to tell which ones are the really important ones. This book helps.

"From freezing infantrymen huddled in bloodied trenches on the front lines to intricate political maneuvering and tense strategy sessions in European capitals, noted historian John Toland tells of the unforgettable final year of the First World War. As 1918 opened, the Allies and Central Powers remained locked in a desperate, bloody stalemate, despite the deaths of millions of soldiers over the previous three and a half years. The arrival of the Americans "over there" by the middle of the year turned the tide of war, resulting in an Allied victory in November. In these pages participants on both sides, from enlisted men to generals and prime ministers to monarchs, vividly recount the battles, sensational events, and behind-the-scenes strategies that shaped the climactic, terrifying year. It's all here—the horrific futility of going over the top into a hail of bullets in no man's land; the enigmatic death of the legendary German ace, the Red Baron; Operation Michael, a punishing German attack in the spring; the Americans' long-awaited arrival in June; the murder of Russian Czar Nicholas II and his family, the growing fear of a communist menace in the east; and the armistice on November 11. The different points of view of Germans, Americans, British, French, and Russians add depth, complexity, and understanding to the tragedies and triumphs of the War to End All Wars." (Publisher's information.)

John Toland has written many important military history books. Although over twenty years old, this one has been republished as an audiobook. Grover Gardner is an award-winning narrator with over eight hundred titles to his credit. Named one of the "Best Voices of the Century" and a Golden Voice by AudioFile magazine, he has won three prestigious Audie Awards, was chosen Narrator of the Year for 2005 by Publishers Weekly,

No Man's Land: 1918 --- The Last Year of the Great War,

Another example of several books with the same title. <http://mapandcounters.blogspot.com/2011/09/book-review-no-mans-land.html>

A long review written by a WWI wargamer.

A long introduction that only a historian turned wargamer could write leads to:

In "[No Man's Land: 1918, The Last Year of the Great War](#)", Pulitzer Prize winning author, John Toland,

revisits the major events, diplomatic, economic, political, and military that combined, in the course of 1918, both to shape the ultimate outcome of the First World War, and to plant the seeds for the next more cataclysmic European war that would erupt a mere generation later. The scope of Toland's carefully-researched work is surprisingly wide; and although the focus of author's narrative, as might be expected, is on the Western Front, important events in Russia, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, Italy, and even the Middle East are all considered as part of his ambitious study." (Reviewer's opinion.)

<https://www.csmonitor.com/1980/1014/101458.html>

Toland's flawed World War I blockbuster; No Man's Land, by John Toland. New York: Doubleday & Co. \$14.95.

By William Keough, William Keough teaches a course in war fiction at Fitchburg State College. October 14, 1980

"John Toland, chronicler of Hitler and the Rising Sun, is back with another blockbuster of a book, this time dealing with the events at the close of World War I in 1918. His accounting of the campaign along the Western Front and of the intrigues behind it and within revolutionary Russia has all the strengths and weaknesses of a blockbuster.

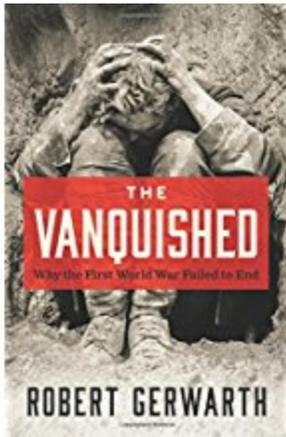
But much of Toland's information has been gleaned from official archives and memoirs of professional officers (a notoriously dangerous source); and the result is curiously top-heavy. The confusion of the front lines, the war-weariness of the soldiers, and the details of the mutual slaughter are often shunted to the background in favor of the machinations of diplomacy and the drama of grand personalities

Also there is a subtle but disturbing jingoism throughout.

In its scope, "No Man's Land" is a useful book; but for analysis it does not rival Paul Fussell's "The Great War and Modern Memory" or Barbara Tuchman's "Guns of August." The raw material is clumsily handled; even as a movie, it will need a director."

If Toland's writing is as bad as some reviewers' say; then why has he had so many best-sellers?

The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End



By Robert Gerwarth

A Times Literary Supplement Best Book of 2016, this book looks at how the past not only shapes the present but also the future.

“An epic, groundbreaking account of the ethnic and state violence that followed the end of World War I—conflicts that would shape the course of the twentieth century

For the Western Allies, November 11, 1918, has always been a solemn date—the end of fighting that had destroyed a generation, but also a vindication of a terrible sacrifice with the total collapse of the principal enemies: the German Empire, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire. But for much of the rest of Europe this was a day with no meaning, as a continuing, nightmarish series of conflicts engulfed country after country.

In *The Vanquished*, a highly original and gripping work of history, Robert Gerwarth asks us to think again about the true legacy of the First World War. In large part it was not the fighting on the Western Front that proved so ruinous to Europe's future, but the devastating aftermath, as countries on both sides of the original conflict were savaged by revolutions, pogroms, mass expulsions, and further major military clashes. In the years immediately after the armistice, millions would die across central, eastern, and southeastern Europe before the Soviet Union and a series of rickety and exhausted small new states would come into being. It was here, in the ruins of Europe, that extreme ideologies such as fascism would take shape and ultimately emerge triumphant.

As absorbing in its drama as it is unsettling in its analysis, *The Vanquished* is destined to transform our understanding of not just the First World War but the twentieth century as a whole.” (Publisher's information.)

Gerwarth has written many books, mostly on Germany, military history, and the men who shaped both. Note that this is apparently an uncredited reprint of a 1964 book by Brian Garfield and Ray Houlihan.

The Vanquished --- Why the First World War Failed to End,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/09/books/review/vanquished-robert-gerwarth.html?mtrref=www.google.com&qwh=88C0717D3A3334B7BE1C75D0348045A5&qwt=pay>

If you're publishing a book on a subject like WWI, besides the obligatory mentions on Google, Amazon.com, Barnes&Noble, GoodReads, etc. a review in the NYTimes the (paper or books review magazine which is a different company) is essential.

In *The Radetzky March*, the 1932 masterpiece of Austrian novelist Joseph Roth, a conservative Polish aristocrat named Count Chojnicki foretells the Habsburg Empire's collapse in 1918. With bitterness he blames it on the empire's restive national minorities: “As soon as the emperor [Franz Josef] says goodnight, we'll break up into a hundred pieces . . . All the peoples will set up their own dirty little statelets . . . Nationalism is the new religion.”

Fine, and then the reviewer can't resist pointing out that Roth is a central European Jew. That's the way the FT does thing.

The author's point is simple, “It's all about self-determination,” or that's what the reviewer (FT's European editor) thinks.

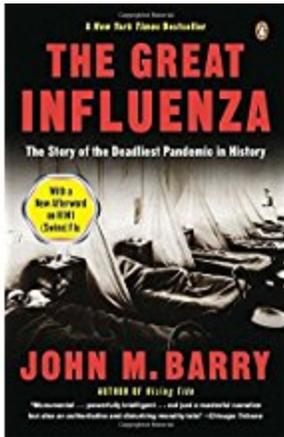
<http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/2045> a long review by a UK academic reviewer of history books.

This, however, is more of an observation about the suitability of the book's title rather than a criticism of its content. Indeed, *The Vanquished* is a work of considerable and convincing scholarship

<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/robert-gerwarth/the-vanquished/>

The first study of the disorders that shook all the defeated states of Europe following World War I. A short review. . . . A thorough explanation for the rise of the nationalist and fascist groups who set the stage for World War II.

The Great Influenza: The Story of the Deadliest Pandemic in History Revised Edition



By John M. Barry

WWI killed seven million civilians and ten million military personnel. The Great Influenza Pandemic killed somewhere between twenty, thirty and forty million; and perhaps as many as one hundred million people worldwide.

“At the height of WWI, history’s most lethal influenza virus erupted in an army camp in Kansas, moved east with American troops, then exploded, killing as many as 100 million people worldwide. It killed more people in twenty-four months than AIDS killed in twenty-four years, more in a year than the Black Death killed in a century. But this was not the Middle Ages, and 1918 marked the first collision of science and epidemic disease. Magisterial in its breadth of perspective and depth of research and now revised to reflect the growing danger of the avian flu, **The Great Influenza** is ultimately a tale of triumph amid tragedy, which provides us with a precise and sobering model as we confront the epidemics looming on our own horizon. John M. Barry has written a new afterword for this edition that brings us up to speed on the terrible threat of the avian flu and suggest ways in which we might head off another flu pandemic.” (Publisher’s information.)

Here’s what two other author’s wrote:

Susan Kent writes:

“The influenza pandemic of 1918-19 appeared suddenly at the end of the First World War and with explosive impact took the lives of at least 30 million people worldwide.”

“When we think of plagues, we think of AIDS, Ebola, anthrax spores, and, of course, the Black Death. But in 1918 the Great Flu Epidemic killed an estimated forty million people virtually overnight. If such a plague returned today...”

Killingray and Phillips writes:

“The Spanish Influenza pandemic of 1918-19 was the worst pandemic of modern times, claiming over 30 million lives in less than six months.”

Just reading the reviews made me curious about this book. Some of the reviewers were downright nasty and that was just at the editor.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/03/14/books/virus-alert.html>

A long review from a NYT reviews editor. You can almost predict what a book on this topic is going to say by how it comes down on one question, “How many people died during the Pandemic?” Twenty million seems to be the low figure and one hundred million the high figure. The author here equivocates and just writes “much more than the low figure”. I couldn’t help but think back to the Vietnam War days and the problems McNamara had because he listened to the stats of the body counters and not the words of the living.

<http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJM200408053510624#t=article> review from the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

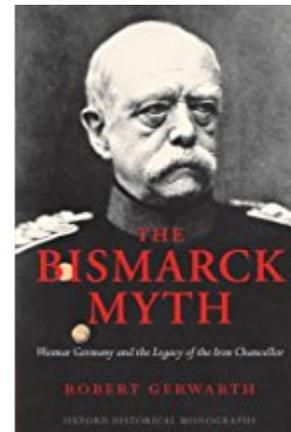
Public health, epidemic disease, and politics: sounds like a recipe for an HIV cocktail --- only much deadlier, right?

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC450178/>

A review from the Journal of Clinical Investigation that reads like something from The X-Files.

I have a theory that if Wilson, Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Orlando hadn’t been able to come up with a peace treaty at the Paris Peace Conference in 1918-1919 Mother Nature had a back-up to end the war, and all wars, once and for all --- it was called The Great Influenza Pandemic of 1919.

The Bismarck Myth: Weimar Germany and the Legacy of the Iron Chancellor (Oxford Historical Monographs) 1st Edition



By Robert Gerwarth

Not an easy read, but what German book is? The same thing might be said of Bismarck. In fact, the same thing might be said of the Weimar Republic., Still, easy or not, worth the effort to read for what it teaches.

"Few statesmen in history have inspired the imagination of generations of Germans more than the founder of the Kaiserreich, Otto von Bismarck. The archetype of charismatic leadership, the Iron Chancellor maintained his pre-eminent position in the pantheon of Germany's political iconography for much of the twentieth century.

Based on a large selection of primary sources, this book provides an insightful analysis of the Bismarck myth's profound impact on Germany's political culture. In particular, it investigates the ways in which that myth was used to undermine parliamentary democracy in Germany after the Great War, paving the way for its replacement by authoritarian rule under an allegedly 'Bismarckian' charismatic leader, Adolf Hitler.

As one of the most powerful weapons of nationalist agitation against the Weimar Republic, the Bismarck myth was never contested. The nationalists' ideologically charged interpretation of Bismarck as the father of the German nation-state and model for future political decision-making clashed with rivalling - and thoroughly critical - democratic and communist perceptions of the Iron Chancellor. The quarrel over Bismarck's legacy demonstrates how the clash of ideologies, particularly between 1918 and 1933, resulted in a highly political fight for the 'correct' and universal interpretation of the German past.

Essential reading for anyone interested in modern German history, this book sheds new light on the Weimar Republic's struggle for survival and the reasons for its failure." (Publisher's information.)

The Bismarck Myth --- Weimar Germany and the Legacy of the Iron Chancellor

The book was published by the Oxford University Press Academic/Arts & Humanities/Biography list.

"...an astutely conceived and solidly grounded contribution to the historiography of German political culture in the earl twentieth century." - **Geoff Eley The English Historical Review**

"The history of Weimar Germany's failure has never been told more accurately, convincingly, and vividly than in Robert Gerwarth's Bismarck Myth." - **Johannes Willms, Deutschland Radio**

"Gerwarth's book makes an outstanding contribution to our understanding of modern Germany's political culture." - **Heinrich August Winkler**

"Robert Gerwarth's study on Otto von Bismarck and the role of the Bismarck myth in the rise of Hitler sets new standards for the historiography of Weimar Germany (and) improves our understanding of the fatal turn which German history took in 1933." - **Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Weltwoche**

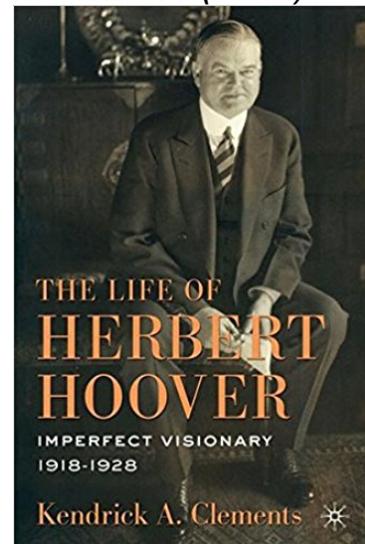
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/central-european-history/article/the-bismarck-myth-weimar-germany-and-the-legacy-of-the-iron-chancellor-by-gerwarthrobert-oxford-clarendon-press-2005-pp-ix216-8500-isbn-0-19-928184-x/14A5197FAAE38654DFEC49915195ACDE>

Cambridge University Press actually reviewed (in five lines) the book.

<https://mjwrightnz.wordpress.com/2014/06/12/why-the-bismarck-myths-were-well-myths/>

Perhaps the most entertaining reviews of any book were those of this one that compared the myth of Bismarck, the Iron Chancellor, and Bismarck, the battleship, but when the author started comparing the thickness of Bismarck's mutton chops and the battleships armor he lost me.

The Life of Herbert Hoover (6 vols.)



If Shakespeare had written this series of books, he probably would have called it *Much Ado About Nothing*. Still, Hoover gets blame that he doesn't deserve and doesn't get the credit he does deserve. That's life and that's history.

It's hard to believe that there was anything left to be written about Herbert Hoover after Nash's acclaimed three volume biography (see below) that took him fifteen years to write --- but, in fact, biographies of Hoover have become a cottage industry among conservative biographers since Nash wrote his. Why? I think the question answers itself in the titles of these subsequent volumes in the series that followed Nash's work.

Vol. 4 *The Life of Herbert Hoover: Imperfect Visionary, 1918-1928* by K. Clements (2010 ed.)

Vol. 5 *The Life of Herbert Hoover: Fighting Quaker, 1928-1933* by G. Jeansonne (2012 ed.)

Vol. 6 *The Life of Herbert Hoover: Keeper of the Torch, 1933-1964* by G. Best (2013 ed.)

Herbert Hoover in the White House: The Ordeal of the Presidency, by Charles Rappleye (2016)

Herbert Hoover: A Life, by G. Jeansonne (2016)

Herbert Hoover: An Extraordinary Life in Extraordinary Times by K. Whyte (2017)

But there's more to the story, as Wiki suggests:

“George H. Nash (born April 1, 1945) is an American historian and interpreter of American Conservatism. He is a biographer of Herbert Hoover. He is best known for *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*, which first appeared in 1976 and has been twice revised and expanded.

Dr. Nash is also an authority on the life of President Herbert Hoover. Between 1975 and 1995 he lived in Iowa near the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, where he prepared three volumes of a definitive, scholarly biography under the general title *The Life of Herbert Hoover* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co.). He was commissioned for this project by the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association. His biography drew upon research in hundreds of manuscript collections and archival sources in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Australia. His volumes are considered to be the standard works for the periods of Hoover's life that they cover. When Volumes I and II appeared in 1983 and 1988, he presented copies to President Ronald Reagan in Oval Office ceremonies in the White House.” (Wiki.)

The Life of Herbert Hoover: 3 + 3 vols.

By George H. Nash

“This volume launches what will be the definitive biography of one of the most accomplished yet elusive and misunderstood figures in American history. Herbert Hoover (1874-1964) was a man of remarkable

achievements and a succession of careers that spent over fifty years in public service. Yet, to this day, he is one of America's least known leaders, a man stigmatized because he served as president during the grim early years of the Great Depression.” (Publisher's information.)

001: *The Life of Herbert Hoover: The Engineer 1874-1914 Hardcover – April 1, 1983*

by George H. Nash (Author)

002: *The Life of Herbert Hoover: The Humanitarian, 1914-1917 (Life of Herbert Hoover, Vol. 2) Hardcover – August 17, 1988*

by George H. Nash (Author)

3: *The Life of Herbert Hoover: Master of Emergencies, 1917-1918 Hardcover – September 17, 1996*

by George H. Nash (Author)

National Review has called the series a "magisterial work of scholarship on one of our least-known presidents, and an important era in American history."

“The entry of the United States into the First World War in late 1911 found Herbert Hoover at a crossroads. Three years earlier, he had been a successful mining engineer in London. Then, as the war intensified in Europe, Hoover founded and led the Commission for Relief in Belgium, which provided desperately needed fuel to more than nine million Belgian and French citizens trapped between the German army of occupation and the British naval blockade. That emergency undertaking eventually evolved into one of the greatest humanitarian enterprises in history. It also brought Hoover into international prominence.

Here Herbert Hoover moves toward Washington and center stage in his own country. Shortly after the United States' declaration of war, he entered into able service under Woodrow Wilson as a member of the President's War Cabinet and U.S. Food Administration. His goal was to standardize food production to control surging food prices, and to create surpluses of exportable foodstuffs for America's allies. "Food will win the war" became Hoover's slogan.

Hoover encountered the tumult of district politics and became both agent and catalyst of the moment in American lives when a traditionally decentralized economy was coming under price control and other forms of governmental restraint. We see Hoover as builder and bureaucrat, a man who brought force, drive, and ability into the service of his country.” (Publisher's information.)

You might be wondering why I am going into all this and what it has to do with WWI, let alone today's WWII on

the cusp? It's simple. Nash did his research at the Hoover Presidential Library and Museum in Iowa but the project was mainly funded and the books published by W.W. Norton with the backing of the Hoover Institution, which is located at Stanford University. The *Hoover Institution* is an American public policy think tank and research institution located at *Stanford University* in California. Its official name is the *Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace*. It began as a library founded in 1919 by Republican Herbert Hoover, before he became President of the United States. The Library is a respected academic research institute. The Institution is a politically active organization with an agenda of its own.

Political action groups and organizations seeking to use academic institutions to advance their own agendas is nothing new, but it is something we need to keep in mind when reading, especially when used by historical revisionists to support their interpretation of current events.

The Life of Herbert Hoover, Vol. 1 – 6

I had to work my way down to the tenth entry on the Google search list on book reviews of this series before I got to a listing that was actually relevant and it turned out to be nothing more than a rehash of the publisher's press release.

Finally, at number eighteen I found this from *Foreign Affairs*

The Life Of Herbert Hoover: The Humanitarian, 1914-1917

by George H. Nash
Reviewed by Lucy Despard

"The second volume of this major biography (Volume I was published in 1983) concentrates, in almost numbing detail, on the 30-month period when Hoover organized and directed the relief of the population of Belgium, under German occupation and threatened with starvation. Hoover's political and administrative skills in this enormous task, combined with brilliant publicity which he knew how to garner, gave him the national and international reputation which led eventually to the American presidency." (Reviewer's opinion.)

The intellectual firewall that the author, the Hoover Presidential Library, the Hoover Institution, and W.W. Norton have built around this project does credit to The Pentagon Papers.

THE GERMANS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES:

Alfred von Tirpitz
Fredrich Wilhelm Erich Ludendorff
Paul Von Hindenburg
Ulrich von Brockdorff-Rantzau

Kaiser Wilhelm II
Manfried Rauchensteiner

The German Peerispective

One comment I noticed in reading one of the reviews for this project were words to the effect that the author regretted that there were no books written by any of the German principles involved in The Great War. That got me curious so I did some looking. I was surprised that, in fact, many of the key German leaders (Tirpitz, Ludendorff, Von Hindenburg, and even the Kaiser) had written memoirs and even had them translated and published in English by a London publisher named Cassell who specializes in military history --- even to this day.

My purpose here is not to review these mostly old memoirs; since I've only read a few excerpts from most of them; but to make you aware that they do exist and are available online in various media formats. At some point I do hope to read them all, especially the Rauchensteiner work. In some cases I've included the publisher's comments, published reviews, or some thoughts of my own.

Alfred von Tirpitz

My Memoirs was originally published by Cassells in London/ New York. 1919 and republished in a single volume by NSNB with an introduction by Erik Empson in 2013 [ASIN B00DH2E9LE](https://archive.org/details/cu31924026407977).

<https://archive.org/details/cu31924026407977> (online, 448 pp.)

My Memoirs (Volumes I & II) (Illustrated First World War Classics) Kindle Edition

by [Alfred von Tirpitz](#) (Author), [Erik Empson](#) (Editor, Introduction)

- *Complete unabridged edition containing Volumes I & II
- *An engaging new Centenary introduction
- *Specially formatted for Kindle by humans
- *Newly edited and illustrated with over 24 originally sourced images
- *Annotated with informative historical detail
- *Includes extracts from Tirpitz's war correspondence
- *Illustrations depict key figures and themes in the book

My Memoirs (Volumes I & II) by Alfred von Tirpitz

"For the first time Grand Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz's complete memoirs are presented in a single illustrated volume. The so-called "the architect of the German high seas fleet," a major figure in Imperial and Weimar Germany, Tirpitz was instrumental to determining the size and shape of the Imperial navy. During the war,

lacking power he was increasingly sidelined for his criticisms of Germany's defensiveness in the naval war, and was made a scapegoat domestically and abroad for its failures. In these memoirs Tirpitz attempts to set the record straight, and presents his case in a manner that would help define the future. Throughout the book Tirpitz claims that it was the lack of national pride that defeated Germany and that should the navy had been used aggressively against England, particularly in the early years of the war, a more just peace might have been secured.

First published in 1919, Tirpitz's memoirs were one of the first statements by the political establishment about the conduct of the war and his many observations about naval warfare were to become entrenched in the outlook of the Kriegsmarine.

An arch nationalist and monarchist, yet also a modernizer who on at least two occasions vied for the chancellorship of Germany, Tirpitz is a figure that no serious discussion of the IWW could ignore. His frustration at not being able to use the fleet he so diligently built is palpable, and he leaves no stone unturned in order to justify why his, at times perceptive, at other times vain and outlandish, ideas of how Germany could have established itself as a world power through the force of its navy, should have been better heard.

Indeed one of the many fascinating elements of this book is the extent to which German leaders saw as likely, the possibility that England might in fact side with Germany, or at least remain neutral towards her. Tirpitz believed strongly that a powerful German fleet was a useful deterrent to this end. Although history showed otherwise, there is no question that in many questions concerning the conduct of the war, had things been done his way, there may well have been a very different post-war configuration of political power." (Publisher's information.)

Tirpitz's major published works include:

The structure of German World Power. Stuttgart/ Berlin. 1924.

German policy. Hamburg/Berlin. 1926.

Memories, 5 volumes. Berlin/Leipzig. 1927.

Fredrich Wilhelm Erich Ludendorff

Ludendorff's memoirs, *My War Memories 1914-1918*, were originally published by Cassell's of London in a two volume set. Each volume was about 440 pages. This was followed by a single volume, abridged version of 336 pp.

Concise Ludendorff Memoirs, 1914-1918. [An Abridgment of "My War Memories, 1914-1918."] With ... Maps, Etc.



My War Memories 1914-1918, Volume 1



"The first thing to be made clear is that Ludendorff was NOT a von as he is so often shown, even by reputable historians. Given his enormous prestige and high position in the imperial German Army it is hard to believe he was not. In his introduction, Ludendorff remarks that he had no time to keep any record of events and the narrative that follows is based chiefly on his memory. He is going to give an account of the "magnificent deeds of the German Army, deeds from which Germany can take heart and "with which my name will for all time be associated . Later he was sent to the Eastern Front as Chief of Staff of 8th Army under the newly appointed commander, von Hindenburg. Thus began the partnership that was to last till Ludendorff's resignation over four years later on 26th October 1918. Within a week they had won a crushing victory over the Russians at Tannenberg and became instant heroes. When Hindenburg was appointed Chief of the General Staff in August 1916 and moved to the Western Front, Ludendorff went with him as his deputy in the newly created post of First Quartermaster-General. As the narrative unfolds it is clear how Ludendorff became the driving force though always acknowledging Hindenburg's senior position, and, of course, always paying lip service to the All-Highest. Between them they gained control not just of the armed forces but also of Germany's war effort and of the political scene, for example insisting on unrestricted submarine warfare despite the

objections of the chancellor, Bethman Hollweg, who resigned. They had become a military dictatorship. Following the failure of the German 1918 offensive Ludendorff suffered a nervous breakdown and was forced to resign, just before the end of the war.” (Publisher’s information.)

That’s the story, at least as Ludendorff writes it.

You can have a lot of fun with a Google search on “Who’s the worst general, Ludendorff or Haig?” You’ll get a lot of responses from supporters (few) and critics (many) of both. You might start with EB’s comments on both of them at <https://www.britannica.com/list/9-worst-generals-in-history> In general it seems that no one questions the bravery of either man but they do question their leadership abilities and understanding of complex military situations.

To be fair, you can find on Amazon.com two volumes by different authors of Haig’s letters and papers. The first covers the pre-War years and the second covers the War.

Paul Von Hindenburg

The one book I really want to read is *Out of My Life* by Marshal Paul Von Hindenburg, published in 1920 by Cassell of London, 484 pp. Available online or via Amazon.com <https://archive.org/details/outofmylife00hinduoft>

Then I want to read a really good biography of Von Hindenburg and find out if he was really the buffoon that some authors make him out to be or, as I suspect, he was just a good man caught in a bad situation.

Count Ulrich Brockdorff-Rantzau

Alas, there is nothing in English by Germany’s chief negotiator at Paris who later served as Weimar Foreign Minister and later as ambassador to the Soviet Union where he got along well with the Russian FM Chicherin but there are 3 biographies, all in German. If you’re not familiar with his background and the story of his role at the Paris Peace Conference you should at least read the Wiki entry on him at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulrich_von_Brockdorff-Rantzau

Among Brockdorff-Rantzau’s works are:

Patronat u. Compatronat. Dissertation. Leipzig 1890 bis 1891.

Dokumente und Gedanken um Versailles. Berlin 1925

In 1925 he published his ***Documents and thoughts about Versailles***



Cultural Policy Publishing , 1925 , a 221 page collection of materials related to his time as Germany’s chief negotiator at the Paris Peace Conference. It caused a sensation in Weimar and was used by both the Right and the Left to justify their positions

It’s a pity there’s no biography of Brockdorff-Rantzau in English. It would be fascinating to know more about this man who stood up to bullying of the Big Four at Versailles and then charmed Lenin’s chief diplomat in a later assignment.

The Kaiser

Kaiser Wilhelm sought to reinvent himself after his abdication and Germany’s defeat in WWI. The first step in this effort was the writing of his own memoirs; which were once again published by Cassell in 1922. In 348 pages and 15 chapters Wilhelm pays homage to Bismarck and then proceeds to blame everyone but himself for Germany’s collapse.

https://books.google.com/books?id=ywZoAAAAMAAJ&pg=PP13&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false

My Memoirs: 1878-1918

Not surprisingly, I suppose, the Kaiser’s memoirs sold much better in Great Britain than they did in Germany. Below is an extensive 1922 review of the Kaiser’s Memoirs (Remember, they were published in London by Cassell, the same publisher who published most of the major memoirs of the WWI principals. The last paragraph alone is worth the read.

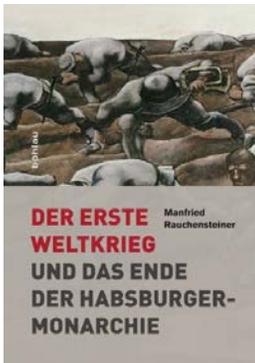
http://www.oldmagazinearticles.com/summary_and_review_of_MY_MEMOIR_by_Kaiser_Wilhelm#.WiWu-DeJiUk

The second part of the Kaiser’s “charm offensive” was an on-going series of interviews with various foreign correspondents and scholars writing about The Great War, its aftermath and, of course, Wilhelm. You, gentle

reader, might wonder what that has to do with Diplomacy? Actually it has quite a lot. One of those who interviewed the Kaiser for a book he was writing on the origins of WWI was a young American graduate student named Sidney B. Fay. Fay would return home, write the definitive (at least for his generation) account of *The Origins of the World War*, and go on to a professorship at Harvard where one of his students was another young student named Allan B. Calhmer.

Manfried Rauchensteiner

Technically Rauchensteiner was a German-speaking Austrian and not a German, but to an Austrian that wouldn't matter --- except during football season. Nor is Rauchensteiner from the WWI era. He's actually alive and well today in Vienna in his forty-eighth year as a professor at the University there in military and diplomatic history.



The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy by Manfried Rauchensteiner. In German and English (online only).

<https://books.google.com/books?id=ZEplBAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=My+War+Memories+Ludendorff&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjbkdfQ6-7XAhUFyWMKHdwwA3wQ6AEIVzAJ#v=onepage&q&f=false>

"The Ballhausplatz and the Deficit of War" is the opening section of the First Chapter of this book and quite a book it is. It did for the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and the Habsburgs what William Shrier's *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* did for Germany and the Nazi. Veteran Peeriblah readers will recall that the Ballhausplatz is the nickname for the square adjacent to the Hofburg in Vienna where the Emperor and Chancellor (and later the President and Prime Minister) live. The name comes from the fact that the site was previously the location of the imperial tennis court.

Rauchensteiner's book is 1177 pages, weighs in at just under 2 kilos and is free to read online. (1222 pp. German Kindle edition)

In contrast, Shrier's book is 1245 pages, weighs in a half-kilo less (I attribute that to the fact that the German publisher probably used better quality paper in the expectation that his book would last for a thousand years.) and is available on Amazon.com in a variety of media.

In comparison The Pentagon Papers had 3,000 pages of historical analysis and 4,000 pages of government documents in 47 volumes. It took 36 analysts 18 months to complete the project, Only 15 copies were printed. I have no idea what a copy weighs.

"Historically to the last detail. Minutely every event recorded and documented. A new view over the first world war, a good research instrument." --- Amazon.com review from a German reader.

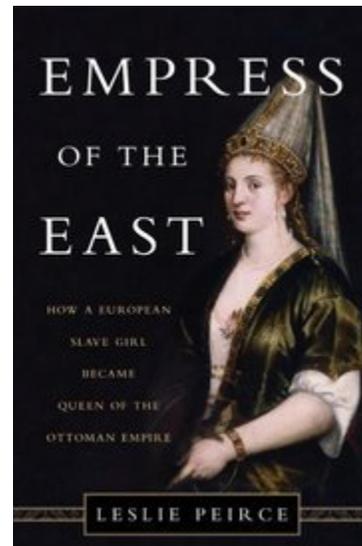
https://www.dawienna.ac.at/Portals/0/Faculty/Rauchensteiner_CV.pdf
His CV is most impressive.

EMPRESS OF THE EAST
How a European Slave Girl Became Queen of the Ottoman Empire
By Leslie Peirce, 2017

One of the truly great love stories of all time about the slave girl who conquered the man who conquered an empire.

The New York Times praised the book in its review, excerpted below:

The Woman Who Smashed a Glass Ceiling in the 16th Century
By THOMAS F. MADDEN NOV. 22, 2017



"The women of the harem may have been shut away from public view, yet they were intimate with the

undercurrents of power. As Leslie Pierce explains in "Empress of the East," the harem "was politics, and it taught politics." She tells the fascinating story of one remarkable harem slave, who broke through that rocky ceiling, claiming unprecedented authority for a woman and forever changing the nature of Ottoman government.

The name of that woman is lost. Europeans called her Roxelana, "the maiden from Ruthenia," a land in what is today Belarus and Ukraine. Captured around the age of 13 by Tatar slavers, Roxelana ended up in the markets of Ottoman Constantinople, and ultimately in the sultan's harem. There she learned Turkish, the precepts of Islam and the amorous arts. She was given a new name, Hurrem, "the laughing/joyful one." Sultan Suleiman ("the Magnificent") first slept with her around 1520, about the time he took the throne. He never stopped, neglecting all other women in his harem. Several years later Suleiman stunned the population by marrying Roxelana, thus making her a free woman. Having overturned centuries of traditions, Roxelana exerted extraordinary influence over her husband, the most powerful man in Ottoman history.

This lively book resurrects Roxelana by digging into letters, account books and diplomatic dispatches to illuminate a life meant to be hidden from view. It is a difficult task. Ottoman culture prized the invisibility of its women, forcing Peirce to judiciously conjecture or creatively imagine much of Roxelana's life. This requires more creativity than professional historians usually allow themselves, but Peirce, an expert on the Ottoman Empire, is careful to wall off her speculations with fair warnings.

Roxelana died in 1558, but her life changed Ottoman politics for centuries" (Publisher's information.)

Thomas F. Madden is the director of the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at Saint Louis University. His latest book is "Istanbul: City of Majesty at the Crossroads of the World."

Empress of the East: How a European Slave Girl Became Queen of the Ottoman Empire.

https://www.bookbrowse.com/bb_briefs/detail/index.cfm/ezone_preview_number/12700/empress-of-the-east contains a half-dozen media reviews, mostly very good.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/10/30/empress-of-the-east-young-radicals-the-seventh-function-of-language-and-the-forensic-records-society>

Empress of the East, by Leslie Peirce (*Basic*). This engaging biography reconsiders the legacy of the sixteenth-century Ottoman empress Roxelana. Kidnapped as a child by slave-traders in present-day Ukraine, she was sold into the harem of Süleyman I. As a royal concubine, she was expected to produce just one son with the sultan—to avoid bloody succession struggles between full brothers. But Süleyman freed and married Roxelana, and had five sons with her, a break from tradition that got her branded a witch and a seductress. Peirce persuasively recasts Roxelana as a pragmatist adept at navigating both palace politics and international relations, and as a pioneer who established a more powerful role for Ottoman women.

I was curious to see how *The New Yorker* would review a book by a New York-based author who teaches at a New York University. Better that some academic presses in my opinion.

CONCLUSIONS, OR MAYBE NOT

Things I learned about reading and writing book reviews and reviews of book reviews while working on this project.

Hopefully you'll learn as much from reading this discussion of WWI literature as I learned from writing it.

Listings on Google search tend to include their sponsored sites (Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble, Kirkus, GoodReads, etc.), the publisher's press releases, professional book reviewer sites, Journal reviews.

Many reviewers rely on the publisher's press release for their review content. (Mea culpa.)

Signed reviews with name, title and position are usually the best.

Yes, reviewers do quote other reviewers.

Beware of search results combining two different books with the same or similar titles.

In some cases, the advantages of reading reviews in lieu of reading the book itself are more helpful.

Diplomacy World Demo Game “Eclipse” – 2017A

The Players:

Austria: Nicolas Sahuguet
England: Edi Birsan
France: Andrew Goff
Germany: Conrad Woodring
Italy: Chris Brand
Russia: Doug Moore
Turkey: Tanya Gill

Commentators by Typeface:

Rick Desper
Christopher Martin
Jack McHugh

The Players:

Austria: Nicolas Sahuguet – Found on a Paris street not far from the Crazy Horse Cabaret, the baby Nicolas clung to his red blanke which still remains his prized possession and probably a Freudian explanation for his fascination with playing Austria. He maintained a low profile in the back alleys around the Parisian District 13 until noticed by the legendary Francois Riverseu whose association with the French Military Ministry is not discussed. From such tutors and others he was infused with French Culture and a serious culinary weakness for Escargot which he brought to his style for playing Austria. While DNA analysis of his blanke did not reveal exact identification of his parentage it did point to a correlation with genetic disorders common in French Canadian circles that have a relationship to the clubbing of baby seals and the in-gestation of their smashed brains. Thus, as the opportunity for an undercover mission to Quebec arose in the French Ministry of Infiltration he took the assignment to Montreal where he maintains a constant search for relatives and relevance to his obsession with slow playing as the Austrians and his deep psychological wounding at abandonment from an early age. He cries in the night sleep terrors of “Don’t leave me” which is a tattoo on his back from a lost opportunity at teenage love with a mysterious woman in Manchester.

Nicolas, she is one of zee greatest players ever to come from ze Quebec, n'est pas? Now that she is in the Montreal, she is even more dangerous. Newly renovated. Would recommend, 11/10.

First encountered Nicolas in Berlin when he was busy winning a title. For years I’ve been convinced we shared a board in Berlin, but a check through the archives does not support that conclusion. I’m sure we’ve shared a board or two since then. Fun player.

England: Edi Birsan – Edi Birsan has played the game since December of 1965. His introduction to Diplomacy on the Net has been downloaded more than a 100,000 times. He has a Wikipedia page as a Diplomacy player https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edi_Birsan and is currently the Vice Mayor of the largest city in the 2nd wealthiest county (over a million people) in the 6th largest economy in the world. In Diplomacy, if it happened, he probably did it first.

The Wikipedia article really says it all. And anyone who can become Mayor of Vice has to have the skills needed to succeed in this game. Spacious, good lighting. Would recommend, 12/10

Edi remains widely acclaimed as the Master of the Game, known for his contributions to various strategy articles over the years including the invention of the exciting but rarely-used Lepanto opening. Edi also enjoys getting players to concede solos to him as well as being a kingmaker in major tournaments. Edi will be the only player in this game starting in a supply center that shares his name.

France: Andrew Goff – Andrew is a hack Diplomacy player who used to be good but started “allying” with people and now struggles to even get his openings right.

With a long list of awards that now clearly discredit the tournaments he won them in, and a penchant for using words like ‘Strategy’ and ‘Psychology’ when he means ‘Luck’, he is nevertheless fairly good company when it comes to eating too much and playing other games with once you’re eliminated.

Outside Diplomacy, he is known for not being the author of 'Great Expectations', 'Hamlet', and the 19th century political treatise 'Democracy In America'. He also significantly didn't contribute to Ken Burns' 'The Civil War' and the Broadway production of 'Singin' In The Rain'.

Throw another shrimp on the Barbie, we have an Aussie in the Hizzy! G'day, Goffie! True fact: Goff knows more about playing diplomacy than most people ever learn. Hardwood floors, great views. Would recommend, 13/10.

Goff is an interesting guy and a multiple world champion. I think I've only played with Goffie once. But as always, my memory may be fading. At one point I convinced myself I'd spent a season on Real World: Rutgers but it had been so traumatic I suppressed all the memories. I digress. Oh, right, Goff. Very good player.

Germany: Conrad Woodring – Drawn by the staunchest breed of Alaskan Huskies the sled of his mother was unable to reach the hospital on the border with British Columbia so Conrad was born on the side of the path and nuzzled between his mother and the dogs. Being in the period of the long night the darkness was considered as part of his birthright and he has been fond of the color black ever since and repealed by the opposite. He even managed to spend a serious amount of time in Blackest Africa where he helped to engineer various dark metal extraction devices for use in black 'gold'. Unfortunate circumstances brought him to England where his only solace was in Guinness and playing Germany. However, the fascination with things black has always drawn him towards the Black Sea which just so happens to have the double bonus of allowing him to go through the great white expanse to get there.

The Raddest of the Woodring brothers, Conrad struggles to escape his slightly better known brother's fame. I'm sure he will be calling up Graham on the regular, asking questions like "If Both Edi and Goffy want a western triple, that's good, right?" and "Do I have to stay in Denmark in the fall to own it?" Remodeled bathrooms. Would recommend, 14/10

Conrad gets a demerit for misspelling 'Guinness'. I'm too traumatized to say anything else. Let's just pretend this travesty never happened. *sniff*

Conrad provided a great service to the East Coast hobby by hosting people at his family's house on Lawn Guyland for years. Tough tourney: winner got a nice plaque but also-rans have been known to be thrown off cliffs. In more recent years Conrad has taken up the role of World Traveler Smurf and we are diminished by his absence.

Italy: Chris Brand – Chris grew up in England and first played Diplomacy as a teenager in a three-player game with his Dad and younger brother. He doesn't recall a second game at home. Then there were games at high school during lunch break where it was surprising how far through a game you can get in an hour with short deadlines. With his first email address came the discovery of the judges and online games, which continued when he emigrated to Canada in 1996.

In 2004, he stumbled across an advert for a face-to-face tournament "Dip in the Ocean" and decided to attend. He soloed as Russia in the second round, the only solo in the tournament, but managed to play badly enough in the other two rounds to only finish third overall. This was also where he learned that there was a thriving face-to-face Diplomacy scene in the UK that he had managed to be completely unaware of while living there. He became a regular at west coast tournaments, taking a few more podium finishes, until 2007 when WDC came to Vancouver. This was another of those life-changing events. WDC was bigger and better, and he came 15th. He wanted more. He went to Austria the following year and scraped his way on to the top board, where he was slaughtered as Austria. Family vacations started being planned around WDC. Online games became less interesting. In The Hague in 2010 he again qualified in 7th for the top board and again got slaughtered, this time as Turkey. That same year at Dipcon he watched Eric Mead take the one dot needed to push him down to second place. He was one of only four North American players to make it to Sydney for WDC in 2011. In 2015, he missed his first WDC since Vancouver. He'd collected four second places and four third places but had still never won a Diplomacy tournament. In 2016 he was at WDC in Chicago. He again qualified in 7th place for the top board, having soloed as Italy in round 3. The other players were nice enough to let him play Italy, and he spent the game chasing Nathan Barnes' France, managing to overtake him at just the right time and actually winning a tournament for the first time. Finally convinced that he does know how to play this game, he was back at WDC in Oxford earlier this year trying to be the first person to defend the World Champion title. He again qualified for the top board in 7th, but was outplayed in Austria by Doug Moore as Italy. He will be at Dipcon in Vermont in November as defending North American champion. In January 2017 he ran a tournament in Vancouver that attracted 21 players and he is running it again in January 2018. You should go.

Chris – the kind of name a true champion carries. It just sounds like a winner, doesn't it? "Chris, World Champion." Rolls off the tongue. This format puts Dr. Brand at a severe disadvantage, because it is much, much harder to misorder. Wall-to-wall shag carpets. Would recommend, 15/10.

I still don't quite understand what happened in Chicago. In Round 1, Turnage, Maletsky and I ran an Eastern Triple that flattened the board, and meek li'l ol' Brand survived with 2 dots. And then he won the tournament. Fun guy to play with.

Russia: Doug Moore – Doug Moore foolishly started playing this game in college, introducing many ex-friends to the game. A former online judge player, Doug started playing tournament Dip with the Pitkissers, winning several tournaments along the way. He now resides in Portland, OR and is one the West Coast Care Bears.

Doug is a tree-hugger, and I mean that in the best possible sense, which isn't very. Expect him to always look out for his allies needs before his own, and try to avoid conflict. Walk-in closets. Would recommend, 16/10.

Doug was a fellow PitKisser* for many years and we've played together on dozens of boards. For about 3 years in the mid-00's a typical house game had Doug, myself, Baralone, Corey Mason, Bruce Ray/Ray Bruce, Ecton, and whatever old-timers we could roust. The kind of guy I like allying with - he'll stab, but only at an appropriate time. Also loves doing weird things for shits and grins like "I'm just going to piss off all my neighbors to see if I can get out of the mess!"

***A Pitkisser is a member of the Potomac Tea & Knife Society.**

Turkey: Tanya Gill – A mystery to herself she has never recovered her memory from a head injury in Coastal

British Columbia where she was found on the deck of a Chinese furrier's boat from the culling off the coast of Sea Lions and the like condoned by the Canadian government. This clearly was part of some hideous economic treaty negotiated in the back alleys of Paris by the Franco sellouts of the Government. It was rumored that she may have been assigned to infiltrate the sealers by the French Canadian underground seeking to undermine the Anglo infested western provinces. Nevertheless, since her passport was covered with stains of yellow taffy, the Chinese thought she may be an agent for the Turkish Department of Confectionary who wanted to make some case against them trade violations since they were commonly known to use yellow sugar on the innards of the seals for some Hong Kong delight.

Taking the clue she immediately fled to Quebec where she obtained no luck with the Turkish authorities on her identity but was advised to "not bother any Moore". Being rather oppositional she looked for further references for her identity, but not giving up on the Turkish link had a tattoo on the bottom of her left foot reading: "No Moore".

Tanya is the best there is at what she does. Where others hem, haw, dilly, and dally, she gets right to the point and gets the job done. Rumors of a demonic heritage are as far as we can tell baseless. Granite countertops. Would recommend, 17/10

Haven't met Tanya, so I can't vouch for her. DQ vouches for her. I can't vouch for her. Hoping she sticks around for a while. Based on her press I suspect I'd like the cut of her jib.

The Commentators

Rick Desper first discovered the game of Diplomacy as a freshman in college, where he learned to enjoy local games played either in one sitting or with daily deadlines. He became primarily an email player in the early '90s as the email hobby exploded, when play centered around such things as the Judge Adjudicator for email play, the Diplomatic Pouch webzine, and the development of various ratings systems. Rick particularly enjoyed exploring map variants and was in the habit of playing 10-15 no-press gunboat games online simultaneously.

OK, I'm tired of this third person crap.

My FTF tournament play started slowly with the Boston-area Diplomatic Incident hosted by Dave Partridge in the mid-90s. The first "real" tournament was AvalonCon in Baltimore in 1997, run by Jim Yerkey, where I first met people like Chris Martin and Tim Richardson. In 1998 many of us met at World Dipcon at DixieCon, which Chris won and where Tim frustrated my shot at a solo as

my Austria was stopped at 16 SC. This started the trend toward FTF tournament play, a trend helped by a position I had in Germany for two years, which made it relatively easy to attend WDC in Namur as well as go to my first Manorcon, where I was adopted by Team Sweden.

As the millennium came, I moved to DC and met the Potomac Tea & Knife Society, a local club that started hosting tournaments and which eventually hosted DipCon and World DipCon. My activities started to move almost entirely towards FTF and away from email diplomacy at this point.

For about five years I became a regular tournament traveler, a period that included peaks (winning WBC!) and valleys (last place at Dipcon in Portland!) The last place was parlayed into a spot on the famous/infamous CruiseCon, aka Dipcon at Sea. We only had 14-15 players but the level of play was high and it was much fun, and somehow I convinced Edi Birsan to get behind

the idea that I should top the final board and win the tournament. At that point I figured I'd peaked, and subsequent tournament play has reinforced that feeling, as I no longer feel a strong desire to endure the emotional commitment necessary for high level FTF play.

I still stay involved in the Diplomacy community, with occasional local gaming and rare trips to tournaments. I also stay interested in the hobby as an Editorial Board member of Diplomacy World. I am strongly interested in discussions about multi-player game theory and scoring systems, and have become convinced that a few minor tweaks to the game would vastly improve the experience (Bye bye, stalemate lines!) I enjoy providing commentary for Demo games but will badly miss Jim Burgess's presence in the current game.

Chris Martin was introduced to Diplomacy in middle school, as a means of teaching conflict resolution to future leaders. That part didn't work out but the game stuck, and in 1996 Chris got online and started playing again. Since his debut at AvalonCon in 1997 (two eliminations and a 1-center survival (BERLIN TO KIEL!)) he has finished in the top-3 at more than thirty face-to-

face tournaments, including winning World Dip Con in 1998. Last year, Chris created a series of videos following the World Championships at WeaselMoot in Chicago. Today, he helps to run a Diplomacy channel on Cisco Spark, where more than 100 players are organizing online games and F2F events. He is of the opinion that the fleet in London should, more often than it typically does, open to the English Channel.

Jack McHugh is a well-known raconteur, Diplomacy player and man about town...as well as one of our least liked but most recognized commentators. An infamous player who can easily be bribed with a cheeseburger or a super-size package of Reese's peanut butter cups. He is known for his annoying style of whining, wheedling, and begging to get Belgium in 1901. He likes to brag about this since he is usually playing Italy or Austria.

Jack is also a known associate of the editor of Diplomacy World, Douglas Kent--although Doug will deny this--and has been questioned by the police when large quantities of chocolate or peanut butter or both have gone missing, although to date he has successfully avoided being blamed for any missing food stuffs or supply centers.

Commentator Expectations - Pre-Game

The West: I would be surprised to see a bounce in the English Channel – Edi may be beyond my ability to influence in this regard. Goff likes to play a pretty laid-back game, so I'd even be surprised to see him in Burgundy early. Conrad is the one with the heavy lifting to do here – he will be hard pressed to get either of his neighbors to give him the space he needs to get comfortable. Doug's Russia will be decisive, tipping the balance at least in the early game.

The East: Tanya is the wild-card here, and should be on the receiving end of legitimate offers from all her neighbors, including Chris. Doug typically has less patience for shenanigans than Nicolas, so if she tries to do something anti-russian early, she'd better make sure it sticks. Chris, something of an Italy specialist, will bide his time until he can make a decisive move. Expect I/F relations to be extra-cordial for the opening game. Prediction: 4way draw with E/F/R/I. Backup prediction: 3way draw E/F/T. Hmm, I'm pretty sure it will be Edi and Goffy in the west, aren't I? I might be doing Conrad a disservice there, but ... it's a tough spot he's in.

I've played with Edi, Conrad and Andrew before--I don't remember doing well against any of them, although the booze and food were good at Conrad's house con several years ago on Long Island before he became an international engineer....or that's his CIA cover, anyway. I remember he wasn't a bad player

although i spent most of that con playing Muchen and Junta and doing poorly at both.

Edi is a great player who is susceptible to shameful toading...that was my approach anyway. Flattery early and often, you really can't go wrong with that approach, make sure you give Edi his due for inventing the Lepanto opening.

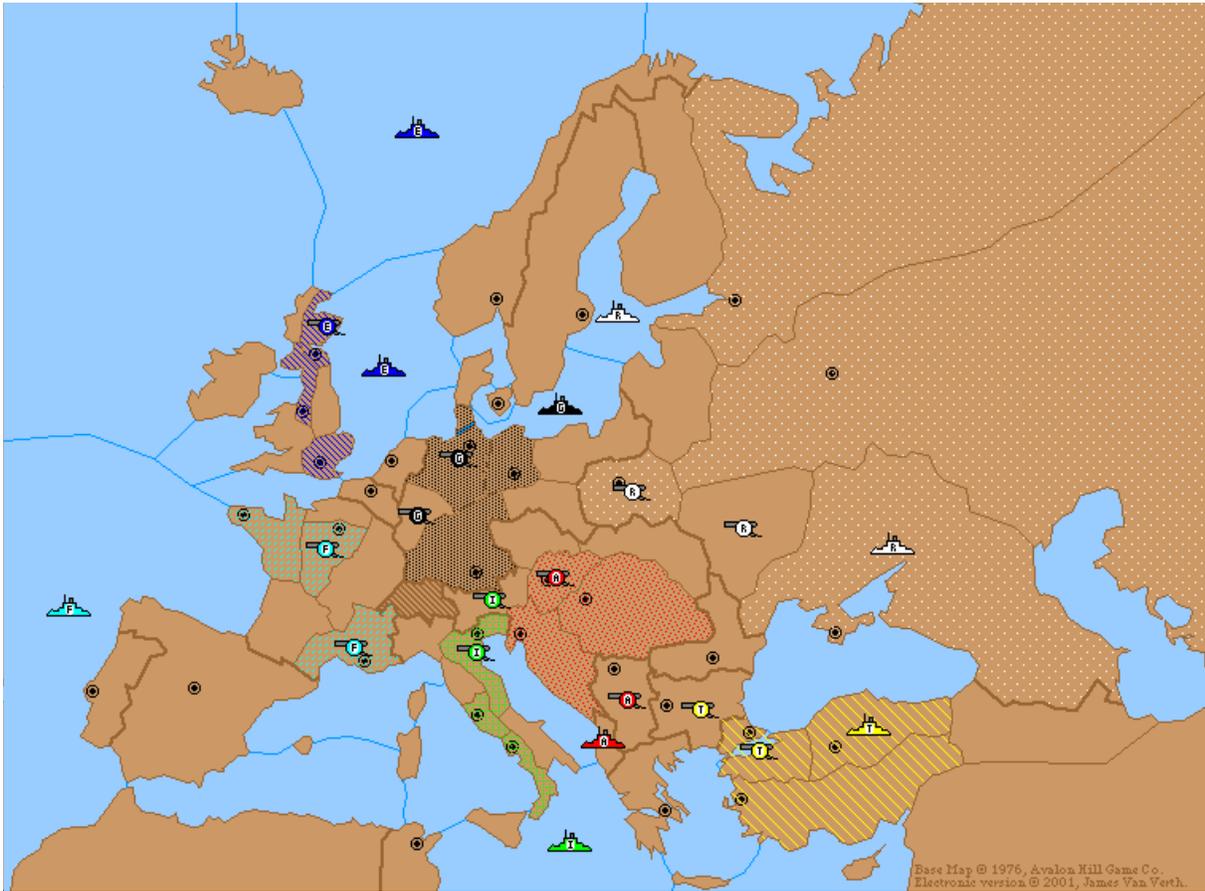
Andrew is Australian so anything grilled on the barbee makes him happy with any kind of beer. He also likes, like all good diplomacy centers, his neighbors supply centers. So threw a few dots on the barbee with some beer and he's yours for life...or at least until the beer and the dots run out.

I forecast a Sea Lion based on the proposition that Conrad and Goffy will prefer each other over Edi, who often gets clobbered in invitational games. In the East Doug will involve himself in both fronts while Brand and Sahauguet, the expats in Canada, combine forces to isolate the Gill playing Turkey. After about two years of this, things will change. Doug will stab two people at once, Goff will sweep into the Med, and Gill will rebound, taking Serbia. Woodring will convoy into England on the same move Birsan convoys into France while Goff is convoying into Italy. By 1905 an Austrian fleet will

be on the Black Sea. By 1909 it will be dislodged by
a German fleet.

So it is written.

Spring 1901 Results



Austria: A Budapest – Serbia, F Trieste – Albania, A Vienna - Galicia (*Bounce*).

England: F Edinburgh - Norwegian Sea, A Liverpool – Edinburgh, F London - North Sea.

France: F Brest - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Marseilles - Burgundy (*Bounce*), A Paris - Burgundy (*Bounce*).

Germany: A Berlin – Kiel, F Kiel - Baltic Sea, A Munich - Ruhr.

Italy: F Naples - Ionian Sea, A Rome – Venice, A Venice - Tyrolia.

Russia: A Moscow – Ukraine, F Sevastopol - Black Sea (*Bounce*),
F St Petersburg(sc) - Gulf of Bothnia, A Warsaw - Galicia (*Bounce*).

Turkey: F Ankara - Black Sea (*Bounce*), A Constantinople – Bulgaria, A Smyrna - Constantinople.

PRESS

France to Observers:

Enjoy this odd opening from France
It looks like a merry old dance
But it gets a result
Without causing insult
To Conrad or Edi Birsan.

EDinburgh, Spring 1901

With the death of Queen Elizabeth January 22, of this year, the Reign of Edward the VII began in a solemn ceremony at Winchester Cathedral. Following up on the great sadness of the association with London, the King

moved the Royal Capital to EDinburgh where he would be free from the memories of his dear departed mother as well as farther from the flirtations with Lillie Lantry. The change in the capitalization of the city was noted and explained that he was now King ED Inburgh.

The northward mobilization of the Army and the establishment of Scapa Flow as the Fleet Home Port comes as a no surprise with the arrival of the King. What was rather unusual is the arrival at his side of a mysteriously accented woman with some combination of French and Brooklynese affectations: Madame Nasrib De Ide. She claims to be a relative of President William

B. Ide of California who declared the California Republic in 1846 and brought it into the United States shortly thereafter, shortly meaning 25 days. Her mother is reputed to have been from the Texas Bonapartes that arrived from France after the First Abdication and had plotted to rescue Napoleon from St. Helena but his early passing terminated the effort.

In a reception held at the request of the Norwegian Ambassador, Igordigabout Norte Moor, the Madame was asked about her relationship with the King to which she replied: "What's it to you, Mon Sewer?" The discussion was cut short when the Russian Ambassador spilled a

plate of caviar on her dress to which she commented in low tones to the King "what do you expect from a drunken Russian fish egg abortionist?" The King replied, "A Drunken Russian is a redundant statement."

The German Ambassador Zimmerman, on his way to a new post in Mexico, meanwhile handed the King a note detailing abuses of Russian fishing boats in the Baltic that may need to be boarded with regard to their limits on their catch and asking what the position of the Empire would be. "The Russians have a tendency to fulfill their own worst prophecies, so we will just see what the Tsar is up to shortly."

Spring 1901 Commentary:

Commentators by Typeface:

Rick Desper

Christopher Martin

Jack McHugh

Spring 1901 and I'm assigning negative points to Goffy on style. The poem, really - "dance" does not rhyme with "Birsan." - I might've let it slip if he'd made it possessive somehow Dance ~ Birsan's - but I guess we can't all be pretentiously overeducated, can we?

Wait, Rick and I can. HmMMMM.

You're just upset because you don't want 'Birsan' anywhere near 'dance'.

That being said, this is one of my least favorite French Openings. Does what it says on the poetical tin, though, and offends neither neighbor. What does Paris do in the fall? That's the question. Be interesting to see if he declines to pick up the two Iberian dots and instead goes to, say, Pic & Bur, building one.

It does feel like it's intentionally weak from a tactical perspective. Waive all interest in Belgium. I prefer leaving Paris. But who am I to question Goff?

Meh, I don't have a problem with a conservative French opening. The French are one of the strongest powers on the board, I would argue they are the strongest. They have a virtual lock on two neutrals and no one can seriously threaten their home centers before 1902. The other powers should have it so good.

Otherwise, Chris Brand has the interesting opening, inasmuch as something now has the potential to happen. I think he's unlikely to run in on Nicolas? Oddly enough Brand, Birsan, Gill, and Sahuguet were all at

Carnage in Vermont the first weekend in November - I wonder if they discussed the game at all? Tanya and Nicolas and Chris all shared a ride from Montreal, I think? Should be interesting in any case.

There's a good argument to make that the opening Chris used is the strongest opening for Italy. For Italy to go quickly he's got to get his armies moving. Now he could go straight into Trieste, which usually works in the Spring, but it also usually creates an incredibly vindictive Austria.

Ah the Byrne Opening for Italy, my personal favorite, if you get stuck playing the center powers of Austria or Italy I say fortune favors the bold. No point in sitting around waiting for the gods to smile on you. Get out there and make your own fortune. Those centers aren't going to be given to you, stake your claim early and often.

Moving around the board, staying in the South:

Austria seems a bit beleaguered. Can't like it when both Russia and Italy try to enter the homeland in S01. My only advice to Nicolas here would be not lose two home SCs to Chris. :)

Much as I love the Byrne Opening for Italy--I hate it when I'm Austria. The temptation of two lovely, inviting, welcoming Austrian centers is just too much for the most players. They can't resist helping themselves.

I ignore the implications as Austria because you tend to look like a fool no matter what you do if you go back to defend your dots. Either Italy didn't stab you and now you have, as Ricky used to tell Lucy, "a lot of 'splainin' to do" or he did and now you're kind of screwed since an Austro-Italian war tends to lead the Turkish-Russian occupation of the Balkans, Austria and Italy, not a good outcome for Austria.

I see Turkey and Russia bouncing the Black Sea. Tanya has to be happy that there are no signs of collective anti-Turkish action.

Doug seems to be committed to the South. Arranged bounces in both Black Sea and Galicia don't hurt Russia much.

I wouldn't read too much into Russia's actions in the south. Strategically speaking the north is a dead end for Russia--once you pick up Norway and Sweden, what's left? The only real question for Russia is the Germany vs Austria/Turkey. Most of the time I agree that Russia generally goes South rather than West.

On the other hand, we see the Germans in the Baltic Sea. That's a very unusual opening. Conrad has not sent an army East, however. That should not be

interpreted as 'not anti-Russian' so much as it's 'not a fool'.

Come to think of it, viewing all the Western moves in conjunction, it smells like a Western Triple. Goffy is sitting back and waiting, Edi's got his fleet set to go to Barents, and Conrad can block Sweden and take Denmark and Holland to get builds. Though of course he may have to defend Munich. I doubt Chris would want to see a Western Triple.

If this is a Western Triple it will be interesting to see how the two most recent World Champs respond. After all, Russia and Italy are usually the first victims (and often the only victims).

I agree with Rick--smells like a Western Triple, look how wide open the Low countries are. This smacks of a prior arrangement. I wonder if it is a Quadruple with Italy on board? I guess we'll know pretty quick if Chris plunges the knife into Nicholas' back.

Edi and Andrew will do well here with nothing but the wind at their back as they head eastward in search of fortune, fame, dots.

If Chris does go for Nicholas' dots I expect to emails between Berlin and Rome and Moscow and Ankara to be fast and furious as Tanya and Doug try and pry Conrad or Chris or both away from Edi and Andrew.

Fall 1901 Results

Austria: F Albania – Greece, A Serbia Supports F Albania – Greece, A Vienna - Trieste.

England: A Edinburgh – Norway, F North Sea – Belgium, F Norwegian Sea Convoys A Edinburgh - Norway.

France: A Marseilles – Spain, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean – Portugal, A Paris - Gascony.

Germany: F Baltic Sea – Sweden, A Kiel – Denmark, A Ruhr - Holland.

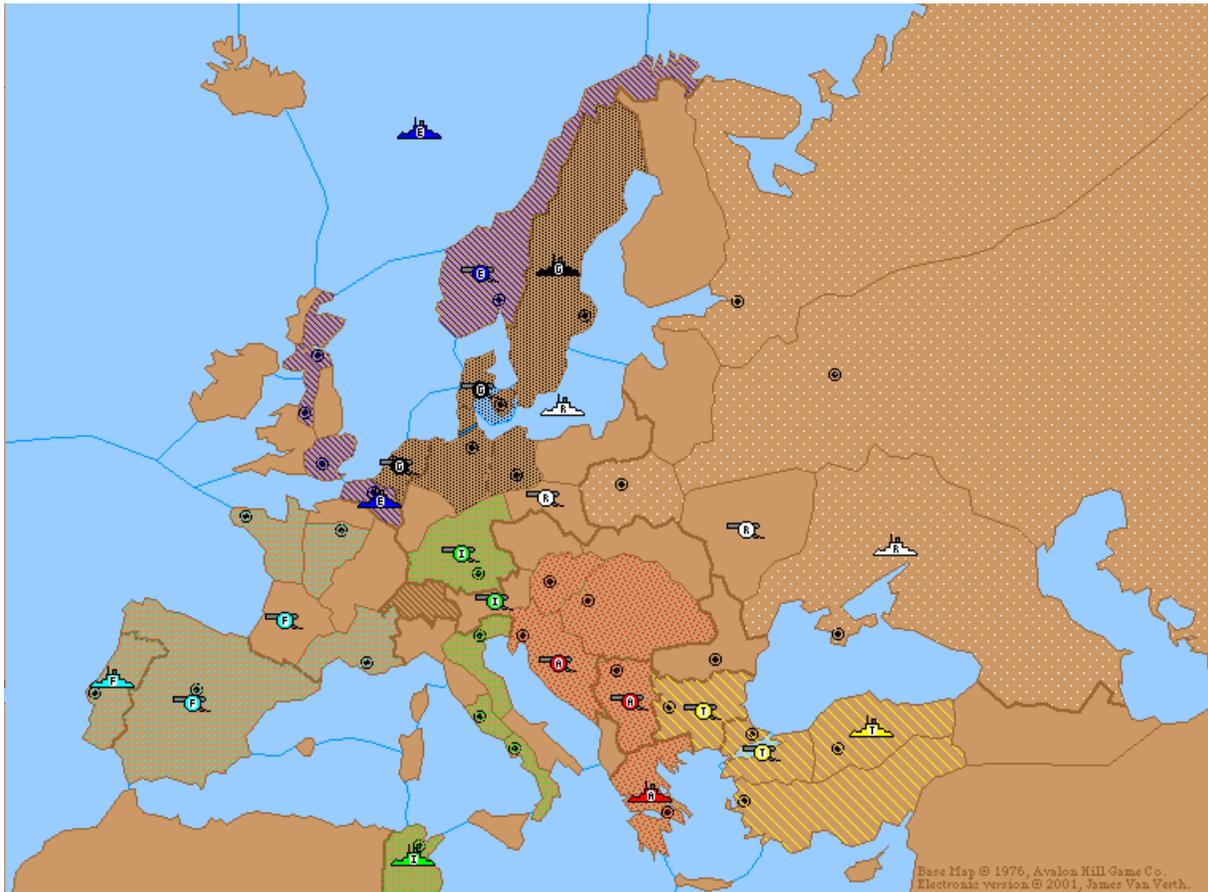
Italy: F Ionian Sea – Tunis, A Tyrolia – Munich, A Venice - Tyrolia.

Russia: F Gulf of Bothnia - Baltic Sea, F Sevastopol - Black Sea (*Bounce*), A Ukraine - Rumania (*Bounce*), A Warsaw - Silesia.

Turkey: F Ankara - Black Sea (*Bounce*), A Bulgaria - Rumania (*Bounce*), A Constantinople - Bulgaria (*Fails*).

Supply Center Chart

Austria:	Budapest, Greece, Serbia, Trieste, Vienna=5	Build 2
England:	Belgium, Edinburgh, Liverpool, London, Norway=5	Build 2
France:	Brest, Marseilles, Paris, Portugal, Spain=5	Build 2
Germany:	Berlin, Denmark, Holland, Kiel, Sweden=5	Build 2
Italy:	Munich, Naples, Rome, Tunis, Venice=5	Build 2
Russia:	Moscow, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Warsaw=4	Even
Turkey:	Ankara, Bulgaria, Constantinople, Smyrna=4	Build 1
Unowned:	Rumania.	



PRESS

With hardly a word from the East

Edi's running this show like a beast.
He's shooting like Kobe;
He might reach Nairobi!!!
Spectacular to say the least!

EDInburgh, Oct. 7th, 1901

Gathering in a small ante-room with the Italian Ambassador, the British monarch lifted a toast to his guest: "On account of today's momentous date in history, we salute the people of Venice and their allies in the defeat of the Ottomans at the Battle of Lepanto." To which the Italian Ambassador at first looked rather

puzzled until his Attache' whispered in his ear. "Oh, we do not celebrate that any more. After all it is the Austrians who hold Italia Irredenta." To which the king drank his wine anyway and then went to Madame Nasrib and commented quietly: "Irredenta- is that some sort of pasta." "Yes, Your Majesty it is when it is over cooked by boiling too long." was her reply.

Meanwhile reports from the Sea Lord come in about heading for the Belgium shore for refueling and to re-establish the relations from 1820 when the Empire started to make sure that the site of Wellington's victory would remain out of hostile tourist intrusions.=

Fall 1901 Commentary:

Commentators by Typeface:

Rick Desper

Christopher Martin

Jack McHugh

The board has begun to shake out nicely here as nothing like the prospect of some centers to clarify players intentions. As Gorden Gekko's character

famously said in the movie Wall Street. "Greed clarifies, cuts through, and captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit."

What evolution do we see here?

First, going from west to east, the Western Triple is in full swing. The big winner so far is England. I usually don't see England pick up two builds this quickly or easily. Norway and Belgium is quite a coup for Edi and he again shows why he is one the grand masters of Diplomacy.

Andrew, France, and Conrad, Germany, did quite well as well up north Germany able to pick up Swe and Den with Bel will help offset the loss of Mun. Conrad did not do as well in the south as Italy, Chris, managed to slip an army into Mun.

While the loss of Munich is certainly a setback for Germany, Conrad is still in a relatively good position as Italy appears to have no support from anyone in the West and Doug, Russia, has other issues in the south that will limit the number of armies he can spare to help Italy in the short term. The fact Germany can lose a home center and still be in a decent position speaks to both the strength of Germany's position in Diplomacy as well as Conrad's excellent diplomacy.

France has nothing but clear sailing ahead as there are no armies or fleets from any other power anywhere near France. World War I French PM Clemenceau would approve of the results of Andrew's policies so far. I would only question that move of A Par-Gas, I don't see what the use of that army there is; I think France would have be better off with A Par-Bur, to reinforce Mar and guard against ITALIAN A Mun-Bur in the Spring of 1902, if as it turns out, Italy moved into Mun.

Kudos to Chris, Italy, for spotting the budding alliance in the West and trying to throw a monkey wrench into it. Italy can go one of two ways when she sees a Triple, he can turn on Austria for some quick dots and try and build up his forces before France or Turkey gets there or he can work with Austria to try and stop said Triple. Clearly Chris going the later route with his move on Munich.

It is clearly not in Italy's best interest to have three cooperating Western powers with two builds each.

The problem is I just don't see a lot of support from the other powers for Italy's bold move. I will discuss Italy's diplomatic options after I talk about Austria as I think Italy and Austria have the same interests at this point in the game.

Austria, Nicholas, is in good shape with Italy's move into Munich. It helps Austria in three ways, one, it takes the pressure of Austria from Germany as Italy is now literally has Austria's back. Two, it gives Italy builds without Austria having to lose any home centers to Italy, even temporarily, while allowing Italy to build up his forces. Three, these moves solidify Austria and Italy's hand in so far as they can use their alliance as leverage to attract partners and deter enemies.

Diplomatically speaking Italy and Austria need to broker a peace in the Russo-Turkish war of 1901 as quickly as possible. A/I will soon face E/F/G and they will need two things in the East, secure, peaceful borders and allies. A war between Russia and Turkey will divert units from the front lines against the west and force them to choose sides in that war. It will also offer the western powers a defacto ally in the east in Turkey. Turkey's attack on Russia will pull Russian units to southern Russia and away from E/G's attack on Russia which is exactly what the western powers.

In the East, Doug's Russia is in big trouble diplomatically speaking. Russia's strength, easy access to most of the board, can be, as we see here, a weakness as well. Not only does Russia have access to most of the board, but, conversely most of the board has access to Russia. Right now Russia is besieged with a war with Turkey in the south and coming war with England and Germany in the north.

Russia needs to end the war with Turkey NOW, even if it means ceding Rum and Sev to the Sultan because without peace in the south, the Tsar doesn't have much of a chance to survive much longer in this game. It is a bitter pill to swallow but Doug really doesn't have much of a choice without a diplomatic revolution in the West.

Tactically Doug did quite well in terms of how the board broke, I think he made the best of a bad

situation diplomatically. His F Bal and A Sil are both in a good position to put pressure on Ber and with Italy's A Mun he is in about the best position Russia can be in up north facing a Western Triple. Clearly both Chris and Doug saw that Germany was working with England and France and moved accordingly.

Finally we come to Tanya's Turkey, the Ottoman is in one the second best position after France in this game. She has help limit Russia to zero builds by bouncing Doug in Rumania and is a good position to extract concessions in return for peace in the south to allow Doug to turn his full attention northward. She should find ready allies as I said earlier in Nicholas and Chris to help her convince the Tsar to turn over Rum (now) and Sev (later) in return for peace.

The only issue is that Tanya must be cautious about over playing her advantage. If she is too intransigent then she could trigger an attack by A/I/R on Turkey but clearly that would not be anyone in the interest in the East. Nor is it in Turkey's interest to collapse Russia too quickly as it would allow the western powers to cross the stalemate line and clean up on all the centers before she is in position to get Turkey's share of the centers.

So much for our current situation, now for my predictions. Two powers are easy, England builds fleets and Austria builds armies. There is rarely any reason for either power to depart from their emphasis on fleets and armies, respectively.

Germany, given his friendly relations with England and unfriendly relations with Russia and Italy, will likely build armies.

Italy will also probably build fleets as she she will need them to both hold off army and to pressure Turkey to lay off of Russia.

Turkey has an interesting choice--does Tanya build F or A Smy? You can make a case for either one--an army keeps the pressure on Russia and helps Turkey get Sev sooner--likely by Fall 1902 no matter what Russia does.

However there is a Aus F Gre and Ita F Tun with at

least a Italy likely building two fleets which means Turkey's lone fleet spends at the year down at least three to one to Ita/Aus fleets (assuming Italy builds an army or sends the second fleet to the hold off Fra F Mar) which is somewhat to a risk for Turkey. So I guess the question Turkey needs to ask herself is it worth taking the risk vis-a-vis Ita/Aus and possible Lepanto to keep up the pressure on Russia and get Sev.

All in all, quite a revealing turn.....

That is a lot of detailed analysis, and I mostly agree with it. I want to draw attention to the French moves, as Goffy hasn't really gone whole hog on the western triple. Sure, we could see F Mars & A Paris, with the subsequent Spring moves that position for a war against Chris in the Med while helping Conrad back into Munich. But I also wouldn't be surprised to see a detente in the Med between F/I, allowing A/I to focus on Turkey for a bit while Goffy brings his forces back to the middle of the board.

My guess is that Edi would prefer to keep the W3 on board, pushing to StPete for his part and trying to keep Doug on the ropes, but that he'd be open to the idea of working with Goff to replace Germany, if A/I give them the space to do so.

And if there is one thing we know about Chris Brand, it's that he can negotiate a detente in the Med. Even with Tanya's likely build of F Smy here, A/I is in position to take advantage of the box Turkey is in. Balancing that is the fact that Tanya and Nicolas and Chris all live in Canada - and those Canadians are famed for being really nice, eh?

Doug has, as Jack notes, made the best of a bad situation. Given the situation in the north I'd expect Nicolas to push for Doug to get Rumania - As StPete can't be held, and another Army needs to appear in Moscow in 1902, it is just easier for that army to be Russian, especially if Doug can get Berlin (which, barring some tactical brilliance, he should be able to do for a year, at least).

Finally, I would say that if there is now an A/I alliance, I'd say that it is being driven by the West - and given my experience with these players, I'd be very suspicious about an honest to goodness western triple lasting any length of time. If I'm Austria here I'm likely to work with Russia and Italy to take Bulgaria from Turkey, all else being equal - rather than rush to the walls of a stalemate line in 1902.

This move looks very bad for Germany. I don't see any way to apply a positive spin to Russian F Bal, A

Sil combined with Italian A Mun, A Tyr. Now it's certainly true that Italy could go in any of a number of directions from Munich, the presence of the Russian forces threatening Berlin cannot be so easily explained away.

If this is a Western Triple, it has failed miserably. Russia and Italy have set the front, and it's halfway through Germany.

So let's walk away from that idea and what do we see? An England with two builds next to two compromised powers (Germany and Russia). Edi should be fine for quite some time here. An intentionally slow start by a France who has tons of diplomatic flexibility. An Italy who can build two and has the tactical advantage in the middle. An Austria that somehow also built two, has the Turk boxed in, and will likely be the land power of the Balkans.

Turkey seems to be in her own corner diplomatically. We'll see if she can figure a way out. Slow starts are hardly atypical for Turkeys in high-level boards, and do not mean anything too negative about her prospects.

This is how I see the near future: Germany suffers badly as Edi puts the collar around him and poodlizes him in a war vs. Russia that Germany cannot win. Goffy's next move can be in any direction, but whatever choice he takes should work out. (An early G/R war is very, very good for France.) In the East the AIRheads methodically dismantle Tanya's Turkey just as the usual precaution good players take when any kind of reasonably strong player is in the corner.

Or things could be much different.

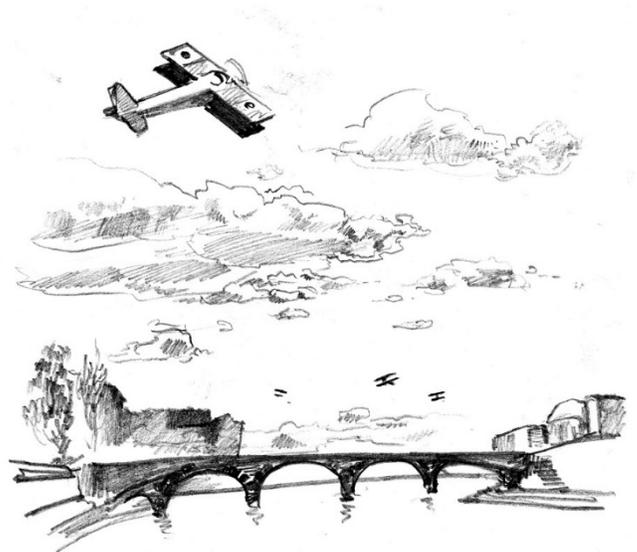
Let me respond: first to the comments about Turkey. Turkey always starts slow given the layout of the board. She only has access to one neutral that no one else can bounce her out of and another two that always contested unless Turkey talks her way into them. She is much like Italy but without the easy access to the center of the board and the stalemate line that Italy has to work with as leverage with the other powers. Nor is Turkey able to threaten another power's home centers as Italy can vis-a-vis Austria so Turkey, by definition, must play a waiting game in Diplomacy, she simply has no choice.

The best opening from Turkey's point of view is a fast start from Western powers to move toward the East. Why? It diverts units from Turkey's corner of the board to the stalemate line which is the best

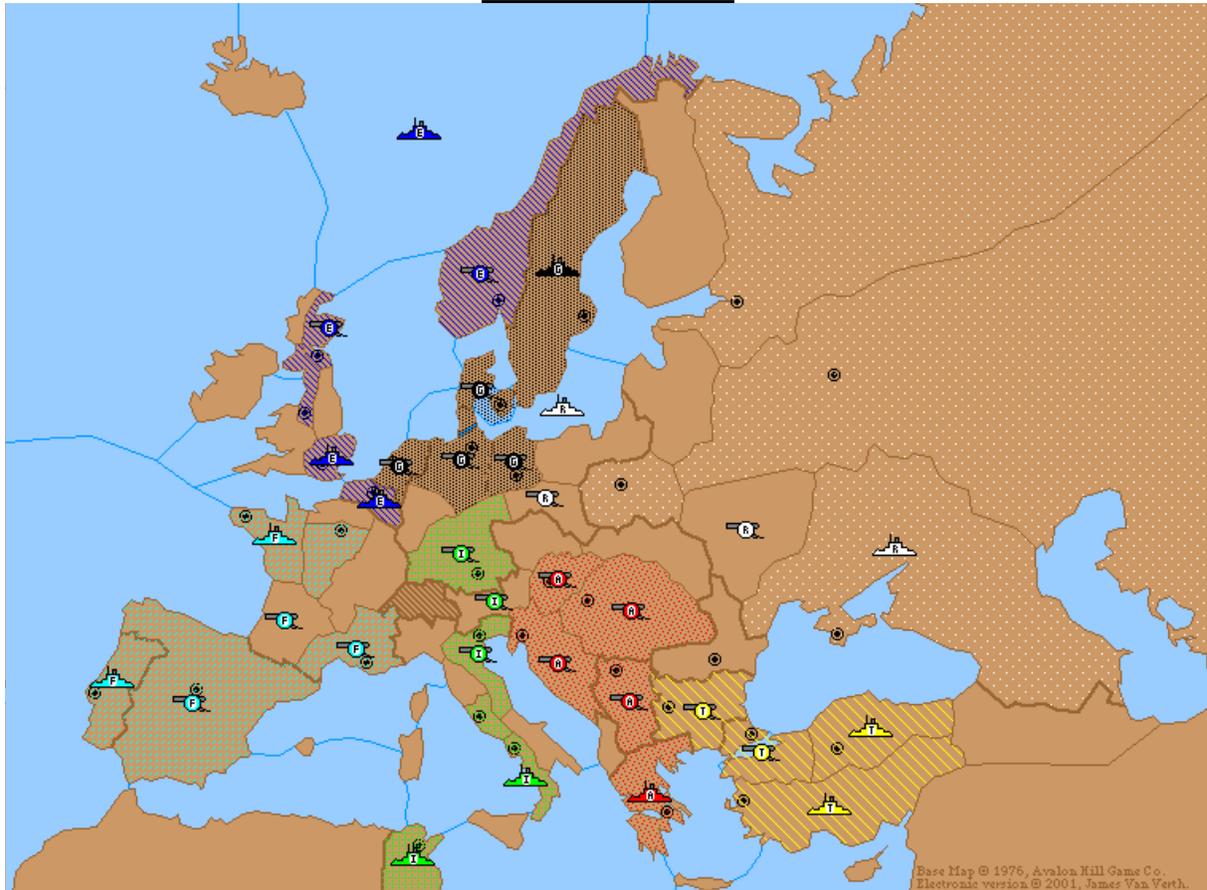
Turkey can hope for and which has happened in this game. If I were Turkey I'd be pretty happy with the way the board is shaking out so far.

While I see some truth in Rick's comments regarding Germany I think he is far too gloomy regarding Germany's position. Rick says he doesn't see "any way to put a positive spin" on Russia's F Bal, A Sil and Italy's A Mun--how about the fact that Russia got zero builds? How about the fact that England landed an army in Nwy? Or that Burgundy and the Ruhr are clear and England only put a fleet in Bel? The first year, while not all beer and brats for Germany, could have gone a lot worse for our Kaiser than it did and we should not lose site of the fact that if Germany has to fight E/F or R/I she is almost always better taking on the latter than the former in my opinion.

A Triple Alliance is always a huge gamble for the power nearest the middle of the board no matter what side it comes from East or West. The middle power is the most vulnerable but has a chance to reap the biggest windfall if it isn't met with immediate resistance from the other side of the board. In this case, A/I/R were clearly ready for it and Germany is paying the price but the game is far from over--as Churchill famously said after the battle of El Alamein in World War II, "It's not the end, nor even the beginning of the end, but it is the end of the beginning."



Winter 1901 Results



Austria: Build A Vienna, A Budapest..Has A Budapest, F Greece, A Serbia, A Trieste, A Vienna.

England: Build A Edinburgh, F London..Has F Belgium, A Edinburgh, F London, A Norway, F Norwegian Sea.

France: Build F Brest, A Marseilles..Has F Brest, A Gascony, A Marseilles, F Portugal, A Spain.

Germany: Build A Kiel, A Berlin..Has A Berlin, A Denmark, A Holland, A Kiel, F Sweden.

Italy: Build A Venice, F Naples..Has A Munich, F Naples, F Tunis, A Tyrolia, A Venice.

Russia: Has F Baltic Sea, F Sevastopol, A Silesia, A Ukraine.

Turkey: Build F Smyrna..Has F Ankara, A Bulgaria, A Constantinople, F Smyrna.

PRESS

From France:

Some days you look at your neighbours
And ask if you're in their good favours
Then you look at the board
And note life is absurd
Governed largely by random behaviours

Winter 1901 Commentary:

Commentators by Typeface:

Rick Desper

Christopher Martin

Jack McHugh

As I guessed, the F/E builds don't point towards a Western Triple as much as two players maximizing their options. While I'd be very surprised to see a bounce in the channel, I don't think there will be a big push into the med by Andrew nor over the top by Edi. No other surprises.

Goffy pretty much had to build F Brest. The bickering between Russia and Germany is going to give us a very strong England. I would not be surprised to see Edi take the Channel with support from Belgium (or London). A classic Birsan move here would be to take St. Pete and prop up Conrad while hiding behind him. The army build shows an intent to go into Russia.

In the east I see nothing contradicting my Turkish squash theory. The big Austrian army *could* go into Russia easily. But why do that? There's time for that later.

The tactics of '02 should be very interesting.

The interesting builds are Fra A Mar and Ita A Ven. I think these builds are very good news for Turkey. Italy is going north or west or maybe even east but not anywhere near Turkey.

A Mar is interesting but given the layout of the board, that build might have been encouraged by Germany as an A Mar-Bur is actually a necessity for the Western Triple to continue and get off the stalemate line.

A Edi is mildly interesting but it continues to point toward England's desire to be a big player on the continent so I really don't see Edi taking the Channel at this point--why rock the boat. If Andrew goes to MAO then moving to Eng just makes him angry and even if France gets into Eng, he has no army in Bre or Pic or Bel to convoy to England.

I'm still curious to see how things shake out between Turkey and A/I/R. Right now it looks like Turkey's the odd woman out but it doesn't have to continue this way, A/I do have room to maneuver as does Russia if he can get A or I to go along with him. I think Italy and Austria have done better than most so far and I like Turkey's position as well.

The powers that are behind the 8 ball are Russia and Germany--neither want to see this many army builds this early in the game. Doesn't bode well for either power and only four of the ten builds were fleets which is less than I would have expected considering Russia had no builds while both England and Italy got two builds each. The latter are usually reliable nautical powers who usually go for fleets over armies.

