

# Risk: Legacy – Deface the Game

By Russ Lockwood

Steve talked up a version of *Risk* called *Risk: Legacy*. I didn't understand exactly what he was getting at when he said you write on the board, tear up cards, and generally deface the game. For all of us who try to keep our games in reasonable condition, it sounded a bit bizarre.

Perfect. Just the games we try and play.

Five of us -- me, Steve, Ed, Dan, and Erik -- met at Dan's to give it a whirl.

## Looks Like Risk With Fancy Pieces, but...

The plastic pieces are cool (even if Dan preferred to play with his original wooden block pieces), we rolled for factions, and then the defacing began.

Each faction gets a card with two 'power' stickers on it. You pick one and peel off the sticker to affix it to the faction card.

"But what happens if you want to use the other power in another game?" I ask.

"You don't," Steve responded, tearing up a card holding the remaining power sticker.

"You tore up the card."

"You're supposed to tear up the card."

"Tear up the card?"

"Tear up the card."

"You want me to tear up the card?" I asked, just to be sure. I mean, it's ungamerlike!

"TEAR UP THE CARD!" he demanded.

"OK, OK. It's your game." I tore the card in half and threw it away. At first, it felt weird to vandalize a game, but the destruction became strangely appealing. I tossed the halves into the trashcan and declared, "What else do we get to tear up?"

Steve gave me a puzzled look.

"Is there another card?" I queried, a gleam in my eye.

"Let's tear up more cards! Those, there!"

"WAIT! WAIT! No! Not yet! Not yet!" Steve panicked.

"Later. Later!"

Sheesh, you push a gamer over the edge and then try and restrain him...

Genie and bottles, Steve. Genie and bottles.

*Risk: Legacy comes with cool little plastic pieces.*

## Game the First

The *Risk: Legacy* map has all the same territories as the classic map, with a few changes, such as Ukraine is renamed Russia. This might explain why the US did not come to the defense of Ukraine when the Russians pried Crimea and a couple of eastern provinces from the country – the State Dept was using the *Risk: Legacy* board and thought it was current. Good thing it doesn't have a nine-dash line.

Anyway, you start in one territory with eight armies and a special faction card and can expand into unoccupied territories one after another if you want. So we did. Steve grabbed Australia and sat in Siam. Ed



grabbed North America. Erik grabbed South America. I grabbed Europe. Dan expanded into Asia, but not the whole continent.

*The Imperial Balkania special faction card. The brackets on the left would fill up with special benefits and detriments.*



Alas, Erik was a ringer. He had played three games, so on his turn, he took a couple territories to grab Ed's HQ unit and then shot the Africa/Europe lines to capture my HQ. Combat's the traditional 3d6 vs 2d6, but with a twist. You can declare an attack and invoke the special attribute on your card – by peeling off the sticker and affixing it to the board.

Yep. You can plop an Ammo Shortage (-1 to one defender die) on a territory and that territory will have an Ammo Shortage for any player the rest of the game...and the next game, too. And the next, until you either run out of games or somebody affixes a cancel sticker atop the Ammo Shortage sticker.

That's when the four of us learned about victory points for capturing HQs. Silly us. We played for a long traditional *Risk* game. My own faction of Imperial Balkania never had a chance. Erik blitzed us.

The game is not about territories, but VPs. HQs are worth 1 VP each.

For winning, Erik signed the board in the appropriate spot. That's right, the winner writes the history. On the board. Tagging it.

Then, he gets a choice: name a continent, or, create a major city and name that. Erik chose the former, renaming Australia as Strattonia, a twist on his last name. It gives him an extra army if he owns it.

Us losers who still had troops on the board got to name a minor city and sticker it down on one of the territories we still held. We also signed the back of the faction cards.

I plopped Russellville in Great Britain. Idyllic place. No poptops and never a lost shaker of salt.

## Game the Second

We rolled anew for factions and a couple of us shuffled around. I forget which one, but I called it the Clan of the Cave Bear because it had guys riding bears. Neat power – in your first attack upon an enemy territory in the turn, the enemy gets a -1 to one die.

*Game the Second. Left to right: Ed the Red, Dan the Black, and Erik the Purple. No, I can't remember who had which faction....Notice the stickers on the map. The one in Great Britain is called Russellville, in Middle East is Iton, and in Eastern US is Tragic City.*



Handy, that. Would have been handier had I remembered to use it for half the game...

I placed last and saw Steve in Strattonia (remember, Australia was renamed), Ed in North America, Erik in South America, Dan in Africa, and I set up in Japan as far away from everyone as I could get.



Wiser now, we played very conservatively, advancing only a couple territories a turn. Note that all the Ammo Shortages and Bunkers stickered on the board in the first game were in play for game the second. Legacy. Get it?

Erik made a move into Africa and tried to take out Dan, who rolled well enough to survive the onslaught.

Ed saw the opportunity and took out Erik's HQ and tried to take him entirely out, but ran into smokin' hot defense dice in Brazil.

Steve in Siam raced through India for Africa to try and take out Erik, but fell short. He spent later turns expanding into Europe.

I saw the opportunity and raced through China, hammered Steve in Siam, took his HQ in Western Strattonia, and had just enough – and I mean one die on one die – to take Steve's last Strattonia territory. Steve survived in India and a couple other spots. It's hard to take out a player. Dan grabbed back a territory in Africa.

*Later in the second game: Steve (left) ponders Ed's gambit.*



Builds all around and little else, except Erik hammered his way to Strattonia. My big bad bear units rolled over on their backs and put their little feeties in the air.

I cashed in my cards and counterattacked, but Erik defense dice were smokin' hot again and I lost all armies in the attempt.

Dan cashed in his cards and split his force in two – one heading west to capture the HQ in South America and the other following the trail of bodies east to grab the HQ in Strattonia. Game over.

Dan, as winner, signed the board, and chose a major city as his prize. I again took a minor city and placed it in Japan. It's called Lockzilla.

Sing it, baby... "Oh, no, there goes Tok-y-o, go, go, Lockzilla..."

## And So...

With all the minor cities named and stickered, you get to open a sealed envelope with more stickers – one for altering the game rules and the other to alter a faction.

Note that after this, players still on the board but losers nonetheless get to stick a coin on a territory card – when traded in (future game), counts as more than a normal card. Territory cards can have up to six coins, I recall. If all six coin spots are filled, that'll get you 10 or so armies, as I recall.

*The HQ pieces...*

This is the third *Risk* game that has augmented classic *Risk* in a way that impresses me and the rest of the group as well: *Star Wars Risk* (Kill the



Death Star), *Game of Thrones Risk*, and now *Risk: Legacy*. Just about all the other previous variations were pretty much *Risk* with pretty pieces, and, well, meh. You know, cool theme pieces, but little in the way of rules innovation.

One other thing. We played two games of a 15-game campaign (for lack of a better word). The player who wins the most games gets to name the entire world.

*Risk: Legacy* restructures *Risk* into a campaign system with bragging rights. Smart. Clever. Addictive. And you get to tear up cards and deface the gameboard.

## Game the Third

Five of us -- me, Steve, Ed, Dan, and Fred (in for Erik) -- met once again at Dan's to continue the Campaign.

*Art for Die Mekaniker.*

Steve, picking first, took the Sand people. I have no idea what they are really called -- I might learn by the 15th game -- but they have a sandy-looking card and the pieces are tan colored. He again ensconced himself in Strattonia (i.e. Australia that had been renamed by a victorious Erik after game one), claiming the third time would be the charm. Fred took the Balkaniacs and set up in Brazil. Ed took Da Bears in North America. Dan set up in his major city in Madagascar.

I had the Khan (fortunately, this game only demands two-dimensional thinking) and the choice again of Asia or Europe. Decisions, decisions, and not a good one to be found. I had lost the first game when setting up in Europe and the second when setting up in Asia. I selected Northern Europe for my HQ.

Of note, the Khan won the first two games (by different players: Erik and Dan) so there must be something to this army. Its 'power' is that it gets an extra army on HQs it controls at the start of each turn. I could always use an extra army.

*Tag-team Strattons. Left to right: Russ, Steve, Fred (in for Erik), and Ed.*

## Fred Started It

Fred proved the instigator of much in this game. He attacked into North America. He attacked into Africa. He rolled sixes with wild abandon and captured Ed's HQ and ultimately Ed -- forcing Ed into exile in Irkutsk. Players taken out of the game respawn in an empty territory. The Irkutsk area was the only spot in the world left unconquered at the time.

Dan played possum in Africa, hindered by a growing Fred and Steve's pile of armies in Middle East. Indeed, I thought he would go for the knockout shot against Dan (who had a dozen armies in Madagascar) and Fred (who had only two armies in Brazil). Nope.

Steve broke my continent in Russia (former Ukraine). I took it back. Dan broke my continent in Southern Europe. I took it back. I even held it for one turn to grab the five-army continent bonus.



Then Drop Dead Fred pushed into Iceland with a pile of troops and even had the audacity to grab Great Britain. He tried to change the road signs pointing the way to my city of Russellville and steal all the salt shakers.

I pondered and pondered. I had a small trade in of seven armies, plus the one freebie at the HQ, plus the usual three, plus the half dozen or so garrisoning the HQ. It might be enough.

## **I Love It When A Plan Comes Together**

My Spanish troops in Western Europe liberated Great Britain and re-established Russellville as the center of blender-mixed booze. The HQ Army landed easily enough in Iceland, but had a bit o' trouble storming the troops defending a volcano before driving through North America, capturing the HQ originally owned by Ed, and then stalled at the Panama Canal before turning back and grabbing Tragic City, USA.

What Super Genius! What derring-do! What a brilliant, calculated, carefully scrutinized, well-thought out strategy to ...

## **Awwww, Who Am I Kidding?**

Surprise! I won.

What The Fumble am I talking about?

Well. I started with 1 VP for my HQ and another for being a red-star player without a win. That's 2 VP.

Then, I picked up another VP for capturing the Ed/Fred HQ. That's 3 VP.

I had to pick up a card as a reward for capturing another player's territory, only I did not own any of the four territories showing, so I would pick up a Coin Card. However, no Coin Cards were available.

When that happens, a VP is awarded to the player with the most territories. I had 12, edging out Steve's 11. That was my fourth VP and thus, the win.

No kidding? No kidding.

As winner, I signed the board as the Lion of Stockton. Note this is the third game of three won by the Khan player.

Then I had a choice of naming a continent or placing a major city. I placed the major city of Stockton in Argentina. That means no one else can start there except me. It will also cause two troop losses to the player that moves into it first.

Cool. Onto the fourth game...

*The territory card of Eastern Australia, with one coin (resource) attached.*



## **Game the Fourth**

Cards came out for pre-game prep. High roller picks first, then clockwise around the table until the last fellow picks (twice), then the order reverses with the last fellow picking and back to the first player (picks twice) and then the order reverses again.

The cards set new starting conditions -- number of starting armies, who places first, who goes first, and how many coin cards at start. The faction cards were part of the deal. Clever play this -- you give players the choice of what they value most -- more starting armies, a particular faction, who goes first, or when the place. Clever decision-forcing mechanic.

I forget who picked what faction, but I plopped down in South Africa, Steve placed in Australia (again and with the same faction), Dan was aggressive and planted in Southeast Asia (Siam), Fred in Peru, and Ed in the middle of North America.

Other cards allowed for placement of mercenaries (free army at the END of the turn). I plopped one of those in the middle of Africa. Fred put one in Brazil, Steve in one of the Australian territories, and so on.

We all expanded slowly. Fred and Ed faced off while Steve and Dan faced off. I was the fifth wheel that did nothing to discourage them as I eventually took all of Africa and pushed into Europe.



Ed weakened Fred, so I dove across the Atlantic into Brazil and swept down and up to take the South American continent. Fred respawned in Asia. I was heading towards Ed, but Fred's defense dice took too many armies for me to continue. Ed failed to dent me, as I defended the bunker at the border between North and South America. Steve and Dan danced and took turns bashing each other.

With Fred's HQ and my own, I had 2 VPs. My own effort to take out Ed came to naught, so I turned my attention East. I traded in cards, swept through the Middle East, India, and took out Dan's HQ, then plunged into Australia and took out Steve's HQ. That's two more VPs. Add in the 2 VPs I already had, and put another win in the Lion of Stockton's column -- the first repeat. I plopped a major city in Europe -- Woodopolis. This was also the first time the Khan faction did NOT win.

I should note that Steve was about to steamroller a couple of players, but I went before him and short-circuited his plan.

*A Walker with three-man crew. Look closely. Budget cutbacks obviously deleted any armor protecting the legs of the crew, who might have gone by the nickname Pegleg Piggies.*



## Game the Fifth

Game four was quick, so we reset for game the fifth. This time, Fred set up in South America, Dan in Africa, Steve in Strattonia (previously renamed Australia), Ed in Scandanavia, and I pondered where I would set up.

I had a 10-army start card. Fred had a 6-army start card. I had the first move. Last game, I thought Steve or Dan should've gone after each other because of their proximity. I resolved to try that strategy. Fred also had two coin cards. I plopped my HQ in Central America.

My 10 armies, plus 3, gave me 13 vs Fred's 6. I left three behind to defend my HQ (which had the special power of being fortified), took the intervening territory, and attacked Fred with 9 armies vs 6. We lost about the same, leaving me with the HQ and Fred exiled to Irkutsk or Yakutsk (forget which).

Dan expanded to all of Africa, Steve grabbed all of Strattonia (Australia), and Ed expanded a bit in Europe.

Alas, I had somewhat shot my bolt. I took the rest of South America, but Dan stormed over. We traded the ex-Fred HQ a couple of times, but I could not get the army engine cranking. I managed to grab about half of North America and pushed a foothold into Asia while Ed streamed across Iceland and Greenland and down in a failed effort to take my HQ.

Steve played possum most of the game, built up, and unleashed his armies up through Asia, bashing me in North America and taking my HQ, then dove for South America and ex-Fred HQ. I folded like an aluminum lawn chair being run over by an 18-wheeler. Steve's starting 2 VPs plus my two HQs' VPs equaled 4 VPs and a win.

I like the ebb and flow of *Legacy* and the new rules that come up as you play. Five games down, 10 to go. Ed remains the sole red-star player without a win.

So far, the winning position starts were: Argentina, Madagascar, South Africa, Northern Europe, and Southeast Asia.

## Game the Sixth

After a hiatus, we gathered once again to look over the map and plot our victories. Ed started in Siam and grabbed all of Strattonia (Australia). Erik grabbed all of South America. I grabbed all of Africa. Steve started in Greenland and expanded (eventually) throughout North America. Dan started in Kamchatka and gathered strength, taking Alaska from time to time to break North America.

So far, so typical.

Erik dashed across to Africa, then grabbed Central America. Steve retaliated by driving through Europe to push Erik back. With a card trade in, I pushed Steve out of Africa and then grabbed Brazil from Erik. I was tempted to try and take out Erik entirely, but the armies just didn't add up in my favor.

Ed meandered across northern Asia and across Europe to grab Iceland. Dan waited. Steve took out Erik, but was too weak to hold and I grabbed the rest of South America while pushing into the southern areas of Europe. Just when I thought I could hold both continents, Dan migrated through Asia, Europe, and broke my continents of Africa and South America like some Mongol horde. Disaster! Dan's free move took his armies all the way back to Kamchatka.

Steve stormed across the Panama Canal seeking what was left, and my die rolling to hold the bunker in Venezuela was odds-defying awful. We joked that I forgot to get inside the bunker, and then when I did, I left the door open.

I managed to lose a lot of armies retaking Africa, but not South America.

Ed, who had not won a game to this point, had two VPs: 1 'star VP' at start and his HQ. He traded in four cards for another 'star VP' and put his armies next to Steve's lightly defended HQ. A couple die tosses later and Ed captured the HQ and his fourth, and winning, VP.

Of note, during the game one event was drawn that had all minor cities with one army or two armies lose an army. Ed lost New Guinea because he only had one army on it. That meant the event cost him one army lost, loss of continent bonus of two armies, and one more to retake it (minor cities cause one automatic loss). Ed proclaimed that would have a crucial impact on his fortunes, but apparently not as much as he feared.

So far, the winning position starts were: Argentina, Madagascar, South Africa, Northern Europe, and Southeast Asia (twice).

## Game the Seventh

I'm afraid my brain RAM does not remember all of game 7. It was weeks ago, with a vacation in the interim that vacated all brain functions except sightseeing and eating.

I do remember it was our first four-player game: me, Ed, Dan, and Steve.

Fortunately, I snapped a mid-game photo that showed my mighty empire stretching across Europe and North America (just after an event card plague took out my minor cities).

*Steve (left) and Dan ponder the board. How I lost after taking and holding two continents defies belief...unless you game with me regularly.*





I recall I stopped Dan from breaking North America, but dimly remember Steve following up and cracking it, then snaking somewhere for the win.

## Game the Eighth

Please refrain from singing any variation of Henry the Eighth, I am, I am, and I'm also going to warn you that this game recap contains a spoiler.

*Left to right: Steve, Ed, Dan, and Erik ponder what this new wondrous interloper is going to do to the balance of power.*



Play started per usual, with the five of us picking from among the factions, placements, troops, and so on. I chose two coin cards, 10 troops, and the second turn.

Unfortunately, that also left me with the fifth placement and Da Bears.

We always get a chuckle about the fifth placement, because that player inevitably bemoans his plight about where to place because he doesn't have much choice. Steve set up in South Africa, Erik in Africa, Ed in Strattonia (nee Australia), and Dan in Europe. That leaves Asia or North America for me -- I took the latter, setting up the HQ in Alberta.

About the only positive thing was that I quickly established non-aggression pacts with Steve and Dan. Since I went second, I nabbed Greenland and Central America. The others set about continent conquering, with Steve, Ed, and Dan nabbing theirs. I followed one turn later.

Steve swerved out of North Africa and whacked Southern Europe. Uh-oh. He said he was going to Asia, but decided to stay and sample the pasta and ouzo. I also saw that he could march through Dan to break my continent, so I put a couple extra armies in Greenland and Central America.

Then a marvelous, wonderful, skillfully wrought, and brilliantly executed plan of mine worked. A random event card gave five armies to the player with the most population. That was me!

OK, so I found out when everybody else did, but I took the five armies and beefed up the interior garrisons to prevent city loss from random plagues of frogs. Remember this as I squirted from Alaska into Asia.

Steve did expand into Asia, running into Ed and Erik, and later, me, as we traded off areas to grab cards. On a silly note, during this game we rolled triple 1s five times! I saw a triple 2 once, but no triple 3s, 4s, 5s or 6s. Quite extraordinary.

## Found the Rule

Erik found a passage in the rules that allowed people to gain a card after conquest in countries of their 'home' continent (depending on the starting spots on the back of their card). Well, that would have helped a number of us in past turns, so it was all even-stevens as far as we were concerned and we used the rule from then on.



At some point in time, I turned in four cards (remember I had two from the start) in for a victory point star. One for my HQ, one more down, and two to go for the win.

Now, about that event card and the five armies. The next three random event cards after that were the 'most population gets five armies.' In the parlance of today, the rich (me) got richer. Then came the plague card that did not affect me because I had all those armies garrisoning everything, and then came more 'gain armies for most population' cards that generated three and four armies (depending on the card) for me. If I recall rightly, I gained about 30 'free' armies from all the cards. This allowed me to beef up the borders and certainly gave paws, er, pause, to other players about messin' wit Da Bears.

## The Breakout and Spoiler Surprise

Steve thought a bit and then went for a strategy I'm not quite sure what he was supposed to accomplish. He boiled out of Brazil into Erik's Africa. I thought, here he goes to take out Erik, who was holding five cards and seemed army poor. Nope. He turned north into Europe, took out a path of Dan country to get Iceland and proceeded to attack Greenland and try to break my continent.

*Alien Island comes with links across any ocean. Erik picked the Indian Ocean and linked Madagascar to Alien Island to Indonesia. Note that the tower stickers are bunkers that give the defender +1 to one die. The orange and black sticker in upper right is a mercenary that gives the owner of the territory one extra army at the end of their turn. The half sticker in lower right means low ammo and gives -1 to defender dice.*



I had a small garrison of six armies there and succeeded in grinding him to a halt. Alas, he used his special power and made a mid-turn free move of all his armies in Venezuela (about 8 or 9) to Iceland to continue the assault.

Well, in one roll, I used a nuke to adjust a die roll, and Steve used a nuke to adjust his die roll, and then Erik (Erik!?) used a third nuke to adjust a die roll.

Game stop! When three nukes are used on one combat roll, you open a sealed box. What's inside?

ALIENS! Little green men (well, Milky Way off-white men) with rayguns and saucers! Unexpected! Brilliant! We all gave cheers of glee! Kudos to the Risk team for that one.

*Milky Way off white aliens with saucers descend onto Alien Island. What an unexpectedly wonderful twist.*

One problem. The cards that went with the aliens were not in the box. Apparently, many games had a packaging snafu that switched the cards from another faction (presumably in the other sealed box), or, if you look at it another way, flummoxed the packaging of the plastic pieces in the wrong box. Dumb asses! Idiots! Morons!

We quickly agreed -- Oh, well, too bad! PLAY ON WITH ALIENS!



So, 'Alien Island' becomes a new area on the map -- a sticker you paste in an ocean with links to the two land areas. Erik, being the third nuker, became an alien collaborator (shades of the TV series V) and got to run two factions -- his original and the new aliens. In subsequent games, the aliens become just another faction.

Erik stuck Alien Island in the Indian Ocean, linking Madagascar and Indonesia.

The game continued. Steve stormed into and across North America to capture my HQ with five armies left! Ach! Sand scum! And he did it without breaking our treaty over the Panama Canal.

The other players scrambled to restore or expand their power. The aliens invaded Strattonia and Dan took back Europe, as I recall. Meanwhile, I started counting up spaces and armies in a plot to restore North America. With the garrisons left behind, I could do a few soak-off attacks on his conquering five to liberate my HQ and perhaps take back the continent. I would also crash his South American party and take his HQ.

Yet as I pondered, and with five cards in my hand for a good trade-in, a thought occurred to me. I could trade in four cards for another VP (that would be my second), recapture my HQ for a third VP, and invade South America and take his HQ for a game-winning fourth VP. Placing my troops, I had 10 vs 5 (plus a few soak-offs) at my former HQ and 12 vs 6 vs his HQ.

I went for it. My two soak-off armies in Alaska nailed all five of his armies to recapture my HQ. Sheesh, that was great rolling. My 12 armies knifed through Venezuela and grabbed his HQ in Peru with equal ease. Game over!

As conquering hero, I signed the board as the Lion of Stockton and then renamed North America as Lockwoodtopia (gives an extra army or two to the continental bonus, but only for me).

All five of us agree that this *Risk Legacy* really revitalized the game for us. Clever rules. A big surprise. Dilemmas galore. Five cheers to the design team.



*Game the ninth: left to right: Erik, Steve, Ed, and Dan.*

## Game the Ninth

The ninth game includes another spoiler. You've been warned.

Dan took the aliens -- quite adventurous. He started on Alien Island. Well...maybe not quite as adventurous because aliens on Alien Island get two armies as a 'continent' bonus.

Oh yeah. Aliens get one other advantage: They don't lose armies when grabbing cities -- that really helps in the expansion portion of the game.

Steve took Da Bears and set up in North America -- an interesting ploy. Erik took the Sand People and set up in Africa. I took Die Mechaniker and South America. Ed took the Imperials and Europe.

Dan expanded into Strattonia in one turn -- easy when you can ignore city losses. The continent has one minor (1) and two major (2) cities, which would cost us humans five armies to conquer (plus the three needed to garrison the territories. Kick in the fourth territory for the continent and it's stretching time for us humans to take the place in one turn. It also meant Alien Dan got three armies, plus two for Alien Island continent, plus two for Strattonia for a total of at least seven per turn. That's mighty powerful in the early going.

I went second. South America risks getting cut off from the rest of the board, especially if you have alliances as I did with Steve in North America and Erik in Africa. That happened to Steve last game.

Erik played after me, so I wasn't worrying about modifying our neutrality pact. Indeed, he encouraged it because it would leave a territory to conquer and gain a card. Fair trade off. I dove across Africa and landed in the Middle East.

As expected, Erik expanded across Africa, Ed expanded, albeit slowly, across Europe, and Steve took North America. Dan expanded into Asia.



Keeping one eye on the random event deck, Dan and I traded off across Asia, each seeking the most population so we could get those big five army events. What I forgot was that the random event deck size doubled with other random events.

The extra army ploy worked a couple times for me, but then an alien devastation card showed up. The city of Iton in Middle East was the first to go, turned into a ruin. The Alien player peeled off a sticker and plopped it atop the city sticker. Iton's gone and so is any army or armies in the territory. Not only was my favorite falafel place rubbled, but that was my army that vaporized.

*Bloody aliens! They did an orbital bombardment of my Iton (minor city) in the Middle East territory. Blew up an army garrison, too. Dan played the aliens, as evidenced by his use of classic Risk wooden cubes.*



## Duke Nukem and Another Spoiler

Somewhere in there was a random event that nuked a territory. This should have been done last game in Greenland (the three nukes trigger), but due to the errant production packaging, it came out now. We debated what to do: put it on Greenland now, don't put it down at all, or next nuke-targeted territory? We ended up deciding that the next time someone played a nuke, they would roll a die. On a one, the territory gets nuked.

Sure enough, Erik tried for a game-winning drive through Europe and into North America to grab Steve's HQ. He traded in his cards and took his reinforcements to get a whopping 30 armies.

That triggered the opening of the last sealed box.

What's inside?

More aliens?

Nope. Mutants!

A package of orange zombie-ish mutants and garbage trucks. Yep. Little orange garbage trucks. Unlike the Aliens, they do not come in immediately, but they are available for the next game.

Erik's sand people reached Iceland when Steve played a nuke to help defend Greenland and his North American continent. Steve rolled a 1! Poetic justice? Fate? *Risk* karma? The place that should have been nuked last game is now nuked!

*The nuclear wasteland that was once Greenland. Any one attacking and taking the territory loses half, yes, half their surviving armies. Nobody but the Mutants (who gain an extra army at the end of their turn if they have glowing Greenland) ever attacked the place – effectively cutting off one route into North America, er, Lockwoodtopia.*





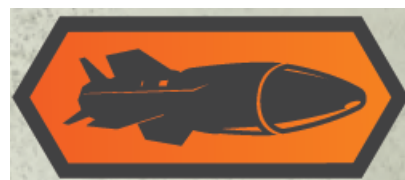
A big nuke sticker (why not a mushroom cloud?) got plunked on Greenland. Now we had to figure out what it did. It vaporized all armies in the territory, then destroyed 1d6 armies in all adjacent territories. Steve lost control of all adjacent territories as his armies glowed into puffs of smoke. Erik rolled a 1 and lost one army.

The other thing it does is eliminate half of all armies that conquer it. Erik did not move in anyone because a) he would lose half his 20 or so armies, and b) he could not capture any of the adjacent territories (including the HQ) because they did not have any armies in them to fight -- and you can't walk in to claim unmanned territories after you start conquering.

Worse, Alien Dan stuck a 'Scar' on the Sandies that limited their maneuver (free move any time during the turn) to moving only to an adjacent territory. WHACK! That took out that main power! Erik was stuck in Europe.

## For the Win...

Next, Ed went for the win with a drive back along Erik's path. I tossed in nukes. I tossed good dice. Dan tossed in a nuke. It all bled Ed purple (his faction's color). Finally, it was down to one die roll to take Erik's HQ. Ed failed. So close!



*A nuke counter.*

Steve tried to regarrison North America, but ultimately, to get a card, he had to break a treaty with Dan and stormed out of Alaska to Kamchatka.

I surveyed the board. No more nukes in any faction to alter combat rolls. I had eight troops in Brazil -- enough, I thought, to cross over to Africa and grab Erik's HQ. I had a small trade in (seven armies) along with my usual five army reinforcements to start in Asia to drive on Ed's HQ. That would be closer, but doable. All I would have to do is make sure I fulfilled the Mission Card (grab continents worth seven armies, i.e. Asia) for the fourth VP.

That's when the random event after Steve's move hit. The Aliens get to ruin another city. Dan chose Brazil.

I didn't care about the city, but the loss of the eight-army strike force AND the loss of the two-army continent bonus did my plan in. Try as I might, the numbers could only work on a real long shot. I still had five armies in Argentina to move into the now empty Brazil. That would leave four. It's two spaces to become adjacent to Erik's HQ in South Africa. Even if I win both, that only leaves a one die vs one die attempt to take the HQ.

I'd have to reinforce with at least one army. That would leave nine to roll through Asia and into Europe. If I didn't lose a combat, that would leave me with two armies to attack Ed. Mighty, mighty, mighty long odds. Nope. It's rather pointless to expect to win 11 out of 13 combats. The exceptionally well-played Alien bombardment that took out Brazil was just the right piece of random event luck at just the right time in just the right spot.

Dan, already with two VPs, traded in a pile of cards and the Aliens swarmed over Asia and nabbed Erik's HQ.

A most enjoyable game that saw four players with a shot at winning on the last round.

## Game the Tenth

I knew this was going to be a long game for me after my first half-dozen rolls -- all but one was a "1." Oh boy.

Of particular note was the initial selection process. Whereas before the faction pick was almost an afterthought, the addition of the Aliens and Mutants turned them into instant acquisitions. For the record, Dan took Aliens (start in Africa), Erik the Mutants (Lockwoodtopia, aka North America), Ed the Sand clan (Strattonia, aka Australia), Steve the Balkaners (Europe), and I took Da Bears (South America).

*Early in game 10 with Erik (left) and Ed watching Dan take Africa*



The usual expansion occurred. Once again, I dashed across Africa to Middle East so I would not be trapped in the corner. That's when the "most population gets 5 armies" random event showed up, and both Ed and I had 9 each, so no one got any armies. Later in the game, I had 13 to Ed's 12 when Steve took one of mine, then, on a spur of the moment, took another. Sure enough, another population random event showed up to give Ed a few more armies. Ed looked strongest after a while, eventually taking all of Asia but the Urals.

## An Ignominious First

I registered a "first" in the campaign: the first one to roll poorly and lose my headquarters (and its 1 VP) due to a random event card. In the early game, I had only left three armies at HQ in Argentina. You need a die roll + number of armies (in my case 3) to equal 6 or more. Sure enough, I rolled a "2." Boom! A sinkhole swallowed up my HQ. Lost armies. Lost VP.

*Game 10 from another perspective. Clockwise from top left: Dan's arms, Russ' arms, Erik's shoulder, and Ed's head. Photo by Steve.*

That left the Mission objective to grab a VP: conquer 9 territories. Doable. Da Bears cracked Lockwoodtopia without loss, crunching the Muties with odds defying die rolls. Things were looking up. I stormed across to Africa and hooked left into Southern Europe. That's when the wheels





fell off the die-rolling train. Between good rolls and nukes, Steve's two piddling little fellers slaughtered army after army until I finally burst through them, retook Middle East, and tried a desperation 1-on-1 attack against India that failed. Back in Lockwoodtopia, I carved up the Muties, but ran out of armies needed for garrison duties.

In the end, I took eight. DOH!

Dan went next, cashed in cards, and smashed through me to take the Mutie HQ (1 VP) and went through Steve to take his HQ (1 VP), and took nine territories along the way (1 VP). Add in his own HQ (1 VP) and that's the four needed to win.

Back to back wins by the rock n' roll *Risk* group: Dan and the Aliens. One thing he did as winner was negate a "scar" -- in this case, he stickered over the toxic goo sticker I had placed on Alien Island.

Our group has come to a tentative conclusion that the Aliens are a tad too powerful -- they don't lose armies when occupying cities AND they have a load of Alien-specific cards (like bombardments and reinforcements). One or the other would be OK, but both really get to be game changers.

## Game the Eleventh

It's been a while, so this one is fuzzy. Only four of us for this one. Dan grabbed the Aliens and Europe, but then again, he was on a roll. Ed took the Mutants and Lockwoodtopia. I took the Balkanians and Africa. Steve took the Gray (Khan?) and Strattonia.

*Game 11: Only four players for this one. Steve (left) suggests Ed attack anyone but him after my Pyrrhic Balkans attack.*

At first, I did OK, no thanks to Steve, who fought over Alien Island with me, as I grabbed Africa and

South America, no thanks to those Aliens who said they'd honor a truce line between Europe and Africa (and Middle East) and then rained fire and brimstone upon my poor little city in Egypt. That little escapade killed off my garrison and broke the continent. Worse, Dan launched an all-out attack to crush me. It was a close-run thing, for he took all but one country.

In the payback-is-a-bitch column, I cashed in cards and took back everything plus Southern Europe, breaking his continent. Then one of those random cards showed up and gave the Aliens five armies. Curses!

Steve built up slowly and steadily. Ed expanded as well.

## City on the Hill

Somewhere in there, the 'World Capital' random event showed up on Ed's turn. Lo and behold, for the first time, we could actually use the card. Ed loosed a roar of approval and did the honors, choosing Brazil and that heaping pile of Alien-caused rubble and ruin that had once been my city a couple games ago.





The shining edifices of the World Capital rose, phoenix-like, a mixture of majesty and whimsy, a gleaming jewel of technological and architectural inspiration, atop the ruins to herald a new era of--

At least that's what I thought Ed was thinking as he bwa-ha-ha'd his World Capital sticker atop the ruins. I suggested he name it after himself. Instead, he searched his brain RAM for the name of the X-men mansion. I used my phone and Google. He liked his X-name better. Ed christened the World Capital as: X-Factor.

*Ed feels the power, looses a bwa-ha-ha, places the World Capital in Brazil, names it X-Factor, and tears up the card.*

The game went on. At the last, Steve weighed his chances of taking me out, picking up my HQ VP, plus another VP from a Mission card along the way. Dan had cards and would no doubt use them. Steve hemmed and hawed, but yielded to my entreaties that it was now or never. Steve traded in cards and made his move.

The Steve Steamroller crunched across Asia and into Europe, hooked a left and poured across the Med into Africa and down to South Africa and my HQ. I didn't put up much of a fight. He had six armies left as he claimed his fourth VP and the win.

Now, lest you think me altruistic in my exhortations, understand that the player with the most wins gains some sort of advantage (like starting in the World Capital or some such). Dan and I stood at three wins apiece, Ed with one, Eric with one, and Steve with two. Since Steve won, he also has three. Now, no player sits supreme, giving me a chance in the next game to try and become the grand poobah...

## Game the Twelfth

On the twelfth game of campaign, my enemies gave to me... 12 rolls of sixes, 11 rolls of five-sies, 10 nukes a flyin', 9 pointing fingers, 8 army losses, 7 random e-vents, 6 times a joking...

5 back-stab raids...

4 calling bluffs, 3 Bronx cheers, 2 funny jests, and a last drive that took my head-quar-ters.

Man what a game! New for game number 12 was a variant from Germany (translated into English) that had five extra initial cards during the picking and set up phase. I can't recall the others, but mine was Ambassador, which lets me set up in any major city (not just the ones I founded).



I set up the sandpeople in Australia thanks to the Ambassador. Dan and the Imperials set up in Europe, Steve and the Aliens in South America, Erik and the Mutants in North America, and Ed and the Khan in Asia.

This was a surprise, as Africa was left alone. I went first and expanded throughout Australia, onto Alien Island, and into Madagascar -- the latter because the Madagascar card with all six circles filled was available. Alas, Dan used the special Imperial power to expand into a city and grab the big card.



*Game 12: My sandstorm in the South is greeted with much mirth by Alien Steve (left) and Red Ed.*

Steve expanded throughout South America and headed across the top of Africa, Ed expanded in Asia, and Erik in North America.

Africa became the bloodbath of the world in this game, as Steve -- shunning Ed's lone army in Egypt -- decided to hammer my Central Africa. My rolls were excellent, and it cost him a considerable number of his armies to take it. So much so that on my turn, I swept back in and over into Brazil, taking the World Capital. That helped me snag some extra armies from random events as I turned back his counter-counter-attack to take it back.

Ed tried next. Before he attacked, I put my single army right on the border with Egypt and proceeded to defeat his three-army invasion.

Meanwhile, Dan looked like he was going to attack, so I put her on the border facing Gibraltar, where she took a few armies out thanks to nukes, but alas, Dan finally swept her out of the way and drove into Africa all the way to Madagascar. My counter-attack tossed him out.

This back and forth over Africa continued for several turns. I don't recall ever conquering the continent long enough to get the continental bonus.

On the last turn, I ground through Steve and took the rest of South America and into Central America, finishing off the aliens and grabbing his territory cards. I grabbed one city from him, one from Erik, and two from Dan that would fulfil a Mission card and garner me a VP, but, I would have to eschew taking a territory card, and one of them had four circles filled. Combined with what I took from Steve, I stood a good chance of taking out another player with the army trade-in.

Alas, it was not to happen. Erik and the mutants traded in, attacked, and grabbed two HQ (including mine) and took both toxic territories (Alberta and Afghanistan) which is a special VP for the muties. That was a four VP for the win.



## Game the Thirteenth

An exciting game for all, but an absolutely frustrating game for me. It's a game I should have won. The odds said I should win. The dice spoke otherwise, but I get ahead of myself.

Erik set up first in South Africa and because the faction (not the player) had the most wins, also gained three armies in the World Capital. Dan took the Aliens and set up second on Alien Island. I set up third and set up in New Guinea (thanks to picking the Ambassador card). That meant that three HQs were in a row, so to speak, separated only by a single territory each. Steve set up in Siberia, far away from the maddening crowd. Ed 'derped' -- a new word for me which seems to be the verb equivalent of 'Doh!' -- and forgot all about the game.

I went first, picked up Indonesia, and stopped. Steve went second and expanded into a city for a card. Erik went third and was dickering with Dan over Africa when I asked Dan if he wanted a non-aggression pact. He didn't answer, so I took that as a 'no.'

Erik headed north after agreeing to allow Dan a path out (in as much as I occupied Indonesia with its nice bunker with most of my troops). Steve expanded up north.

I took the rest of Australia, ahem, excuse me, Strattonia. The others expanded as well. The Aliens got a pair of quick event cards that added to their armies. Forgot about that. Uh-oh. About that time I was kicking myself for not selecting the Aliens as my faction when I had the pre-game chance. Those Milky Way-colored aliens were breeding like rabbits. Alien rabbits with big teeth.

## The Holy Handgrenade of Jakarta

I attacked Alien Island. If I didn't defang those rabbits, I would be eaten. It wasn't great odds, but I had enough.

Dan proceeded to roll horribly. I mean really badly. Like losing eight armies in a row before splitting a die roll for only one loss. Man, I was into Alien Island like the Germans through the Ardennes in 1940.

Erik asked for an Indian Ocean non-aggression pact and I agreed.

I shouldn't have. The little gray-colored faction (forgot which one he had) turned around and attacked me on Alien Island. The backstabber! The faithless one! The pact's electrons had just barely flickered to life on social media!



*Game 13: Erik the Gray hangs on. Dan the Alien hangs on. Russ the Sandman sleeps in his own quicksand.*

Well, well, well. I attacked him the next turn, figuring I had plenty to take him out. It started well through Madagascar, but then the nukes started flying. Slowly, I was ground down as Dan and Steve tossed in nukes as well. It was down to Erik's last territory, his last army, and my last attacking army. The dice were thrown and I had the higher total.

Alas, Steve tossed in his last nuke to turn Erik's loss into victory. As we found out during the next turn, Steve has a power to grab any territory card available if he expends a missile. A couple turns previous, Steve did



grab a card but didn't realize he needed to use said missile...which meant Steve shouldn't have had that last missile to use. We reasoned, based on cards he picked, that he didn't need to use the missile back then. Ergo, he had the missile to use and Erik lived.

So the game went on as we jockeyed for position, forces ground down, territories grabbed, and events granting or removing armies.

That's when I traded in my cards worth 30 armies! Add in the 6 normal reinforcements and the 9 already in one spot, and that gave me quite the superiority needed to take the three other HQs for the win.

Dan had 12 armies on Alien Island, and one more on Madagascar. Erik had three in South Africa.

Steve was the sticking point. He set up away from the others so I needed to figure out how many armies to send his way as a second force. I needed two to expand so I could get next to his HQ garrisoned with five armies. I sent 11 more. The rest went after Dan and Erik.

The first phase went well. I took out Steve's HQ with five armies to spare. Better to be safe than sorry.

## The Curse of Alien Island

If my original attack on Alien Island was the Ardennes in 1940, this one for the win was Ardennes 1944. As bad as Dan's dice were the first time, mine were worse the second time. He lost all 12 armies, but took 28 with him. I couldn't believe it. The others were already packing up the game. My victory parade? Poof!

Apparently all those lazy-ass aliens had been replaced by elite aliens.

I barely took Madagascar, and the against odds attack against Erik, including a pair of dice from my leftover colony in Central Africa, failed. Up north, Steve retook his HQ.

Erik tried next, driving through me to grab the Alien HQ and my own in New Guinea. Alas, he ran out of troops to take nine territories (Mission Card) for his last VP.

Dan patched up a second continent, Europe, to go along with South America. I cracked Europe. Dan patched it back up. Steve and Erik grabbed some of my overextended territories. Erik even managed, for the first time since game one, to grab all of Strattonia (worth an extra army as a continent bonus to him and him alone).

Then Steve made his move. He stormed out of China, into Indonesia, over Alien Island, through Madagascar, and into South Africa. That's three HQs for 3VPs. Plus, earlier in the game, he had traded in four territory cards for a VP. That made four for the win. Well-played.

As winner, Steve eschewed naming Asia. He thought for a moment and pronounced "Make America Great Again" and stickered a +1 continental bonus to North America (technically called Lockwoodtopia).

A good game with chances for all to win.

## Don't Ever Open This

Steve, as winner, decided to open the envelope marked "Do Not Open This" or something to that effect.

Inside, it said something about a big virus and contained more random event cards.

Uh-oh.

We didn't look at them. We just added them to the random event deck.

We don't know what they are, but I'm guessing we'll find out...

*Game 14: Balkan burst a bust.*

## Game the Fourteenth

Well, we found out the random virus event cards nail armies in various



territories -- and kill off territory cards (tear 'em up!). Uh-oh.

Erik and Mutants started in Lockwoodtopia, Ed and the Khan started in South America, Dan and the Aliens started in Strattonia, Steve and the Sand Peoples started in Africa, and I settled into Europe with the Balkis -- I was already practicing my happy dance.

The first inkling of a problem came when those pesky Sand People wedged into my crack of Europe, busting up my continent. Man, they get into everything! Now, before the big attack, I asked if Steve really wanted to pick a fight on the first turn of the game...and he said yes. Little did I know he had made a political pact to make sure Dan and I did not win this game -- and thus preserve his lead. Anyway, Erik and the Mutants piled on and took Iceland from me.

*Steve (middle) plops his armies in Great Britain to begin the conquest of Europe. Russ (left) is about to choke on his rolls. Erik plots to take advantage of post-sand bloodbath. Photo by Dan.*



So, in the second turn, I ignored the Muties, traded in my big 10-army card, grabbed the usual reinforcements, and headed south to take out Steve. Nukes flew left and right, but his was a HQ too far.

My Imperial Balkanians were pummeled again, losing my HQ to the Burning Sanders crowd. The Sand People and the Aliens traded jabs, as did the Khan and the Mutants. It was a considerable mess, which made it a good back-and-forth game.

Finally, Ed made his move. His mass of armies stormed out of the Capital City (Brazil), hooked a left through Africa into Europe, grabbed my HQ and major city, threaded south into Africa and grabbed Steve's HQ and major city. He also had the world capital. The major cities and the world capital was good for a victory point (mission card) and the three HQs were good for 3VPs for a winning total of 4VP.

Along the way, some of the new virus cards hit. I can't remember which territory we tore up (Afghanistan?), but whichever one it was, there it went into the trash...

*If you squint, the Sand People (Steve, at left) captured Scandinavia (and my HQ) and renamed it Sandanavia. Ed (middle) makes his move.*

Now onto the last game...





## Game the Fifteenth

Well, it's January and it's taken many months to get to the 15th game of the Legacy campaign. My computer files sez July, so call it six months to play 15 games, each modified by the previous.

To recap, Steve had four wins, Dan and I had three wins, and Erik and Ed had two wins. Like the previous game, Steve wanted to either win or prevent either Dan or me from winning. Dan and I were not going to let that happen, thus was born the counter-pact.

*Early game jockeying. Notice the Alien pile of 'free' troops in Japan.*



Ed and the Khan set up in South America, I and the Impy Balkanites set up in Australia, Steve and the Sanders in Europe, Dan and the Aliens in Africa, and Erik and the Mutants in North America. Each of us filtered throughout our respective continents, although Ed balked at grabbing the major city of Stockton in SA for many turns.

Early on, event cards gave the aliens not one, but two 'beam downs' worth five armies each. Then another 'most population' gave him another three. Looked like the aliens would run away with it, but the attack from Africa into South America ran into the World Capital and its force field in Brazil.

*Game 15: Mid game. Ed's first shot at winning petered out in South Africa.*

Games earlier, I had run into said force field protecting Danbury on Madagascar. Force fields give +1 bonus to defender die rolls during 10 combats. This time, after two combats in Brazil, with Dan losing both, Dan reassessed his strategy and free moved away.

Erik dove across Asia to Afghanistan, picking up a VP for fulfilling his personal mission of grabbing all toxic goo territories. We picked off his conquests.

Dan roared out of Japan and into North





America, but fell short of taking Erik's HQ.

Steve built up Europe into a mighty wall of warriors. He was not necessarily a target due to a special power that allowed him to blow up his HQ after its capture -- denying the enemy a VP.

I picked off a territory and then a city (newly vacant Lockzilla in Japan) to grab cards.

## **Going for the Win I**

Then Ed made his move. He raced out of Brazil and through Africa in an effort to grab Dan's HQ, and, after consideration, went after mine in Indonesia. He got as far as South Africa before he re-evaluated his losses. At the time, I was quite weak there, but Dan's determined defense saved the day for him and me. I stuffed more troops back at my HQ, as did Dan.

## **Going for the Win II**

To Ed's amazement, he survived for another turn, as did his special lucky mercenaries 'Scuba Steve' and 'Diver Dan,' and had another go at victory. He traded in his cards, dumped a pile of new armies in Brazil, and tried his same strategy again. This time, he cut through Africa without excessive losses until he came to Dan's HQ, which has the special power that it's fortified (like the World Capital) when Dan has eight or more armies as a garrison. Dan had nine.

The slaughter of Ed's troops commenced. Ed eventually knocked the garrison down to only four armies, but he was down to about 12 armies -- the exact number I had sitting on my HQ, which itself had a fortified bunker. Ed free moved away back to the World Capital.

## **Going for the Win III**

My move. I traded in 10 resources for 30 armies -- fulfilling a Mission card condition that earned me 1 VP. I owned my HQ for another VP. I had to take two more HQs -- and Steve's HQ was out because he could blow it up and deny the VP. My move was crystal clear.

I plopped all 30 armies, plus the seven I'd usually get, into Japan. Then it was a blitz through Dan to get to Erik's HQ, which was taken (third VP) despite Steve dumping six nukes in my way, but with a top of my hat to Dan for his helping nuke. My horde advanced into Ed in South America. Ed's HQ fell for my fourth VP and the win.

I signed the board per usual as 'Russ, Lion of Stockton' and then renamed the last continent, Asia, as 'Omegaland.'

## **Who Won the Campaign?**

The winner gets to name the entire world. Out of the 15 games, Steve and I tied with four wins each, Dan had three, and Ed and Erik had two.

The rules say that in case of ties, the players roll one d6 and add the number of continents named. In this case, Steve and I both named two continents.

So, it's down to one d6 each, no modifiers...

My black cube of fate rolled around and landed with a four showing. Steve tossed his red die and...a six!

We proclaimed Steve the emperor of the world! I gave him an exploding fist bump. Ed gave a high five.

But what will Steve name the world? Steve-orama? Steve-alicious? Stevadore?

He named it Cardtopia (he really likes games with cards).

## **Verdict**

I am impressed at how *Risk* was re-imagined for *Risk Legacy*. Marking up the board, tearing up cards, and offering 'surprise' packets (well, I guess if you've read this far, 'tis no surprise left) enlivened the game. Same simple combat system, with twists, and enough wrinkles to keep us always scheming for the win.

As Ed noted, and we concurred, 15 playings of the game made it well worth the effort. And you can even use the figures for something else sci-fi.

Great campaign, guys. I joked that after all this time, Steve should bronze the board and hang it in his basement. On second thought, maybe just seal it in plastic so all the names will be preserved.



*End of game 15 and the campaign. Left to right: Russ waits to sign the board, Erik reflects on the game, Emperor Steve surveys his domain, and Ed's hand is a blur of putting away his forces. Dan took the photo.*