

Game 1 Recap 2016 Convention

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The game started as a FTF Gathering Storm game.

The Rhineland was remilitarized in late 1935 and Austria annexed in early 1937. The game was generally a high income; high EAI affair that allowed the WA's to gain a large naval advantage that kept the BOP close the entire game. After Austria the epic struggle for Czechoslovakia began. For the next 2 years both sides battled mightily for control of it. Every time it looked like the Axis could call it the WA's produced a support or Diplomatic card making it impossible for Germany to annex it. Finally in summer 1939 the Russians were about to get full cohesion and would also be able to begin mobilizing civilian factories. The Axis signed the pact, called Poland and war broke out in fall 1939. For the transition significant research results were 18 steps advanced submarines and specialized units for the Axis. The WA's had 18 steps economic prep and beefed up French defenses with a fully extended Maginot line and 4 4X5 armor units.

Prewar The Axis plan had been a British oriented strategy with taking Spain, Gibraltar and the Middle East on the agenda. Sea lion would be threatened but it was not expected to be an available option as the defenses were expected to be too strong. Since Germany was a bit weaker than usual (missing the Czech mobilization and units) the new strategy was to play conservatively and hold out the best that they could.

The WA's also modified their war plan. Being aware of the potential power of the advanced submarines the WA's went to a strong Europe first strategy and placing additional RP's in naval projects, especially shipbuilding, to counteract this.

Poland fell in the fall with no German casualties. The winter was Sitzkrieg and it was with some apprehension that a weaker Germany attacked a very strong France in the spring. The attack was up north and the extended Maginot line was pierced north of Sedan. Paris didn't fall until fall 1940 but French losses were high and the FSL was close to normal. Vichy was established. Money issues caused a quiet winter. In the Spring Malta and Yugoslavia were taken and there was a little push into Egypt. Summer saw a Barbarossa and good progress was made into Russia with a general Russian retreat to be out of range in the fall. Also that summer seeing that Germany was fully occupied with Russia, the WA's invaded Morocco and Algeria. Down a -2 NDRM the Italian fleet stayed in port. Vichy activated as a German ally but as usual they were only a small help. A moderate winter in Russia left the Germans in a good position to attack in 1942.

The US entered then war in spring 1942 and Germany broadly attacked Russia again in summer and made good initial progress. However the continuing attack in fall was not as successful and the tide began to turn. The WA's slugged through North Africa from both directions towards Tripoli which fell in the winter. The sub war was ineffective due to the WA's heavy allocation of RP's and good research

rolls. The Germans research was not as effective and even the advanced sub prototype couldn't save the Battle of the Atlantic for them.

Sicily was invaded in spring and conquered in summer. A "1" diplomatic roll for Greece (previously the Germans had hex control) sealed Italy's fate and they surrendered that turn. The Czechoslovakian situation was finally settled in the spring of 1943. After six years and numerous DP's allocated by both sides the Czechs were still an independent nation. The Germans ended that in spring 1943 with armored diplomacy. In the East Russia began attacking across the wide front and starting pushing the Germans back. Having achieved CTL2 the WA's invaded France at Lorient that summer. They began to widen the bridgehead quickly. 1944 saw rapid advances by the Allies on all three fronts and Germany was quickly short of money, oil and units. In the winter both the WA's and Russians were in a position to do low odds exploitation attacks on Berlin but decided to use their only atomic bomb to ensure that Germany surrendered 2 turns early. Previously the WA's had rolled a 5 for Uranium separation giving them one bomb in 1944.

In the Pacific Japan followed a prewar low tension strategy and declared war in winter 1941. A very successful PH destroyed 2 CV, BB3, CA4 and 4 DD. The remaining US CV was able to attack Kido Butai but was repulsed by AA fire. The usual initial Japanese conquests followed and included all of the Gilberts and a strong Japanese contingent in Guadalcanal. Conquered island groups maxed out at 9. A strong defense in Singapore held out until summer 1942 and took considerable Japanese resources to dislodge them. This effectively ended Japanese offensive operations in the Pacific. The usual sparring over supply lines in New Guinea and the Solomons characterized the rest of 1942. The US landed back in the Gilberts and in the struggle a carrier battle resulted with the loss of 2 more US CV's.

1943 saw the normal strengthening of the US Navy and it started to become more difficult for the Japanese to supply the Bismarck barrier. The US Navy started to work up the Solomon chain but at the end of the year Guadalcanal was still Japanese. A port was built at New Georgia. At the end of 1943/start of 1944 Lae, Guadalcanal and the Bismarck's were left to their fate by the Japanese. Rabaul and Manus (where an artificial port was built) were taken. Truk and the Marianna's were very strongly defended. The Japanese fleet was also still intact so the US decided to go sideways towards the Philippines taking many ports in that direction with the most significant being Davao on Mindanao. The sub war was not going well for the US and a "6" on the 1944 ASW roll gave the Japanese 3 ASW results. That coupled with 2 Air Range results stopped the sub war in its tracks. The end of 1944 saw Japan with full oil and substantial BRP's and growth.

The last turn of 1944 saw an invasion of a fortified Canton along with Lingayen. The Japanese fleet came out for Canton and a large carrier battle was fought. The Japanese lost all but 2 CV's while American losses were much lighter but not insignificant including 3 carriers. One of the attacked TF's contained invasion forces and an infantry unit was lost. Despite this loss Canton was taken with strong Chinese help and casualties. At the start of 1945 the Japanese moved most of their remaining fleet to Viet Nam to help get one last oil convoy thru. A series of small engagements (mainly surface) were fought over the base changes and convoy route but ultimately 3 oil counters got thru to Japan. In the American Spring turn a carrier sweep was made against Japan proper. A very successful kamikaze attack sank 4 carriers.

Resistance points were rapidly mounting and the Allies changed strategy to only undertake operations that limited Allied losses. Also significantly the plutonium roll was a "1" meaning there would just be 2 atomic bombs available for the Allies in 1945.

In the spring and summer turns the US attacked out of Canton to gain territory, take objectives and especially gain airbases to cover Okinawa and Kagoshima. The Russians who had declared war in the spring, made large gains in Manchuria. All attacks were made at high odds to reduce losses. The strategic bombing of Japan was repulsed. In the Fall Okinawa was invaded. The US used a highly unusual but very effective tactic of stripping the carriers of their NAS and basing it in China and Taipei so that LBA air cover of 8 to 9 squadrons per invading TF could provide protection against the 2 waves of kamikazes available. There were losses but the invasion succeeded. China and Manchuria were completely occupied by the Allies.

The Allies tried their best to figure out how to force a Japanese surrender in winter but the resistance numbers were very high. An invasion of Japan looked like it might add more resistance points than it would gain in surrender points. So in the winter turn Singapore (defending at 18) was invaded and an isolated Truk taken. Guam remained in Japanese hand. Kagoshima was nuked. It was decided that Japan would have to fall in the spring 1946 turn thus ending a very entertaining game as a tie. We reflected that we had played 11 and $\frac{1}{4}$ years and 45 turns in the past 7 days and then went out to dinner together.