Wagon Wheel Chess
by Robert Stillman

For those of you who would like to take a break from AH and table-top wargaming to play the world's oldest known wargame, chess, the following may add a different, if not new, twist to the game.

Normally, a chessboard is composed of eight rows of eight alternately colored squares. At the game's start, a full complement of chessmen sit facing each other at opposite ends of the board, prepared to do battle by marching in a generally forward direction and meeting somewhere in the "no-man's land" separating the two sides. As we know, the pawns are limited in their direction of movement, while the officers are limited only by the boundaries imposed by the sides of the chessboard itself. What would be the effects if the latter limitation was removed? What would be the unique problems that crop up from time to time?

Just picture an elastic chessboard that you can grasp at the two corners where your rooks are placed. Now stretch the board out and around into a circle until the two rooks are sitting side by side. You now have a chessboard that looks something like the one pictured above; your men completely surround those of your opponent which are now clustered into the center. But don't start feeling like Sitting Bull at Custer's Last Stand yet; the game is just beginning.

The first thing that becomes apparent when the traditional side-of-the-board boundaries are gone is that now pieces such as the rook and queen can completely circumnavigate the board making it very difficult to hide. At the same time, it is equally difficult to set up a trap. You must now also be looking behind you because of the "spiraling" movements the bishops are forced to make. The movement of the knights has changed little, and the movement of the pawns remains the same even though the outer pawns seem to surround and "close in", while the inner pawns seem to

be trying to "break out".

Of course, the basic rules of chess still hold in this game, but I'm sure that many heretofore unheard of problems will arise due to the "odd" movements of some of the pieces. A new respect for "flanking" movements will also be realized.