

Tribute to Rob Carl

Rob Carl died on Tuesday, September 25, 2018. His long time girlfriend, Paula Kreczmer, contacted me through Rob's e-mail account, as she was familiar with my name from conversations with Rob. Rob was a colorful and important part of our A World at War community, and our annual tournament at WBC. I have asked those who knew him to contribute a paragraph or two with their memories of Rob, in tribute to a friend we shall greatly miss.

After everyone's comments I have added a section on Rob Carl at the Con. There is one more picture and a link to a video in that section.



Rob Carl, Avaloncon 1997, Hunt Valley, Maryland

Paul Milne. Minnesota. I like all of us was very saddened by the news. Rob was truly one of a kind. I think he brightened all of our con experiences even if we did occasionally question the sanity of some plays. I miss sitting outside with him between turns discussing everything under the sun. I will also remember that in some of his last cons that he played in, he only wanted to play Russia and was supposed to be the 5th player in our game. But of course something happened and somebody from another game couldn't make it and Rob always switched games to fill it out. He really didn't want to but he did it. I'll end this with "Berlin is this direction!"

Another great Rob story comes to mind. Jason, Joe Brophy and Rob came to my lake place to play various games. In previous years we had played AWAW but we weren't this year

because Joe had “retired” from the game. On the last night Rob proclaimed that the Yaegar/Carl “Superman” Russian defense was impenetrable in AWAW. Jason gave a skeptical look similar to Obi-Wan’s when informed the Millennium Falcon had made the Kessel run in under 12 parsecs. Reading his mind, Rob said he thought the man hadn’t been born that could stop his Russian attack. Rob pulled out his laptop and the defense. After an hour or so of spirited hypothetical analysis it was decided to settle this on the battlefield. Rob just happened to have his AWAW game in the trunk of his car. (Yes he really did). Russia was set up, a bottle was opened and it was game on. I gave up at about 2AM with the contest still in doubt and went to bed. I don’t think there ever was a definite conclusion to this but it sure was fun to watch!

Randy Scheers, Houston, Texas. I only met Rob at the WBC. Rob was always cheerful and friendly; he made all newcomers feel welcome. I agree that he would do anything for you; he wanted the people around him to be happy. He had some very different viewpoints and strategies for AWAW. They didn’t always work out, but they often worked out much better than I thought they would. I was amazed at how confident he was in trying strategies most of us wouldn’t, and how happy he was regardless of how they worked out.

I still like his article on the AWAW website titled “Why I Don’t Build Forts!” I know most people disagreed with him on this subject, but he was convinced and cared enough to write an article with his thoughts to share with us all, and he has definitely made me think about the subject.

Rob will be missed.

Chris Goldfarb, Santa Clara, California. This is a huge loss. Rob was one of the most genuine people I’ve ever met, and would not hesitate to give you the shirt off his back. When I asked for help to offset the cost of the site a couple years ago, Rob was extraordinarily generous.

He will be missed.

David Hanson, Fayette, Iowa. Mike, thank you for taking the time to report on our friend.

I was glad to see Rob at the Convention recently. I received some of the books and videos he offered. I will keep them as treasured mementos of a tough table warrior & good friend.

Speaking of story--Rob & I partnered at Convention some years ago. We played Axis. I ran the Europe board while Rob captained the Empire of Japan. Rob decided to mount a Winter 1940 attack on the Allies. Yikes! But, Rob made it work; we played into 1944 & he kept going strong.

Ed Schoenfeld, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This is very, very sad news.

Rob was my opponent at the first con I ever attended, back when it was still in Baltimore. I cannot think of a better way to be introduced to the BPA community than to spend the week playing Rob. In later games we sometimes were opponents and more often partners -- Rob had a joyful way of playing, rolling with every punch and ready to try any strategy that looked like it might succeed (except, of course, building forts.).

I am very glad I once got to show him my home town when he visited Milwaukee. He was a true gentleman and friend and I will miss him greatly.

Mike Crowe, Vienna, Va. I last saw Rob in the spring of 2017. I was getting my house ready to sell, and he helped jump start the process with some early repairs. It was a long drive for him to my house, but he immediately agreed to come. I have thought about him from time to time since then, but did not manage to make contact again.

Rob was a good friend, and I enjoyed talking to him about the state of all things AWAW on numerous occasions. He sought my help a bit when he decided to give Warplanner a try, and then we'd talk about his games with Mark Yaeger and how good he was at this game. "He and I think exactly alike!", he would tell me.

I played Rob at his house, and he at mine, and we partnered once or twice. I will miss him.

Mark Yaeger. Australia. I am very sad. I will miss him.

Rob was the friendliest of all of the AWaW guys I have come across... but more than that he went out of his way to be a friend... making contact, asking after how I was going, how my daughter was going, etc... and had a passion for AWaW (as well as football and billiards).

PS. One of these years I will make the Con and we'll have a drink to Rob.

Greg Wilson. Scotch Plains, New Jersey. Rob will be truly missed! He was the most generous soul imaginable! Always looking out for the other guy.

He could be counted on for the most imaginable outrageous strategies. They did not always work, but were always fun! His enthusiasm was infectious and he will be sorely missed.

Rob always carried a picture of his own friend who passed away to the con. It would be nice if we remembered Rob in a similar way!

Bruce Harper. Vancouver, Canada. Rob Carl's legacy in the game is that replacements can move one hex. And they always will, as long as the game is played, so Rob lives on too. So sad.

Jason Moore. New York. Rob will be truly missed! He was a kind soul and generous to a fault. Many of the group have already highlighted the many shared memories of Rob and how he touched our lives.

I just have two small additions to add to the long list of Rob's stories and how they impacted us.

The first one is a favorite phrase of his that I have heard an uncountable number of times. He was playing Russia, as usual, and it was either Winter 1941 or Winter 1942. The Germans were on the verge of collapsing his position and the winter die roll ended up being a 6. I recall the glimmer in his eye as he ran around the table with a Tanqueray and tonic in one hand and with the other doing a fist pump into the sky while yelling, "It snowed, it snowed!". The Russian winter had saved him once again!!

Subsequent to that game I believe many of us have heard that phrase on a few occasions.

The second story is one relating to Rob's obsession of never building forts. He was fond of saying that forts are self made prison camps. Joseph and I were in Montmedy, France last Thursday touring a tremendous citadel. At one point while walking the ramparts Joseph brought up the fact that if Rob was here he would explain how futile and useless the whole endeavor of constructing such a large fort was. In that particular instance Rob was correct.

The citadel was only besieged once in 400 years and it fell in two months. Perhaps there is some truth to Rob's fort strategy.

At long last he has been reunited with his good friend Tom!

Rest in Peace Rob!!

Jim Sparks. Rockville, Maryland. I knew Rob since I first started playing Advanced Third Reich. David Middleton, and I would join Rob and his best friend Tommy at Rob's home in Parkville. We would spend many days over the years playing Advanced 3rd Reich there.

I had the fortune to play with and against Rob at AvalonCon and the World Boardgaming Championships convention many times. We once went to Philadelphia to play Adv 3rd Reich at Origins. Rob was Russia and I was the Allies. Our opponents were good but we were better. Once we had the threat of the double turn, (The German's did not always go first like the game does now. It was variable depending on the alliance who had more BRPS.) our opponents surrendered. It was a memorable game as Rob schooled our opponents with his defense of Russia.

Rob Carl was the foundation of my playing what is now AWAW. He taught me how to attack and defend in Russia. I have fond memories of him gaming at the conventions. I remember how he would use dice to see the extent of his air coverage for his attacks. At one convention when we were in "Hitler's Bunker" (Avaloncon, Hunt Valley, Md., in the basement below the restaurant) I remember all the Tanqueray and Tonics piling up as he did not have far to go to the bar. I also remember his loud boast when he needed a good winter roll to help his Russia defenders, he exclaimed for all to hear, "It Snowed!" Rob played a good game and was enjoyable to play with or against. You just could not help but like the man.

I saw Rob for the last time this past convention. He stopped playing the game a couple years prior. He gave me all his AWAW games this year at the con. I contributed them to our AWAW convention supplies. I felt something was amiss from our conversations the last few years but dismissed it as I was just happy to see him and hoping he would come and join us again at future conventions. I did not realize this was goodbye.

RIP Peace Rob Carl. You and Tommy can now play AWAW in eternity.



Rob Carl pictured here standing up with his Russian T34/85 tank shirt.

Joe Brophy. New York. Rob and I were very close. I used to complain to him that he repeated himself constantly and I always knew what he was going to say. During the 2005 con he suggested that it would save time if we would just use numbers for his most often used phrases. I wrote them down in a little notebook that I carried around with me and fortunately I have kept it. So here they are, with annotations for a few of them.

ROB'S TOP 11 PHRASES [as recorded by Joe Brophy.]

1. You're not listening.
2. Everybody is stupid in their own way.
3. The biggest three problems with the world are me, myself and I.
4. I have a long story to tell.
5. I miss Tommy. (A good buddy of Rob's who went to some of the early conventions in Baltimore with him. Tommy died young of a heart attack in the early 2000's, and after that Rob generally brought a picture of Tommy with him to the con and set it up at the table.)
6. Tanqueray and tonic with extra lime, please. (I could tell lots of stories about Rob's drinking days.)
7. Gotta tune up. (Rob needed his weed.)
8. I roll the worst dice.
9. I can't hear you.
10. I'm going out for a cigarette. (Rob was a heavy smoker. His car smelled like an ashtray. He hated to fly because going without a cigarette for a few hours was almost unbearable. That's why I never got him to go to Europe to see some battlefields.)
11. Fair is fair. (A bedrock principle, how he lived his life. He bent over backwards to be fair to everybody, but was very hard on himself.)

Brian Conway. New York. I, too, am deeply saddened by this news. I played with Rob many times, meeting him way back in 1994 when me and Jason took the Championship. He came to NY several times and we had a real blast. An all-around great guy. If everyone was like Rob, the world would be a much better (albeit crazier) place.

Don Stanley. Regina, Saskatchewan. The thing I remember most about Rob other than the complaining about bad dice all the time (yelling number 9), and his friendly personality, is his laugh. When I told Thomas (my son who came to a few cons), I just told him the guy with the laugh passed away ... and he knew that was Rob Carl.

Rob Carl at the Con.

This section describes Rob's various adventures through the years at the AWAW Tournament of the WBC Convention. Only portions of each game are described. The complete game descriptions for games from 2004 through 2013 can be found on-line at the aworlдатwar.org website. The last game described occurred in 2012. The comments in italics are mine. The intent is to give the flavor of Rob's strategies, and his infamous luck, which he usually overcame!

It is interesting that in the years described below, Rob was the Pacific Allies once, The European Axis once, the Russians six times, and Japan four times. As Japan, Rob attacked in 1939, 1940 and 1942 (twice), but not once in 1941!

Rob won First Place in 1997 (as Japan), Third Place in 2005 (as Russia), Fifth Place in 2008 (as Russia), Fifth Place in 2012 (as Japan).

1994. *Rob Carl, Pacific Allies.* Partner: Jerry Smolens.
Opponents: Dale Long and Ed Schoenfeld.

Pearl Harbor falls in Fall of 1942, but Manila holds out until Spring of 1944. American jets flying CAP from CVB FDR help win a naval battle. US Election in 1945 suspends operations for three turns. Decisive victory for Japan.

1997. *Rob Carl, Japan.* Partner: Tim Francis.
Opponents: Herb Gratz and ?

Rob was awarded the plaque for his unconventional strategy of attacking Britain with Japan in 1939! He demonstrated that Germany and Japan could develop a devastating submarine campaign against the Allied transports that made Allied victory hopeless. Tim had to persist in attacking Gibraltar more than once to achieve the Axis goals in Europe, but with Rob's encouragement, kept trying until he succeeded.

This game was a Global War game, combining Advanced Third Reich and Empire of the Rising Sun, and preceded the publishing of a World at War, which came out four years later. This game did result in various changes to the rules to make this strategy unfeasible!

2003. *Rob Carl, Russia.* Partner: Joe Brophy.
Opponents Paul and Kevin Milne.

This was the Milne's first appearance at the convention. This was a Europe only game.

1941 saw a Barbarossa against the redoubtable Rob Carl. He placed a screen of 1-3's on the border and left a strong second line behind the Dneiper out of range of German infantry and air. This defense baffled Paul, who was unable to inflict many losses or take much Russian land. Rob came back with the first in a series of attrition attacks that cut off half of Paul's exploiting armor, preventing any deep penetration on the Fall turn while Paul sorted out the tangled lines. The Russian campaign then settled down to trench warfare on the Dneiper. Germany activated the Ukraine and produced large numbers of Vlasovs, more than compensating for a lack of German production. Neither Germany nor Russia took heavy losses throughout the campaign, resulting in continued large German surpluses. Russia lost not a single IC, and grew base in every YSS.

While large forces remained deadlocked in Russia, the British broke out of Egypt in 1942 and began the long slog to Tripoli that lasted well into 1943. Even after Tripoli fell, mopping up operations in French North Africa slowed the British momentum. While waiting to build a sufficient air and transport force for a cross-channel invasion, the Allies took advantage of a weak defense of Norway to liberate that country in Fall 1943.

In Spring, 1944 the presence of the whole Luftwaffe, stiffened by three jets, made a cross-channel invasion impossible. Instead the Allies attacked Malta and Sicily simultaneously. They bit off too much, taking Malta, but were repulsed from Sicily. At this point the game adjourned.

2004. *Rob Carl Russia*. Partners: Kevin Milne and Paul Milne.

Opponents: Alvaro Martin and Brian Conway

Brian Conway had expressed a preference for playing any side other than Japan, while Rob Carl came only to watch. Nevertheless, Brian agreed to team up with Alvaro, with Brian playing, you guessed it, Japan, while Rob Carl left the sidelines to defend Russia.

In Summer 1942, the Axis field an army against Russia including 46 AAF, two 5o6s, and three paratroopers. This force overran a defending infantry unit, making a huge pocket. A moderate winter saved Russia from further attacks, but the Axis achieved a huge advance.

Rule changes have subsequently disallowed paratroops from overruns, and restricted Germany to one 5o6 in 1942.

In Spring 1943, the Axis saw an opportunity to counterattack the advancing Allied forces in the Middle East, and in fall, they closed the Eastern Med. This gave the Russians a respite that they used to recover their losses and prepare for the offensive. In their fall turn, the newly rebuilt Allied army crossed the channel, while most of the Axis assets were still in the Middle East. Simultaneously, the Russians attacked the Axis line, inflicting a lot of damage. In Winter, the Axis redeployed air to the east, to stop the Russians, while redeploying ground units to the west.

In Spring 1944, the Euro-Axis used their 51 AAF to stop the Allies from making advances in France. Then time ran out, ending the game at the start of the Allied turn. Alvaro and Brian projected that both Germany and Japan would survive deep into 1945, with Germany having a shot of surviving into 1946

Aftermath: Alvaro was awarded the certificate for Best Axis Play, European Theater. Brian Conway was awarded the certificate for Best Axis Play, Pacific Theater.

2005. *Rob Carl, Russia*. Partners: Vic Hogen and Joe Brophy.

Opponents: Eric Scheulin and Bill Moodey.

In research, the Russians are on fire! Rob Carl starts on a five-day binge of great die rolls that he credits to the spirit of his friend Tommy, who passed away last year.

In Spring 1941, Germany activates Finland (4 DPs) and Hungary but fails to activate Rumania (4 DPs), thanks to a Russian subversion result. The Russians withdraw their air force to hexes near the Finnish border where the Germans can only fly 5 air. With no need to guard the Rumanian border, the Russians build a tough triple line. The German attack

cannot penetrate past the Dnieper, and is unable to take Kiev. The Russians destroy the Dnepropetrovsk IC, attrition and free some of their units. The German attack on Russia is lackluster. They do not even take Kiev. They bomb Leningrad for 10 BRPs and the Russians destroy the IC. The Russian winter attrition kills several armor units, and pushes the Germans back to the Rumanian border.

A rules change prevents hiding the Russian air near Finland. Eric had strategic bombers. Rob always popped ICs to prevent their use as punching bags when facing strategic bombers. Voluntary elimination is still possible, but only after sustaining bombing damage, and it results in the loss of the full, rather than pro-rated value.

Winter 1943. - Bill Moodey had to leave, so the Pacific was shut down. Eric had to leave two hours later, about 5 P.M. on Saturday. The final turn saw the German player eject the Russian from East Prussia and further beef up his position on the Rhine, but the WA broke across the Rhine on the Swiss border, losing 30 AAF on a full exchange. The WA announced a winter preparation result and exploited a hex out of the BH, securing it against any possible German counterattack. Mopping up operations were proceeding in Africa.

The European Axis would probably have surrendered by early 1945. The Allies were poised to move forward in the Pacific when the game was called, but that might not have been the case if Bill had not come out to fight. He stated before the final naval battle that he would not have fought the U.S. fleets but for the fact that he was leaving. He is a believer in the fleet in being strategy for Japan.

The PTO was a much more even fight. The Japanese research strategy was well focused and supported their play, which was essentially flawless. Whether they could have survived for long after an early German collapse is a question that is very hard to answer. The consensus was that the Japanese could probably survive until Fall or Winter 1945, but the decision of the Allies to abandon the A-bomb project might well have resulted in them lasting longer.

Bill Moodey took second place as Japan (predicted to hold out until at least Winter 1945). Rob received third place for his play as the Russians, resulting in a predicted conquest of Germany by early 1945.

2006. *Rob Carl, European Axis.* Partner: Joe Brophy.

Opponents: Vic Hogen, Markus Kassoboehrer, Ed Schoenfeld.

Rob Carl's invasion of Russia was stopped cold by a series of Russian 1-2 attacks that eliminated eight armored units (!), and a simultaneous invasion of France. Germany finally succumbed to an atomic bomb on Berchtesgaden. The result was a 2 point Allied victory in Europe.

2007. *Rob Carl, Russia.* Partners: Vic Hogen, Joe Brophy.

Opponents: Kevin and Paul Milne.

The Axis pursued a bombing strategy against Britain (played by Vic Hogen). Rob Carl's Russia attacked in Fall 1942, about the same time the Allies mounted a pretty historical Operation Torch. When Russia declared war and the Allies attacked on all fronts. Kevin played a careful retreat all the way back to Berchtesgaden, which fell to a nerve-wracking

1.5:1 attack in Spring 1945. Japan fell in Winter 1945, making the overall game a draw. Kevin received fifth place for his play as European Axis, and Paul received second place for his play as Japan.

2008. *Rob Carl, Russia*. Partners: Kevin Milne, Paul Milne.
Opponents: Joe Brophy, Vic Hogen.

In 1942, Russia builds out its forces in spring, declares war on Germany in summer, and attacks, attritions and bombs the rest of the year, suffering relatively high casualties.

In Fall 1943, France is invaded. Lack of destroyers precluded an earlier invasion. The Russians attack all along the front, making little progress but weakening the Germans greatly. The Russians are somewhat handicapped by low BRP's and UCL the entire game. The bombing campaign further stretches the Germans, who can't keep up with losses.

In Fall 1944, the Ruhr cities have been fire stormed, and Cologne is captured. On the same turn Russia attacks Berlin on a straight 2 to 1. Rob Carl rolls his traditional 1 in this situation but a 5 on the second roll, knocking Germany out of the war, but costing Russia some 120 BRP's of units.

At this point time ran out and results were adjudicated. The Allies would have had one atomic bomb in Summer 1945. There were various opinions, but so many objectives had been bypassed that it appears that Japan would have held out (barely) until fall. There weren't enough units in position for a spring invasion of Japan. This resulted in a tie in the Pacific.

For his efforts Rob was awarded the 5th Place Plaque for Best Allies, Europe.

2009. *Rob Carl, Japan*. Partner: Mike Crowe
Opponents: Tim Schroeder and Keven Leith.

Axis Plan, Europe. Mike. The Axis plan going in was to threaten to invade Britain by building destroyers early. I would invade if practical. Otherwise, I would attempt to make some gains in the Mediterranean and then invade Russia on schedule in Summer 1941. I planned to try a Winter 1939 attack, which I had not done before. Instead of bombing Britain I would send my air to the Med. I did not plan to establish Vichy. Most of this plan was suggested by Rob, and since it was a bit different than what I normally do, I thought I would try it. I was not planning to invade Spain or Yugoslavia, as we wanted to keep tensions low because of Rob's plan.

Axis Plan, Pacific. Rob: My plan (partly inspired by Vic Hogen) was to hold off war as long as possible, as there is no way you can win. There is nobody you can conquer - not the U.S., not Britain, not Russia, not even China! So I wanted to simply give the Allies the shortest possible amount of time to come at me. I didn't want to wait too long and be unable to establish my basic perimeter, however. Summer 1942 was definitely pushing things to the limit. I figured that by successfully attacking late, I could delay U.S. shipbuilding, U.S. mobilizations, and the U.S. comeback. My research plan was to research magic to help fight the U.S. submarines, getting one in 1943 and one in 1944. I planned to put the 1939 intelligence RP into a spy ring in atomics, to slow down atomic research. I did not plan to produce Wangs or Indian Nationals. I planned for breakthroughs in air, naval and military.

I hoped to build 11 NAS in 1940, 12 in 1941 and 3 in 1942. In addition to the 12 at start, that would give me 38 enas. I would expand the Japanese air to 25 AAF, produce all the Japanese infantry, and an armor or two. I did not plan to take a single hex in China. I planned to produce an air transport and a second paratroop. I planned to build no additional ships beyond a third CVL, to create two full carrier task forces. I planned to send a single carrier to Pearl, to take advantage of the rule that limits the U.S. to using only half their destroyers in their turn when Pearl is attacked. The rest of the carriers would help establish the perimeter. With a late start, my oil would be low, so I was going to be very conservative with my fleet. I would keep the fleet in being, and hopefully allow the U.S. to take whatever they wanted, but only a hex or two per turn.

With no attack yet in the Pacific by Winter 1941, the U.S. is able to take some chances with a forward defense and its carrier placement. Rabaul is strongly defended in the hopes of holding it through the eventual Japanese onslaught, since it is such a difficult place to retake if it does fall. It is also clear that the British will not be able to provide much assistance in the Far East.

In Summer 1942, Rob survives a tension roll that could have eliminated surprise and proceeds with his initial attack. He sends a single carrier to Pearl Harbor to take advantage of the rule that halves the DDs that can be used to carry units if Pearl is attacked. He uses the rest of his carrier force to take the British and Dutch possessions. Keven has strongly defended Rabaul, and it will take Rob several turns to actually take it. The single Japanese carrier actually catches an American carrier in Pearl! However, Rob's surprise roll is low and no NAS get through to make an attack.

Rob's strategy was new to Keven, who had seen early attacks and Winter 1941 attacks with low tension, but never a deliberate strategy to delay the oil embargo and U.S. entry. It produced the desired couple of turns delay in U.S. mobilizations, had some small effect on overall Allied BRP and RP levels, and probably had some effect on naval and air buildup for the Pacific map offensive – although Mike's success on the European map was probably more decisive in the latter. One difficulty that Rob's strategy caused Japan was an overall smaller number of DD's, even though the attack came later. Japanese shipbuilding had been kept low to avoid the tension increases, which hobbles the Japanese. Rob increases his shipbuilding to 4.

In Fall 1942 I surround Moscow and Gorki again. This time the bag is drawn a bit tighter. A number of Russian units die of isolation. The Swedes and Finns, with a little help from German air, take Leningrad on a straight 2:1. Moscow also falls.

Rob takes Rabaul on a 2:1, after an 'a' result on the first roll. This resulted in a weak defense, and the U.S. immediately re-invades on the Allied player turn. The Allies launch a diversionary invasion of Wake (also weakly defended by Japan) at the same time. Rob decides to counter the Wake invasion (which is clearly less supported) due to his desire to conserve oil. (Since he started the war in Summer 1942, Japan began with a weaker oil situation than normal.) The counter-interception fails and both invasions succeed. Rob announces an air range.

In the Allied Winter 1942 turn, I suggest that Tim calculate the Russian resistance level, as he may want to deficit spend to avoid surrender. The resistance level is (barely) negative, but Tim doesn't want to deficit spend; he did enough of that with Britain! Russia offers to surrender, and Germany accepts. Peace will be guaranteed only through the Spring turn, and Russia will have the option of declaring war in Summer.

In Spring 1943, Rob blows out on his ASW roll, and the U.S. subs really start to hurt. After isolating Rabaul for three turns, Rob has a plan for taking it. He did not want a straight winner-take-all fight with the U.S. fleet. Instead, with his second paratroop in range of Rabaul, he sea transports an air transport from the coast of Thailand to Lae. If the U.S. intercepts the sea transport, Rob can force the U.S. to commit their fleet by threatening to counter-intercept. This would then leave him free to invade Rabaul. Keven declines, so now Rob can attempt to take Rabaul on a straight 2-1. Rob, certain of his ability to roll poorly, offers to bet \$50 that he will roll two 1's on this attack. This is a bit out there, even for Rob, and unwilling to take his \$50, I decline. He rolls a 1 on the first roll! The second roll goes well however, and he finally takes it.

Rather than retaking Rabaul, the U.S. will leave it to eventually wither in isolation while the Allies go directly to Hollandia and work their way towards the Philippines.

In Summer 1943, at my (Mike's) request, and because I had sacrificed advancing in the Middle East to support his Summer 1942 DoW, Rob agrees to declare war on Russia! He is feeling fairly flush with BRPs anyway. In response, Tim fortifies Vladivostok, which Rob will never take. But the BRP grants via Siberia drop from 10 to 5, and Tim suffers attrition losses each turn.

The U.S. and Japan spent the rest of 1943 fighting over western New Guinea and the Indonesian islands off its coast. The U.S. re-established positions in the Gilberts. End-of-the-year invasions of the Marshalls, Brunei, and the southern Philippines put the U.S. in a strong position on the Pacific map.

At this point we stopped play in Europe. By playing ahead, Rob and Keven did get several turns into 1944 on the Pacific map. With Rob playing a conservative game to save oil – and because the U.S. sub campaign was every bit as effective as the German sub campaign – the Pacific turns went more quickly.

By Fall 1944, the U.S. had successfully invaded Rangoon, Singapore, Palembang, the northern Philippines, the Carolines, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. However, the Western Allies had “blown out” on an early nuclear research roll, so there would be no A-bombs available. Rob had successfully gathered an enormous army and kamikaze force in Japan. Unfortunately it was late and our brains were fried trying to reconcile two very different U.S. positions (end of 1943 and end of 1944), so we didn't do the big invasion that Truman was able to avoid.

Adjudication. In Europe, with the Axis still in Moscow and still holding out in North Africa and Italy, the Allies were at least a year behind schedule. The European theater was adjudicated to end in Fall 1946.

In the Pacific, Keven was well positioned to advance quickly. Nevertheless, the slower U.S. mobilizations and delayed shipbuilding because of the late Japanese attack were causing delay. The Pacific theater was adjudicated to end in Summer 1945, for a one turn Allied victory.

Mike received fourth place as Best European Axis. Keven received fifth place as Best Pacific Allies.

Note that Rob has swung from attacking as early as possible with Japan (1939) way back in 1997, to attacking later than just about anyone else has done, by attacking in Summer 1942!

2010. *Rob Carl, Russia*. Partners: Don Stanley and Ed Schoenfeld.

Opponents: Jon Hogen and Ken Cruz.

I included many more comments here than in the other games, because Rob commented on this game more heavily than any other. It is certainly one of the ones he enjoyed the most, and it was definitely a great AWAW game.

Germany conquers Spain in Spring 1941, and places a railhead in southern France. The Axis have enough redeployment capacity to bring off a respectable Barbarossa.

Rob: I planned to have a 4o5 armor in the line for the Summer 1941 turn. The second die roll of the game cancelled that – no military breakthrough. I still came up with a good defense, very strong in the north.

Rob: I form a Fall defense with just 5 BRPs of aid. That was all I would get until late 1942. I was actually in East Prussia and held the Baltic States at the 1942 YSS, the first Allied power on German soil! We have snow in Winter 1941, and we both simply consolidate.

Rob: My military research was averaging 1.75. I didn't even have a modifier for rolling for CTL.

Rob: Ken was pounding China. He declared war on the Western Allies in Spring 1942, and with so many troops in China, he couldn't get his garrison back up to 30 BRPs. Since I have Jon stopped at a good line in the west, I declare war on Ken to relieve some pressure on China. I was hoping to pull some Japanese out of China and settle down to an attrition war. I even left a minimum garrison in Vladivostok to tempt him away from Chungking.

Ed: Russia is supported by the maximum BRP grants from 1942 onward.

Rob: I was the first Allied power on Japanese soil. But I overlooked a port that was in range for his armor to get to the front line. When you swat at a bee, you might get stung. I always have to blunder something. Ken had produced two 3o3s. He was going to use them against the Philippines. Ken used the armor to surround most of the Russian Far Eastern army. My DoW on Japan was a strategic move, and would have worked very well if done right.

Rob: Jon made a good move and got the Baltic States. I still had enough air in the west to limit what he did, and after that the front slipped into attrition warfare, until I had some shock troops and enough air.

Rob: After losing so many troops, as well as Vladivostok, I put a minimum garrison in Irkutsk, while trying to build a line. Ken could only get a 1:1 on it, without the exchange

covered. With enough snow in Fall he could not have attacked at all. But it did not snow, he intercepted my DAS, and with my air combat dice, he got the 1:1 and took Irkutsk with a thin supply line.

Ed: While the net cumulative resistance modifiers favored Japan for four turns, Ken's position was entirely defensive for the rest of the game, and the Japanese collapse became only a matter of time.

Rob. Summer 1943. I took a 1.5:1 on Irkutsk and, of course, blew out! I had to try, to at least prove that I am not afraid of the dice. But it's just THE WAY IT IS! I rebuilt the losses on the Western front, in preparation for attacking there.

Jon: Fall 1943 for me was a critical turn. Don really wanted to land SOMEWHERE and I really wanted him to make that landing as far away from Berlin as possible – Gibraltar for instance. I pulled air out of the east and stacked defensively everywhere. The one relatively weak spot was Gibraltar, which is where the invasion came.

Rob: I suggested to Don that he invade France at 1:1, but he preferred to come up through Spain.

Russia attacks aggressively along the entire front in Asia – in classic Rob Carl form, heavy exchange losses are considered merely an easy way to redeploy units back to Europe. Russia takes Irkutsk. Russia retakes Vladivostok.

1944. Rob: I used a good two-pronged attack through East Prussia and Poland to drive on Berlin. But I could only get a 2.5:1 on one of the two breakthroughs. I would have had two bridgeheads, stacked with armor, across the Vistula, with all of East Prussia secured. I had my 506 in the rightmost attack, so that was where the odds were 2.5:1. The left attack went with a 2:1. Of course I blew out! With my whole left flank exposed, Jon counterattacked and wiped me out. It set me back two or three turns, at least.

Late 1944. Asia. Rob: I got a 1.5:1 on Seoul, and any Jap losses would have forced Japan to surrender one turn sooner. But NO!!! I get a '1'. Then I couldn't even get an Ex at 1:2 with a +1 on the die roll.

Spring 1945. Japan will inevitably surrender this turn. Of course this is the turn in which the USN sees the most action! And, no, it is not during an American invasion of Japan – it is during a Russian invasion of the Kurile Islands! Russia invades with a 1x2 and the entire Russian Pacific fleet (all nine factors).

(Rob: This is the only invasion of Japanese territory!)

Japan intercepts with the Yamato and a BC3, but intends to fight only with the Yamato. The US counter-intercepts with four TFs from Guam and an artificial port in Saipan, sailing just outside Japanese LBA range.

Mike: This counter-interception (in the interception hex) is illegal. The Russians are on their own! However, that did not detract from the glorious naval battle, which both sides were happy to fight.

Japan counter-counter-intercepts with five TFs. The US plays a tactical card to get a search advantage, and the fight is on.

After Japan withdraws their five TFs, the Americans take their additional die rolls to help the Russians, as the small forces in the Kuriles struggle to find each other.

The Yamato gets one shot that sinks a Russian CA2 and DD1, but does not turn back the invasion. Since the Americans are too close, the Yamato withdraws and Russia gets the Kuriles.

1946 Spring Allies. Since a German surrender is inevitable in Spring 1946, we call the game at about 9 PM Saturday, with a +1 net Axis victory.

Rob: I always say every year that I had more fun than any previous year. But this year was BY FAR the best I ever had!! I was looking forward to playing Jon and especially Ken. When I found out Ken was playing the Pacific, I was a little let down. So when Ken left the garrison short in Manchuria, there was nothing in the world that was going to stop me from DoWing him. Not even the fact that I only got 5 BRPs of grants in 1941, and knew from the board situation that I wasn't getting any for a while.

Then, after my royal screw-up, and fighting the dice, and fighting on two fronts, to come back and have one or two die rolls turn the game to a draw or one-point victory, I felt like I had won my own first place trophy! This is certainly not to say I did it on my own. On the contrary, we would not have pulled it off if those guys had not fought back as hard as I did.

But fighting my own dice is tough. I am certainly used to really bad combat losses, but to blow out on so many key things, including research! Roll three dice and take the middle number, and roll for three years, and see if you can average 1.75 in the military category! And for Russia, military is the only thing that really matters.

I finally convinced Joe Brophy that the dice just are not on my side. Joe bought me some dice with a skull and crossbones for the '1'!

But the most fun by far was playing with Ken! I kept teasing Ken about finding volunteers for the Eastern front! Of course most of them were 1x3s. At first he would just hand them back the next turn saying, "Here's your volunteers." Most of his attacks were without losses. Later, even he saw how bad the dice were treating me on everything, including attrition rolls. That's when he started saying, "I'm sorry, Rob" when he handed me my dead troops.

As well as getting to play against Ken, I have always dreamed of getting my Russians going against the Japanese and Germans at the same time. And then to get the chance, only to blunder the first turn. Leave it to me! But I think it at least worked out for the best in the long run.

Jon received Second Place for best European Axis play.

2011. *Rob Carl, Japan.* Partner: Ken Cruz. Opponents: Graham Kays and Jerry Smolens.

Mike: After having so much fun bashing each other in 2010. Ken and Rob team up in 2011!



Ken Cruz and Rob Carl Explain Their Strategy to Elihu Feustal.

To see the video, click here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Uu8yMsKqlo>

Japan attacks in Spring of 1942. A one carrier TF goes to Pearl and finds a carrier which is sunk permanently. The other carriers assisted in taking out all the Dutch East Indies in the first turn. By the second turn, all the important objectives are secured. With a large land army, the Japanese push into the Burma mountains and keep pressure on China. The Aleutians are attempted in Fall 1942 and turned back by a Magic intercept. In Winter 1942 attacks against Midway and the Aleutians are both turned back by Magic. Since the islands are filled up and the US is gaining strength, the Japanese turn to China to take Chungking.

Jerry: Thank goodness for Magic. I also think the Winter 1942 invasion attempt was illegal, looking back on it. I believe the Aleutians are affected by Winter weather. (Mike: Correct.) I am also usually incapable of drawing the appropriate Magic cards but in this game that was not so.

Mike: Observe that Rob refuses once again to attack as Japan in 1941!

Postgame comments (this was a decisive Axis victory in both theaters).

Rob. I found somebody that rolls worse dice than me. At least for search. You need 1's for search and I can roll them in my sleep! It wasn't like that in combat though. One turn of combat, I rolled 1's for EVERY attack and attrition. Jerry to follow up, rolled straight 6's for EVERY attack and attrition. (Air combats excluded for both.) It was uncanny!

Mike. Rob likes to complain about his bad dice, and back it up with results to prove it! Except against me!

Jerry: In my game next year I may have Rob roll my search dice rolls.

Jerry: The game in the Pacific ended in the Fall 1945 turn due to it being Saturday night. This was the furthest in any game at the convention that I had ever gotten. We would have gotten further than Bruce's game, if he had not chosen to finish the Fall 1945 turn at 4:30 AM Sunday.

Sixth Place was awarded to Jerry Smolens.

2012. *Rob Carl, Japan*. Partner: Dave Hanson. Opponents: Steve Rossi and Jerry Smolens.

Axis Strategy: The Axis Powers decided that they would mount a full-court press against Russia. Japan horrified the methodical Germans with a hari kari strategy: Go to war against an unready U.S. in winter 1940, rather than 1941!

Mike: This strategy, more than most, throws Japan under the bus, to achieve a dramatic victory in Europe. Since war in the Pacific starts four turns earlier than it did historically, the Allies would hope to take Japan down four turns ahead of time, which would be by Fall 1944, a four point Allied victory in that theater. This is not a foregone conclusion, however, as one critical component, the atomic bomb, is not going to arrive any more quickly. To achieve at least a tie, the Allies would then need to conquer Germany by Summer 1946. Once all those ships arrive from the Pacific, there is no doubt the Allies can land in France. But with little or no pressure from Russia, can they make much progress?

Rob: Being such the Japanese player I am...I have to tell you, hari kari is really Harakiri. Stupid Americans...Ha Ha! (ME...correcting somebody's spelling...the world may end...AGAIN. And point of trivia...seppuku is normally used in writing form and harakiri in spoken form. Same thing.)

Winter 1940. Japan declares War against Britain and the U.S. Japan starts the winter turn with 66 BRPs, and gains two for Indochina. Japan goes to war with its shipbuilding at five. Japan spends 35 BRPs on its DoW, 27 for offensives, and six for builds, ending with zero and no deficit. Japan sends a single CV3 to raid Pearl Harbor (and thereby reduce U.S. redeployments). They find the CV3 Saratoga and destroy it.

Mike: Ouch! Not a bad return on a single CV Japanese raiding force! The good news for the Western Allies is that they have plenty of time to pay Japan back!

1941 Summer Axis. Diplomacy: Vichy France joins the Axis as a full minor ally. And--wait for it... GERMANY STABS RUSSIA. and--wait some more... JAPAN STABS RUSSIA.

Mike: I hope this didn't come as a surprise at this point!

Russia presents a formidable and complete defense.

Steve: I used a cookbook from Rob. - who's playing Japan at the moment!

Dave, dripping irony: Japan is a Big Help to Germany! No hex can be overrun. The Germans have several armor in the Middle East, so only about ten 4o6 and a 2o6 stand ready to operate in Der Ost. Exploiters cannot pass out of reach of the Russians' armored linebackers. Dnieper River and Lake Peipus will mark maximum exploitation range.

Pacific. Japan attacks a Russian position next to Manchukuo, at 2:1, and makes the Wehrmacht look successful by comparison, by blowing out on a "1,1".

Fall 1941, Europe. This turn is a major disaster for Russia. In addition to the units lost, the Axis will now control every forest hex, and are a mere three hexes from Vologda and Moscow, with Leningrad, and any units on the Finnish border, isolated.

Pacific. The Siberia early Winter roll is a "6", which will prevent Japan from its planned exploitation adjacent to Irkutsk. Japan advances ground units westward through Siberia and attritions the Russians. In Winter, Japan moves through vacant hexes in Siberia. Japanese units surround Irkutsk and in subsequent turns will attrition away the units remaining in that city.

Summer 1942. It is hard to see Russia surviving after this blow (breakthroughs that isolate Moscow and take Gorki). A high level surrender is approaching, even without the participation of Japan.

Pacific. Japan gets six ground factors adjacent to the Asia Urals box. Japan attritions the isolated Irkutsk garrison and moves infantry toward Vladivostok, planning for a fall attack. Japan manages to build most of its remaining unbuilt units, and begins to climb out of its economic and strategic hole. Most of the newly built units go to garrison Japanese controlled islands ahead of the building U.S. counteroffensive.

1942 Fall Axis. Germany crosses the Volga and isolates the Russian oil, limiting oil to a single counter from the Urals box.

Pacific. Japan walks into a vacant Irkutsk, and moves 25 (!) ground factors adjacent to the Urals box. With a 2.5:1 attack, Japan captures Vladivostok. So Japan gains a +1 resistance point per turn to offset the point lost to the U.S. for eight Allied island groups. Japan manages to build more units than it lost, significantly reducing the pile in its force pool.

Winter 1942. Russia offers to surrender this turn. The Germans would like to accept. But they have a couple more objectives to capture (e.g., Baku.), and have a deal with Japan than they must keep. Surrender declined, for the moment.

Mike: Rob has no doubt requested that surrender wait until sometime in 1943. He knows that once Russia surrenders, the Western Allies will have nothing to do other than focus most of their force to destroy Japan.

Pacific. Japan begins to pull ground units back from the Urals, for use in the Pacific against the burgeoning U.S. forces. Japan defends aggressively, hoping to hold the U.S. to their Marshall Island footholds for another turn. With the U.S. reinforcing the Solomons, the Bismarck Islands face serious pressure. Rabaul becomes unusable by the IJN, due to WA LBA. Japan builds beach defenses to protect the Bismarcks.

1943. Germany pounds Russia's increasingly lifeless body. Rob displaces the Russian fleet.

Rob: When I chased the Russian fleet out, I had a TF there to intercept. I did intercept, but could not find him (which goes hand in hand with INTERCEPTION for me), and he ran away. So the ONLY fleet combat in the game ended in NO COMBAT!

The next turn, Japan airdrops its 1m2 from Paramushiru onto vacant Petropavlovsk - thereby "capturing" the Russian Far Eastern Fleet, which has no remaining ports to which to flee. By this one BRP limited offensive Japan gains 27 BRPs worth of dead Allied units, and a +1 Resistance modifier. Japan builds beach defenses in an island group.

Allied Summer 1943. Russia offers surrender, and this turn Germany accepts. Russia permanently departs from the world war (and from the world in general, isolated as it is in western Siberia).

Rob: At this point Dave and Steve stop play in Europe, and get into another game of Gathering Storm.

1944. After attritioning away the Communist Chinese, Rob occupies Japan for a resistance point. Regarding his naval strategy against the approaching US fleet:

Rob: As long as I keep the "fleet in being", I can minimize his gains each turn. He has to send his whole force to one objective area, rather than two, three or more.

1944 Winter Allies. The U.S. launch a gigantic carrier patrol against Truk. Over 70 NAS counter air Japanese LBA, which include: 27 AAS +1 NAS LBA, and 30 NAS CBA. After one round the U.S. lose 20 NAS. Doing the math, the U.S. realizes they can't kill or invert all of the remaining Japanese air, so the U.S. withdraw.

Rob: I had 9 AAF, and 31 NAS, in Truk, for a total of 58 air squadrons. And if he got past that, I had an air defense of 21 (inherent defense of 5 with two cities, one being an objective; 99 fleet factors for another 10; a fort for 1; an airbase for 1; two BB5s for 2; and two CVBs for 2). When Jerry called it off, I still had my fleet available for interception.

1945. At the US election, the US withdraws from the war in Europe, but the Japanese resistance is not high enough for a withdrawal in the Pacific. The game is played to the end of 1945. The Allies don't get the bomb in 1945. The game is adjudicated as a +2 Japanese victory, along with the +6 victory for the Axis in Europe.

Rob is given the 5th place plaque for Best Axis Plan, Pacific.